

SOUND OFF!



VOL. II, NO 18 THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”

10 MAY 2007

FIRST CALL - THEME OF THE ISSUE AND/OR CLIPS & QUOTES

MORE AND LESS ~ AN AWFUL SYMMETRY

We are, we are told, in an age of “asymmetric warfare”.

In asymmetric warfare a much weaker enemy employs unexpected or unconventional means to capitalize on the stronger force's weaknesses, or, as in *jiu jitsu*, to turn strength into a weakness.

This is no great departure from MG Carl von Clausewitz's *Principles of War*: Objective, Offensive, Mass, Economy of Force, Maneuver, Unity of Command, Security, Surprise, Simplicity.

Asymmetric warfare merely emphasizes surprise, simplicity, economy of force, and maneuver. It is always on the offensive. Its objective is broad and not geographically bound. It doesn't need mass or unity of command. It melds maneuver and security by hiding among non-combatants. Maybe giving it a name of its own lets the stronger force excuse the defeats.

Sometimes forgotten is von Clausewitz's admonition that the predominant condition in warfare is uncertainty. A hard concept to accept if you are absolutely and unshakably certain of your choices and your policies, and will brook no dissent.

Asymmetric war makes one wonder what the term “military superpower” really means. We are fighting asymmetric war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we are not winning. Rome was defeated by asymmetric warfare. The German army on the eastern front was defeated largely by asymmetric warfare. France was defeated and we were never able to win against asymmetric warfare in Vietnam. Asymmetric war got us in Beirut, and again in Somalia. So much for the “power” in “superpower”.

Hidden among the asymmetries of asymmetric warfare, and the policies that have led us into it is an awful symmetry – a symmetry of contrasts that is bleeding us dry in every category of national interest and national treasure.

We suffer from, on the one hand more, and on the other hand less – greater efforts for fewer results – greater expenditure for less return.

- More forces – hence greater exposure and less security.
- Less security – more casualties
- Fewer active soldiers – more bleeding of reserves and guard.
- Fewer soldiers overall – more mercenaries.
- More mercenaries – less control of the battlefield
- More attack helicopters – less security for Iraqi civilians.
- Less coalition participation – even more US casualties.

- More national apathy – less involvement and far less sacrifice.
- Less concern for world opinion – more hatred for America.
- Less oversight – more mischief – more war-profiteering – more joblessness at home – drastically more national debt.
- More debt – fewer national priorities getting required funding.
- Less continuing care of serving military and veterans – more homelessness – more divorce – more domestic abuse.
- More governance by fiat – fewer Constitutional protections.
- Less adherence to the Constitution and the separation of powers – more negation of the power of the legislature and the courts – a more dictatorial rule, often outside of the law.

If this list of actions and their results were used as the test on “Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?”, the fifth graders would win easily, and our leaders would be sent to the dunce's corner.

Will Rogers said, “If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging!”. The administration is in a very deep hole and it can't stop digging. They just upped troop strength by 20% and attack helicopter strength by 40%. 35,000 more troops have been alerted for deployment this year with no commitment to bring home the ones already there.

While the military leadership should not give foreign policy advice, it now seems incapable of giving even military advice. Someone wearing stars has to know that this is a deadly goat-rope, and the only possible outcome already looms this side of the horizon – more casualties, more erosion of our military – more asymmetry

No one questions the military leadership's bravery on the battlefield. No one questions their inherent patriotism, although some might question the Constitutional component of that patriotism.

We are starting to question their willingness to risk career harm by standing up and telling the administration that this must stop. This is the place and time for them to remember George Danton's admonition, “De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace!”. Audacity – boldness – not on the battlefield, but in the halls of the Pentagon and before Congress.

General Harold Johnson, CSA under President Lyndon Johnson, said shortly before he died that the greatest regret he had – his personal greatest failure – was that he did not walk into the Oval Office, lay his stars on the president's desk and say we must get out of Vietnam.

The American people need a new symmetry – more courage and less careerism in both Congress and the military leadership.

REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

VUFT ANSWERS THE CALL

Late last month we received a request for help from a veterans' activist asking us to assist a stranded Iraq War vet and his family who had moved to California to take a job, and the job disappeared. Their car broke down and they needed to get back to Oklahoma where they had both family and employment waiting. VUFT contribute \$250, Veterans for Peace contributed \$400, and several individuals donated another few hundred dollars. The family is now safely back in Oklahoma. While there are no earth-shattering results of immediate-response actions like these, small acts are sometimes all that is needed.

WAKE UP! SPREAD THE NEWS!

MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN, FREE, AND VERY WORTHWHILE! GET YOUR FELLOW VETERANS, AND VETERANS' FAMILY MEMBERS TO JOIN VUFT! WE ARE BEGINNING TO BE HEARD, AND WE NEED YOU TO HELP US GET THE MESSAGE OUT. IF EACH OF US WOULD BRING IN ONE NEW MEMBER EVERY MONTH, WHAT AN IMPACT WE COULD HAVE!

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE!

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE AT WWW.VUFT.ORG.

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

BE A MEMBER If you are getting this newsletter and have not yet joined, please go to [our website](#) and join. Membership is free. The more our numbers grow, the greater voice we have. It shouldn't be that way, but it is, so join us and help us take the fight to Congress and the state legislatures. Please encourage your friends who either are veterans, are related to veterans, or who support veterans' causes to join VUFT, Inc.

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE If you wish to donate to our work you may now do so via PayPal or Visa on [our website "Join" page](#). Every little bit helps. We are a 501(c)(3): your donations are deductible on your federal taxes. You can also buy our handsome pins using the same method. If you wish to volunteer your services to the organization, please contact the Chair at rhandy@vuft.org or the Vice Chair at scook@vuft.org. Watch for details at www.vuft.org

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS

I am a nurse Vietnam Veteran and a nurse psychotherapist, with expertise in the healing of PTSD. I am currently writing a book with the purpose of helping women veterans who have been traumatized, in and through their military experiences. Many of the women I have already interviewed have either been in combat or not, have been raped, sexually harassed, molested, etc and some have reported these events and subsequently punished for reporting. Some have been inappropriately and negatively labeled by the military and then discharged without access to benefits.

There are countless stories of those who served proudly, and were exposed to chemicals, which ruined their health, and destroyed their military careers plus many who have had very positive and full military experiences. My goal is to tell the stories that need to be told, to educate the public and where needed, bring justice to unjust situations. If any women is interested in speaking with me further about this or telling her story through an interview please contact me at nursescribe@earthlink.net

Thank you for your support.

Sarah L. Blum, 12th Evacuation Hospital, Cu Chi, Vietnam 1967
www.sarahshealinghaven.com

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS

BILL CALLS FOR CLOSING GUANTANAMO

Senator Feinstein (D CA) introduced S. 1249: A bill to require the President to close the Department of Defense detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. <Bill text at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c110:./temp/~c110Hyh3hn>>

SENATOR: LIFT 10-YEAR DEADLINE TO USE GI BILL

Rick Maze - Staff writer - May 2, 2007

The 10-year window for using GI Bill education benefits after leaving active-duty service would be eliminated under a bill introduced Tuesday in the Senate. The chief sponsor, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), said the 10-year limit is outdated and could be part of the reason why up to 60 percent of veterans who have earned GI Bill benefits do not use them.

<Bill text at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c110:./temp/~c110dvnnBZ>>

GI BILL SHOULD BE FREE, LAWMAKER SAYS

Rick Maze - Staff writer- Apr 23, 2007

The \$1,200 enrollment fee for GI Bill benefits would be waived for junior enlisted members and everyone in the military would get a second chance to enroll in the education benefits program under a bill introduced by Rep. Lee Terry, (R-NB2).

<More at: www.armytimes.com/news/2007/04/military_gibill_feeswaived_070423w/

<Bill text at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c110:./temp/~c110yExv75>>

BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION FOR VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Larry Scott - April 26, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, joined by Ranking Member Senator Larry Craig (R-ID), introduced the Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation Act of 2007 (S. 1233). This legislation is intended to improve care for veterans with traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

<More at: <http://veterans.senate.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Newsroom.PressReleases&month=4&year=2007&id=999>

<Bill text at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c110:./temp/~c110roPPMj>>

WAXMAN SEEKS TO BAN SALE, DEVELOPMENT OF VA CAMPUS

Martha Groves - Times Staff Writer - May 9, 2007

Measure would extend existing restrictions to the entire facility as U.S. explores commercial uses of property on L.A.'s Westside.

U.S. Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) on Tuesday introduced legislation that would prohibit the sale or commercial development of any portion of the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs campus. The measure would also require the VA to satisfy a 1998 congressional mandate by completing a comprehensive master plan for the property aimed at ensuring that veterans' future needs would be adequately addressed. <More at: www.latimes.com/news/printedition/california/la-me-veteran9may09.1.1265148_story>

RETREAT – NEWS

WE CAN'T HELP VETERANS BECAUSE THAT WOULD "DISCRIMINATE" ~ AW SH#T! VETERANS' HOUSING PROJECT IS IN LIMBO

Mary Engel - Times Staff Writer - May 8, 2007

A bill guaranteeing that affordable apartments proposed for a San Fernando Valley veterans campus be solely for veterans passed the House of Representatives on Monday despite claims that it could delay or derail the very housing it seeks to support.

"The bottom line is it stops a housing project for disabled veterans that has been underway for four years now," said Dora Leong Gallo, chief executive of Community of Friends, a nonprofit developer.

Community of Friends and another nonprofit group, New Directions Inc., with the support of the Department of Veterans Affairs, have been planning to convert two buildings at the VA's Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center into about 150 housing units for disabled, homeless vets. The groups intended to seek low-income tax credits and federal housing funds to renovate the buildings, which were damaged in the 1994 Northridge earthquake. A "veterans-only" requirement would run afoul of federal and state nondiscrimination laws, which means the two nonprofits would have to raise money privately for the \$40-million project.

<More at: www.latimes.com/news/printedition/california/la-me-veteran8may08.1.806394_story>

IRAQI LAWMAKERS DEMAND U.S. WITHDRAWAL

United Press International - 05/04/07

BAGHDAD, May 2 (UPI) -- As calls in the U.S. Congress grow for a scheduled troop withdrawal from Iraq, similar demands are escalating in Iraq's National Assembly. Some 133 Iraqi lawmakers from different political blocs, calling themselves the "free deputies," signed a document demanding a scheduled withdrawal of the U.S.-led multinational troops from their country, according to the Sadrist bloc in Parliament. <More at: www.upi.com/International_Intelligence/Briefing/2007/05/02/iraqi_lawmakers_demand_us_withdrawal/>

SO WHAT?

BUSH DETERMINED TO PROLONG LOST WAR

Joseph L. Galloway - McClatchy Newspapers

The time for bumper-sticker bombast, sound-bite strategizing and gotcha politics as practiced by the politicians who infest the nation's capital needs to end right now, at least where it intersects with the disaster that is the Iraq War. There's no high ground left

to capture by either a stubborn president who won't see or hear the truth about where his path to "victory" in a lost war really leads, or the new Democratic majority in Congress, which is too timid and fearful of doing what they were elected to do - bring an end to the war as swiftly as possible.

While the politicians - a pox on all of them - wrangled and dithered and bloviated American troops were dying at record numbers on the bomb-blasted roads and streets of Iraq. The month of April saw 104 American soldiers and Marines travel home in flag-draped coffins, out of sight of the cameras and the American people in whose name they died. It was the sixth highest monthly death toll of the war. This past week was a circus of the ridiculous as President Bush went on television every day threatening to veto a bill providing the billions needed to continue to prosecute his war - only the second veto The Decider has exercised in his six years in power - on grounds that the Democrats were trying to substitute the judgments of politicians for that of the **military commanders on the ground**. <More at: www.realcities.com/mid/kwashington/17173005.htm>

HERE IS A FORMER "COMMANDER ON THE GROUND"

WAS ANYONE LISTENING TO HIM?

GENERAL DISCONTENT

Jake Tapper - ABC News - 09 May 2007

In an act of defiance perhaps not seen since President Truman fired Gen. Douglas MacArthur, today the anti-war veterans group VoteVets.org, which has been influential with Capitol Hill Democrats, is launching a half-million-dollar TV ad campaign featuring Maj Gen John Batiste (Ret.), former commanding general of the first infantry division in Iraq. The ad begins with a clip President George W. Bush saying "I have always said that I will listen to the requests of our commanders on the ground." Batiste then appears, saying, "Mr. President, you did not listen. You continue to pursue a failed strategy that is breaking our great Army and Marine Corps. I left the Army in protest in order to speak out. Mr. President, you have placed our nation in peril. Our only hope is that Congress will act now to protect our fighting men and women." <More w/video at: www.truthout.org/docs_2006/050907A.shtml>

DESERTING WAR

As Congress continues to grapple with questions of when and how to leave Iraq, the US Army has revised its count of active duty soldiers who have deserted the military, raising that figure by almost 1,000 for fiscal year 2006 alone. Until the new figures were released on March 23, it had been widely reported that the number of deserters and soldiers absent without leave, or AWOL, had been decreasing since the start of the Iraq War except for a slight uptick in the past year.

In fiscal year 2006, a total of 3,301 active-duty soldiers deserted the Army, according to Major Anne Edgecomb, an Army public affairs officer. The Army previously reported 2,343 deserters in 2006, which was a slight increase over the year before. The rate of increase was actually about 30 percent. In 2005, the Army had reported that desertions had dropped by 17 percent, but the new numbers show they actually rose by at least eight percent. Numbers reported for the years 2000 through 2004 were similarly flawed. <More at: www.pasadenaweekly.com/article.php?id=4513&IssueNum=66>

KEY US ARMY RANKS BEGIN TO THIN

Gordon Lubold - Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

The reenlistment rate for mid-grade enlisted soldiers dropped from 96 percent in 2005 to 84 percent in the first quarter of this year. Thousands more mid-level enlisted soldiers are leaving the Army than in each of the past two years, forcing the service to increase its use of pay-to-stay programs and find other ways to keep GIs in the fold. <More at: www.csmonitor.com/2007/0502/p01s01-usmi.html>

NONETHELESS

ARMY CHIEF WANTS TO SPEED UP TROOP HIKE

Associated Press - April 30, 2007

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii - The Army's new chief of staff says he wants to accelerate by two years a plan to increase the nation's active-duty Soldiers by 65,000. The Army has set 2012 as its target date for a force expansion to 547,000 troops, but Gen. George Casey said Saturday that he has told his staff to have the Soldiers ready earlier.

"I said that's too long. Go back and tell me what it would take to get it done faster," he said in an interview with The Associated Press during a stop in Hawaii. <More at: www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18377394/>

PENTAGON TELLS 35,000: PREPARE TO DEPLOY

Lolita C. Baldor - May 8

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Pentagon has notified more than 35,000 Army soldiers to be prepared to deploy to Iraq beginning this fall, a move that would allow commanders to maintain the ongoing buildup of troops through the end of the year if needed.

<More at: <http://apnews.excite.com/article/20070508/D8P09T4G1.html>>

OH YEAH! DON'T FORGET THAT PESKY OTHER WAR! PENTAGON TO FORTIFY FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN

Robert Burns - AP Military Writer – May 9, 2007

The Pentagon said Wednesday that it will maintain a heightened level of U.S. troops in Afghanistan well into 2008 by sending elements of the 101st Airborne Division as a replacement force.

<More at: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20070509/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/afghanistan_us_military>

HERE'S ONE PRETTY SENSIBLE WAY TO GET A FEW MORE WELL-TRAINED ONES GAY SAILOR CALLED BACK TO ACTIVE DUTY

Stars and Stripes - Joseph Giordano | May 08, 2007

On his wedding night in July 2004, then-Petty Officer 3rd Class Jason Knight finally accepted a truth he had fought against for years: he was gay. Almost immediately, he moved to get his marriage annulled. He apologized to the woman he'd married. And when it came time to explain his changing circumstances to the Navy, he left nothing out. Under the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, he was quickly discharged from the service. But now — whether through a clerical oversight or what some claim is an unwritten change in policy to keep more gay servicemembers in the ranks at a time of war — Jason Knight is back on active duty.

<More at: www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=53187&archive=true>

MEANWHILE, DON'T WASTE TIME AND MONEY ON GENEVA/HAGUE TRAINING OR THOSE BORING "CHARACTER GUIDANCE" CLASSES TROOPS AT ODDS WITH ETHICS STANDARDS

Thomas E. Ricks and Ann Scott Tyson - Washington Post Staff Writers - May 5, 2007; A01

More than one-third of U.S. soldiers in Iraq surveyed by the Army said they believe torture should be allowed if it helps gather important information about insurgents, the Pentagon disclosed yesterday. Four in 10 said they approve of such illegal abuse if it would save the life of a fellow soldier. <More at: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/04/AR2007050402151.html?hpid=topnews>

WELL WE'D EQUIP THEM PROPERLY IF WE COULD. ARMORED VEHICLES FOR IRAQ DELAYED

Associated Press - April 30, 2007

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - The armored carrier has a grim black slash across its side, burn marks on the door and a web of cracks along the window. Like most of the Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles in Anbar province, this one has been hit as many as three times by enemy fire and bomb blasts. Yet, to date, no American troops have died while riding in one. But efforts to buy thousands more carriers - each costing about \$1 million - could be delayed if the White House and Congress do not resolve their deadlock over a \$124.2 billion war spending bill. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,133917,00.html>

AND SEND MONEY TO FIX THIS WHILE WE USE WHAT WE HAVE TO BUILD F-35s ~ CLOSE AIR SUPPORT AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE ARE NOT OUR PRIORITIES, THANK YOU

AIR FORCE FLEET WEARING DOWN

USA Today - May 08, 2007

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. - The Air Force's fleet of warplanes is older than ever and wearing out faster because of heavy use in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the service's top combat commander. Gen. Ronald Keys, who leads the Air Combat Command, points to cracked wings on A-10 attack planes and frayed electrical cables on U-2 spy planes. Compared to 1996, the Air Force now spends 87% more on maintenance for a warplane fleet that is less ready to fly, Air Force records show.

<More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,135018,00.html>

MAYBE SOME OF THESE BUCKS COULD HELP ~ DO YOU THINK? PENTAGON CONTRACTORS OWE \$7.7 BILLION IN UNPAID TAXES

Thomas D. Williams - truthout Report - 30 April 2007

A federal watchdog agency ... investigations clearly show the US government is facing serious long-term funding shortfalls, while federal contractors, doctors and medical suppliers, regularly receiving federal Medicare money, owe billions in unpaid taxes. ... a recent GAO inquiry reveals that about 113,800 contractors working for a variety of federal agencies, including the Pentagon and the General Services Administration, have built up \$7.7 billion in unpaid taxes. This matches untidily with a March GAO report saying that more than 21,000 doctors, health professionals or medical suppliers, collecting billions in federal Medicare dollars, simultaneously owed more than \$1 billion in federal income taxes. <More at: www.truthout.org/docs_2006/043007J.shtml>

**OR HOW BOUT USING THIS FINE TO HELP THE TROOPS?
FIDELITY FINED FOR MISLEADING MILITARY PERSONNEL**

May 8 2007

NEW YORK (Reuters) -- The NASD said Tuesday it fined two Fidelity broker-dealers a total of \$400,000 for misleading U.S. military personnel in sales literature promoting two mutual funds. The violations took place between January 2003 and January 2006 and concerned the Destiny I and II funds, which require investors to invest in installments, the regulator said.

<More at: <http://money.cnn.com/2007/05/08/markets/bc.fidelity.nasd.reut/index.htm?postversion=2007050815>>

GUARD UNIT ORDERED TO STRIP

Associated Press - April 27, 2007

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - The commander of New Mexico's National Guard is demanding an apology from the Army brass after dozens of his Soldiers in a mostly Hispanic unit were ordered to strip to their gym shorts and searched for gang tattoos while on duty in Kuwait. Army officials said the searches last May of 58 New Mexico National Guardsmen in a unit called Task Force Cobra were proper and legal.

But Brig. Gen. Kenny Montoya, head of the state National Guard, said he believes ethnicity played a role in the episode - the unit is 55 percent Hispanic. "I said something wrong was done there, and it was because of race, and I want to make sure it will not happen again," Montoya said.

The search was prompted by an unsubstantiated allegation from a Soldier in another unit who complained about gang activity among Soldiers in Kuwait. The Soldier claimed to have seen gang tattoos among members of Task Force Cobra's parent unit.

<More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,133741,00.html>

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Notes</u>
5/10-13		Franklin Community Park Franklin, KY	Wall That Heals	AMVET Ladies Auxiliary Post 110	
5/16		Las Vegas, NV	Stand Down	Shalimar Cabrera	702-429-7294
5/16	1100-1500	Jacksonville Marriott 4670 Salisbury Road, Jacksonville, FL	Career Fair		904-296-2222
5/17		Los Angeles, CA	Resource Fair	Doris Nickelson	310-518-1855
5/17		Saint Paul, MN	Resource Fair	Kara Cornils	612-727-1355
5/17-20		AMVETS State Headquarters Springfield, IL	Wall That Heals	Illinois AMVETS Service Foundation	
5/23		Lansing, MI	Resource Fair	Kate Reed	517-484-4414
5/25-28		Bulger Park Melrose Park, IL	Wall That Heals	Veterans Park District	
5/30	1100 - 1500	Doubletree Hotel Tampa Westshore Airport 4500 West Cypress Street, Tampa, FL	Career Fair		813 879-4800
5/31	1730 - 2200	Playboy Mansion Los Angeles, CA	National Veterans Foundation Memorial Day fundraiser	REIAC High Flyers Ball Committee	NVF 888-777-4443
6/8-10		Humboldt County Fairgrounds Ferndale, CA	Stand Down	Kim Hall	707-822-2175
6/13		Palace Station Hotel 2411 W. Sahara Ave, Las Vegas, NV	Career Fair		702-367-2411
6/14-17		Savannah, Georgia	Wall That Heals	Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 671	
6/15		Worcester, MA	Resource Fair	Joe Boylan	508-791-0956
8/3-5		Roosevelt University Chicago, IL	VVAW 40yj Anniversary	Hannah Frisch VVAW National Staff	773-276-4189

Let us know about meetings and gatherings and we will advertise them

Note: We are a non-partisan organization that does not take a position, as an organization, on this war. We will advertise all legitimate veterans' events, regardless of purpose.

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

VA OFFICIALS THAT MISCALCULATED THE NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS AWARDED SIGNIFICANT BONUSES

Larry Scott - May 3, 2007

Washington, D.C. – "This nation's veterans health care system is strained to the breaking point. I do not understand how an underfunded agency has the resources to award a generous bonus package of \$3.8 million to its employees at the same time it shoulders a backlog of 600,000 claims and asks veterans to wait months for necessary medical care.

<More at: www.vawatchdog.org/07/hcva07/hcva050307-2.htm>

AND THIS IS HOW HE WILL PAY FOR THE BONUSES GATES WANTS WALTER REED CLOSED

Associated Press - May 04, 2007

WASHINGTON - Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the aging hospital heavily criticized for inadequate care of wounded war veterans, should be closed as planned, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Wednesday. Gates' conclusion, following a review of Walter Reed by an independent advisory group, runs counter to the recommendation of some in Congress who have called recently for the Pentagon to reverse its 2005 decision. <More at: www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1617088,00.html>

ARMY'S VET CARE PROBLEMS WIDESPREAD

Associated Press - April 26, 2007

WASHINGTON - The Army said Wednesday it was hiring case managers and boosting oversight at military facilities after a new internal review concluded poor outpatient care extended beyond Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Gen. Richard Cody, the Army's vice chief of staff, said officials were finalizing a report on problems after a team of Army inspectors visited 11 bases in seven states last month to study outpatient treatment, building conditions and the information provided to patients. The investigation found staffing shortages, excessive paperwork and poor training that created too much bureaucracy and long waits for injured Soldiers, particularly at Fort Stewart in Georgia and Fort Hood and Fort Bliss in Texas. Army officials also were taking a special look at problems at Fort Lewis in Washington state. <More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,133601,00.html>

THE PENTAGON'S CHRONIC NEGLECT OF IRAQ VETS

Mark Benjamin - Salon - Apr. 25, 2007

Military officials knew long ago about the failure to take care of America's war wounded at Walter Reed hospital.

When the Walter Reed scandal exploded in the media in February, bringing wide attention to inadequate care for veterans at the Army's flagship hospital, Defense Department officials expressed shock and claimed ignorance. Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., the assistant defense secretary who oversees military medicine, declared at a press conference on Feb. 21: "This news caught me -- as it did many other people -- completely by surprise."

But Salon has learned that the Defense Department had been conducting monthly focus group discussions with soldiers treated at Walter Reed since before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had even begun, and that it continued to do so as wounded veterans of those conflicts arrived at the facility. <More at: www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/04/25/walter_reed_groups/print.html>

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PUTS TROOPS AT RISK

Associated Press - May 04, 2007

WASHINGTON - The military is putting already-strained troops at greater risk of mental health problems because of repeated deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, a Pentagon panel said Thursday in warning of an overburdened health system.

Issuing an urgent warning, the Defense Department's Task Force on Mental Health chaired by Navy Surgeon General Donald Arthur said more than one-third of troops and veterans currently suffer from problems such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. ... The task force found 38 percent of Soldiers and 31 percent of Marines report psychological concerns

such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder after returning from deployment. Among members of the National Guard, the figure is much higher - 49 percent - with numbers expected to grow because of repeated deployments.
<More at: www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,134577,00.html>

GAY SAILOR CALLED BACK TO ACTIVE DUTY

Stars and Stripes - Joseph Giordano - May 08, 2007

On his wedding night in July 2004, then-Petty Officer 3rd Class Jason Knight finally accepted a truth he had fought against for years: he was gay.

Almost immediately, he moved to get his marriage annulled. He apologized to the woman he'd married. And when it came time to explain his changing circumstances to the Navy, he left nothing out. Under the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, he was quickly discharged from the service.

But now — whether through a clerical oversight or what some claim is an unwritten change in policy to keep more gay servicemembers in the ranks at a time of war — Jason Knight is back on active duty.

<More at: www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=53187&archive=true>

GI BILL FAILS VETS

Terry J. Allen - April 20, 2007

Soldiers returning from Iraq aren't receiving their education stipends until it's too late

... Many veterans who applied under the 1984 Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) say they faced black-hole bureaucracy and college costs that far exceeded benefits.

"I was so disgusted by how hard it was to get my college benefits, I just gave up," says Howard about his first experience enrolling in the University of Vermont (UVM), a relatively affluent state/private school in picturesque and progressive Burlington. "I volunteered for the Marines, served in Iraq and I appreciate the pat on the back and being called hero, but the military sells itself on money for college; it is the major recruitment tool. This is supposedly why I sold my soul to the devil."

Because many colleges require payment upfront, and benefit checks from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) typically arrive months after the semester begins, veterans often have to pony up thousands of dollars in tuition, fees and living expenses to enter school. Already stressed, they may have to choose between going into debt, missing semesters, or exchanging college dreams for low-wage work to support themselves and their families. <More at: www.inthesetimes.com/article/3134/qi_bill_fails_vets/>

HUMVEE DOORS TRAPPING TROOPS

Tom Vanden Brook - USA Today - May 8, 2007

Kits to fix the problem were included in vetoed bill

The Army is fixing the doors of every armored Humvee in combat in Iraq because the doors can jam shut during an attack and trap soldiers inside, Pentagon records and interviews show. The door trouble, the latest in a series of problems with the Humvees since the Iraq war began, is an unintended consequence of the Pentagon's effort to add armor to protect troops from makeshift bombs.

<More at: www.armytimes.com/news/2007/05/gns_humvees_070507/>

CAN'T WE START PRESUMING SERVICE-CONNECTION AND SORT IT OUT LATER?

THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "HAVING ACCESS" AND "GETTING" MEDICAL CARE.

INJURED CONNECTICUT SOLDIER DENIED SERVICE BENEFITS

Southington, CT -- WTNH TV News

... it was not insurgents [Ryan] Riddle had to worry about on a hot summer night two years ago, it was a bullet from an M-16 carried by one of his own comrades.

"It felt like someone took a sledge hammer to my thigh, I couldn't even stand," said Riddle. "I had to be walked to my vehicle and when I put up my leg the bleeding just started and it wouldn't stop."

It was an accidental shooting which left very real scars from shrapnel wounds to Riddle's wrist and legs. Doctors were unable to remove part of the bullet in his leg because it was too close to an artery. He filed for service related benefits for the gun shot wound, and doctors at the Newington Veterans hospital told him there is no proof of his injury.

Riddle said he was told doctors were not sure if he was shot on the streets of Hartford or in Iraq. Despite X-rays that clearly showed a bullet still lodged in Riddle's thigh the VA denied his claim saying "service records do not document a gunshot wound to the left thigh during service." Somehow, Riddle's service records had been lost. <More at: <http://wtnh.com/Global/story.asp?S=6462509>>

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MOBILIZED AS OF MAY 9, 2007

This week, the Army and Air Force announced an increase, while the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard numbers decreased. The net collective result is 1,063 more reservists mobilized than last week. At any given time, services may mobilize some units and individuals while demobilizing others, making it possible for these figures to either increase or decrease. Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 64,005; Navy Reserve, 5,859; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 5,886; Marine Corps Reserve, 5,356; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 302. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 81,408, including both units and individual augmentees.

A cumulative roster of all National Guard and Reserve personnel, who are currently mobilized, can be found at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2007/d20070509ngr.pdf>.

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL ADDS NAMES OF THREE SOLDIERS

Jennifer C. Kerr - Associated Press Published May 4, 2007

WASHINGTON - The name of Army Sgt. Richard M. Pruett is now etched into the glossy black granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial - nearly four decades after he was wounded during a combat mission in South Vietnam. Richard Pruett, who was from Sherman, Texas, died in 2005 from complications related to wounds received during the war.

Also joining those honored on the wall are Navy Fireman Apprentice Joseph Gerald Krywicki of Holton and Army Spc. Wesley Alvin Stiverson of Monticello, Ill. Krywicki was killed in 1966 in Vietnam when a member of his unit accidentally discharged his rifle. The Navy initially declined to add Krywicki's name to the memorial because he died not in combat but in a "friendly fire" incident. Stiverson sustained fragmentation wounds in 1971 when his base camp came under fire in Vietnam. The Pentagon determined that his death in 2005 was directly related to those wounds.

<More at: <http://www.lsj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070504/NEWS01/705040329/1001/news>>

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2007

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	3,351
WOUNDED US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 4/23]	24,764
OTHER CASUALTIES [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 4/23]	≥32,544
KILLED UK	148
KILLED OTHER COALITION	125
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	819
**KILLED CONTRACTORS [LAST DoD UPDATE 3/31]	678
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 46,529
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 69,106[LANCET-753,209]
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 400,000+[LANCET- 1,335,776]

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US	381
*OTHER CASUALTIES US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 3/24]	6,334
KILLED COALITION	182
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	669
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (JULY 2004)	32,034

NOTE: SOME NUMBERS DO NOT CHANGE BETWEEN ISSUES BECAUSE UPDATED FIGURES ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT PRESS TIME

* This entry has been changed to "Non-mortal casualties" which includes wounded, non-hostile casualties, and diseased where medical air transport was required. To see detailed demographic data on the casualties go to <http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>

** Includes 280 additional contractor casualties reported in international press but not in US official figures

AFTERTHOUGHTS

AN APPALLING POLL

Military.com close window

THE MUSTER

MILITARY.COM'S DAILY POLL

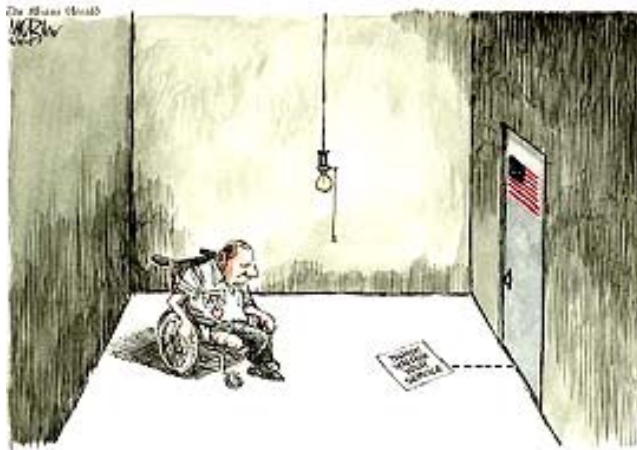
Created: Monday, May 07, 2007 ADVERTISEMENT

Do you think torturing the enemy is acceptable if American lives hang in the balance?

Yes	78%
No	22%

This poll is not scientific and reflects the opinions of only those Internet users who have chosen to participate.

Related Pages:
[Petraeus Alarmed by Ethics Report](#)
[Discussion Boards](#) | [Archive](#)



NOTICE

If at any time you cannot open a link in this newsletter to an article or web page that interests you, please let me know at scook@vuft; I keep a copy of most of the full articles, or can research an alternative route to the information. [Ed.]

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EDITOR'S NOTE: I have been asked what guides my selection of articles. In general, I try to stick with articles that deal exclusively with our target group: serving military, veterans, retirees, and their families. I also favor articles that deal with the effect of Legislative or Executive inaction or bad actions that adversely affect our target group. I try not to pick those articles that have already been beaten to death in the regular press, but rather try to bring the reader articles that he or she might not run across in another medium. While we are non-partisan, I do not believe articles critical of government actions to be partisan as long as they are accurate and fair. Criticism, like dissent, is fair. Finally, I screen hundreds of articles for inclusions and for every article I include, I throw five or six away – good articles, but not as important as the ones selected.

I always appreciate contributions, whether it is opinion in Letter-to-the-Editor form, or articles that the reader believes would be good for our readership. Since I get a chance to vent once in awhile in these newsletters, I will certainly consider Op-Ed copy for inclusion. I always welcome reader comment or complaint. [Sandy Cook](#), Editor

ADD-ON ~ THERE ARE MORE OF THESE THAN EVER BEFORE

THE VIETNAM WAR WANNABE AND HIS/HER MOST USED LIE

The common lie told to friends (and particularly girlfriends and wives) by Vietnam War wannabes (a group that continues to outnumber actual in-country Vietnam War veterans by twenty to one [f1], is that they cannot produce a DD-214 or other military-issued documents confirming their (heroic/valorous) service in Vietnam because their military record files “remain classified” due to their “top secret” assignments in Vietnam.

Of course, those of us who actually served in Vietnam and held equal or higher than SECRET security clearances know well that security classifications were/are always on a need-to-know basis as well as sharply defined and limited to specific operations or assignments. And never, in any case, is/was a military 201 jacket (or individual personnel file) classified in full. But what many Americans don't know is that all Vietnam War records have been de-classified for over 13 years since 1994... and there is no, repeat not a single, Vietnam War incident, operation, mission, or military person who's activities remain classified since 10 November 1994.

A BRIEF HISTORY...

The Vietnam War de-classification process began on 19 June 1992 when presidential candidate William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton met with USSR Premier Boris Yeltsin at Blair House, Washington D.C. Working with Clinton advisors Hershel Gober (later SecVA) and Jerry Bowen (later UnderSecVA for Cemetery Affairs), Phill Coleman, Senior Librarian of The American War Library strongly advised candidate Clinton to obtain his national security and foreign relations credentials by meeting with foreign heads of state. In one aspect this advice materialized in the unscheduled 19 June meeting that preceded Premier Yeltsin's first meeting with then president George H.W. Bush that occurred much later.

Readers should recall that at this time in 1992 there were no formal relations between the United States and the Communist-led government in Vietnam, nor since the end of World War II were there any formal discussions between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. on the hundreds of thousands of Americans unaccounted for from that war which were reported to have ended up in the Soviet Union servicing the Soviet defense industry.

In his meeting with Premier Yeltsin, Candidate Clinton convinced Yeltsin to de-classify and open up Soviet WW2 archives and intelligence files to assist the U.S. in resolving the fates of our countless WW2 MIA's. Yeltsin not only unhesitatingly agreed, he provided Candidate Clinton with access information and contacts in the U.S.S.R. to assist in information recovery.

Two years later, as Mr. Coleman continued to serve as military and veteran advisor to the Clinton Administration for veteran and military affairs, (now as president) Mr. Clinton agreed to assist the American POW/MIA community and other veteran interests to also declassify all WW2, Korea and Vietnam War documents for the two-fold purpose of allowing greater research into missing American military personnel and clarifying the claimed military service of fraudulent individuals who falsely claimed to be war veterans or former POW's.

The result of this appeal produced Executive Order 12937 which ordered full and complete declassification of all WW2, Korea and Vietnam documents... to include individual personnel files of personnel whether living or deceased.

Henceforth, no active, former or self-alleged American military member can truthfully state that their (alleged) Vietnam War or other foreign war service is “classified”.

Should you or anyone you know encounter any individual who claims that he or she served in Vietnam but refuses to produce proof on the (false) basis that their military personnel file is “classified” you should inform the individual that his or her excuse is not only false but fraudulent and possibly punishable by fine or incarceration for impersonating a military medal recipient (under the Stolen Valor Act signed by George W. Bush, 2007).

Date-stamped References:

- Executive Order 12937 <http://www.fas.org/sgp/clinton/eo12937.html>
- POWs And Politics: From WW2 To Vietnam <http://www.kimsoft.com/korea/pow-ussr.htm>
- [f1] 2.7 (officially listed in the DeptDef “Official Vietnam War Service Index) to 3.1 million Americans served in Vietnam. As of this date, 17 April 2007, approx 985,000 survivors of the Vietnam War are estimated to be alive today. (Information on access to the Official Vietnam War Service Index of Vietnam War Participants is located here: <http://www.amervets.com/library.htm>)
- Otis Willie (Ret.) Military News and Information Editor (<http://www.13105320634.com>)
The American War Library, Est. 1988 (<http://www.amervets.com>) 16907 Brighton Avenue Gardena CA 90247 1-310-532-0634
- Military and Vet Info-Exchange/Discussion Groups <http://members.aol.com/warlibrary/share.htm>