

# SOUND OFF!



VOL. III, NO 20

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

*"VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER"*

10 JUNE 2008

## FIRST CALL – NOTES FROM THE FRONT

### THE LION DOESN'T SLEEP TONIGHT!

"Class action lawsuit" sounds really boring, doesn't it? Sounds sort of stuffy and uninteresting. Even the detail – "This is a suit for performance not for monetary damages." – sounds deadly dull.

But if you understand it and see where it is going it is really the lion's roar!

Let me steal from two of my favorites, where with apologies I substitute veteran for "in my profession" and "woman", respectively and respectfully, in the originals:

"I am impelled, not to squeak like a grateful and apologetic mouse, but to roar like a lion out of pride as a veteran."

John Steinbeck

"I am veteran, hear me roar, in numbers too big to ignore, and I know too much to go back and pretend."

Helen Reddy

For 233 years since the first organized armed force began to serve the almost-United Colonies the soldier, sailor, or airman has been the essential hero when times were grim, and the inconvenient bad memory when troubles passed. Love the soldier – ignore the veteran has been this nation's pattern.

There was an exception. For about ten years after World War II our world was a little different. The contribution of veterans had been so universally recognized that it could not be ignored forever; but soon the nation reverted to its usual common disregard.

Don't get me wrong! We were always remembered when it was convenient – when we were needed to support a political campaign, or a high-sounding piece of legislation, we were remembered alright – for the twenty minutes or so that our memory was necessary to prove some official's patriotism, or some coward's valor.

Today's model is worse! Today's warriors are forgotten or ignored while the fighting is still going on! Just another fiscal and societal inconvenience, like the poor, teenage mothers, and abandoned cars.

If the odds were just even, all of this might just be OK. If every veteran were given a fighting chance against the system, all might be better. But the system protects itself in the best way that it knows how – through stacking the odds overwhelmingly in its own favor.

The DVA writes the rules, and they write them so that each of us has to face the system alone – one veteran at a time – unprotected, unrepresented, alone against an incomprehensible system. And it has

worked because we have mostly been silent. "Real men don't cry" gets converted to "Tough vets don't complain." How convenient!

Our lawsuit has said, "Enough!"

Like Howard Beale, Peter Finch's character in "Network", we are saying, "We're mad as hell and we're not going to take it anymore!"

While this lawsuit deals specifically with the provision of mental health services, it certainly promises to be far more effective than the millions of letters which have been written already with little response. This lawsuit promises to change how federal departments are required to perform in response to the law.

This suit is our collective roar.

We will not only take it as far as it needs to go – to the Supremes if necessary – but we also are going to keep on coming on every front.

We are not going to be satisfied with the tweak here and a band-aid there. We praise those vets organizations who get invited to testify before Congress and who help try to patch the mess that is current legislation, but we want to go to the source. We want the DVA, DoD, and the Attorney General of the United States to know that the courts say that you must provide the care that Congress has directed in the law, and you must do it in a timely and meaningful way.

We are not going to be ignored any more.

We did not ignore you, America, when you called on us. We went while you stayed home. For all of our history we have served while you mostly played.

Listen to our roar, Congress!

24 million veterans want you to know that you are being held accountable. 24 million veterans; another 50 million immediate family members, widows and orphans; at least two additional family members who are not VA-eligible but who are influenced by each veteran want you to know that we vote. 125 million people directly involved or closely associated, most of whom are of voting age.

"All through the night, like the tumult of a river when it races between the cliffs of a canyon, in my sleep I could hear the steady roar of the passing army."

Richard Harding Davis

"In the jungle, the mighty jungle the lion awakes tonight!"

Listen to our roar, America!

Listen! [Ed.]

## SPECIAL APPEAL

As our litigation and legislative actions expand rapidly, the expenses to VUFT are likewise mounting rapidly. We don't charge dues, as others do. We don't beat you over the head every month, as they mostly do, with mailings demanding that you do your patriotic duty and send them bucks.

What we will do is come to you if and when – and only when – the need is truly there. Well gang, the need is truly there.

We are sending witnesses to court hearings, to give testimony before legislatures (California now, and many other states to come). We provide a website and this newsletter – in hard copy form to those veterans among us who do not have the internet – and we cover the cost of printing and mailing those twice each month. We mail out memberships letters and cards each month and now have sent out nearly 1,000. We attend meetings where our testimony or other contribution can make a difference for veterans, whether it is in education, medical care, in favor of or opposed to legislation of interest, or even in the political arena where we defend veterans issues without taking a partisan stand.

We need your help now to meet these expenses. Please pitch in at <http://www.vuft.org/donate.html> where you can donate by PayPal or Credit Card. Any amount will help.

## REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS – CALLS TO ACTION

### NEED LEGAL HELP IN AN APPEAL TO THE DVA?

Try these two websites: Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program [www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm](http://www.vetsprobono.org/index.htm). United States Court of appeals for Veterans Claims "Public List of Practitioners" are members of the court's bar [www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/](http://www.vetapp.gov/practitioners/)

### 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!

## ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

**THE FIGHT CONTINUES!** The [lawsuit](#) that we have filed along with Veterans for Common Sense against the Veterans' Administration had reached the end of its trial phase but there is a new twist. In May, [a VA e-mail surfaced](#) where a PTSD clinic manager discouraged diagnosing veterans with PTSD due to staffing and budget constraints. She advised VA psychiatrists and psychologists to improperly diagnose veterans with Adjustment Disorder, and this might prevent veterans from receiving VA healthcare and disability benefits. Judge Samuel Conti, who is presiding over our lawsuit against VA, has [ordered VA into court today to explain the e-mail](#). We believe that the VA misled the court by failing to release this e-mail during the trial. In his order, Judge Conti wrote, "...the e-mail raises potentially serious questions...."

Here is a link to the legal [documents](#) on the lawsuit.

More articles available at:

New York Times: [www.nytimes.com/2008/06/07/us/07brfs-001.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/07/us/07brfs-001.html)

Defenselink [www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=11968](http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=11968)

## AND THE VA SPINS AND SPINS

### VA: PTSD AND TBI "OVERBLOWN"; LIKE "FOOTBALL" INJURIES

Brandon Friedman - Anchorage Daily News - *May 27, 2008*

VA Secretary James Peake continued to show little respect for the service of America's newest veterans yesterday by dismissing concerns about the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) in troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Speaking alongside Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) in a remote Alaskan village, Peake first used the word "overblown" when discussing PTSD and TBI and then made a "football" comparison.

A Vietnam veteran in Bethel, John Guinn, told Stevens and Peake he was worried about what's going to happen to the village soldiers back from the Middle East. He said everyone is proud of them now. But what happens in a few years when these men,

highly trained in combat, can't find jobs, start drinking and going a little crazy, he asked. There aren't people in tiny villages trained to deal with mental health issues, he said.

"It's going to cause a commotion in their village," Guinn said. "I'm scared."

VA secretary Peake suggested some of the concern about post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury has been overblown. Many of the brain injuries are serious but some of them are akin to what anyone who played football in their youth might have suffered, Peake told Guinn.

Guinn wasn't entirely satisfied with the answers. He said it's a real issue for returning soldiers as well as their families, and he doesn't think job training is enough. <More at: [www.vetvoice.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=1342](http://www.vetvoice.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=1342)>

**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](#) "[Donate](#)" 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](mailto:rhandy@vuft.org) or the Vice Chair at [scook@vuft.org](mailto:scook@vuft.org). Watch for details at [www.vuft.org](http://www.vuft.org)

### **WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP**

VUFT is a no-fee organization. We must raise money to keep the effort going. Normal expenses have been borne out of the pockets of a very few board members, plus a few small donations over the two plus years of our existence. Although our legal defense in the current case is *pro bono*, we are incurring expenses in support of the case, to include travel expenses to attend the hearings and the trial. We also are incurring expenses in our effort to expand to all fifty states. Please consider [donating](#) whatever you can to VUFT

**All donations are tax deductible to the donor.**

### **MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS AND OTHERS**

*No letters this issue*

### **RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATORS**

#### **TOP VA MENTAL HEALTH OFFICIAL CONTRADICTS VA MANAGER AT SENATE HEARING, SAYS VA FACILITY IS USING IMPROPER DIAGNOSES FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Dr. Ira Katz tells Senator Murray he disagrees with suggestion made in e-mail to diagnose veterans with adjustment disorder rather than PTSD

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) questioned top Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) officials over a recent e-mail that discouraged VA employees from diagnosing veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The e-mail, which was written by VA manager Dr. Norma Perez, directed VA staff at a facility in Temple, Texas to diagnose "compensation-seeking veterans" with adjustment disorder, a diagnosis that has a lower disability payout than Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Dr. Perez appeared at the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing and was joined by Dr. Ira Katz, the VA's top mental health official. <More at: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=298748>>

#### **SENATE PASSES MENTAL HEALTH ACT**

This week the Senate passed the Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008 (S. 2162) by unanimous consent. The bill, introduced by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), improves treatment and expands research to address the rising cases of PTSD, substance abuse and suicides among soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. It would also extend support to family caregivers and low-income veterans in rural areas. <Bill at: [VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC. IS A NATIONAL, NON-PROFIT, PUBLIC SERVICE CORPORATION, INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA \[#C2766290\]. DONATIONS TO VUFT ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE TO THE DONOR PER IRC SECTION 501\(C\)\(3\), AND FOR CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS UNDER CA RTC 23701W.](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c110:3:./temp/~c110hlBRoy::></a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

## **VA MUST REGAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF VETERANS AND ENSURE APPROPRIATE DIAGNOSIS OF INVISIBLE WOUNDS, SAYS AKAKA**

Akaka holds hearing on systemic indifference to invisible wounds

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, held a hearing today on the state of mental health care within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Recent incidents indicate a possible trend of system-wide or systemic indifference to the invisible wounds of war. It is shameful, because veterans deserve better, and because it tarnishes the good work of the many VA mental health professionals who help veterans battle PTSD, depression, and other psychological wounds," said Akaka. "Whatever the reasoning behind the mistakes that were made, VA must work to regain the confidence of veterans who now question whether VA is a friend or enemy."

<More at: [www.vawatchdog.org/08/scva08/scva060408-2.htm](http://www.vawatchdog.org/08/scva08/scva060408-2.htm)>

## **TRICARE BENEFICIARIES ABOUT TO BE TURNED AWAY?**

June 02, 2008

Barring congressional action, the Medicare payment rate to physicians will be reduced by 10.6% in July of 2008. This directly affects TRICARE beneficiaries because TRICARE payment rate is based upon Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) update formula. This means that doctors will be forced to accept less money for medical procedures. In the past these reductions have caused doctors to turn away TRICARE patients and will likely do so again if the reduced payment rates are not blocked.

This issue will adversely affect survivors, retirees, members of the active-duty, Guard and reserve and their families, especially those living far from military installations. There are already some doctors in remote areas who refuse to see new TRICARE patients. Without congressional action to ensure these cuts don't take effect, more doctors may chose to turn TRICARE beneficiaries away.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., has submitted her bill, S. 2785, otherwise known as the Save Medicare Act of 2008. It has been sitting in the Finance Committee since 13 March 2008. The Save Medicare Act would stop the Medicare physician payment cuts for 18 months and will not increase the cost of permanently fixing the fatally flawed Medicare physician payment system. The 18 month timeframe will inject some stability into the system for seniors and physicians forced to make difficult practice decisions because of planned payment cuts. The timeframe will also give Congress time to begin working on a long-term solution to the broken payment system without having to take action to stop the cuts twice in one year.

**Tell your Senators to support S.2785**

The most critical activity you can undertake is to call or email your Senators. Urge them to co-sponsor S. 2785. Go to <http://capwiz.com/ama/issues/alert/?alertid=11168896>, enter your ZIP, and be connected to your Senator by email.

**READ THIS AND THEN CALL YOUR SENATORS ABOUT THESE TWO AS WELL**

## **INVESTING IN MILITARY SPOUSES**

Carissa Picard - May 11, 2008

... there are several reasons to invest in military spouses: a) it improves retention and morale; b) it benefits the servicemember and the military family overall; and c) it is the right thing to do. So what is Congress looking to do for military spouses?

Senators McCaskill (MO) and Corker (TN) introduced the Military Spouse Education and Employment Act of 2008 (S2599) in February. S2599 would provide employers with tax credits for employing spouses of active duty servicemembers (as well as activated National Guardsmen or Reservists), extend the federal government hiring preference for veterans to active duty spouses, and allow servicemembers to transfer any unused portions of their GI Bill to a spouse or child if they re-enlist for a third term. This bill has no additional co-sponsors and has been sitting in the Senate Committee on Finance since February. I find this disheartening because military spouses face higher incidences of underemployment and unemployment than their civilian counterparts as a result of their marital status.

Senator Hutchinson of Texas introduced the Montgomery GI Bill Educational Assistance Transferability Act (S.2575) at the end of January. Currently, up to 18 months of the MGIB can be transferred to a spouse or child if the servicemember is deemed to have a "critical skill" and if he or she re-enlists. S2575, however, would allow any servicemember eligible to use the MGIB to transfer their educational benefits to a spouse or child immediately. This bill has fared better than S2599 with 24 co-sponsors although it is also sitting in committee (the Armed Services committee).

None of the presidential candidates have signed on to either bill.

<More at: <http://electioncenter.military.com/2008/05/investing-in-mi.html>>

## **THIS WOULD BE NICE FOR SOME OF US, BUT WHY DON'T THEY WORK ON THE HARD STUFF INSTEAD?**

### **RETROACTIVE COMBAT ACTION BADGES PUSHED**

Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite, R-Fla., recently introduced legislation to retroactively award the Army Combat Action Badge to those members of the U.S. Army who were engaged by the enemy from Dec. 7, 1941, to the present day.

<More at: [www.legion.org/whatsnew/publications/newsletter/story/?id=599](http://www.legion.org/whatsnew/publications/newsletter/story/?id=599)

For complete access to bills concerning veterans, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/110search.html> and type in the word "veteran"

### **RETREAT – NEWS**

#### **GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING SOARS 45 PCT IN 10 YEARS**

Francis Kohn - 9 June 2008

World military spending grew 45 percent in the past decade, with the United States accounting for nearly half of all expenditure, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said Monday. Military spending grew six percent last year alone, according to SIPRI's annual report.

In 2007, 1,339 billion dollars (851 billion Euros) was spent on arms and other military expenditure, corresponding to 2.5 percent of global gross domestic product, or GDP -- or \$202 for each of the world's 6.6 billion people. The United States spends by far the most towards military aims, dishing out 547 billion dollars last year (\$1,823/person), or 45 percent of global expenditure. <More at: <http://news.my.msn.com/topstories/article.aspx?cp-documentid=1442902>>

#### **GAO FAULTS TRAINING FOR VA CLAIMS PROCESSORS**

Kelly Kennedy - Staff writer - May 28, 2008

Although the Veterans Affairs Department has added thousands of staff to help process disability claims, a new study finds those new employees face no consequences if they don't attend mandatory training. Because the caseload is so heavy, instructors aren't always available to provide on-the-job training for new employees.

<More at: [www.armytimes.com/news/2008/05/military\\_va\\_training\\_052708w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/05/military_va_training_052708w/)>

#### **SHADES OF THE MORO REBELLION AND THE CALL FOR THE MODEL 1911 PISTOL**

##### **ARMY REVIEWING COMPLAINTS OVER BULLETS**

Associated Press - May 30, 2008

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. - The military is reviewing Soldiers' complaints that their standard ammunition isn't powerful enough for the type of fighting required in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army's highest-ranking officer said Thursday. But Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the Army chief of staff, said it was too soon to say whether the Pentagon will switch. Current and former Soldiers interviewed by The Associated Press said the military's M855 rifle rounds are not powerful enough for close-in fighting in cities and towns in Iraq and Afghanistan. ... The M855 rounds were designed decades ago to puncture the steel helmets of Soviet soldiers from hundreds of yards away. Some soldiers said that they are not large enough to stop an enemy immediately in close quarters.

<More at: [www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24880259/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24880259/)>

##### **THE PUSH FOR A DEEPER DEPLOYMENT POOL**

Gina Cavallaro - Staff writer - Jun 9, 2008

In the Army's ongoing push to provide fresh troops for the war zone and give a break to repeat deployers, personnel officials are targeting not only soldiers who have never gone, but also those whose combat tours were brief or long ago. Now experts are tracking every soldier's deployment record, zeroing in on a formula that considers frequency, length and total months in a combat zone, as well as skills, experience and availability. <More at: [www.armytimes.com/news/2008/06/army\\_deployequity\\_060708w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/06/army_deployequity_060708w/)>

##### **REVEALED: SECRET PLAN TO KEEP IRAQ UNDER US CONTROL**

Patrick Cockburn - The Independent UK - 05 June 2008

A secret deal being negotiated in Baghdad would perpetuate the American military occupation of Iraq indefinitely, regardless of the outcome of the US presidential election in November. The terms of the impending deal, details of which have been leaked to The Independent, are likely to have an explosive political effect in Iraq. Iraqi officials fear that the accord, under which US troops would occupy permanent bases, conduct military operations, arrest Iraqis and enjoy immunity from Iraqi law, will destabilize Iraq's position in the Middle East and lay the basis for unending conflict in their country.

<More at: [www.truthout.org/article/revealed-secret-plan-keep-iraq-under-us-control](http://www.truthout.org/article/revealed-secret-plan-keep-iraq-under-us-control)>

## **IRAQ LAWMAKERS WANT US FORCES OUT AS PART OF DEAL**

Reuters - 04 June 2008

Washington - A majority of the Iraqi parliament has written to Congress rejecting a long-term security deal with Washington if it is not linked to a requirement that U.S. forces leave, a U.S. lawmaker said on Wednesday.

"The majority of Iraqi representatives strongly reject any military-security, economic, commercial, agricultural, investment or political agreement with the United States that is not linked to clear mechanisms that obligate the occupying American military forces to fully withdraw from Iraq," the letter to the leaders of Congress said.

<More at: [www.truthout.org/article/iraq-lawmakers-want-us-forces-out-part-deal](http://www.truthout.org/article/iraq-lawmakers-want-us-forces-out-part-deal)>

## **NOW A FOX WATCHES THE OTHER FOX WHO IS RAIDING THE HENHOUSE**

### **DOD CONTRACTS OUT CONTRACTOR OVERSIGHT**

Maya Schenwar - truthout Report - 04 June 2008

The Department of Defense (DOD) now employs contractors to keep contractors in check in Iraq, under a new framework for war industry management solidified last month. In April, the Pentagon split its largest military contract in Iraq - formerly belonging to the Houston-based corporation KBR, Inc. - among companies Fluor and DynCorp, in addition to KBR. A fourth company, the British-American service provider Serco, is responsible for managing and overseeing the other three, according to its contract, signed last year and now in effect. <More at: [www.truthout.org/article/dod-contracts-out-contractor-oversight](http://www.truthout.org/article/dod-contracts-out-contractor-oversight)>

## **TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Notes</u>
6/11	1100 - 1400	Omni San Antonio Hotel 9821 Colonnade Blvd, San Antonio, TX	Career Fair		210.691.8888
6/12	1000 - 1700	Morocco Shrine Auditorium 3800 St. John's Bluff Road, Jacksonville, FL	Career Expo		<a href="#">Register</a>
6/12-15		The New Gate Mall Ogden, UT	Wall That Heals	VFW Post 1481	
6/13		Worcester, MA	Resource Fair	<a href="#">Joe Boylan</a>	508-791-0956
6/14	1300-1500	Elks Club, Garden Grove, CA	Flag Day Celebration [Profits to Fisher House]	<a href="#">67<sup>th</sup> Flag Day Committee</a>	<a href="#">G Giacoppe</a>
6/16	1100-1400	Holiday Inn - BWI International Airport 890 Elkridge Landing Rd, Linthicum, MD	Baltimore Military Career Fair		410-859-8400
6/19-22		Faith Bible Chapel, 6210 Ward Road Arvada, CO	Wall That Heals	Faith Bible Chapel International	
6/20-22		Westin Washington DC City Center 1400 M Street, NW, Washington, DC	National Summit on Women's Veterans Issues	DVA Center for Women Veterans	
6/24	1100-1400	Radisson Martinique On Broadway Hotel 49 West 32nd Street, New York, NY	New York Military Career Fair		212-736-3800
6/24	1100-1400	Crowne Plaza 4100 Presidential Blvd, Philadelphia, PA	Philadelphia Military Career Fair		215-477-0200
6/26	1000-1600	Holiday Inn Seattle / SeaTac Int'l Airport 17338 International Blvd, Seattle, WA	Pacific Regional Career Event		<a href="#">Register</a>
6/27-29		Ferndale, CA	Standown	Kim Hall	707-826-6191

**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**

### **A BRIEF EXTRACT FROM A GREAT INTERVIEW -CLICK AND READ IT ALL!**

#### **LIKE WANDERING GHOSTS**

David Kupfer -Sun Magazine - June 2008

#### **Edward Tick On How The U.S. Fails Its Returning Soldiers**

"...PTSD is presently classified as a "stress and anxiety disorder." But "stress and anxiety" does not begin to describe the emotions people experience during warfare. We don't really have words for it. Also ptsd classifies veterans as "disabled" by how far they are from the civilian norm. But veterans are not disabled civilians. They are war-wounded soldiers and have different

values and expectations about life. When we require that they get on with “business as usual” now that they are home, we put the blame on them for having broken down in the first place, and we pressure them to take sole responsibility for their healing. But everyone who participates in a war is changed. No one comes through unscathed.

My best understanding of what we call “ptsd” is that it is an identity disorder and soul wound that has its source in moral trauma. It is also a social disorder arising from the broken relationship between our society and its veterans. The standard clinical viewpoint on ptsd is that there can be management and control of symptoms and readjustment to life, but no healing. I believe, though, that if a veteran makes the difficult inner pilgrimage to discover the sources of the suffering, and works hard to give meaning to the wounding, and finds ways to reconcile and forgive, then healing is possible. I have seen a number of veterans fully heal their ptsd. They have satisfying lives, marriages, and jobs. They are of service to their communities. And they sleep like babies. ...”  
<More at: [www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/390/like\\_wandering\\_ghosts](http://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/390/like_wandering_ghosts)>

### **WHEN WOUNDED VETS COME HOME**

Barry Yeoman – AARP Magazine - July & August 2008

As more troops than ever are surviving the fearsome injuries of war, parents are increasingly being thrust into the role of long-term caregivers <More at: [www.aarpmagazine.org/family/when\\_wounded\\_vets\\_come\\_home.html](http://www.aarpmagazine.org/family/when_wounded_vets_come_home.html)>

### **HELP FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING ORPHANS OF WAR**

Christopher J. Gearon - AARP - May 2008

Grandparents and other relatives caring for the children of deployed soldiers get some needed financial security July 1 when the U.S. military will allow soldiers to earmark a one-time, \$100,000 payment to non-spousal caregivers in the event they are killed while serving the country. The change spells relief to thousands of single parents who serve in the military and to those left to raise the soldiers' children.. <More at: [www.aarp.org/family/caregiving/articles/iraq\\_vets\\_benefits\\_change.html](http://www.aarp.org/family/caregiving/articles/iraq_vets_benefits_change.html)>

### **FORECLOSURES IN MILITARY TOWNS SURGE AT FOUR TIMES U.S. RATE**

Kathleen M. Howley - Bloomberg - May 27

... In the midst of the worst surge in mortgage defaults in seven decades, foreclosures in U.S. towns where soldiers live are increasing at a pace almost four times the national average, according to data compiled by research firm RealtyTrac Inc. in Irvine, California.

... Foreclosure filings in 10 towns and cities within 10 miles of military facilities, including Norfolk, Virginia, home of the Navy's largest base, rose by an average 217 percent from January through April from a year earlier. Nationally, the rate was 59 percent in the same period, ... The biggest surge was in Columbia, South Carolina, home to Fort Jackson, where the Army trains recruits for combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. Properties in some stage of foreclosure rose 492 percent from a year earlier, RealtyTrac said. The second-biggest increase was 414 percent in Woodbridge, Virginia, next to the Marine Corps Base Quantico. Foreclosure filings tripled in the cities surrounding Norfolk Naval Base and the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base near Oceanside. Havelock, North Carolina, site of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, saw foreclosures more than double.

<More at: [www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&sid=aw2TMDLnewsU&refer=home](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&sid=aw2TMDLnewsU&refer=home)>

### **VA, CONGRESS ASSIST VETERANS IN MORTGAGE MESS**

Tom Philpott - Special to Stars and Stripes - June 07, 2008

With thousands of servicemembers and veterans having lost homes or facing foreclosure as the mortgage crisis continues, lawmakers are pushing legislation to raise VA loan ceilings, lower VA funding fees and expand the VA's ability to help veterans to refinance loans they can't afford. The Department of Veterans Affairs, meanwhile, is encouraging military members, veterans and surviving widows with at-risk loans to seek advice from VA loan counselors even if their loans are not VA-guaranteed.

<More at: [www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=62669&archive=true](http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=62669&archive=true)>

## **FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY – “YOU’RE DOING A GREAT JOB, VA AND ALL” VETS TAKING PTSD DRUGS DIE IN SLEEP ~ WEST VIRGINIA**

Julie Robinson - Staff writer - May 24, 2008

A Putnam County veteran who was taking medication prescribed for post-traumatic stress disorder died in his sleep earlier this month, in circumstances similar to the deaths of three other area veterans earlier this year. <More at: <http://wvgazette.com/News/200805230640>>

## **COUNTY IN CALIFORNIA STRUGGLES TO FILL VETERANS' NEEDS**

Sarah Frier - San Mateo County Times - Jun 02, 2008

Two years after returning from duty in Iraq, San Mateo County [California] resident Michael Lufors says he has yet to see a county veteran service officer for help in dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder.

It's not for lack of trying, Lufors said, noting he has called the county office four times and visited once but nobody was ever available. <More at: [www.veteransforcommonsense.org/articleid/10272](http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/articleid/10272)>

## **TASK FORCE FORMED TO COMBAT PROBLEMS AT VETERAN HOME ~ ARIZONA**

Amanda J. Crawford - The Arizona Republic - Jun. 8, 2008

The state has formed a multi-agency task force to address systemic problems at the Arizona State Veteran Home. The state-run nursing home came under fire last month for sending home a 67-year-old diabetic man recovering from brain surgery without any home-health services or medications. The state health department declared that residents in the home were in "immediate jeopardy" - the second time in about 15 months. <More at: [www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0608B1-update0608.html](http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0608B1-update0608.html)>

## **IT'S AMAZING WHAT A LITTLE LAWSUIT CAN DO, ISN'T IT?**

Many are familiar with the concept in logic of "*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*", which is to say, "After that, therefore because of that." It is often a spurious argument since the mere fact of any event happening after another in time does not necessarily make it happen as a result of the former event. It is most often used by the uninvolved to take credit for some action that is only remotely related to whatever they are doing themselves. The simplest example: "I washed my car, therefore it rained."

In this case, however, we believe that we can rightly take credit for the actions reported in the following article and elsewhere throughout this and immediately previous issues. Currently the VA seems to be doing much in pursuit of their congressionally mandated activities. Unfortunately all of this kerfuffle on their part has been happening mostly since we took them to court and they tried and were unsuccessful in getting us thrown out.

I think that we have finally found a good example of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, one that is true and makes sense.

## **VA BEGINS NEXT PHASE OF COMBAT VET OUTREACH**

May 30, 2008

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it has completed making calls to veterans potentially identified as being ill or injured from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF-OIF), and will immediately begin targeting over 500,000 OEF-OIF veterans who have been discharged from active duty but have not contacted VA for health care. <More at: [www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1509](http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1509)>

## **FEMALE SOLDIERS KNOW: SEXUAL ASSAULT CAN LEAD TO PTSD**

Barbara Bachmeier – Anchorage Daily News - 05/26/08

Last month I attended a presentation on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, at the Anchorage Veterans Administration Clinic. PowerPoint slides provided a definition of PTSD and common causes of this disorder: IEDs, seeing the bodies of dead children, experiencing serious bodily injuries, and others. I asked the briefer, a VA psychiatrist, whether the VA also considered Military Sexual Trauma an experience that can lead to PTSD. He replied "No." I looked at the physician with amazement. Many peer-reviewed journal articles assert that Military Sexual Trauma, or MST, is especially associated with PTSD. That the Veterans Administration continues to disassociate MST with PTSD is remarkable. <More at: [www.adn.com/opinion/story/417835.html](http://www.adn.com/opinion/story/417835.html)>

## **TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS**

### **NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MOBILIZED AS OF JUNE 4, 2008**

This week the Army, Navy and Marine Corps announced a decrease, while the Air Force and Coast Guard announced an increase. The net collective result is 571 fewer 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. The total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 76,438; Navy Reserve, 4,463; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 8,455; Marine Corps Reserve, 9,344; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 459. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel who have been mobilized to 99,159, 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://preview.defenselink.mil/news/Jun2008/d20080604nqr.pdf>.



## OIF/OEF – HACK DATE SATURDAY 10 JUNE 2008

**NOTE: STATISTICS FOR WOUNDED ARE GETTING SHAKIER - DoD REVISES NUMBERS – DROPS NON-HOSTILE “OTHER”**

### OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (1,878 DAYS)

KILLED US	4,094
WOUNDED US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 5/31]	30,182
OTHER US CASUALTIES [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 4/5]	≥38,631
DIED OF SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS [LAST DoD UPDATE 3/1]	145
MISSING OR CAPTURED US	3
KILLED UK	176
KILLED OTHER COALITION	137
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	1,819
**KILLED CONTRACTORS [LAST DoD UPDATE 6/30/07]	1,001
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 47,555
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 92,004
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIVILIANS	≥ 400K – 1.2M
IRAQ REFUGEES INTERNAL/EXTERNAL [9/27/07]	2.1M/2.5M

### OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2,407 DAYS)

KILLED US	517
OTHER CASUALTIES US [EST. LAST DoD UPDATE 10/2007]	1,994
KILLED COALITION	319
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION (12/2/2007)	1,472
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,619
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS (7/2004)	≥ 3,525
WOUNDED AFGHANI MIL/CIVILIANS (7/2004)	32,034
AFGHAN REFUGEES INTERNAL/EXTERNAL	1.75M/4.8M
COST OF IRAQ WAR TO DATE	\$527,165,379,077

*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 ~ MISCELLANEOUS AND OTHER STUFF

### A VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

#### THE MARINE CORPS NEEDS YOU

"The Marine Corps is concerned about your health. We encourage all former Marines, family members and civilian employees who resided or worked aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune between 1957 and 1987 to register with the Marine Corps for information regarding past water quality." Register at <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clsurvey/>

#### PICTURES YOU NEED TO SEE

The Rocky Mountain News has done some remarkable journalism on the effect of the war on those who stay at home. Please take the time to view these two wonderful examples of their photo-journalism.

*Final Salute* - by photographer Todd Heisler and reporter Jim Sheeler

[www.rockymountainnews.com/special-reports/final-salute/](http://www.rockymountainnews.com/special-reports/final-salute/)

also by Todd and Jim, *Wake for an Indian Warrior*

[www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN\\_15\\_4405009,00.html](http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN_15_4405009,00.html)

The Los Angeles Times did a incisive and informative photo series which is available here:

*The Lifeline*

[www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/wounded/la-na-wounded-series.0,936394.special](http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/wounded/la-na-wounded-series.0,936394.special)

also, *Eye of the Storm*

[www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/arts/la-ca-0518-iraq-pg,0,2764252.photogallery?index=1](http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/arts/la-ca-0518-iraq-pg,0,2764252.photogallery?index=1)

For a view of the effect on Iraqi civilians you can go to Dahr Jamail's site at:

[http://dahramailiraq.com/gallery/albums.php?set\\_albumListPage=1](http://dahramailiraq.com/gallery/albums.php?set_albumListPage=1)

From Military Press, a great PowerPoint show:

[www.vaservices.org/us/photos/100GreatestMilitaryPhotographs.pps](http://www.vaservices.org/us/photos/100GreatestMilitaryPhotographs.pps)

## MORE PICTURES AND VIDEOS

Watch the AF Guard of Honor at Arlington in rain and wind last week honoring a fallen warrior – not a flinch. You'll be proud of them.

<http://www.ireport.com/docs/DOC-31270>

All around the nation, there are those who remember and remember well. Thanks.

Philadelphia's "Arlington"



Santa Monica's Arlington



## DISCOVER WHAT THE CANDIDATES SAY ABOUT VETERANS

Senator Barack Obama's official veteran web page:

<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/veterans/>

Senator John McCain's official veteran web page:

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/9cb5d2aa-f237-464e-9cdf-a5ad32771b9f.htm>

“CHERRY” DOES IT AGAIN

*Empty Chair*

I got your pickup in the driveway  
I sure hope that you don't mind  
lately I've been using it for work  
the drivin' helps me to unwind  
  
I got a job down at the K-mart  
it was that or Johnsons mills  
I'm not gonna make a fortune  
but it helps some with the bills  
  
and the boys really miss you  
Sams too young to understand  
but Billy tells him it'll be alright  
you'd be proud of our little man  
  
I know if anyone could hear me  
they'd think I was off my head  
but we always talked like this  
after we'd got the kids to bed  
  
honey I'm trying to be strong  
but it gets harder every day  
please don't think bad of me  
about what I'm going to say  
  
God damn all the politicians  
and the lies they chose to tell  
God damn their phony war  
and I hope they burn in hell  
  
they're safe in their big houses  
*with* their lovin' families there  
but you're never comin' home  
and all I got's your empty chair



(cherry) <http://very-cherry.stumbleupon.com>

## 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](mailto: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