

# SOUND OFF!



BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

#58

*"VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER"*

8 JULY 2012

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## WERE YOU WITH MAX, JOHN, AND TAMMY?

Veterans United For Truth, Inc., is not a political organization, and what I am about to say is not targeted at any political party, nor is it meant to be in favor of or in opposition to any political candidate. What it is about is the veteran's place in national esteem, and how we veterans are duty bound to defend our fellow veterans, especially when others attack them.

Max Cleland, John Kerry, and Tammy Duckworth are not the only veterans to run for office, and they are not the only veterans who have been shamefully attacked by their fellow citizens, although they are undoubtedly the most famous. Other veterans of all parties over the years have suffered shameful calumny at the hands of their fellow citizens.

Fewer than 1% of American families have been directly affected by their country's latest wars. Fewer than 7% of us remain who have ever even served.

We all went for many different reasons. Some were drafted. Some enlisted to have a choice rather than get drafted directly into the combat arms. Some enlisted because we couldn't figure out what else to do with ourselves at that time in our lives (here I plead guilty). Some enlisted out of pure patriotism. Some enlisted because they wanted to fight for something bigger than themselves. Some even enlisted as a court-ordered alternative to jail time.

Nonetheless, and for whatever reason, we all served. Most who signed up sooner or later came to see their service as meaningful and extraordinary, particularly when compared to those who did not serve.

Not all who served were heroes; not all were wounded; not all got the public recognition they should have for their personal heroism or exceptional service. All served while others stayed home.

Those who stayed home never suffered wounds and never suffered the loss of friends in combat. Those who stayed home never suffered the extreme deprivation and the unrelenting fear of endless combat. Many who served also never suffered that fear, but they were there when they were needed by their nation, and doing what their nation asked of them, even if it was just standing and waiting. That is what is meant by "service".

Those who stayed home got on with their lives and by doing so got a head start on those who served. Most made no sacrifice whatever. They finished school earlier than those who served, they got jobs sooner, they got married sooner, they started families and businesses sooner, and, in the end, their whole lives were made socially and financially better—although I would say not richer—by not having made the sacrifice.

So now, when those who stayed home once again attack those who served, we have to ask ourselves a serious question. The question is not whether or not our service was important to the nation; we know that it was. The question is whether or not those who now attack us and our colleagues should be allowed to do so without penalty. They prove by their attacks that they are not worthy of our trust and certainly are not worthy of our service.

The worst attacks of all, of course, are when we veterans attack fellow veterans. Like or hate Max, John or Tammy politically, we veterans must unfailingly honor their service because only we can ever know what that service was like. When others won't defend our friends and fellows, we must.

You are veterans or the close relative of veterans. You are also citizens who have given more than others. Don't let that service pass lightly. Know your Congressperson and state representative. Follow how they vote on veterans' issues. Know about their service. Send them letters when they vote on valid veterans' issues—letters of praise when they support the issues, and letters of condemnation when they do not. This is all easy to do but very important. They have to hear to know.

Know the candidates. Know about their service too. If a candidate attacks a veteran stand up for the veteran! If a candidate makes light of military service, speak up! You earned the right, the candidate did not: in fact, you defended that right when he or she would not.

In short. You have earned the right to have your voices heard, so get cracking! Don't sit back and cluck your tongues and shake your heads. Lift up your heads and use your tongues to tell the 93% that this 7% will be heard!

And tell them that, as we defended the nation, we will always defend our brothers and sisters because that is what vets do.

**Always! [Ed.]**