

SOUND OFF!



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THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

25 AUGUST 2005

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

TIE A YELLOW RIBBON 'ROUND THE OLD BANK ACCOUNT

[A] Marine recruiter, Staff Sgt. Jason Rivera, ... went to an affluent suburb outside of Pittsburgh to follow up with a young man who had expressed interest in enlisting. He pulled up to a house with American flags displayed in the yard. The mother came to the door in an American flag T-shirt and openly declared her support for the troops.

But she made it clear that her support only went so far. "Military service isn't for our son," she told Rivera. "It isn't for our kind of people."

From Terry Neal's *Talking Points* in the Washington Post 8/22/05

THE \$200,000,000 THAT THE US ARMY IS SPENDING IN FY 2005 ON RECRUITING WOULD BUY A NEW SET OF BODY ARMOR FOR ALMOST EVERY US SOLDIER IN IRAQ (133,333 @ \$1,500 PER).

REVEILLE - WAKE-UP CALLS

IF I COULD TALK TO THE TROOPS

AN EDITORIAL

Perhaps the hardest conundrum in the current and past wars is the question of whether or not a protest hurts the troops. Very few would argue with the fact that the right to protest in general about anything is quintessentially American and democratic. Very few would argue that any question is beyond discussion.

But, when I raise my voice in protest over this particular war I am told, "Shut up! You are a traitor! Your protest hurts the troops. Your questioning the war questions their sacrifice, and says that they 'died in vain'". And the worst one of all, "You are walking on their graves."

How do I, a patriot both at heart and through demonstrable long service to my country, answer these charges? How do I act in the face of such an indictment?

The nut of the problem, of course, is that I cannot talk to the troops in these exchanges, I can only talk to their self-appointed 'defenders', often folks who believe that somehow patriotism is the blind following of the

Commander-in-chief's desires. These are most often folks who have no stake in the current game: no child or other loved one in or on their way to Iraq or Afghanistan; no service of their own; no allegiance except to some comic book idea of the Constitution and the nation.

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If I could talk to the troops I could tell them that I protest for them not against them.

If I could talk to the troops I could say that your promise to defend the nation is always matched by the President's promise not to send you except to defend the nation, and only when all else has failed; and that while you have kept your oath, the President and the Legislature have failed in theirs.

If I could talk to the troops, I could tell them that we went before you and in some cases, such as any theater in WW II, we knew that we were defending the country, and that our president had sent us there only because he had to; that Congress had deliberated the issue, and that the nation's representatives – our representatives -had

decided that they must declare the war that we were fighting.

If I could talk to the troops I could tell them that even in Korea, despite claims by some to the contrary, we were on the ground, we were attacked, we were defending ourselves, and our President knew why he had us there, even if Congress couldn't deliberate their way through the issue.

If I could talk to the troops I could tell them that many of us have been where they are now; that many of us never knew why we were in Viet Nam other than in service to our sworn oath, that few of us believed that if we didn't fight the Viet Cong and the NVA they would attack us in Lafayette Park, and most wondered why our President couldn't tell us the reason and why Congress wouldn't wrestle with it at all.

If I could talk to the troops I would tell them that they should never be sent into battle ill-armed and ill-trained as is happening month after month with unit upon unit in this conflict.

If I could talk to the troops I would tell them that their families deserve to be defended at home, and that their wives and children shouldn't have to travel hundreds of miles and wait days and weeks on end for medical and other family services, shouldn't have to wonder if their pay was going to arrive, and shouldn't have to suffer loss of family homes and businesses because of someone's secret plan.

If I could talk to the troops I could tell them that no person who valorously stands up and follows his oath and his leaders' orders by going into battle, and therein perishes, dies in vain; no one wounded doing his sworn duty is wounded in vain. But I would also tell them that such death or woundings are a further charge on the malfeasance of their leaders.

If I could talk to the troops I could tell them that nothing and no one ever trivializes their sacrifice in our eyes; their and our failed military and civilian leadership is all that trivializes their sacrifice in any sense.

If I could talk to the parents and loved ones of the troops I would ask them to stand with us as we stand with their dear sons and daughters.

If I could talk to the troops I unfortunately couldn't tell them why no one else is sacrificing when they are giving all.

If I could talk to the troops I could tell them that I revere their personal nobility while I deny the nobility of their leaders' cause.

If I could talk to the troops I know that they would understand and that many of them would agree.

If I could talk to the troops I would never lie.

If I could talk to the troops.

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With devotion to the nation and our troops - s cook

ASSEMBLY - PROGRESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

The organization is growing, slowly, and we have added several distinguished members to our Advisory Committee. The Board met on August 20th in Santa Barbara and continued the planning for our California Legislative Action Day this fall. The targets of that action are the members of the California Senate and Assembly who sit on the Veterans' Affairs Committees.

We hope that the new groups growing around the country will plan comparable actions. We will be sharing our planning and proposed tactics over the next several months.

We encourage members from both parties to push for Veterans' Caucuses in their states, both as organizations within their legislatures, and as action groups within their political parties. Nationwide focus on veterans' issues is essential if we are to help bring relief to the shamefully deteriorating condition of active and reserve forces, and to the systemic failure of the benefits program for families and veterans.

Part of our task is to expand our current anecdotal evidence of the failure of the system to include factual and referenced instances of such failures. If you know of specific cases of failure of service to any current or past veteran of our wars, please forward the information to muren@vuft.org, with a copy to the editor at scook@vuft.org.

MAIL CALL - LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

No letters this issue

RECALL - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

BECAUSE OUR FOCUS IS ON LEGISLATORS AND LEGISLATION IN SUPPORT OF THE TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES, HERE IS A NOMINATION FOR THE FIRST MEMBER OF OUR "HALL OF SHAME", WITH THANKS TO ONE OF OUR ESTEEMED ADVISORS FOR THE INFORMATION. REMEMBER, IT'S THE PERSON NOT THE PARTY WHOM WE OPPOSE.

NOMINEE #1 – REPRESENTATIVE JOHN T. DOOLITTLE, (R – ROSEVILLE, CA – 4TH CD)

3/16/05: On the Iraq supplemental funding bill, Doolittle voted for \$81 billion for the war but voted against a motion to add an immediate \$1.2 billion for veterans' health care, the amount needed to cover a shortfall for VA funding. The motion failed, 200 ayes to 229 nays.

5/26/05: On the Defense Authorization Act for 2006, Doolittle voted against an amendment to provide TRICARE medical benefits to all members of the National Guard and Iraq. The amendment failed, 211 to 218.

On May 26th the House also considered an Amendment to H.R. 2528, the Military Quality of Life Appropriations Act for FY06 which would have provided an additional \$53 million towards veterans' health care, including combat-related trauma care, prosthetics, assistance for war orphans, and to process claims for compensation and pensions. The package was specifically targeted to help veterans returning from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was offset by cutting the next round of funding for BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) by 9%.

With both Doolittle and Richard Pombo (R-Stockton, CA – 11th CD) voting against, it failed by one vote, 213 ayes to 214 nays.

6/24/05: On a vote to add \$1 billion for VA health care, Doolittle voted against the motion. The motion failed 185 to 216.

6/28/05: The Administration announced it had vastly underestimated the number of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who would seek medical treatment at VA hospitals.

6/30/05: Doolittle again voted against a motion to add \$1 billion for veterans' health care.

7/28/05: Finally, stung by public outcry, the House Republicans changed their position and voted 410 to 10 for \$1.5 billion in health care in the Department of Interior Appropriations bill.

Submit votes for and against the nomination at scook@vuft.org

WHAT ABOUT YOUR CONGRESSMAN OR STATE LEGISLATOR – REPUBLICAN, DEMOCRAT OR OTHER? NOMINATIONS ARE PERPETUALLY OPEN FOR EITHER THE "HALL OF SHAME" OR THE "HALL OF FAME" – VILLAINS OR HEROES. SEND DETAILS TO THE EDITOR AT SCOOK@VUFT.ORG.

CALIFORNIA MEMBERS PLEASE SUPPORT AB 1525 – REVISION TO THE REVENUE AND TAX CODE

Treasurer Angelides is sponsoring AB 1525, authored by Assembly member Levine (D 40th AD – Van Nuys/Canoga Park), which will give the 21,000 members of the California National Guard a refundable income tax credit of up to \$4,000 a year for health insurance premiums to cover themselves and their families when they are in the National Guard but not on active duty. The bill finances the tax credit to National Guard members by closing the "nowhere income" loophole in California's corporate tax law, which allows multistate and multinational corporations to escape taxation in any state on income from certain transactions. The bill is revenue neutral and has no impact on California's General Fund.

The amendment that revised the original bill to meet these goals passed the Assembly on August 18th. The bill has been returned to the Appropriations Committee for action. The full text of the amended bill is available at:

http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/billtrack/text.html?file=ab_1525_bill_20050818_amended_asm.html

Please ask your friends and family to support AB 1525 by contacting their Assembly members today by clicking here:

http://action.angelides.com/campaign/angelides_nationalguard/forward

S. RES. 155 – THE MOST IMPORTANT LEGISLATION OF ALL

Our Senate, who can't seem to get the Executive to do the programs right on the ground, managed to pass Resolution S. Res. 155, "Designating the week of November 6 through November 12, 2005, as "National Veterans Awareness Week" to emphasize the need to develop educational programs regarding the contributions of veterans to the country."

That ought to solve all those pesky problems! I guess that we veterans should be grateful.



RETREAT – NEWS

ARMY PLANNING FOR FOUR MORE YEARS IN IRAQ TOP GENERAL SAYS U.S. MILITARY PREPARED FOR 'WORST

The Army is planning for the possibility of keeping the current number of soldiers in Iraq — well over 100,000 — for four more years, the Army's top general said Saturday. In an Associated Press interview, Gen. Peter Schoomaker said the Army is prepared for the "worst case" in terms of the required level of troops in Iraq. <[More](#)>

[Ed. Just think what this will do to the numbers of coalition and Iraqi casualties.]

U.S. TO SEND MORE TROOPS TO IRAQ INCREASED INSURGENT ATTACKS EXPECTED IN ADVANCE OF OCT. 15 VOTE ON NEW CONSTITUTION

By William Branigin - Washington Post Staff Writer - Tuesday, August 23, 2005; 3:57 PM

Anticipating an increase in insurgent attacks, the United States plans to send more troops to Iraq in advance of an Oct. 15 referendum on a new Iraqi constitution, which is considered unlikely to halt the country's violence, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said today. <[More](#)>

BUSH RAISES OPTION OF USING FORCE AGAINST IRAN

Reuters 8/14/05 President Bush said he could consider using force as a last resort to press Iran to give up its nuclear program.. <[More](#)>

TO THE COLOR - GATHERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
24-Sep	Noon	Washington DC - The White House	National Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	11:00	San Francisco - Dolores Park	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	Noon	Los Angeles - Olympic & Broadway	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-Sep	Noon	Seattle - Westlake Plaza	Regional Mass March	A.N.S.W.E.R.	Anti-War
24-26 Sep	11:00	DC - Washington Monument	March and Meetings	United for Peace & Justice	End-the-war
11-Nov	11:00	NYC – Madison Sq Park /5 th Ave	Parade	NYC Event Planning	Celebrate Vets
11-Nov	9:00	Sacramento – State House	Legislative Siege	VUFT	Action

All Veterans Day events acknowledged by the VA can be found at <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/regsites.htm>

TATTOO - CURRENT ISSUES

INSURANCE COVERAGE

On July 26, 2005 the House passed H.R. 3200 unanimously, which will allow for the maximum coverage for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) to be permanently increased to \$400,000. **[Full Story]**

CONGRESS TO WEIGH BILLS INCREASING VETERANS' PAY, MILITARY INSURANCE

01:00 AM EDT on Monday, August 15, 2005

The U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs approved, during the first week of this month, two bills sponsored by Chairman Larry Craig, R-Idaho, including a measure, S-1234, which increases the pay rates for disabled veterans and survivors compensation by an estimated 2.3 percent, and another measure, S-1235, which increases life insurance coverage for military personnel from \$250,000 to \$400,000. <[More](#)>

REVISITING VETERANS' STRESS CLAIMS

VA DEPARTMENT WILL INVESTIGATE 72,000 CASES TO SEE HOW THEY WERE DECIDED

Aug. 12, 2005, 12:26AM - By REBECCA CARROLL - Associated Press

WASHINGTON - The government is going to take a new look at the claims of about a third of the military veterans who now get disability payments for post-traumatic stress disorder. <[More](#)>

IRAQ VETERANS RETURNING WITH PROBLEMS TOO SERIOUS FOR LOCAL HELP

KEVIN DOBBS - Des Moines Register - Aug 13, 2005

Many central Iowa soldiers have returned from combat in Iraq with health problems that Polk County veterans officials say they are not equipped to address.

"Almost every single Iraq vet who walks into our office has some kind of serious problem, many with mental health problems. So we just have to refer them on," said David DeBolt, director of the Polk County Commission on Veteran Affairs. "We're here to help with basic needs - some rent money, help with the bills, prescriptions, transportation around town." [<More>](#)

WHO'S PAYING FOR OUR PATRIOTISM?

By Uwe E. Reinhardt - Monday, August 1, 2005

President Bush assures us that the ongoing twin wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are worth the sacrifices they entail. Editorialists around the nation agree and say that a steadfast American public was willing to stay the course.

Should anyone be surprised by this national resolve, given that these wars visit no sacrifice of any sort -- neither blood nor angst nor taxes -- on well over 95 percent of the American people? [<More>](#)

TAPS – PASSINGS AND WAR STATISTICS

Total number currently on active duty in support of the partial mobilization for the Army National Guard and Army Reserve is 121,295; Navy Reserve, 4,268; Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 10,151; Marine Corps Reserve, 8,840; and the Coast Guard Reserve, 543. This brings the total National Guard and Reserve personnel, who have been mobilized, to 145,097, including both units and individual augmentees. <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/2005/nr20050824-4525.html>

OIF/OEF – HACK DATE WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2005

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

KILLED US	1,873
WOUNDED US	≥ 14,120
KILLED UK	93
KILLED OTHER COALITION	101
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	582
KILLED CONTRACTORS	257
KILLED IRAQI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 32,830
KILLED IRAQI CIVILIANS	≥ 26,396
WOUNDED IRAQI MIL/CIV	≥ 131,411

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

KILLED US	231
WOUNDED/INJURED US	571
KILLED COALITION	101
WOUNDED/INJURED COALITION	303
KILLED AFGHANI POLICE/MILITARY	≥ 8,587
KILLED AFGHANI CIVILIANS	≥ 3,485

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VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC

P.O. Box 42202, Santa Barbara, CA 93140

www.vuft.org

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

LAST NAME: _____

First name, MI: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Years of Service: From Mo/Day/Yr ___/___/____. To Mo/Day/Yr ___/___/____

Dues Enclosed: 1 Year (\$20) _____ Lifetime (\$100) _____

Additional Donation: _____

I would like to serve on the following committee(s) [optional]:

Finance

Fundraising

Organization Building

Other states

Growth/Outreach

Veterans & Other Veterans' Groups

Events

Planning and execution

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Communication

Website, Media Contact

Materials

Posters, Flyers, etc. production

Message

Writing, editing, newsletter

Local Organizing

Form community group

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: ___/___/____