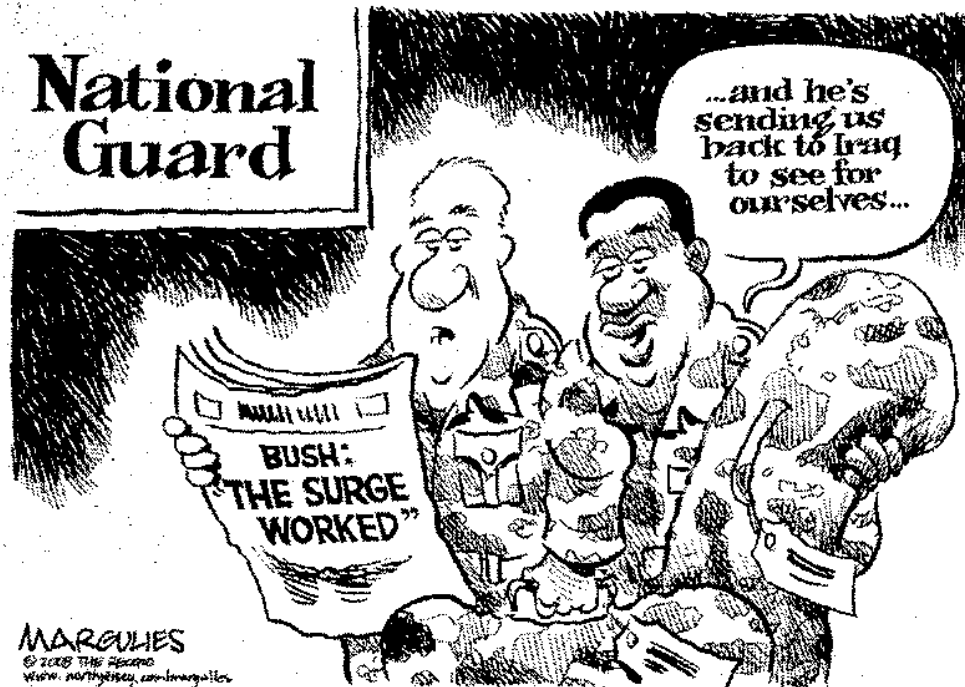


GI SPECIAL GUARD ISSUE:

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V.A. Shits On National Guard And Reserve War Veterans, As Usual: "More Likely Than Active-Duty Iraq And Afghanistan War Veterans To Have Disability Claims Denied And More Likely To Receive The Lowest Possible Disability Ratings"

Duffy said reservists returning from deployments do not have the same access as active-duty members to qualified doctors who can evaluate combat-related medical problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

October 06, 2008 By Rick Maze, Army Times [Excerpts]

National Guard and reserve members are more likely than active-duty Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans to have disability claims denied and more likely to receive the lowest possible disability ratings — even though they are only half as likely to file claims in the first place.

An analysis of benefits claims prepared by Veterans for Common Sense, based on data obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, shows Guard and reserve members who served in Iraq or Afghanistan are twice as likely to have a veterans' disability claim denied as other veterans of the same operations.

The higher rate of denials and low ratings among reservists do not appear to be the result of filing frivolous claims.

Forty-five percent of active-duty veterans of the two ongoing operations filed disability claims, compared with 23 percent of Guard and reserve members who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, said Paul Sullivan, executive director of the nonprofit veterans' group.

Sullivan said he is unsure what has caused "such an enormous discrepancy" but thinks Congress and veterans deserve an answer.

"With 300,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans filing a claim [with the Veterans Affairs Department] so far, we owe it to our veterans to make sure their claims are adjudicated completely, accurately, quickly and fairly," Sullivan said.

Peter Duffy, a retired Army colonel with the National Guard Association of the United States, said gaps in personnel and medical records might make it harder for Guard and reserve members to prove they have service-connected disabilities.

Duffy said reservists returning from deployments do not have the same access as active-duty members to qualified doctors who can evaluate combat-related medical problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

**Kiss That Civilian Job, Home And
Life Goodbye:
National Guard Boss Wants 35% More
Guard Troops On Fulltime Active Duty!**

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Sep 23, 2008 By Rick Maze; Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

BALTIMORE — Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. told National Guard members Sunday that continued reliance on deploying reservists is the only way of meeting national security commitments without dramatically increasing active forces.

Speaking at a convention of the National Guard Association of the United States, Casey said there are 60,000 to 70,000 Army or Air Guard members deployed overseas who are vital to having a sustainable force, which he listed among six priorities for the future of the Army.

Increasing the size of the Guard by 10 percent or more is one of the top priorities for the National Guard Association, said retired Brig. Gen. Stephen Koper, the group's executive director.

Of particular concern is the need for more Guard members on fulltime active duty, an idea Pentagon officials have resisted, Koper said.

The Army Guard's longtime and unmet goal is to have about 32,000 guardsmen on active duty, but it is more than 35 percent short of meeting that goal, a level that Koper said would still be inadequate.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

**“Now I Sit In Iraq, 23 Years Old
With Two Hearing Aids And No
One To Help Me”**

**“One More Bomb, And I Could Never
Hear Again”**

**“The Army Is Not Looking Out For
Anything But Itself In My Case”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
9.22.08

It has come to my attention that I am not the only soldier with the problem of the Army not caring about medical needs. I read an article about a soldier who was sent to Iraq with hearing loss, which may have caused another soldier's death ("A quiet danger," Aug. 18).

I have served four years and two combat tours in Iraq. I have never had any trouble at all. I have always been the best I could be. Very decorated and motivated.

Now I sit in Iraq, 23 years old with two hearing aids and no one to help me.

They say if I hear one more bomb, I am deaf for life.

The medical personnel say I should leave and be stateside where I can find a job fitted for me.

The staff in my brigade say I should stay, but not work.

I love my soldiers and I am a soldier till the end, but I will not stand by and watch life go by.

One more bomb, and I could never hear again.

The Army is not looking out for anything but itself in my case.

Sgt. Michael S. Corbett
Forward Operating Base Loyalty, Iraq

**Dutch Platoon In Afghanistan
Refuses Combat Order:
Will Be Sent Home;
“The First Time An Entire Dutch Platoon
Has Been Suspended From Active
Service”**

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, The Military Project & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in!]

September 26, 2008 Radio Netherlands

In Afghanistan, a Dutch Task Force Uruzgan platoon has been temporarily suspended from active service for collectively refusing to carry out an order.

The 24 scouts refused to provide support and defence to a less-well trained and experienced unit. They wanted their commander to reverse the roles, but he refused and suspended the unit.

The incident may lead to a criminal investigation.

In this case the scouts will be sent back to the Netherlands.

According to defence experts this is the first time an entire Dutch platoon has been suspended from active service.

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WARS**



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