



# The Bugle Call Rag

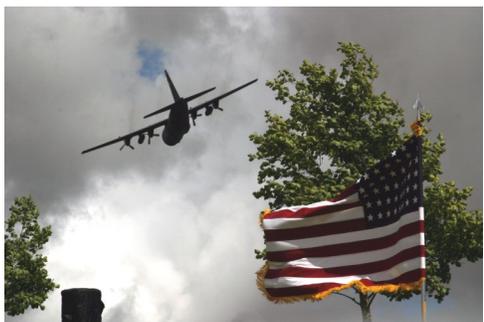
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## COMMANDER'S COLUMN



Annual membership renewal is going on right now, and I want to say I'm proud of our post for working hard at getting their dues into Herman. We have a 52% renewal rate at this early date. This compares with the 22% rate all the other post in the Mighty Fifth District are averaging, and 17% for the Department of Georgia. Let's be proactive and get 100% early, and then be done with it.

Please send a check for \$45 (or any amount above your dues if you want to offset printing cost of the Bugle Call Rag newsletter) to:

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## DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

The Dog Days of Summer have been upon us for several months now.

Webster defines "dog days" as...

1 : the period between early July and early September when the hot sultry weather of summer usually occurs in the northern hemisphere

2 : a period of stagnation or inactivity.

Our post has worked hard this calendar year. Our youth programs are alive and well with the oratorical contest and Boys State now behind us. You've earned a rest in this heat. As a group though, we need to spin back up soon and look at doing a project that would benefit the American Legion during the October/November timeframe. I would like to solicit your inputs and come up with a plan of action on any worthwhile project. Additionally, I'll bring this to the attention of the Executive Committee in August. This may be as simple as visiting a retirement community home on Veteran's Day, or working with groups like HERO BOX like we've done in the past.

## WRITER'S CRAP



I hope you're not offended by the headline. Since I quoted Webster, I must now quote the

Urban Dictionary on "Writer's Crap."

1: Derived from writer's cramp, writer's crap refers to a stage when one is only capable of writing utter crap.

***That story was horrible; I think he's got a bad case of writer's crap***

I'm starting to get writer's crap. As editor of the BCR, it's my job to put the newsletter together. I asked back in May if anybody would write some articles of interest for the BCR (No takers so far). Again, I ask because I know there are some great stories to be told. Submission to the BCR can be sent to my e-mail address listed.



### Inside this issue:

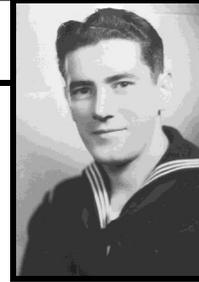
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## TRUE STORY

If body armor doesn't fit your troops, you can buy a different size, find new troops, or – if you have a little extra money in the budget – pay for plastic surgery so the troops fit the gear.

The Mirror newspaper in London reports that the British defense ministry paid for three recruits to have their ears pinned closer to their heads so they could comfortably wear helmets, and also paid for four women to have breast reduction surgery so they could fit into body armor.

Military officials defended the expenses, saying the plastic surgery was required for "operational reasons." They did not offer specifics.



## Bring It Back ?

Victor A. Mahoney - Editor Emeritus

The Selective Service Act, affectionately referred to as The Draft, was introduced to the modern American male in September of 1940. President Franklin Roosevelt, uneasy about the Nazi rampage in segments of Europe, persuaded Congress to beef up our military. Initially, all males between ages 21 to 36 had to register. Later, the pool was to include those from 18 to 45. A look back at this first peacetime conscription in the U.S. showed that it served the country well.

We were generally isolationists at the time and wanted to keep our noses out of the European mess. The Draft, then, was not joyfully received, but it was not viewed as a cause for the young to rebel and to avoid the call to arms. Americans began to see the squeeze that the Axis Powers were putting on us. Japan squeezed too hard at Pearl Harbor and, as Admiral Yamamoto told his Emperor, "We have awakened a sleeping giant." Indeed, they had. The Draft awakened 10 million men during WW II. The giant was stirring and flexing.

Draft Boards throughout the country used a sort of lottery system and labeled their pool members as 1-A (good stuff) or 4-F (not so good) or somewhere in between if deferment was in order. Generally, men with 1-A tag secretly felt a bit proud of being physically and mentally ready. The 4-F category held some questionable cases of flat feet, punctured ear-

drums, bad backs, weak eyesight and strange behavior. As casualties mounted, however, even the 4-F pool was raided. The important observation here is that The Draft covered the nation, all walks of life, and made for a representative military.

Why all this review? Well, we are at war, have been at war for quite a stretch of years, and will be at war for some time to come. Other than brief media reports about our now all-volunteer military, there is little national awareness and involvement of the people. We read sorrowfully about the lives lost and the bodies maimed and the budget woes. When The Draft was in its heyday that meant that every household was involved; there was awareness. There was a national spirit that marked us as special. We became world leaders.

Yes, bringing back The Draft is politically unpopular, but wouldn't it be uplifting if the country was led back into the spirit of the Draft days when everyone had some role to play, be it ever so humble, in defending our country?

In a book entitled WITH THE OLD BREED, the author, E.B. Sledge, now deceased, writes about his days in the Marines, fighting in Peleliu and Okinawa, abhorring war and its inhumanity. What is uplifting about this mortarman's detailed observations as he suffers through the madness and ferocity are his sense of duty and his admiration of his comrades. This observation closes his memoir:

"...it will be necessary to accept one's responsibilities and to be willing to make sacrifices for one's country – as my comrades did. As the troops used to say: ***If the country is good enough to live in, it's good enough to fight for. With privilege goes responsibility.***

(WARNING: Possible article side effects: headache dry mouth, facial tic, painful nostalgia. If any of these show up, call your doctor right away.)





## WE NEED MORE VETERANS MAKING LAWS

By Donald N. Zillman

STARS AND STRIPES NEWSPAPER

The 112th Congress takes office facing many challenges. Among the most serious are military and national security issues that include the conduct of two wars, the possibility of other conflicts, and the growing recognition that national defense expenditures can no longer be regarded as off the table at a time of large deficits and huge reluctance to meet them with increased taxes.

The significance of defense issues raises the issue of the number of senators and representatives with personal experience of service in the uniformed military. The 112th Congress continues a half-century pattern of each new Congress having fewer military veterans than the immediately preceding Congress.

Of the 535 senators and representatives in the new Congress, 108 report some form of military service in one of the uniformed services — a decline of five veterans from the 111th Congress. By comparison, at the height of the Vietnam War approximately two-thirds of the members of Congress were veterans. Twenty years ago, when I began tabulating the veterans in each new Congress, the numbers were close to half of the membership of one or both houses. Today, the figure is about 20.

The message is not that voters don't like their federal legislators to have military service. The military remains at the top of most polls identifying America's most admired professions. The great change has been the separation of military service from the life experience of most American men who are likely to become candidates for national office. The high percentage of veterans in the 1960s congresses reflected the experience of widespread, draft-induced service during World War II and the early Cold War. Military service was seen as almost a requisite to running for office. Since 1973 and the end of the draft, few young or middle-aged candidates are expected to have served in the military.

Certain demographics of the military veterans in Congress are particularly revealing. Not surprisingly, the older the congressman, the more likely he served in the military. Five senators and representatives did active service in World War II. The largest number of legislative veterans did their service during the era of the Cold War, Korea and Vietnam, often induced by the military draft. Only 30 of the 108 legislative veterans in the new Congress have served in the nearly 40 years of the all-volunteer military.

A further interesting demographic is the lack of female veterans. Only Rep. Sandra Adams of Florida, newly elected in 2010, lists military service in her biography, yet we are several decades past the time when women were merely a token presence in the military.

For most veterans in Congress, military service was a brief chapter in their professional lives. Only 16 of the 108 congressional veterans have served eight or more years on active duty — with the majority of those serving at least a 20-year tour of duty that entitled them to military retired status. None of the 16 veterans reached senior leadership (high general or flag rank) in the armed forces that would entitle them to claim firsthand experience in helping to set major military policy.

The most significant division of the congressional veterans may be party affiliation. Prior to the 2010 election, Republicans held a modest majority of the veterans' seats. The substantial Republican victories in 2010 left only 35 Democratic veterans in Congress compared to 73 Republicans. Democrats hold 12 Senate seats; Republicans hold 13.

The Republican dominance is most visible in the House of Representatives. The House's 60 Republican veterans far outnumber its 23 Democratic veterans. The disproportion becomes even greater when we compare military service since 1991. Twenty Republicans have served (and some continue serving) in the last 20 years. Only two Democrats have served since 1991.

The party disproportion between the numbers of congressional veterans of the last two decades means that Republicans have a near monopoly on being able to speak about relevant military matters firsthand. Granted, military service of any kind at any time gives a perspective the nonveteran will lack. But large changes have taken place in the armed forces from the World War II, Korean and Vietnam eras to the more recent days of the all-volunteer force. The recent veteran is likely to have widely different perspectives on such disparate matters as racial and gender equality, use of technology, the role of the National Guard and Reserve, use of the military in nation-building activities, and nontraditional warfare than those congressional veterans whose active-duty days were in the 1940s through 1960s.

We can all wish for wisdom on military issues that face the 112th Congress. We can especially hope for that wisdom to be shown by those legislators who themselves have served in the armed forces.

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**The August 11<sup>th</sup> speaker is Keith P. Antonia, Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (Retired). Colonel Antonia is Director of Cadet Admissions, North Georgia College, and spent nearly 19 years of hazardous duty in various Airborne and Ranger units, including the commander of the Mountain Phase of the US Army Ranger School in Dahlonega, Georgia.**

**Next Meeting — August 11, 2011**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	EC	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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