

May 15, 2012

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1. [In military-rich battlegrounds, Obama targets a new group: veterans.](#) Republicans have long defined themselves in part on their hawkish stance on national security issues and their popularity among the military and veterans. But the makeup of the nation's armed forces is changing, and President Barack Obama hopes to win over veterans by appealing to the same subgroups that propelled him to victory in 2008: women, minorities and young people.
2. [Military research at record amounts as war winding down.](#) With the Afghanistan War winding down and the chance to study troops in combat running out, military scientists are conducting record amounts of research on everything from blast effects on the brain to stanching blood loss.
3. [Afghan forces will take control of some volatile areas.](#) More details about the third phase of Afghanistan's security transition released Monday indicate that Afghan forces will take the lead in some areas still under persistent threat from insurgents.
4. [Troops leave Korea with a little piece of history.](#) If you're looking for a souvenir, Mardi Gras has its beads, Florida has its Mickey Mouse ears, and South Korea has ... barbed wire?
5. [Clinic in Afghanistan is first stop for US troops recovering from brain trauma.](#) The first room they go to is small and dark, with a single bed in the corner and a blanket hung over the window. The building is covered in a hardened foam that muffles the constant drone of the Apache helicopters, Warthog attack jets and massive cargo planes coming and going from the airfield at this base just north of Kabul.
6. [At Afghanistan hospital, troops treat the wounds of war.](#) Just after 9 a.m., the helicopter descends past jagged, snowcapped mountains, and the crew rushes a soldier with a gunshot wound to his leg into the trauma center. Nurses, doctors and medical technicians, clad in camouflage scrubs, flood into the room, unwrapping his bloody bandage, checking vital signs and inserting lines for intravenous fluids.

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- 7. "No Drama" In Bill For VA, Military Construction.** [CQ Weekly](#) The House Military Construction-VA Subcommittee has "endorsed a \$71.7 billion fiscal 2013 draft bill for military construction and veterans' affairs." Veterans Affairs "would receive \$135.4 billion, including \$60.7 billion in discretionary spending," an increase of \$2.3 billion from last year. The subcommittee's ranking Democrat, Georgia's Sanford Bishop, said, "We have...hopefully" drafted a "no-drama bill." CQ Weekly says the full House Military Construction-VA Committee "may take the bill up this week."

- 8. VA Increases Research On Women's Health Issues.** [Boston Globe](#) "As more women veterans return home, the Department of Veterans Affairs has had to rethink and reshape" its healthcare, according to "Kristin Mattocks, the associate chief of staff for research for VA Central Western Massachusetts Health Care System." The Globe adds, "Last month, the VA Central Western Massachusetts, VA Connecticut, and VA Boston Health Care Systems joined 34 other VA centers across the nation in the Women's Health Research Network, a collaboration of researchers and clinicians studying women's" healthcare issues. Mattocks says that while the main goal of the project is to improve VA care for female vets, the "hope is that what we learn translates into better care for women everywhere."

- 9. Helping Survivors Of Military Sexual Trauma.** [Boston Globe](#) "The US Department of Veterans Affairs has called military sexual trauma," or MST, an "epidemic." The agency, which universally screens "its patients for MST," offers a "variety of treatment options" for those with MST. One of those with MST who "praises the care she received from the VA in Maine as 'phenomenal,' and urges victims to seek VA treatment."

- 10. The Pain And The Power Of A Mother's Love.** [Canandaigua \(NY\) Messenger Post](#) Deb Kluss is "campaigning to have her son," Iraq veteran Jonathan Trottier, "released from prison, where he is serving a 4 1/2-year sentence for causing a serious crash while driving drunk. She is seeking his release from prison to instead have him admitted to a facility for treatment of his post-traumatic stress disorder," or PTSD. Trottier praises efforts by Veterans Affairs to help vets like him. The messenger Post adds, "Kai Chitaphong, social worker and program manager for veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center, said the VA provides services for veterans in transition from prison to civilian life, putting them in touch with VA programs and services to access after prison, for PTSD, family and employment counseling and other needs."

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- 11. Helping Vets: "The System Is Broken."** [Richmond \(VA\) Times-Dispatch](#)
Richmond attorney Matthew A. Kapinos, a veteran who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan and who says the US VA is "not efficient in meeting" veterans' needs. Kapinos, who "has been working with the Virginia Bar Association's Veterans Issues Task Force to assist Virginia veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with benefit hurdles," said VA does the best it "can, but the system is broken." The Times-Dispatch added, "Complaints about the hoops that veterans have to jump through to get benefits they are due from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs are widespread, though vets generally say they are pleased with the benefits themselves." Diana Rubens, VA deputy under secretary for field operations dealing with veterans benefits, said VA is taking steps to reduce its claims backlog.
- 12. Bill Gives Conn. Vets Second Chance To Avoid Jail.** [AP](#) "As thousands of troops return from war to Connecticut, lawmakers have approved a measure that would give veterans a second chance to avoid prosecution or prison when they commit a minor crime." The Connecticut "House and Senate voted unanimously in recent weeks to pass legislation allowing veterans to use the Accelerated Rehabilitation program twice, rather than just once." The AP, which notes that Connecticut's governor has not said if he will sign the bill, adds, "The bill would save the state up to \$3.5 million over the next three years because treatment is cheaper than incarceration and because the federal Veterans Administration can provide much of the treatment, supporters said."
- 13. Actor Devotes Time To Helping Wounded Vets.** [CBS' 60 Minutes](#) 📺
Gary Sinise, who "plays bass guitar in a band named after Lt. Dan," the "gung-ho Army officer who loses both legs in Vietnam in the film classic 'Forrest Gump.'" The role was played by Sinise, who started the Lt. Dan Band, which "will give nearly 50 concerts this year to raise money" to modify homes for disabled Iraq veteran Juan Dominguez and "nine other wounded veterans." Last year, a Lt. Dan Band concert helped raise funds to build a modified home for disabled Afghanistan [veteran](#) 📺 Todd Nicely.
- 14. A Hero's Welcome For Rex, A Marine's Best Friend.** [New York Times](#)
"Bats" blog notes that during a pregame ceremony held at Yankee Stadium on Sunday, 28-year-old veteran Megan Leavey and Rex, the bomb-sniffing dog she worked with during her service in Iraq, were honored. The Yankees, a Major League Baseball franchise, "recognized Leavey and Rex at home plate on Sunday and even surprised Leavey" with a Purple Heart to replace one that was recently stolen from her. The Times points out that Leavey adopted Rex with the help of Yankees president Randy Levine and his wife.

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15. **Financial Woes Weigh Heavily On Veterans.** [McClatchy](#)
16. **A Monumental Moment For WWII Vets.** [U-T San Diego](#)
17. **VA Guardianship Under Fire.** [Lakeland \(FL\) Ledger](#)
18. **Charity Golf Tournament Will Aid Wounded Warriors.** [Aiken \(SC\) Standard](#)
19. **Celebrities Make Pitch For Patient Safety Panel.** [American Medical News](#) Actor Dennis Quaid, whose "12-day-old twins developed infections in 2007," has "joined with patient safety and aviation experts to call for an agency akin to the politically insulated, independent National Transportation Safety Board to investigate cases of medical harm and report deidentified findings to physicians, hospitals and the public." American Medical News adds, "The proposed NTSB for health care is promising, said James P. Bagian, MD, a former flight surgeon and astronaut with NASA who helped drive safety efforts at the Veterans Health Administration and now is professor of engineering practice at the University of Michigan College of Engineering."

20. **VA / VSO-MSO Hearings as May 15, 2012:**

May 16, 2012. HVAC Health Subcommittee has announced a subcommittee hearing to conduct an oversight hearing on the delivery of care to Veterans with amputations, to include both the clinical side and the procurement aspect of the issue. 10:00 A.M.; 334 Cannon House Office Building

May 16, 2012. The House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, will hold a hearing entitled: "Examining Executive Order 13607 and Its Impact and (sic) Schools and Veterans." 2:00 P.M.; 334 Cannon

May 16, 2012. The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs will hold a hearing entitled: "Seamless Transition: Review of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System." 10:00 A.M.; 216 Hart Senate Building

May 23, 2012 (tentative). SVAC a legislative hearing. The agenda includes 26 pieces of legislation.

June 6, 2012 (formerly May 23). The Senate Select Committee on Aging plans to host a hearing on VA's Aid and Attendance Program. 2:00 P.M.; Location TBD

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21. Today in History:

- [1525](#) – The [battle of Frankenhausen](#) ends the [German Peasants' War](#).
- [1536](#) – [Anne Boleyn](#), Queen of England, stands trial in London on charges of treason, adultery and incest. She is condemned to death by a specially-selected [jury](#).
- [1701](#) – The [War of the Spanish Succession](#) begins.
- [1718](#) – [James Puckle](#), a London [lawyer](#), patents the world's first [machine gun](#).
- [1755](#) – [Laredo, Texas](#) is established by the Spaniards.
- [1776](#) – [American Revolution](#): the [Virginia Convention](#) instructs its [Continental Congress](#) delegation to propose a [resolution of independence](#) from Great Britain, paving the way for the [United States Declaration of Independence](#).
- [1792](#) – [War of the First Coalition](#): France declares war on [Kingdom of Sardinia](#).
- [1793](#) – [Diego Marín Aguilera](#) flies a glider for "about 360 meters", at a height of 5-6 meters, during one of the first attempted .
- [1796](#) – [First Coalition](#): [Napoleon](#) enters [Milan](#) in triumph.
- [1800](#) – [George III of the United Kingdom](#) survives an assassination attempt by [James Hadfield](#), who is later acquitted by reason of [insanity](#).
- [1811](#) – [Paraguay](#) declares independence from Spain.
- [1817](#) – Opening of the first private mental health hospital in the United States, the Asylum for the Relief of Persons Deprived of the Use of Their Reason (now [Friends Hospital](#)) in [Philadelphia](#), Pennsylvania.
- [1849](#) – Troops of the [Two Sicilies](#) take [Palermo](#) and crush the republican government of [Sicily](#)
- [1850](#) – The [Bloody Island Massacre](#) takes place in [Lake County, California](#), in which a large number of Pomo Indians in Lake County are slaughtered by a regiment of the United States Cavalry, led by [Nathaniel Lyon](#).
- [1862](#) – [President Abraham Lincoln](#) signs a bill into law creating the United States Bureau of Agriculture. It is later renamed the [United States Department of Agriculture](#).
- [1864](#) – [American Civil War](#): [Battle of Resaca, Georgia](#) ends.
- [1864](#) – [American Civil War](#): [Battle of New Market, Virginia](#) – students from the [Virginia Military Institute](#) fight alongside the [Confederate](#) Army to force [Union General Franz Sigel](#) out of the [Shenandoah Valley](#).
- [1869](#) – [Woman's suffrage](#): in New York, [Susan B. Anthony](#) and [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](#) form the [National Woman Suffrage Association](#).
- [1905](#) – [Las Vegas, Nevada](#), is founded when 110 acres (0.45 km²), in what later would become downtown, are auctioned off.
- [1911](#) – In [Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey v. United States](#), the [United States Supreme Court](#) declares [Standard Oil](#) to be an "unreasonable" [monopoly](#) under the [Sherman Antitrust Act](#) and orders the company to be broken up.
- [1919](#) – The [Winnipeg General Strike](#) begins. By 11:00 am, almost the whole working population of [Winnipeg, Manitoba](#) had walked off the job.
- [1919](#) – Greek invasion of [İzmir](#). During the invasion, the Greek army kills or wounds 350 [Turks](#). Those responsible are punished by the Greek Commander Aristides Stergiades.
- [1928](#) – [Mickey Mouse](#) premiered in his first cartoon, [Plane Crazy](#)
- [1932](#) – The [May 15 Incident](#): in an attempted [Coup d'état](#), the [Prime Minister](#) of Japan [Inukai Tsuyoshi](#) is killed.
- [1940](#) – [USS Sailfish \(SS-192\)](#) recommissioned, originally the [USS Squalus](#).
- [1940](#) – [World War II](#): After fierce fighting, the poorly trained and equipped [Dutch](#) troops surrender to [Germany](#), marking the beginning of five years of occupation.

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- 1940 – [McDonald's](#) opens its first restaurant in [San Bernardino, California](#).
- [1942](#) – World War II: in the United States, a bill creating the [Women's Army Auxiliary Corps](#) (WAAC) is signed into law.
- [1945](#) – World War II: The final skirmish in Europe is fought near [Prevalje, Slovenia](#).
- [1948](#) – Following the demise of the [British Mandate of Palestine](#), [Egypt](#), [Transjordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Syria](#), [Iraq](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#) invade [Israel](#) thus starting the [1948 Arab-Israeli War](#).
- [1951](#) – The Polish [cultural attache](#) in Paris, [Czesław Miłosz](#), asks the French government for [political asylum](#).
- [1957](#) – At [Malden Island](#) in the Pacific, [Britain](#) tests its first [hydrogen bomb](#) in [Operation Grapple](#). The device fails to detonate properly.
- [1958](#) – The [Soviet Union](#) launches [Sputnik 3](#).
- [1960](#) – The Soviet Union launches [Sputnik 4](#).
- [1963](#) – [Project Mercury](#): The launch of the final Mercury mission, [Mercury-Atlas 9](#) with astronaut L. [Gordon Cooper](#) on board. He becomes the first American to spend more than a day in [space](#).
- [1966](#) – After a policy dispute, Prime Minister [Nguyen Cao Ky](#) of [South Vietnam](#)'s ruling junta launches a military attack on the forces of General [Ton That Dinh](#), forcing him to abandon his command.
- [1969](#) – [People's Park](#): California Governor [Ronald Reagan](#) has an impromptu student park owned by University of California at Berkeley fenced off from student anti-war protestors, sparking a riot called Bloody Thursday.
- [1970](#) – President [Richard Nixon](#) appoints [Anna Mae Hays](#) and [Elizabeth P. Hoisington](#) the first female [United States Army Generals](#).
- 1970 – Philip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green are killed at [Jackson State University](#) by police during [student protests](#).
- [1972](#) – The island of [Okinawa](#), under U.S. military governance since its [conquest](#) in 1945, reverts to Japanese control.
- 1972 – In [Laurel, Maryland](#), [Arthur Bremer](#) shoots and paralyzes [Alabama Governor George Wallace](#) while he is campaigning to become President.
- [1974](#) – [Ma'alot massacre](#): In an [Arab](#) terrorist attack and hostage taking at an [Israeli school](#), a total of 31 people are killed, including 22 schoolchildren.
- [1987](#) – The Soviet Union launches the [Polyus](#) prototype orbital weapons platform. It fails to reach orbit.
- [1988](#) – [Soviet war in Afghanistan](#): After more than eight years of fighting, the [Red Army](#) begins its withdrawal from [Afghanistan](#).
- [1991](#) – [Édith Cresson](#) becomes France's first female [prime minister](#).
- [1997](#) – The United States government acknowledges the existence of the "[Secret War](#)" in [Laos](#) and dedicates the [Laos Memorial](#) in honor of [Hmong](#) and other "Secret War" veterans.
- [2010](#) – [Jessica Watson](#) becomes the youngest person to sail, non-stop and unassisted around the world solo.