

## HEALTHCARE

**A fog of drugs and war** (LA Times) --- After two long-running wars with escalating levels of combat stress, more than 110,000 active-duty Army troops last year were taking prescribed antidepressants, narcotics, sedatives, antipsychotics and anti-anxiety drugs, according to figures recently disclosed to The Times by the U.S. Army surgeon general. Nearly 8% of the active-duty Army is now on sedatives and more than 6% is on antidepressants — an eightfold increase since 2005.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/07/nation/la-na-army-medication-20120408>

**Vets Find Mantram Repetition Helps PTSD Symptoms** (KPBS.org) --- Only about half the veterans suffering from PTSD seek treatment, because of the stigma attached to asking for help. The VA Medical Center in San Diego is testing an ancient meditation technique called “Mantram Repetition” to see if more veterans around the country might be willing to try it. Bormann is with the Department of Nursing and Patient Care at the VA Medical Center and she obtained funding for research into the effectiveness of Mantram Repetition. Her clinical trials found that veterans who used Mantram Repetition along with the traditional therapy of drugs and counseling were twice as likely to report relief from their symptoms as those who used the traditional therapies alone.

[http://www.kpbs.org/news/2012/apr/03/vets-find-mantram-repetition-helps-ptsd-symptoms/?utm\\_source=kpbs.org&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=user-share](http://www.kpbs.org/news/2012/apr/03/vets-find-mantram-repetition-helps-ptsd-symptoms/?utm_source=kpbs.org&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=user-share)

**Link between PTSD and violent behavior is weak** (The Washington Post) --- Post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury can increase a person’s anger and hostility and diminish his or her self-control. But the link between those disorders and outright violent behavior is weak and hard to pin down with certainty. “The closer we get to trying to understand how PTSD relates to extreme violence, the more we get anecdotal,” said Paula Schnurr, deputy director of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Center for PTSD, in Vermont.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/link-between-ptsd-and-violent-behavior-is-weak/2012/03/31/gIQApYFZnS\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/link-between-ptsd-and-violent-behavior-is-weak/2012/03/31/gIQApYFZnS_story.html)

**Air Force Tries to Deal With Suicide Rate** (Military.com) --- The Air Force lost 99 airmen in 2010 to suicides, 90 in 2011 and 35 so far in 2012, making suicide the service’s leading cause of death, according to slides presented by Roy during his presentation. The Air Force must avoid turning its efforts to develop a culture of healthy, resilient airmen into a “check in the box” training program, said Roy.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/air-force-tries-to-deal-with-suicide-rate.html>

## HOUSING

**U.S. VETS helps homeless veterans become self sufficient** (Prescott Daily Courier, AZ) --- "A lot of them are camping out, many are older, and most have health issues," Gatens said. "I basically talk to them about how we can help them, and services they can get through us and the VA when they're ready." U.S. VETS is a transitional housing facility with 58 beds where veterans can stay for as long as two years as they work their way toward self sufficiency with individual case management, access to healthcare, resolving legal matters, stabilizing mental health, maintaining sobriety, working through transportation issues, and finding and maintaining employment, said Tim Prater, program director with U.S. VETS.

<http://www.prescottdailycourier.com/main.asp?FromHome=1&TypeID=1&ArticleID=105239&SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1086>

## EDUCATION

**Veterans group works to engage female students** (Columbia Spectator, NY) --- Stella Serpa, administrative assistant at the Columbia University Medical Center, said that the happy hour is a comfortable setting for her to discuss women's issues in history, such as the G.I. Bill Improvement Act of 1977, which granted female service members full military status. Previously, women were forced to leave the service if they got pregnant. Most female veterans at Columbia say that there is an unspoken bond between them. "You don't have to explain what this acronym means," Serpa said. "There's a lot of things my civilian friends will say and I end up on a 20-minute explanation, whereas in this ... other people can relate to you and understand any of that."

<http://www.columbiaspectator.com/2012/04/09/veterans-group-working-toward-engaging-more-female-students>

## EMPLOYMENT

**U.S. Sues Home Depot Over Veteran's Firing** (Journal and Constitution) --- The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Arizona, alleges that Brian Bailey was fired from his job as a department supervisor at a Flagstaff Home Depot in May 2010 for his periodic absences from work because of his military obligations. That would be a violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994. Home Depot

spokesman Stephen Holmes said the company fired Bailey for legitimate, performance-based reasons unrelated to his military duties. He declined to provide specifics.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/atlanta/u-s-sues-home-1408405.html>

## VETERANS' AFFAIRS

**Shinseki: VA on Track to Break Claims Backlog** (Defense.gov) --- VA spent the last two years creating an automated tool to make claims determinations faster and more accurate, he said. "Our intent is to have no claim over 125 days," Shinseki told American Forces Press Service. "And every claims decision that we put out the door [will be] at a 98-percent quality mark." "Last year, we produced another 1 million claims decisions and got 1.3 million claims in," Shinseki said. "So the backlog isn't static. The backlog is a bigger number than we would like, but it is not the same number as three years ago."

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=67793>

## COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

**Military families enjoy free day at Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield** (Masslive.com) --- Military families enjoyed the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame on Saturday for free, as part of an initiative through the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital's Home Base Program. More than 200 military families visited the Hall of Fame, according to J. Patrick Ochoa, senior operations supervisor for the Hall of Fame. "This is the first year that we've done it. They reached out to us. The Hall of Fame is a great family environment," Ochoa said.

[http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/03/military\\_families\\_enjoy\\_free\\_d.html](http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/03/military_families_enjoy_free_d.html)

**Honoring a Service Member's Ultimate Sacrifice, Whether It Was Made on the Battlefield or Not** (The New York Times) --- Who gets memorialized becomes even more complicated when you look at the numbers. From 2001 to 2011, about 16,700 American service members died worldwide. Though there were two wars under way, less than 30 percent of those military deaths, nearly 5,000 in total, were classified as due to hostile action or terrorist attack by the Department of Defense. That left more than 11,700 families grieving the deaths of their fallen service members in training accidents, suicides, homicides or illness, both in war zones and elsewhere.

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/honoring-a-service-members-ultimate-sacrifice-whether-it-was-made-on-the-battlefield-or-not/>

## OTHER

**Artist Mows 850,000-Square-Foot Purple Heart Into N.Y. Field** (Fox News) --- An artist has mowed an 850,000-square-foot rendering of a Purple Heart medal into a park field to honor the 75th anniversary of the medal that commends servicemembers killed or wounded in action. The rendering, which was unveiled Sunday in Thomas Bull Memorial Park in this city 55 miles northwest of New York City, was done by field artist and painter Roger Baker, whose past works include the Statue of Liberty and Elvis Presley.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,292236,00.html>