



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on August 4, 2010

## Drum Out the VA

Mr. Wright had been a childhood friend of the legendary Nathan Hale, and he first went to war as his “waiter,” or assistant. After the Redcoats hanged Captain Hale for espionage, Mr. Wright fought at White Plains and Trenton under General George Washington – more action than many troops saw and under the immortal Commander-in-Chief, too. So he was unusual in his record and experiences.

But he most certainly was not in his application for “assistance.” Across the country, thousands of men who had fought for freedom in their youth demanded tyranny in their old age: they insisted the federal government tax — *i.e.*, forcibly take or, more plainly, steal money from — their neighbors and share the plunder with them.

Congress had encouraged this socialism by passing “An act to provide for certain persons engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the revolutionary war” [earlier that year](#). The Act was only one in a series of legalized larcenies: the new nation’s first Congress had barely convened before it passed “[An act providing](#) for the payment of the invalid pensioners of the United States” on September 29, 1789. Unfortunately, [Davy Crockett with his opposition to compulsory “charity”](#) at the taxpayers’ expense wouldn’t arrive in the House of Robbers-sorry, Representatives until 1827.



Some might — and did — argue that no reward was too great for soldiers who had suffered as severely as those in the Continental Army. And certainly the conditions they endured on a normal day in camp, let alone in battle or while marching, wounded or captured, defy modern comprehension: chronic shortages of rations (which may have actually been a blessing since they were barely edible), horrifically crowded tents for those lucky enough to have any shelter at all, and conditions so unsanitary that Washington spent much of his first months as general cajoling recruits to delay answering nature until they reached the latrine.

But arguing that Revolutionary veterans deserved whatever goodies politicians chose to shower on



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them ignored the deal the Continental Congress had struck with its army – and, implicitly, with the public financing that army. Congress [promised recruits cash payments, of course, which often included a “bounty” immediately upon enlisting as well as wages, rations, a uniform and other accouterments.](#) As its inability to finance the payroll became increasingly obvious, Congress added land as an emolument, whether in existing states or on the frontier. These inducements varied over time; they very occasionally included a guarantee that [“Every person, who may](#) be disabled in engagement, will receive half pay during life or an allowance proportioned to the injury sustained.” But the Continental Congress knew better than to obligate taxpayers to support elderly or indigent soldiers: patriots might ask why they were overthrowing the costly British government with its pensioned veterans and thieving politicians if a costly American one with pensioned veterans and thieving politicians were to replace it.

We’ve come a long and very tragic way since then. Our current rulers with their Veterans’ Administration eagerly and openly laze us with such obligations: how else will they lure healthy teens into risking life and limb for the American Empire? Indeed, Barack Obama did everything but hand out suitcases of unmarked bills as [he grovelled before the Disabled American Veterans in Atlanta on Monday](#): “...as President, it’s been my pleasure ... to make sure America is serving our veterans as well as you’ve served us. (Applause.) And, most recently, to sign advanced appropriations into law so that veterans[‘ sic] health care will never again be held hostage to the budget battles and the political games in Washington. (Applause.)... as we mark the end of America’s combat mission in Iraq, a grateful America must pay tribute to all who served there. (Applause.)”

Judging from the presidential pandering, appeals to the purse work far better than those to patriotism, so-called. Were I a vet, disabled or otherwise, I would be incensed at how venal Obama deems me – but it seems I’m made of more sensitive stuff than his audience, based on their tiresomely frequent applause: “Your country is going to take care of you when you come home. (Applause.) ... I’ve charged Secretary Shinseki with building a 21st century VA. (Applause.) And that includes one of the largest percentage increases to the VA budget in the past 30 years. (Applause.) ... we’re going to keep on making historic commitments to our veterans. (Applause.)”

The Corrupter-in-Chief then paid off various groups of vets: “For about 200,000 Vietnam vets who may have been exposed to Agent Orange..., we’re making it easier for you to get the health care and benefits you need. (Applause.) For our Gulf War veterans, we’ve declared that nine infectious diseases are now presumed to be related to your service in Desert Storm. (Applause.) For our disabled veterans ... (Applause.) ... severely disabled retirees ... (Applause.) ... for rural veterans and women veterans (Applause.) ... our Priority 8 veterans ... (Applause.)” And so on, and on, *ad nauseam*.

This bald bribery endangers our liberty as much as it does our wallet — and boy, does it endanger our wallet. The VA [“request\[s\] an astounding \\$125 billion for 2011](#) — and that’s “up \$11 billion, or 10 percent, from the 2010 enacted budget (excluding funds provided by the Agent Orange Supplemental),” as its own website fearlessly admits. And why not: which Congressional coward would dare tackle so invulnerable a lobby? Indeed, the avaricious agency also confesses, “This is the second year of large budget increases in VA’s discretionary budget[, sic] which is up almost 20% since 2009.” [It brags](#) as well that “The United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans of any nation in the world” – so “comprehensive,” in fact, that “The World War II GI Bill, signed into law on June 22, 1944, is said to have had more impact on the American way of life than any law since the Homestead Act more than a century ago.” And here we thought we were masters of our own fate, not hostages to veterans’ cupidity!



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The Feds rely on a large and steady stream of volunteers to maintain their worldwide empire — kids whom they will deliberately and often fatally endanger in wars they no longer even pretend have anything to do with American freedom: “And whether you served in the Gulf to free a captive Kuwait,” [Barry prattled](#), “or fought in the streets of Mogadishu or stopped an ethnic slaughter in the Balkans, you too are part of an unbroken line of service stretching across two centuries.”

But what if politicians couldn’t bribe their dupes with billions of our taxes? Imagine Sam Slaughter knew that he’d be on his own after the war even if the villagers shooting back while he bombed their hovels were to paralyze him or blow his legs off: no “21st century VA,” no “large percentage increase to the VA budget,” in fact, no “VA budget” or VA at all. The military would continue to attract some recruits, sure, but most would probably opt for productive, which is to say private-sector, employment. And the American Empire would shrink, perhaps even to Constitutional oblivion.

When King George I promoted the VA to the Cabinet in 1989, he “[hailed the creation](#) of the new Department saying, ‘There is only one place for the veterans of America, in the Cabinet Room, at the table with the President of the United States of America.’” Of course: it’s the cat-bird seat for picking our pockets. Shame on soldiers who cheer this looting of us, and a pox on politicians who exploit such greed to further the American Empire.

[\[i\]](#) George Dudley Seymour, *A Documentary Life of Nathan Hale*. New Haven, privately printed 1941. Page 373 [reprinted from Revolutionary Pension Files S.32854].



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