

### **Eric Shinseki – Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

Eric Shinseki was born in 1942. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1965 and later received a master's degree from Duke University.

Shinseki served in the U.S. Army for 38 years. He served two tours of duty during the Vietnam War, during which he was awarded two Purple Heart medals for injuries sustained. In addition to serving at various military posts stateside during his long career, Shinseki spent 10 years in Europe, where among other assignments he served as head of the NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia.

In June 1999, Shinseki was appointed Army Chief of Staff, a position he held for four years. During his tenure, he became most famous for his public split with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld over the number of troops that would be needed to secure a post-war Iraq. In February 2003, Shinseki testified in front of Congress that "several hundred thousand" troops would be needed to stabilize Iraq following an invasion. Both Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz were angered by those remarks and expressed their disagreements publicly.

In 2006, General John Abizaid, chief of U.S. central Command, stated publicly that "General Shinseki was right."

#### **Sources:**

Rucker, Philip. *Obama Picks Shinseki to Lead Veterans Affairs*, THE WASHINGTON POST, December 7, 2008.

Calmes, Jackie. *General Critical of Iraq War is V.A. Chief Pick*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, December 7, 2008.