



Veterans' Update

Your quarterly newsletter on Veterans' Issues from
Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite

August, 2006

Greetings,

The Veterans' Update is a newsletter created to keep you abreast of issues and legislation important to the veterans of Florida's 5th Congressional District. I hope that you find this issue informative and educational. If you need any help with the benefits or care you receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), please do not hesitate to contact my Brooksville district office at (866) 492-4835.

Sincerely,



Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite

*This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.
It is provided as a service to 5th Congressional District constituents.*



M.C.


Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0903
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

JULY 27: NATIONAL KOREAN WAR VETERANS ARMISTICE DAY

Fifty-three years ago, on July 27, 1953, the United States, North Korea and China signed an armistice that officially ended the three-year Korean War. For too many Florida veterans, the Korean War has become known as "The Forgotten War," sandwiched between World War II and Vietnam. It was the heroic efforts of our men and women in the Armed Forces that helped maintain democracy and preserved freedom for millions on the Korean Peninsula.



**Korean War Memorial
in Washington, D.C.**

While the signing of the treaty may have ended the conflict, it did not end the United States' presence there. Thousands of brave men and women served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the three years of the war, as well as in the years since the war ended. Today, my office is working hand-in-hand with local veterans groups to identify the thousands of 5th District constituents who served in Korea and deserve recognition. If you served in Korea and would like to see if you are

eligible for either the Korean Defense Service Medal or the Korean War Service Medal, please contact my office toll-free at (866) 492-4835.

Today, it is clear that the Americans who fought in Korea helped build a better world for the Korean people. South Korea has flourished spectacularly under U.S. protection while Communist North Korea is in dire straits, unable to feed its people. Like we see today in the newly liberated countries of Iraq and Afghanistan, when people have the freedom and will to determine their own fate, they will embrace democracy, freedom and the right of self-determination.

U.S. HOUSE CHOOSES FINAL ORLANDO VA HOSPITAL SITE

After more than two years of attempts to find a site suitable for the construction of the new VA hospital in the Orlando area, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee has designated the Lake Nona site for the future VA hospital. One of only two new VA hospitals to be constructed in the nation (the other is in Nevada) the Orlando site will provide much needed relief to the overburdened VA hospitals in Tampa and Gainesville.

One of the main benefits to the Lake Nona site is its proximity to the new medical school facility being constructed on the same site. As with most VA hospitals around the U.S., pairing VA facilities with academic institutions allows veterans access to high-quality medical procedures, state-of-the-art equipment and a ready supply of resident doctors.

Also included in the legislation is more than \$7 million for the Spinal Cord Injury Center at the James Haley VA hospital in Tampa, and more than \$85 million for the expansion of the Gainesville VA hospital. Both hospitals will utilize these funds to enhance patient care and provide increased access to veterans throughout the region. The bill, H.R. 5815, now heads to the Senate for consideration.

VA HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION FOR VETERANS OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Veterans are eligible to enter into the VA Health Care System if they served on active duty in a combat theater during WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, or the campaigns in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Global War on Terror.

VA Seamless Transition

In response to seriously injured service members returning from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the VA has stationed personnel at major military hospitals to help wounded

service members as they transition from military to civilian life. Service members who have questions about benefits or need assistance in filing a claim can contact me toll-free at (866) 492-4385.

Transition Assistance Program

The Transition Assistance Program consists of comprehensive three-day workshops at military installations designed to help service members as they transition into civilian life. The program provides job-search, employment, and training information, as well as VA benefits information, to service members within 12 months of separation or 24 months of retirement.

Both James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa and the Malcolm-Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville have these programs. Please feel free to contact my office for more information.

224TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PURPLE HEART MEDAL IS ON AUGUST 7, 2006

The United States has fought in many wars throughout its proud history. Brave men and women have marched through foreign lands in defense of freedom and liberty. American soldiers have fought with honor and distinction in wars as close to home as the War of 1812, and as far away as the Korean War. In each of these conflicts, soldiers have engaged the enemy on behalf of all Americans and have been recognized for their bravery and sacrifice.

One of the most prestigious medals that a military member may earn is the Purple Heart. Established by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War, the Purple Heart has been awarded to hundreds of thousands of worthy Americans over the past 224 years.

In the 5th District, I have had the honor of awarding more than 20 veterans with the Purple Heart, including some who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I would like to mention the names of some of these courageous men, including Kenneth Bradshaw, John Folsom, Wendell Stevens, William Schaub, Harold Kurth, Sanford Walke, James McDowell, Patsy D'Ambrosio, Arthur Neilson, Richard Power, Agostino Loporto and John Fedyszyn. While each of these brave veterans has their own story about their time in combat, they all share one trait; uncommon valor and honor.

Each of these Purple Heart recipients bears the scar of their wound, but also the gratitude of the American people and the admiration of freedom loving peoples around the globe. I would hope that all Americans will take a moment to recognize wounded veterans' bravery and patriotism this August 7th.



Rep. Brown-Waite Discusses Increased Congressional Funding for Veterans with Purple Heart Recipient Richard Power

REP. BROWN-WAITE'S VETERANS CERTIFICATION BILL PASSES HOUSE

On July 24, 2006, legislation I introduced to help veterans transfer the skills they learned in the military into jobs in the private sector passed the U.S. House on a bipartisan basis. H.R. 5220, the *Veterans Certification and Licensure Act of 2006*, was included in H.R. 3082, a comprehensive bill addressing veterans' contracting, education, employment and training, memorial services, and benefits for veterans.

For far too long, many employers have overlooked one of the most skilled segments of the workforce – our nation's veterans. As a Member of Congress, I have an obligation to ensure that this does not happen in the future. My legislation takes an important step toward fulfilling this obligation, while ensuring that these talented individuals are able to help fill much-needed labor shortages.

Under the demonstration project, the Secretary of the Department of Labor will select at least ten military occupational specialties that have skill sets similar to civilian occupations in areas of high

worker demand or industry growth. The Secretary will work with each State to identify local requirements for obtaining certifications, credentials, or licenses in areas relevant to these occupations. Finally, the project will devise strategies to help military personnel overcome any obstacles or burdens created by these requirements. The legislation now heads to the Senate for consideration.

Contact Information for 5th District VA Clinics

With more veterans in the 5th District than any other congressional district in the nation, providing quality access to health care clinics has been a top priority for me and my staff. Located throughout the eight counties that comprise the 5th District, VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics are an invaluable resource for those veterans seeking outpatient care.

As I travel throughout the District, I take the time to sit down with the clinic doctors and administrators to give them updates on what is happening in Congress that affects the VA, and to hear any complaints or compliments from the doctors and their staff. These discussions give me the first hand feedback that I use when working with other Members on the House Veterans Affairs' Committee to decide overall funding levels and what improvements to the VA health care system should be made.

As you might imagine, with so many veterans moving into the 5th District, men and women ask me all the time how to find the closest clinic to their hometown. I have provided phone numbers and address for each of the eight clinics that 5th District veterans utilize below. If you have any questions or concerns about the access or timeliness of your care, please do not hesitate to contact me at (866) 492-4835.

Brooksville VA Outpatient Clinic 14540 Cortez Blvd. Ste 108 Brooksville, FL 34613 352-597-8287	Lakeland VA Outpatient Clinic 3240 S. Florida Ave. Lakeland, FL 33803 863-701-2470	Lecanto VA Outpatient Clinic 2804 West Marc Knighton Court Lecanto, FL 34461 352-746-8000	Leesburg VA Outpatient Clinic 711 West Main Street Leesburg, FL 34188 352-435-4000
Pasco VA Outpatient Clinic 9912 Little Road New Port Richey, FL 34654 727-869-4100	Ocala VA Outpatient Clinic 1515 E. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34470 352-369-3320	The Villages Outpatient Clinic 1950 Laurel Manor Drive The Villages, FL 32162 352-205-8900	Zephyrhills VA Outpatient Clinic 37814 Medical Arts Court Zephyrhills, FL 33541 813-780-2550

###



**Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite, 20 North Main St., Room 200
 Brooksville, FL 34601, toll free 1-866-GWAITE-5**

<http://brown-waite.house.gov>

Also, be sure to sign up on my Congressional Web site to receive my weekly e-newsletter. All you need to do is submit your name and e-mail address to receive it each Friday.