

**March, 2007**

Greetings,

The Veterans' Update is a newsletter created to keep you abreast of issues and legislation important to the veterans of Florida's 5<sup>th</sup> 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 toll-free at (866) 492-4835.

Sincerely,



Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite

---

### **BROOKSVILLE PINEBROOK VA CLINIC TO BE EXPANDED YET AGAIN**

With an ever increasing veteran population in Hernando County, the Pinebrook Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Brooksville needed a significant expansion to meet veteran demands. Having successfully fought to triple the size of the existing clinic when she came to Congress, Rep. Brown-Waite continued to put pressure on the Veterans Administration to expand it even further.

The regional VISN office approved an expansion of 1,700 square feet on January 25, 2007. This additional space will provide a shifting of administrative and other functions, allowing an expansion of additional/multiple provider examination and treatment rooms. Workloads can also be increased since additional "provider scheduling slots" will be available. Even with this expansion, there is a great need for another CBOC in the Hernando County region. In 2005, the Brooksville clinic had 19,773 visits and treated 4,774 unique patients. In 2006, those numbers jumped to 23,909 and 6,994, respectively. Rep. Brown-Waite will continue to work with the VA to ensure that construction of additional facilities will be located in Florida's 5<sup>th</sup> District.

### **VETERANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO CONSTRUCT A NEW CBOC IN LAKELAND**

In addition to the Brooksville expansion, VISN has approved the construction of a new CBOC in Lakeland. This construction would expand and relocate the existing Lakeland CBOC to 9,929 square feet. The selection of a site and total costs should be finalized by the end of May. The expected construction completion date for the new clinic should be May, 2008. This new clinic will bring another CBOC to northern Polk County and will help meet the additional healthcare needs of area veterans.

### **VETERAN'S HISTORY PROJECT**

With the 5<sup>th</sup> District having the second most veterans of any congressional district in the United States, Rep. Brown-Waite has worked hard to ensure that veterans' military service gets the attention it deserves.

One way to recognize this service is to take part in the Veterans History Project. This Project seeks to record the stories and histories of our nation's veterans, before they are lost forever. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. has collected hundreds of thousands of personal stories from veterans around the nation.



**Rep. Brown-Waite Discusses with a Local Veteran the Requirements Needed to Receive Medals Earned for Military Service**

When Rep. Brown-Waite is back in Florida, she schedules times to meet with individual veterans at the Hernando County Broadcasting studios and helps take down their histories. This is a wonderful opportunity for veterans to record their memories from their service days and ensure that future generations of Americans will never forget their sacrifices. If you would like more information about the Veterans History Project, please contact Rep. Brown-Waite's office toll-free at (866) 492-4835.

## **DNA Can Help Make Positive POW/MIA Identifications**

The U.S. Department of Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office recently held a regional meeting in Tampa to meet with military veterans and their families who may have relatives that were lost in combat. Over the past five years, the remains of more than 500 soldiers have been located, and nearly eighty percent of them have been positively identified through the use of DNA matching. To find out more about the Defense Department's DNA program for soldiers missing in action, please visit their website at [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo).

## **ELIGIBLE VETERANS CAN RECEIVE THEIR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS**

As every Florida resident is aware, thousands of veterans live in our great State. Many of these veterans served with honor and distinction in World War II and Korea, giving up precious years of their lives to fight the enemy on foreign shores. Some of these brave soldiers never got the chance to graduate high school because they entered into military service. The State of Florida has passed legislation that allows those veterans who missed graduating from high school to receive a high school diploma. Included below are the eligibility criteria for both World War II and Korean veterans who wish to apply for a diploma. For both of these requests, there is an application the veteran must complete that they can get by contacting Rep. Brown-Waite's office toll-free at (866) 492-4835.

### *WWII Veterans High School Diploma – Requirements*

- Must be a current Florida resident, but could have attended high school in any state
- Been honorably discharged from any branch of the Armed Forces
- Enrolled in high school between 1937 and 1946
- Been scheduled to graduate from high school between 1941 and 1950
- Been inducted into the Armed Forces between September 16, 1940 and December 31, 1946

### *High School Diplomas for Korean War Veterans – Requirements*

- Must be a current Florida resident, but could have attended high school in any state
- Inducted into military service between June 1950 and January 1954
- Been honorably discharged from any branch of the Armed Forces
- Started high school between 1946 and 1950
- Scheduled to graduate from high school between 1950 and 1954

## **Rep. Brown-Waite Can Help You Receive Military Service Medals**

One of the proudest things Rep. Brown-Waite does as a Member of Congress is help veterans receive the medals they earned during their service. Especially for those veterans whose records were stored at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri that was destroyed by fire in 1973, reconstructing your service history can be challenging.



**Thank-You-America Certificate**

Rep. Brown-Waite and her staff are here to help you work with the Department of Defense and apply for those medals you are entitled to receive. She is always happy to personally present these to you when she is traveling throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> District. If you do not think you have received all of the medals you deserve, or have questions about your eligibility for certain medals or badges, please contact Rep. Brown-Waite's Brooksville office toll-free at (866) 492-4835.

### **THANK YOU AMERICA CERTIFICATE**

French authorities are issuing a certificate to recognize the participation of all American and allied soldiers who took part in the Normandy landing and who contributed to the liberation of France.

The certificate is intended to express the gratitude of the French people to the soldiers who participated in the Normandy landing and liberation of France, on French territory and in French territorial waters and airspace, between June 6, 1944 and May 8, 1945. The certificate will not be issued posthumously.

The ten Consuls General of France in the United States will issue the documents on behalf of the French authorities. They will do so in coordination with state Veterans Affairs offices, Veterans Service Organizations' national and states representatives and Veterans associations.

### **COLD WAR RECOGNITION CERTIFICATE**

The Cold War Recognition Certificate was recently approved by the Secretary of Defense. All members of the Armed Forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the U.S. anytime during the Cold War era, which is defined as September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991, are eligible.



To be eligible for this certificate, applicants must certify that the nature of their service was honorable and provide supporting documentation of proof of service. Supporting documents may include leave and earnings statements, DD-214 or other discharge papers or a SF50 (Civilian Personnel Action Form).

### **NEW PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR NOW OPEN – SEND YOUR STORIES TODAY**

As you may have heard, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, a 7,500 square foot facility in New York State, is now open to the public. This new museum will share the stories of America's combat wounded veterans and those who never came back, all recipients of the Purple Heart.

Since 1932, over one million members of the military from all walks of life earned this medal in service to the nation. Their stories will be preserved and shared through exhibits, live and videotaped interviews with the veterans themselves, and the Roll of Honor, an interactive computer program preserving the stories of each individual.

If you are a Purple Heart Recipient, or know someone who is, you can make sure their story will be preserved by contacting Rep. Brown-Waite's office toll-free at (866) 492-4835. One of the staff members will be happy to send you a form where you can fill out your name and personal story, proof of receipt (a DD-214 discharge certificate or equivalent), as well as any photographs and personal mementos that will help tell each recipient's story. Rep. Brown-Waite will then make sure that the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor receives your unique story and learns of your bravery and service to our nation.



###



**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.