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M.C.  
Presorted Standard  
CAR-RT SORT  
*GINNY BROWN-WAITE*

# 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 toll-free at (866) 492-4835.

Sincerely,

*GINNY BROWN-WAITE*

Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite





CONGRESSWOMAN

**Ginny Brown-Waite**

**Veterans' Update**

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

### **GINNY HOSTS HER ANNUAL VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD JANUARY 11, 2008**

Every year, I meet with 5<sup>th</sup> District veterans to gain valuable input regarding local veteran related issues. In addition to my many visits to area Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), James Haley and to local VFW and American Legion Posts, these meetings are the best opportunity for veterans to speak directly to me and share their comments, concerns and praise about the VA.

As a senior member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I work every day to make VA health benefits stronger and of higher quality for American veterans. When I travel throughout the district meeting with veterans and their families, I often hear innovative ideas for how to improve the VA system. My annual advisory board gives me the input I need to go back to Washington and tell the career bureaucrats running the VA what your specific concerns are, and how we can work together to help find solutions.

My next veteran advisory board will be held this January 11, 2008. If you would like to become a member of my veterans advisory board, please contact me to fill out an application form. For more information about the meeting, or to share your comments about the VA, please call me toll-free at 866-492-4835.

### **BROOKSVILLE VA CLINIC EXPANSION GRAND OPENING COMING JANUARY 11, 2008**

With an ever increasing veteran population in Hernando County, the Pinebrook Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Brooksville needed a significant expansion to meet veteran demands. Having already been successful in tripling the size of the existing clinic when I first came to Congress, I continued to put pressure on the Veterans Administration to expand it even further. The good news is that the VA authorized a significant addition to the facility and we will commemorate the grand opening in January.

With another 1,700 square foot expansion, the clinic will now have more space for additional/multiple provider examination and treatment rooms. Workloads can also be increased since additional "provider scheduling slots" will be available. The grand opening for the expanded facilities will be held this year on January 11, 2008. Look for an announcement in the newspaper or contact my office toll-free at 866-492-4835 for more information.

### **NEW VA SECRETARY DR. JAMES PEAKE CONFIRMED BY U.S. SENATE**

On December 14, the Senate confirmed Dr. James Peake, Lieutenant General (Retired), United States Army Medical Corps, as the new Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

As the Ranking Member on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, I can tell you that Dr. Peake's confirmation is great



**Dr. James Peake Confirmed  
as VA Secretary December  
14, 2007**

news for American veterans. To have a medical doctor in the position of VA Secretary will give the Department much needed insight into the health care needs of 5<sup>th</sup> District veterans.

Dr. Peake graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1966, and was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam as a platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Division. He received his medical degree from Cornell University in 1972. From 2000 to 2004, Dr. Peake was Surgeon General of the U.S. Army. From 2004 to 2006, he was executive vice president and chief operating officer of Project HOPE, a nonprofit international health foundation. In his latest role prior to confirmation as VA Secretary, Dr. Peake served as chief medical director and chief operating officer of QTC Management, a firm that provides disability medical evaluations for disability-based benefit and insurance programs.

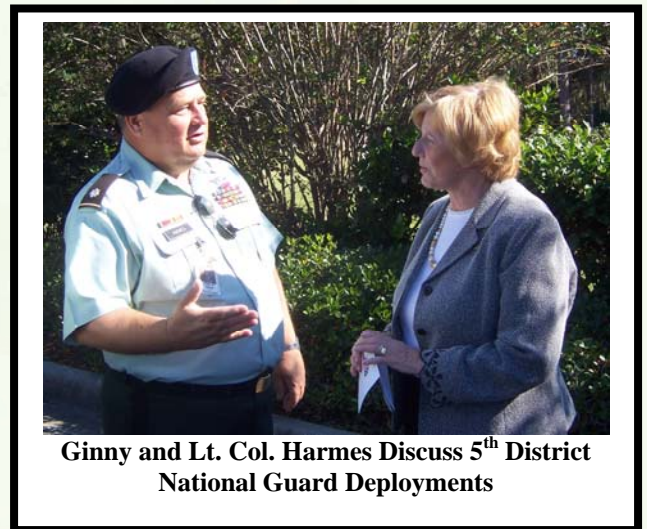
### **VFW POST 10209 GRAND OPENING**

As one of the most venerated veteran outreach posts in Hernando County, VFW Post 10209 will commemorate its grand opening dedication on January, 2008. With more than 1,300 members, the Post had outgrown their old building and needed a larger facility for their meetings. In addition to the previous meeting hall being over forty years old, veterans and guests were looking for an updated and cleaner facility for their events and meetings. With the new Post building expanding out to a total of 14,000 square feet, the new facility is the largest VFW Post in the State of Florida.

Named after the former longtime Commander of the Post, Ed Noll, the dedication of the building will be held on Saturday, January 12, 2008. I will be on hand to help dedicate the building and also place a flag I donated into a time capsule. The flag was originally flown over the United States Capitol and has been flying over the new VFW Post from its opening date earlier this year till the dedication ceremony. The flag will then be added to a time capsule that commemorates the day's events and won't be opened for fifty years.

### **GINNY HELPS PASS RECORD INCREASES FOR VETERANS HEALTH CARE**

As part of the final legislation that funds the federal government for the upcoming year, money for veterans once again reached record levels. As we have seen since 1995, veterans have received significant year-over-year increases in federal appropriations. This year veterans will receive \$43.1 billion, \$6.6 billion above 2007 and \$3.7 billion over the President's request for veterans medical care, claims processing, and facility improvements. I was extremely proud to vote in favor of these important funds that are summarized below.



**Ginny and Lt. Col. Harmes Discuss 5<sup>th</sup> District National Guard Deployments**

#### **Veterans Health Administration:**

- Medical Services: \$29 billion to improve access to medical services for all veterans.
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse: \$2.9 billion for specialty mental health care and \$429 million for the Substance Abuse Program.
- Assistance for Homeless Vets: \$130 million to help care for an 2,300 additional homeless veterans.
- \$15 million for the Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, a program to ensure a more seamless transition for our veterans, particularly in the areas of greatest concern for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan – traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, increased survival of severe burns, and amputation.
- Medical Administration: \$3.5 billion, to ensure the efficient operation of the Department's health care system.

- Medical Facilities: \$4.1 billion, for on-going maintenance and renovations of existing facilities.
- Medical and Prosthetic Research: \$480 million for research to improve the quality of life for injured and aging veterans.

**Major Construction:** \$1.1 billion, to fulfill the Department's commitment to fund recommendations made by the Capitol Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission.

**Extended Care Facilities:** \$165 million for grants to states for construction and modification of extended care facilities. The funding level will satisfy all currently identified life and safety needs and still provide funding for the construction of three new facilities.

**Information Technology,** \$2 billion to improve the health records system to help ensure that medical information follows patients as they transition from the Department of Defense health system to the VA health system.

**United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims:** \$22.7 million to review appeals from veterans denied benefits.

#### **GINNY'S RESOLUTION HONORING THE NATIONAL GUARD PASSES U.S. HOUSE**

On December 18, 2007, I was very proud that the House passed my resolution, H. Res. 542, which expressed the unconditional support for the National Guard by the U.S. House of Representatives. The legislation passed on a bipartisan and unanimous vote of 408-0.

Hundreds of 5<sup>th</sup> District Guardsmen and women have answered the call of duty and have gone over to Iraq and Afghanistan as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. With hundreds of thousands of Guard members serving throughout the United States and around the globe, every Member of Congress should be eternally grateful for the sacrifices of the men and women in the National Guard. Whether it is responding to hurricanes in Florida, snow storms in Montana or guarding our southern border, the Guard performs the highest level of service for our nation. My resolution makes it clear that the U.S. House of Representatives supports the Guard unconditionally and that we will do whatever it takes for them to be successful in their mission.

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**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.