

# Eighth District Veterans Report

*from U.S. Representative Bill Posey*

Dear Friend,

At this time of year all Americans are reminded that our liberty is not free. Our brave men and women in uniform know through experience the sacrifices that were made to secure our nation and the liberty we enjoy.

We set aside time to remember those who paid the ultimate price securing our ability to live free. As we reflect on their sacrifice for us, let us remember in our prayers and thoughts the loved ones they left behind, for they feel that loss most each day.

Let us also us not forget today's generation of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen who have answered the call to protect the nation and are this very day serving on the front lines of freedom across the globe. Let's hold them and their family members close in our daily prayers.

President Eisenhower, in his first inaugural address, reminded us that: "We must be ready to dare all for our country. History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid." For their courage, their service and their sacrifice, we owe our brave fallen heroes, and all those in uniform who serve this nation, a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Sincerely,

*Bill*



Rep. Posey meets with WWII Veterans participating in a recent Honor Flight.

***"This is a bittersweet time, as we reflect on those who gave all to secure freedom for those they loved most."***

-Rep. Bill Posey

## STRENGTHENING VETERANS BENEFITS PROGRAMS

- ✓ **Voted to reject the TRICARE fee increases** proposed by the Department of Defense and the Administration (*H.R. 4310, Roll Call 291*)
- ✓ **VA ID Card:** Supports legislation to enable all veterans to obtain ID cards from the Department of Veterans Affairs (*H.R. 1598*)
- ✓ **Supporting Veterans' COLA:** Providing annual veterans cost-of-living adjustments (*H.R. 569*)
- ✓ **Meeting the Needs of Surviving Spouses:** Ending the practice of reducing Survivor Benefit Program benefits by amount received in Dependence and Indemnity Compensation (*H.R. 32*)
- ✓ **Services for Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans:** Granting presumptive coverage for Agent Orange if serving within 12 miles off shore in Vietnam (*H.R. 543*)
- ✓ **Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act:** Ensuring immediate VA healthcare to veterans and their family members who were stationed at Camp Lejeune and have been diagnosed with a disease related to the water contamination that occurred between 1957 and 1987 (*H.R. 1627/Public Law 112-154*)
- ✓ **Quick Access to Veterans Medical Care:** Legislation would require the VA to schedule a medical appointment within 30 days of a veteran requesting a medical appointment (*Cosponsor H.R. 241*)

## HELPING VETERANS TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

- ✓ **Improving Veterans Education Benefits:** Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010 updated GI Benefits and made sure that these earned benefits were more fully available to the veterans who had earned them
- ✓ **Assisting Veterans Transitioning from Military Jobs to Civilian Jobs:** Voted for passage of The Veterans Skills to Jobs Act requiring Federal Agencies to accept military training as sufficient to satisfy training or certification requirements for federal licenses (*Public Law 112-147*)
- ✓ **Curbing Veterans Unemployment** by voting to establish the VetStar Award for businesses that excel in providing gainful employment for veterans (*Roll Call #383*)
- ✓ **Strengthening Mental Health Screening and Suicide Prevention:** Helped advance suicide prevention legislation and funding and ensure greater access to mental health screening and services (*H.R. 2005*)

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR CURRENT SERVICEMEMBERS

- ✓ **Opposing Sequestration:** Voted against the Budget Control Act, which put sequestration in place, and voted for legislation to replace sequestration (*Roll Call 690*)
- ✓ **Supplying our Troops with Equipment and Training** they need to win on the battlefield (*Roll Call 645*)
- ✓ **Helping Military Spouses with Employment:** Providing military spouses a \$500 tax credit to pay for licensure or certification when moving to a new state (*H.R. 1620*)
- ✓ **Guaranteeing Military Pay During Government Shutdowns:** If ever there is a government shutdown, we should make sure our troops get paid (*H.R. 149*)

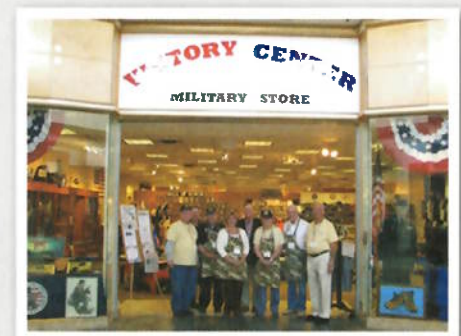
## Veterans Advisory Council



Rep. Posey met recently with his local Veterans Advisory Council (pictured above) to discuss pressing local and national issues affecting veterans. The Council consists of men and women from the various military branches and various Veterans Service Organizations. Council members shared directly with Rep. Posey details about some of the current challenges with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs, issues related to local access, support for the new north Brevard Veterans Cemetery, concerns about the serious needs of those currently returning from theater, and some of the positive steps that local organizations are taking to meet veterans' needs in their local communities.

## New Indian River County Veterans Store

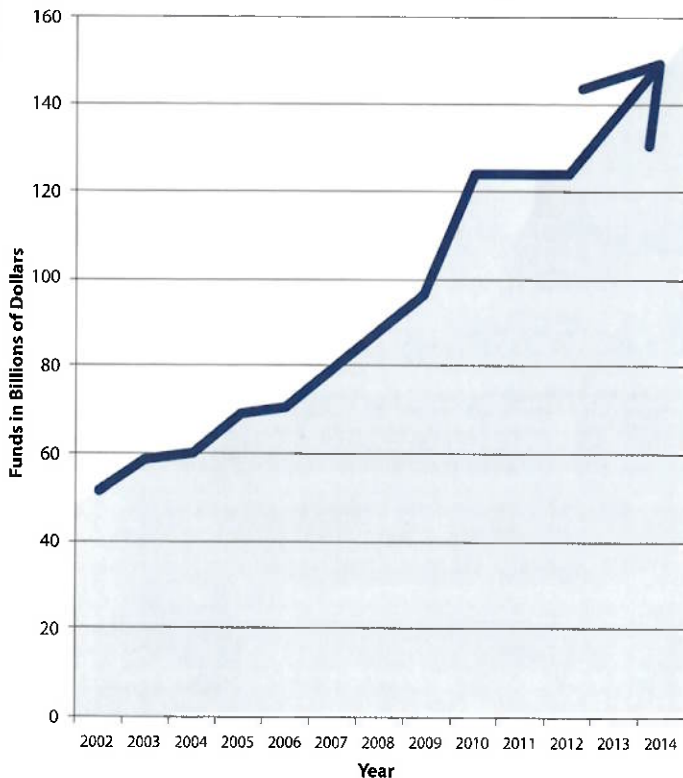
At his Veterans Advisory Council meeting, Indian River County Veterans Council President Martin Zickert told Rep. Posey about the store they have opened at Indian River Mall on Route 60. This store sells armed forces merchandise, and also has Veterans Service Officers on site to help veterans process their claims. (pictured below)





# AGENDA FOR VETERANS

## Veterans Funding



Source: The President's FY2014 Budget. Based on Budget Authority

## Fixing the VA Claims Backlog

Rep. Posey supports the House Veterans Affairs Committee oversight hearings into the troubling veterans disability benefits backlog. Congress and veterans expect improvements given record-high VA funding, additional staffing and protection from sequestration budget cuts. "The delay is inexcusable and must be fixed," said Rep. Posey. "All our veterans who have served this nation in uniform deserve high-quality service from the VA, and the VA needs to take corrective action to ensure that promises are kept in a timely manner."

## Recognizing the 65th Infantry Regiment – the Borinqueneers

In 1898 Congress created the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment as a Puerto Rican segregated unit of the United States Army. Over time, the 65<sup>th</sup> has been called to serve our nation in World War I, World War II and most notably the Korean War, where they became known as "The Borinqueneers" and were among the first U.S. soldiers to engage the North Koreans in 1950.



On April 25<sup>th</sup> Rep. Posey introduced bipartisan legislation (H.R. 1726) with Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi to present the Borinqueneers with the Congressional Gold Medal. (pictured above) They are part of a proud tradition of service that includes such courageous fighters as the Tuskegee Airmen, Montford Point Marines, Navajo Code Talkers and the Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team – all of whom received the Congressional Gold Medal.

## Easing Transition from Military to Civilian Life

One of the greatest challenges for those transitioning from active duty to civilian life is having skills that are easily transferable. Rep. Posey has cosponsored the bipartisan Troop Talent Act (H.R. 1796) to ease the transition by:

- Lining up military skill sets with civilian credentials/licenses, giving Service members greater guidance so that they are preparing for military careers that also transfers easily into civilian work.
- Allowing Military Tuition Assistance (MTA) and Post 9-11 GI Bill benefits expenditures on courses and programs that guarantee a credential or industrial certification after successful completion.
- Increasing access to high-demand career fields for Service members by expanding DOD's pilot program on credentials to include information technology and other fast-growing industries.

## Investigating Benghazi - Many Questions Remain Unanswered

- **Why Was Backup Not Sent?** – It is becoming clear that there were repeated refusals to authorize military forces to respond to the attack, despite frantic requests from State Department officials on the ground in Libya. This terrorist attack resulted in the deaths of four Americans, including our Ambassador, Christopher Stevens.
- **ABC News Reported That Administration Removed All References to Al-Qaeda, Terrorism, and CIA Warnings. Why?** – On May 10, 2013 ABC reported that the White House removed "all references to Al-Qaeda and all references to CIA warning before the attack."
- **Anti-Muslim Video and Benghazi Demonstration Myth** – Despite the fact that State Department and Libyan officials knew the attack was a coordinated terrorist attack the day after the attack, why did Ambassador Susan Rice declare on multiple talk shows the following Sunday that it was a spontaneous demonstration in a response to the anti-Islamic movie Innocence of Muslims. And, why two weeks after the attack, in his address to the United Nations, did the President state, "there is no video that justifies an attack on an Embassy?"
- **Creation of a Select Committee Needed** – Rep. Posey is an original cosponsor of legislation to create a Select Committee on Benghazi.
- **Family of Slain American Calls for Select Committee** – Patricia Smith, mother of State Department Information Officer Sean Smith, who died in the attacks, has pleaded for answers and supports the creation of a Select Committee: "Please, please help me find out who is responsible and fix it so no more of our sons & daughters are abandoned by the country they love."

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## Local Veterans Receive Their Service Medals

Congressman Posey recently presented United States Army Retired Command Sgt. Major **Gordon L. Petro** of Melbourne with the POW (Prisoner of War) Medal for his service to our nation during the Korean War. (pictured at right)

Command Sgt. Major Petro was captured on September 3, 1951 at Mohyo-Dong in North Korea and returned after two years in captivity to the United Nations Military Control Munsan-Ni in South Korea on September 3, 1953. CSM Petro served our nation for 27 years prior to retiring and was never presented his POW Medal.

Army veteran **Stanley Kubel** of Melbourne also received his WWII medals 69 years after earning them. Kubel was presented by Posey Community Relations Director Rob Medina with the Presidential Unit Citation, the Good Conduct Medal, an Honorable Service lapel pin, the Asian Pacific Campaign Medal with three Combat Stars, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and the WWII Victory Medal. Kubel, who served in the Army Air Corps from 1942-45, ended his service as a staff sergeant.



## Posey's Personal Accountability Checklist

- ✓ Cut Congressional office budget - saving over \$500,000 in taxpayer dollars
- ✓ Rejected 2009 Congressional pay raise every year (approved before Posey came to Congress) and worked to block Congressional pay raises for 2010-13
- ✓ Every year since 2009, Rep. Posey has written a check to the U.S. Treasury to return the pay raise. (Treasury told Rep. Posey it could not deduct it and he would have to write a check back each year.)
- ✓ Voted to cut overall Congressional budgets by nearly 20% over the last three years - 5% in 2011, 6% in 2012 and over 8% in 2013
- ✓ Closing the revolving door between Congress and lobbying by imposing a five-year lobby ban on former Members of Congress and senior staff
- ✓ Paid for his own foreign travel personally and rejects taxpayer-funded or lobbyist-funded overseas trips

## Rep. Posey and His Staff are Here to Serve Veterans



**Rob Medina** and **Cheryl Moore** (pictured at left) serve on Rep. Posey's staff and have nearly 20 years combined experience in helping veterans with casework needs. Rob and Cheryl are well-versed in veterans issues personally and professionally. Rob

Medina is a U.S. Marine, no longer on active duty, and Cheryl Moore grew up a Navy dependent, the daughter of a WWII and Korean War veteran, and she is the mother of an U.S. Airman. They are here to help veterans navigate federal agencies, assist in obtaining medals, and secure Defense Dept. records.

*"Thank you for your time and effort intervening on my behalf for reinstating my dependency and indemnity compensation. This was done in a timely manner and is greatly appreciated."* – Vero Beach Constituent

*"My mother and I want to thank you and your staff for intervening on her behalf... the correspondence you forwarded, phone conversations, and actions already taken resolve the issues to the benefit of my mother."* – Palm Bay Constituent

*"Mere words of thanks to you hardly express my deep gratitude to you and your staff in helping obtain back-pay for my daughter, who is 100% disabled from the Navy."* – Titusville Constituent