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Veterans Day Update: November 11, 2010

Senator Brown believes that one of his highest priorities is serving his constituents in Ohio – particularly our state's veterans. Each day, he works to ensure that the men and women who bravely and selflessly serve in our nation's Armed Forces receive the benefits and support they have earned. As a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Senator Brown also works in Washington, DC on behalf of Ohio veterans.

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Helping Ohio Veterans Receive the Benefits and Medals they Earned



Last week, Sen. Brown presented a Purple Heart Award – that was 40 years overdue – to Ohio Veteran Joseph D. Thomas. After struggling to receive the Purple Heart he earned in 1970, Mr. Thomas contacted Sen. Brown's office for assistance. Sen. Brown worked to secure the medal for the Columbus-area native and also learned that he is eligible for seven additional service medals.

Sen. Brown's office routinely assists Ohio veterans access health care and educational benefits, receive retroactive VA benefits, and attain medals and honors. Caseworkers in his offices hold workshops throughout the state to help veterans manage their benefits. Senator Brown encourages Ohio veterans in need of assistance to contact his office at 1-888-896-OHIO (6446).

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury

Among the most pressing needs of this generation's veterans is the proper identification and treatment of combat wounds. Due to multiple – and extended – deployments to combat zones, and the widespread use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Iraq and Afghanistan, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) have emerged as the signature injuries among servicemen and servicewomen deployed to these theaters. These returning service members must receive appropriate early detection and treatment of PTSD and TBIs.

Senator Brown cosponsored the [Traumatic Brain](#)



Injury Act of 2008 – signed into law on April 28, 2008 – which expanded research to identify common therapeutic interventions used for the rehabilitation of individuals with TBI and prevent secondary neurological conditions. Sen. Brown is also a cosponsor of the [Post-Deployment Health Assessment Act](#), which would provide in-person mental health screening for every service member deployed in connection with a contingency operation. Most recently, Sen. Brown supported the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) final regulation – published on July 13, 2010 – that will make the

claims process easier for veterans with PTSD.

Agent Orange and Vietnam Era Veterans

For veterans from the Vietnam Era, establishing diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure is a primary concern. On September 1, 2010, the [VA published its final rule](#) adding Parkinson's disease, chronic B cell leukemias, and ischemic heart disease to the list of diseases already recognized as being associated with Agent Orange exposure. This ruling will simplify the path to quality health care and disability pay for more than 150,000 Vietnam veterans.

On September 23, 2010, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to examine way to improve the decision-making process for determining diseases associate with Agent Orange exposure. Prior to this hearing, Sen. Brown met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki and was confident that Secretary Shinseki made the right decision in adding ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease, and chronic B cell leukemias to the presumptive diseases list for Agent Orange exposure.



The Department of Veterans Affairs began distributing disability benefits to Vietnam Veterans who qualify for compensation on November 1, 2010. If you would like to file a claim, you may apply online at <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>, or call the VA's toll-free helpline at 1-800-749-8387.

Health Care and Disability Compensation for Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan Veterans

On Sep. 28, 2010, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it will expedite the treatment and care of Armed Forces personnel that formerly served – or are currently serving – in Southwest Asia. Beginning with the onset of the first Gulf War, service members who suffered from, or develop, Brucellosis, Campylobacter jejuni, Coxiella Burnetii (Q fever), Malaria, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Nontyphoid Salmonella, Shigella, Visceral leishmaniasis, or West Nile virus may be eligible for disability benefits or health care services from the VA. You may visit the [VA's website](#) for more information on compensation procedures and eligibility requirements for service-related illnesses.

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and Pay Raises for Our Service Members

The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2011 would provide funding for our nation's overseas contingency



operations; the evaluation of military systems and technologies; the Department of Defense's health care system; and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Furthermore, the FY11 NDAA would provide a raise in basic pay to military personnel, expand the Military Family Readiness Council, and increase Army end-strength. Senator Brown believes that Congress must pass this legislation to ensure that our military – including the more than 240,000 U.S. military service members currently deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan – have the equipment, technology, and support they need to accomplish their missions at home and abroad.

Veterans History Project and World War II Registry

Sen. Brown is encouraging Ohioans to participate in the Veterans History Project (VHP). Created by Congress in 2000, VHP is aimed at collecting and preserving the personal accounts of American wartime veterans. To date, the VHP has received more than 65,000 individual stories. For more information on the Veterans History Project, please visit their [website](#). You can also honor a World War II veteran by sharing their story and memories with our nation. To register a loved one, or search the database, [click here](#).

Upcoming Hearings

[Hearing](#): Review of the VA and DoD Integrated Disability Evaluation System
November 18, 2010

Casework

If you require Senator Brown's assistance with your VA benefits, service medals, or social services, please contact Senator Brown's Cleveland office toll free at 888-896-OHIO (6446) or [click here](#).



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