

Always Here to Serve Kansas Veterans

My office has locations in Topeka and Pittsburg ready to serve you. From resolving problems with the Veterans Administration to retrieving military records, we're always here to serve Kansas veterans.

CONTACT CONGRESSWOMAN NANCY BOYDA AT:

Washington, D.C. 1711 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 Phone: (202) 225-6601 Fax: (202) 225-7986	Topeka Office The Gem Building 510 SW 10 th Ave., Topeka, KS 66612 Phone: (785) 234-8111 Fax: (785) 234-9111	Pittsburg Office The Stillwell Hotel 701 N. Broadway, Suite A, Pittsburg, KS 66762 Phone: (620) 231-3011 Fax: (620) 231-4011
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Please visit our website, boyda.house.gov, and sign-up to receive your weekly electronic newsletter.



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(Union Bug)

Congress in Your Mailbox

JULY 2007

CONGRESSWOMAN NANCY BOYDA



UPDATE ON VETERANS



boyda.house.gov

Dear Friend,

America's 23 million veterans never hesitated to serve their country, but today, too many are waiting for their country to serve them. As I've traveled up and down Kansas, I've heard again and again that the state of veterans' benefits is simply unacceptable.

Nationwide, some 400,000 veterans are waiting to receive their disability and other benefits. Imagine if all 400,000 veterans had to apply for their benefits in Washington, as they used to do after the Civil War. Imagine if they all lined up together as clerks sorted through papers bound, literally, in red tape. The line would stretch 150 miles – the distance from the U.S. Capitol to Philadelphia.

America can do better. We must take care of the veterans who had the guts, the courage, and the work ethic to serve this country. We must not leave the Veterans Administration so underfunded that it cannot serve the new veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

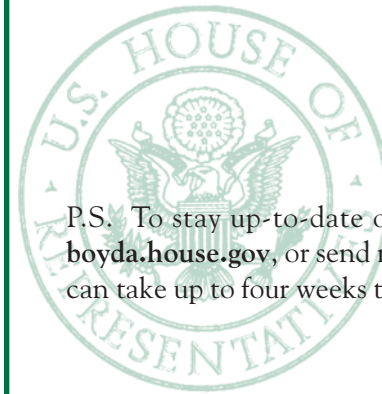
I'm truly excited to tell you that Congress has already taken an enormous step to support America's veterans. On June 15, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the 2008 Fiscal Year Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, which provided a \$6.7 billion increase in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This is the largest single-year funding increase in VA history. Its impact is impossible to overstate. A colleague of mine in Congress, someone who has served in public office for over two decades, described the passage of this bill as "the single proudest moment of my public life." I couldn't agree more.

Now, having passed this historic veterans' appropriations bill, our next item of business is to guarantee that the money is well spent. I'll work hard to ensure that these funds make a day-to-day difference in veterans' lives.

With warm regards,

Nancy Boyda
Member of Congress

P.S. To stay up-to-date on my work for veterans in Washington, please sign up for my e-mail newsletter at boyda.house.gov, or send me a letter anytime to share your views. (Unfortunately, due to mail security, postal mail can take up to four weeks to reach my office in Washington, so please send an e-mail or fax for a quicker response.)



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BOYDA BRINGS "CONGRESS ON YOUR CORNER" TO KANSAS

During my frequent trips home to Kansas, I often host an event called "Congress on Your Corner" as a way of keeping in touch with constituents. Each "Congress on Your Corner" is an informal, friendly get-together in a grocery store, restaurant, library, or mall in the Kansas Second Congressional District. I sit down one-on-one with constituents to discuss their legislative concerns and offer assistance with federal agencies such as the VA.

Past "Congress on Your Corner" locations include Fort Riley, Atchison, Troy, Wamego, Ottawa, Osage City, Iola, Chanute, Topeka, Hiawatha, Oskaloosa, Pleasanton, Goff, and Parsons. My office is always scheduling future "Congress on Your Corners." If you have a suggestion for a venue, please contact my Topeka office at (785) 234-8111. I look forward to visiting your corner soon!



Congresswoman Nancy Boyda joins veterans at a press conference to announce a \$6.7 billion increase in VA funding.

Recently I was proud to support the *National Defense Authorization Act*, a major, bipartisan budget bill that funds America's national defense through 2008. The legislation provides \$22 billion for Army and Marine Corps equipment, increases funding for troop training, and significantly strengthens the National Guard.

This bill provides the resources that America's military needs to keep our families safe, and it includes funds to reset our nation's strategic readiness after four years of war in Iraq. I'm gratified that Congress has acted to support our troops, raise soldier pay and increase survivor benefits.

The National Defense Authorization Act:

- ✓ **Strengthens the National Guard by adding \$1 billion for National Guard and Reserve equipment, ensuring that the National Guard can meet its homeland and civil support missions**



On a recent visit to Iraq, Congresswoman Boyda meets with U.S. soldiers and discusses soldier pay and benefits.

- ✓ **Provides for a much needed 3.5% pay raise for our troops**
- ✓ **Authorizes expanding the military by 36,000 Army troops, including new soldiers stationed at Ft. Riley and Ft. Leavenworth, and by 9,000 Marines**

LARGEST INCREASE IN VA HEALTH CARE FUNDING IN 77 YEARS



Congresswoman Boyda joins veterans at a press conference announcing the largest VA funding increase in 77 years.

Among America's 23 million veterans are two of the closest members of my family. My father served in the Navy in World War II, and my husband, Steve, served as a Marine during the Vietnam War. I believe to the core of my being that America's veterans deserve this country's unwavering support.

In mid-June, I voted for legislation that increases funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2008 by \$6.7 billion, the largest single increase in the agency's 77-year history. The bill provides money to improve medical services at VA hospitals, to treat veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries and mental illnesses, and to add more than 1,100 new claims processors so that the VA can respond more rapidly to veterans' benefit claims.

By **ADAM STOLTE** District Representative

Earlier this year, Joycelyn Roney of Carbondale, Kansas, learned that the Burlingame Historical Society was seeking the military records of local veterans for a new veterans memorial. She knew that her late father-in-law, Earl John Roney, had served in the Navy in World War II, so she contacted Rep. Nancy Boyda's office for help in tracking down his service records.

As a member of Rep. Boyda's constituent services staff, I often help relatives learn more about their loved ones' military history. Sometimes, as our office digs through decades-old records, we uncover long-buried stories.

Earl John Roney enlisted in the Navy in December of 1939, and he was assigned to the USS Tennessee, a 32,300-ton battleship stationed in Pearl Harbor. Two years later, on December 7, 1941, he found himself in the midst of a defining moment in U.S. history – the "date which will live in infamy," when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and triggered America's involvement in World War II.

Over 2,300 Americans died that day, and Mr. Roney could easily have been one of them. The USS Tennessee was moored inboard from the USS West Virginia, which was devastated by Japanese bombs and torpedoes. Had Mr. Roney been stationed on the West Virginia, only a few feet away, he would probably not have survived.

But he did survive, and he served America honorably throughout World War II, through repeated hospitalizations for injuries incurred in the line of duty. On November 1, 1945, he received an honorable discharge, and he passed away many years later in 1998.

I learned all of this information from official military records, and I learned something



Congresswoman Nancy Boyda, left, presents seven medals to Joycelyn Roney and Earl Roney, survivors of late Pearl Harbor veteran Earl John Roney.

more, too: Mr. Roney was eligible for seven medals that he had never been formally awarded.

On behalf of his surviving family, our office contacted the National Personnel Records Center, who collected Mr. Roney's hard-earned medals: the Combat Action Ribbon, the Navy Good Conduct Medal, the American Defense Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

In a moving and long-overdue ceremony on July 10, Rep. Boyda formally presented the medals to two of Mr. Roney's surviving family members, Joycelyn and Earl A. Roney.

If you'd like to learn more about late members of your own family who served America in wartime, please feel encouraged to contact Rep. Boyda's Topeka office at (785) 234-8111. We'd be pleased to request your loved one's military records. Not every record contains as many details as Mr. Roney's, and some older records have been lost entirely, but we'll do everything we can to help uncover your family's story.