



Born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, Congresswoman Brown attended local schools, and graduated from New Stanton High School. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in 1969 and a Master's degree in 1971 from Florida A&M University, where she joined Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority. She earned an Educational Specialist degree in 1974 from the University of Florida (UF). She taught in the Duval County Public School System. Additionally, Congresswoman Brown received the following: Honorary Doctorate from Bethune-Cookman College (BCC); Honorary Doctorate of Law degree from Edward Waters College (EWC); Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Richmond Virginia Seminary; and the Humanitarian Karic Brothers Award for 2011. She is a former faculty member at EWC, UF and Florida Community College at Jacksonville. She is the primary caregiver for her aging, ailing mom. She is a loving mom to her adult daughter who is an attorney.

Congresswoman Brown has created a powerful legacy of commitment, dedication, and genuine concern for her constituents, the people of Florida, and this nation. In 1992, she was the first African American elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Florida in 129 years. Throughout her political career, she served 34 years representing North and Central Florida (including Jacksonville, Gainesville, Orlando, Palatka, Eatonville and Sanford), 24 years as a Member of Congress, and 10 years as a Florida State Representative. In each of these roles, she has worked tirelessly, making sure the welfare of the people was and continues to be her top priority. Congresswoman Brown has made it her life's work to improve the plight of the American people through political, civil, philanthropic and volunteer work -- she has made a difference in the lives of thousands throughout the United States and abroad. Long after the history books have been written, her legacy of service will continue to impact and connect the lives of people from all walks of life. She has left an indelible mark on the history and hearts of our nation and will be remembered for her humanitarianism.

## House Committee on Veterans Affairs



Montford Point Marines



Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL)  
Former Ranking Member

## Veterans Affairs

With all that she has accomplished, nothing is more important and near to her heart than the care and treatment of military veterans. Congresswoman Brown has spearheaded several committees, projects and programs to ensure our military veterans are properly taken care of for their service to our country.

For 24 years, Congresswoman Brown served on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. During her tenure on the committee she was the Top Ranking Democrat in the country, and has been a tireless advocate for veterans in working to ensure they had access to the resources, health care and other benefits they have earned. She was influential in securing six VA hospitals built for our veterans. A few of her many accomplishments include:

- Ø Served as Ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
  - Presided over 20 hearings on issues relating to veterans' services, healthcare and readiness for the new millennium
- Ø Convened first hearing since 1994 on issues concerning women veterans
  - Secured funding for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial to prevent it from being closed
- Ø Fought for benefits promised to veterans
- Ø Instrumental in passing the Veteran's Access Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, Public Law 113-46
  - Law includes critical language to ensure VA has final authority over the care veterans receive whether at the VA or through non-VA provider facilities
  - Ensured veteran stakeholders would work with the VA to ensure it has all the resources it needs to provide superior healthcare to the nation's veterans
  - Goals of the new Choice program include:
    - § Making access to community care easier to understand
    - § Improving the veterans' experience
    - § Clarifying the program for VA staff, and making it easier for community providers to partner with VA
  - Provide seamless connections between VA and community providers and apply best practices from the private sector

- Ø Passed legislation to honor the Montford Point Marines (first African American Marines)
- Ø Secured more than \$500 million to build and improve VA hospital and medical facilities in Jacksonville, Gainesville, Orlando and Tampa
- Ø Built a new VA Cemetery in Jacksonville
- Ø Supported numerous legislation for veterans, which included:
  - Allow for full military retirement pay and disability compensation
  - Pay for postage on packages sent to service members involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom
  - Exclusion from gross income certain death gratuity payments to members of uniformed services
  - Increase in the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan basic annuity for surviving spouses age 62 and older
- Ø Provided housing for homeless veterans
- Ø As a Member of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress:
  - Passed the single largest increase in the budget in the 77-year history of the VA, which was written jointly by AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans America and Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Ø As a Member of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress:
  - Supported and had the President sign the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 and the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010. The Caregivers law created an unprecedented support program for veteran caregivers that provides training, financial assistance and improved respite service. This law also improved health care services for America's women veterans, expands the mental health services provided by the VA, and expands supportive services for homeless veterans
- Ø Instituted the Veteran's Omnibus Health Services Act:
  - Law addresses the needs of veterans by enhancing employment opportunities, preventing and caring for homeless veterans, ensuring the welfare of veterans and their families by increasing insurance limits, protecting service members called to combat, honoring fallen service members and their families, strengthening education benefits, addressing housing needs of disabled veterans, and investing in research for Gulf War veterans
- Ø Received endorsement of the Veterans of Foreign Wars PAC in 2002
- Ø Advocated for VA to initiate a program of ensuring alternative treatment techniques for opioid use
  - In May 2016, the House passed a bipartisan package of bills to battle America's growing epidemic of painkiller abuse and heroin addiction focusing on opioid addiction, treatment and prevention
  - PROMISE Act, a bipartisan bill, will help improve VA opioid safety, and provide veterans with safe, personalized care to deal with their physical and invisible wounds including using alternative treatment techniques

## Veteran Homelessness

Homeless veterans participating in roundtable discussion on homelessness



Ranking Member Brown sponsored H.R. 5407, the Homeless Veterans with Children Reintegration Act. The act directs the Secretary of Labor to put homeless veterans with dependent children at the top of the list to receive services through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP). This program provides grants to local workforce boards, non-profits, and community and faith-based organizations to help homeless veterans find jobs

Ø HVRP is one of the few nationwide federal programs focusing exclusively on helping homeless veterans reintegrate into the workforce

- Ø Bill also requires DOL to study access to shelter, safety and other relevant services for homeless veterans with dependent children
- Ø Information would help us understand the problem and identify opportunities to resolve issues facing homeless veterans with children
- Ø The Committee on Veterans' Affairs conducted a hearing. Testimony in support of its passage was received from the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Vietnam Veterans of America

By making veterans with children a priority to receive temporary housing and the wrap-around services necessary to support a single working parent with children, it is Congresswoman Corrine Brown's hope that vulnerable families will be stabilized, able to move on to permanent housing and employment, and one-by-one, never be forced to spend another night in an unsafe environment. For her steadfast efforts to alleviate homelessness for our veterans Congresswoman Brown:

- Ø Received letter from Five Star Veterans on assistance given to help homeless veterans
- Ø Received Legislative Leadership Award from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

## Disabled Veterans



In February 2015, Ranking Majority Brown pushed the VA Secretary to ensure the agency was compliant with laws requiring VA website accessibility for disabled veterans, particularly for visually impaired veterans. She has gone on to strongly advocate for other services to benefit our disabled veterans and the caregivers who care for them by pushing for the enactment of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. In the six years since its enactment, she has spoken with many caregivers in her district who have benefitted from the program. She has also heard from caregivers who have given up careers to provide unpaid care for veterans suffering from illness rather than injuries, or who were injured or became ill before 9/11. She strongly favors expanding this highly successful program to provide support for them by cosponsoring HR 1969.

- Ø IT Accessibility for Visually Impaired Veterans -- Received the George "Buck" Gillespie Award from the Blinded American Veterans Foundation in June 2016
- Ø Caregivers – In 2010, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act (P.L. 111-163) was enacted to provide comprehensive caregiver support to caregivers of veterans severely injured or disabled after September 11, 2001
- Ø HR 1969, the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act. The bill has been referred to the Veterans Committee and several other committees. She continued to push for hearings and has advocated about the need to find the necessary funding by closing tax loopholes and not cutting other VA programs



## Montford Point Marines



Throughout the years, the Montford Point Marines received little recognition and few accolades for their contribution to U.S. history. African American Marines were assigned to the Composite Defense Battalion, which included coastal artillery, antiaircraft, infantry and tanks. About 13,000 of these men served overseas during the war.

Rep. Corrine Brown, a staunch supporter of veterans was the lead sponsor in fighting for recognition of the contributions of the first African American Marines enlisted in the Marines Corps at Montford Point training station, Camp Lejeune, NC, in 1942. Because of her efforts, a gold medal resolution was passed by Congress. This recognition has taken 50 years to come to fruition, and if not for the ceaseless efforts of Congresswoman Corrine Brown, we might still be waiting for this to happen.

Congresswoman Brown stated that, the ceremony held to recognize these men "will go a long way towards correcting this past injustice, as this Gold Medal will forever anchor their role in the history of our nation's great military." Congresswoman Brown went on to say that, "Certainly, it is necessary to honor all of America's war heroes' selfless service and sacrifice, and, those who served at Montford Point." "They answered our nation's call at a time when our society was deeply divided along racial lines. As such, many of their contributions went unrecognized and many times they were not given the respect and recognition they deserved as Marines, as Americans, and as patriots."

Over the years, most of these men have passed away. Those who survived have grown old and gray. Today, 63 years after the camp they trained at closed its doors, 368 surviving Montford Point Marines have finally be recognized by Congress with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. When interviewed by ABC News when he went to visit the Capitol to watch the House vote on the gold medal resolution, Sgt. Ruben McNair, 86 stated, "It's a long time coming." "Something you look forward to, wonder if you are going to make to live long enough to see it." William McDowell, representative of the Montford Point Marines, U.S. Marine Corps accepted the medal on behalf of all the honorees during the ceremony.

## History of the Montford Point Marines

In 1942, President Roosevelt established a presidential directive giving African Americans an opportunity to be recruited into the Marine Corps. These African Americans, from all states, were not sent to the traditional boot camps of Parris Island, South Carolina and San Diego, California. Instead, African American Marines were segregated - experiencing basic training at Montford Point - a facility at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Approximately twenty thousand (20,000) African American Marines received basic training at Montford Point between 1942 and 1949 (less than 10% of the Marine Corps end strength) during World War II. The initial intent of the Marine Corps hierarchy was to discharge these African American Marines after the War, returning them to civilian life – leaving the Marine Corps an all-white organization. Attitudes changed and reality took hold as the war progressed. Once given the chance to prove themselves, it became impossible to deny the fact that this new breed of Marine was just as capable as all other Marines regardless of race, color, creed or National origin.

Exceptional recruits were singled out to assist in the training of their own platoons. Mortimer A. Cox, Arnold R. Bostick, Edgar Ro Davis, Jr., Gilbert H. “Hashmark” Johnson and Edgar R. Huff were selected for their leadership and maturity and became the First Black Drill Instructors. These first DI’s would join the staff to reinforce the training mission at Montford Point which was to develop African American Marines for support roles in the Corps, following graduation.

In July of 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order #9981 negating segregation. In September of 1949, Montford Point Marine Camp was deactivated – ending seven years of segregation. On April 19, 1974, Montford Point was renamed Camp Johnson, in honor of the late Sergeant Major, Gilbert H. “Hashmark” Johnson. Johnson was one of the first African Americans to join the Corps, a distinguished Montford Point Drill Instructor and a Veteran of WWII and Korea. The Camp remains the only Marine Corps installation named in honor of an African American.



## Women Veterans



Congresswoman Brown has done an outstanding job of ensuring the service and welfare of women veterans remains at the forefront of our minds. She has introduced legislation to ensure they receive the care and treatment needed to transition from the military to civilian life, and address any mental health concerns they may have.

- Ø Introduced HR 1575, which makes permanent a highly successful pilot program to provide counseling in retreat settings for women veterans newly separated from service in the Armed Forces.
- Ø Women veterans transitioning from active duty experience readjustment issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), military sexual trauma, substance abuse, and homelessness similar to their male counterparts, yet there are indications that military service may affect women differently than men.
- Ø Research has shown that women exposed to stressful situations like combat or military sexual trauma react differently than their male counterparts, and female veterans commit suicide at nearly six times the rate of other women.
- Ø Congresswoman Brown has been a staunch advocate for women veterans. She fought to ensure The Women's Memorial was not taken down.
- Ø 111<sup>th</sup> Congress:
  - Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-163, 124 Stat. 1130) required VA to conduct, through the Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Center Program (RCS), a pilot program to evaluate the feasibility and advisability of providing reintegration and readjustment services in group retreat settings to women veterans recently separated from service in the Armed Forces after a prolonged deployment.
  - The pilot program ran for two years. Evaluation data was gathered pre-retreat, immediately post-retreat, and 2-month post-retreat.
  - Most of the women veterans who participated in the retreats showed improvements in their psychological well-being, decreased stress symptoms, improved stress coping skills, and a reduction in the severity of their PTSD symptoms immediately both following the retreat and 2-months post retreat.
  - HR 1575 was reported to the House by the Veterans Committee on November 2, 2015, and awaits consideration on the House Floor.
- Ø Ranking Member Brown cosponsored HR 1948, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act, sponsored by Rep. Julia Brownley, Ranking Member of the Health Subcommittee.
  - HR 1948, expands and makes permanent a successful pilot which provides drop off child care services for veterans with appointments at a VA medical center.
  - Studies of the four original sites in the pilot showed that the program is extremely popular with veterans, particularly veterans who are grandparents.
  - The program also proved to have been effective in reducing "no show" appointments at VA.



## Veteran Suicide



Congress is holding a day of events to prevent suicides amongst our soldiers.

April 18, 2016

The VA believes every Veteran suicide is a tragic outcome. Regardless of the numbers or rates, one Veteran suicide is one too many. The understanding that “Suicide Prevention is Everyone’s responsibility,” continues to be spread throughout the VA and abroad. Strategic partnerships between the VA and community and federal partners continues to address the needs of Veterans, and aggressively undertake new methods of preventing suicide.

Statistics show 22 veterans commit suicide each. This is one veteran suicide too many and 7300 veterans annually from all eras of war including WW2, Korean, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. That’s more suicides annually than the total American deaths during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) since the wars began. This is a shocking number that many find hard to believe. Veterans are committing suicide in these high numbers attributed to triggering points:

- 3 Depression
- 3 Survivor’s guilt
- 3 Self-blame for mission failure
- 3 Impaired thinking caused by alcohol or substance abuse
- 3 An Altered worldview due to post-traumatic stress
- 3 Traumatic brain injury.

The Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) has been expanded to provide immediate access to mental health crisis intervention and support. Veterans can call the national suicide prevention hotline number to reach highly skilled responders trained in suicide prevention and crisis intervention. VCL also includes a chat service and texting option. Additional services include:

- 3 Modification of phone systems to allow for direct connection to the VCL by dialing “7” when calling the VA medical center.
- 3 The hiring over 60 new suicide intervention responders/counselors for the VCL
- 3 Intensive training for each responder on a wide variety of topics in crisis intervention, substance use disorders, screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment.
- 3 Since the establishment of the VCL through May 2016 the VCL:
  - o Has answered over 2.3 million calls, made over 289,000 chat connections, and over 55,000 texts;
  - o Has initiated the dispatch of emergency services to callers in imminent suicidal crisis over 61,000 times;
  - o Has provided over 376,000 referrals to a VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC) thus ensuring Veterans are connected to local care.

## Foreclosures

The Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA) is the largest HUD certified counseling agency in the country, and has been at the forefront of addressing the mortgage crisis. The company has been the most effective at obtaining affordable solutions for homeowners. Working together with Congresswoman Brown, NACA has been instrumental in saving many thousands of homeowners on the verge of foreclosure and financial disaster. Bruce A. Uffner, CEO of NACA, said, "Congresswoman Corrine Brown has done outstanding work with homeowners at risk of losing their homes. No other Member of Congress has committed more time or been as effective in working with those at risk of foreclosure." Congresswoman Brown has attended many of NACA's five-day American Dream events where thousands of homeowners attended to obtain same day solutions. She was there from the start of each day, late into the evening. She wanted to make sure people received an affordable solution. Because of her efforts, many people were able to reduce their monthly mortgage payment by hundreds and sometimes over a thousand dollars, with interest rates as low as two percent, and sometimes with a reduced outstanding principle.

- Ø Worked with NACA to assist over a quarter-of-a-million homeowner achieve affordable solutions nationwide.
- Ø Congresswoman Brown is passionate about educating communities and churches about foreclosures.
- Ø Provide help to churches to keep them from losing their church through foreclosure.
- Ø Received letter from Five Star Veterans on assistance given to help homeless veterans.
- Ø Worked with a non-profit group to help nearly 1 million people throughout the country reduce their mortgages to save their homes from foreclosure.
- Ø Helped people in danger of losing their homes to foreclose.
- Ø Secured support and money to rebuild public housing in Sanford.





For 24 years, Congresswoman Corrine Brown served on the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure. She is passionate about building the infrastructure for our city to improve accessibility, ensure safety, and open our cities to greater travel opportunities throughout Florida. By focusing on the key issues related to economic growth and development, Congresswoman Brown has been instrumental in bringing jobs and new opportunities to communities, cities, and towns within her district and state. She has raised the funds to repair and build new highways, roads, transit, rails, and bridges for better travel throughout cities.

Ø **Member of the Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure**

- Senior Ranking Member on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
- Ranking Member and Chair of the Transportation Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee.
- **Leader in fight to change transportation funding through Tea 21 Initiative**
  - § Tea 21 initiative returns more transportation money to populous states like Florida and Texas. As a result, Florida now receives a 57% increase in transportation funding.
- Secured \$100 million to replace the Fuller Warren Bridge that provides a vital link for Interstate 95 across the St. Johns River in Jacksonville.
- Secured support and money to expand and improve Interstate 4.
- Reworked the funding formula to get Florida 25% percent more money from federal gas taxes for transportation projects.

Ø Served on the Congressional Committee that approved \$325 billion for transportation projects through 2021.

Ø **Member of 110<sup>th</sup> Congress:**

- Chair of the Transportation Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials.
  - § Subcommittee very important to Florida and this district because of its jurisdiction over the passenger and freight rail industry, which plays a vital role in Florida's economy.
- House passed H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act.

The Act is a bipartisan bill to rebuild Amtrak and construct high-speed rail on high-density corridors across the nation.

- H.R. 6003 authorized \$14.9 billion for Amtrak capital and operating grants, state intercity passenger grants, and high-speed rail over the next five years.
- H.R. 2095, In a vote of 377 to 38, the House of Representatives approved the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007, which reauthorized the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and improved the safety of our Nation's railroads.

§ President Bush signed both bills into law.

Ø Member of 111<sup>th</sup> Congress:

- Advocated for a dramatic increase in transportation funding in the stimulus package for the nation, and the state of Florida.
- Provision provided approximately \$44 billion for projects such as roads, bridges, dredging, rail and transit through The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- Received an \$8 billion boost from High speed rail alone.
- Subcommittee focused on safety of pipelines and the safe transportation of hazardous materials.
- Conducted investigations and held hearings focused on the dangers of lithium ion batteries and severe inadequacies in the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration within the Department of Transportation.
- Oversight activity led to new rules for shipping lithium ion batteries, pipelines safety monitoring, and permitting for hazardous material transportation.

Ø Member of 112<sup>th</sup> Congress:

- Worked on transportation reauthorization bill.
- Included a strong and comprehensive rail title that includes a dedicated funding source for rail.
- Staunch advocate of the inclusion of \$50 billion in rail funding over the life of the bill.
- Made a significant investment in both high-speed and commuter rail in Florida.

Ø Secured nearly \$44 million to expand the public bus system in Gainesville.

Ø Secured nearly \$1 billion to create the SunRail commuter train system in Orlando.

Ø Secured more than \$2 billion for expansion and improvements at the airports in Jacksonville, Gainesville and Orlando.

Ø Secured more than \$10 million for massive improvements to the port of Jacksonville, which will add more than 25,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

## Additional Highlights

- Ø Secured \$100 million to build a new federal courthouse in Jacksonville
- Ø Secured funding to build courthouses in California and Miami, and expanded the U.S. District court in Orlando
- Ø Helped U.S. citizens adopt children in Russia and several other Soviet countries
- Ø Helped two U.S. citizens get out of prison in Ecuador. Because of her great efforts, Lifetime presented 'Left to Die', a movie about Congresswoman Brown fighting to free Sandra Chase who was wrongly imprisoned for drug trafficking during a vacation in Ecuador
- Ø Hosted district job fairs that served 10,000 people annually
  - Held an annual job fair for 23 years
- Ø Held workshops to help minority and disadvantaged businesses
- Ø Held workshops throughout the year to assist individuals with employment, foreclosures, and education
- Ø Created Corrine's Book Club to give children a love of books and education.
  - Over 1000 students participated throughout Jacksonville, Palatka, Orlando, Eatonville, Sanford, and Gainesville – each student received a computer