



An American Hero

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A True American Hero

Recently, I welcomed Staff Sergeant Earl Granville (Scott Township, Lackawanna County) to my office and he attended Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's address to Congress as my guest. Prior to the speech, SSG Granville and I took some time to discuss his time serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the important work he has been doing here in the United States.

SSG Granville lost his left leg when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle in Iraq in 2008. In December 2010, SSG Granville's twin brother, Joe, suffering from undiagnosed post-traumatic stress, took his own life at age 27. These two brothers served alongside each other in Bosnia and Iraq. I cannot adequately express my respect and appreciation for the heroic service they have given to our country. However, SSG Granville's service didn't stop there, and I have just as much admiration for the work he is doing now to bring awareness to mental health issues and the terrible tragedy of a very high suicide rate among veterans.

He is a true American hero. You can read more about his visit [here](#).



Keeping Pennsylvanians &

Americans Safe

I sat down with Major General James Joseph - the Adjutant General of the [Pennsylvania National Guard](#) - to discuss the current state of our National Guard.

I believe that in this time of great national security challenges, we must ensure our Reserve Components (both Guard and Reserve) remain strong and ready to stand by or supplement our Active Duty at a moment's notice. Our reserves provide a combat-proven, cost-effective force that can rapidly and effectively augment our armed forces abroad as well as respond to natural and manmade disasters at home.

We discussed ways we can work together to ensure the Pennsylvania National Guard is properly prepared to support the United States Military and protect Pennsylvanians from disasters in the Commonwealth.



Honoring Our Nation's Fallen Patriots

I am working to help bring dignity to veterans who have passed away but whose remains are still unclaimed. According to the Missing in America Project, there are an estimated 47,000 veterans remains stored throughout the United States that have yet to be claimed. Unfortunately, due to legislative and procedural barriers that prevent multi-agency cooperation and collaboration, it can be extremely difficult for the Department of Veterans Affairs, veteran service organizations, and funeral directors to determine whether the next of kin can be found.

My bipartisan bill, the *Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act*, begins the process of looking at how the VA handles these remains by conducting a study of how they are identified, claimed, and interred.

When our veterans pass, they should be honored in a way that reflects their bravery and sacrifice while defending our country. It is up to Congress and the VA to fix this and develop a plan of action to help resolve this important issue for our veterans. I am going to continue to fight on behalf of our veterans until both the House and Senate act on this bill.

Read more about my effort [here](#).



Ensuring Necessary Support For Our Veterans

I am working to help ensure our veterans receive the support they need after serving our country and keeping us safe. I voted for the bipartisan *Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act*, which expands mental health care and suicide prevention resources for veterans.

Far too many veterans commit suicide every day in this country. That is heartbreaking and unacceptable. We must stop this disturbing trend and ensure that high quality mental health care is more accessible. This bill helps address this important issue, and it does many things from establishing a new website that offers veterans information regarding available mental health services to creating a pilot loan repayment program to VA psychiatrists.

The [*Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans*](#) measure is critical to the safety and mental health of our service members, and I am glad the President signed it into law.



Honoring A Pennsylvania Hero

Not long ago, I attended a Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony in the U.S. Capitol to honor the First Special Service Force that fought during World War II. One of the veterans from this unit was Bert Winzer from Lower Macungie, Lehigh County. I was glad to visit Bert before the ceremony started to thank him for his service and dedication to our country. We previously met in May 2013 at a National Military Appreciation Month event in Allentown. There, I learned that he had not received all the medals he earned in World War II and I was able to work with the Pentagon to track down his Bronze Star, European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Special Forces Tab.

Bert is a great American and a great hero. The ceremony was an important way to make sure that his "Devil's Brigade" is remembered.

You can see more photos from the ceremony [here](#), and read more about Bert Winzer's trip to Washington [here](#).

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