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news release

DE LA GARZA AND ORTIZ ANNOUNCE VETERANS SECRETARY VISIT

For Immediate Release: 4 October 1993

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WASHINGTON DC -- At the invitation of South Texas Congressmen Kika de la Garza and Solomon Ortiz, Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown will be visiting the Valley on Friday Oct. 8, 1993.

The Secretary's schedule will be a full one. He will begin his day at 7:15 a.m. with a breakfast with veterans and Mission City Officials at the Mission Catholic War Veterans Post. At 8:30 a.m. the Secretary will tour the McAllen Outpatient Clinic, and afterward there will be a press opportunity from 9 to 9:30 a.m. **All press are invited to the other meetings that day as well.**

Secretary Brown will then proceed to Edinburg, where at 10:30 a.m. he will lay a wreath at the Hidalgo County Veterans Memorial in front of the courthouse. Following will be a brief meeting with veterans in the courthouse auditorium until 11 a.m. The Secretary completes his visit to the 15th District with a meeting in Weslaco scheduled from 11:30 a.m. to noon with veterans and City Officials in the City Commission Room at City Hall.

"Now that the stage has been set, I hope we'll see a strong turnout for the Secretary's visit," said Representative de la Garza, "because this visit by the Secretary will afford area veterans the opportunity to discuss whatever is on their minds. Veterans will be able to voice their concerns firsthand and the Secretary will be able to see and hear firsthand exactly what those needs are."

All veterans and their families as well as interested citizens in the area are invited to attend the meeting that is most convenient for them.

The Secretary will then travel from Weslaco to Harlingen where he and congressman Ortiz will address a group of veterans at a ceremony in the Marine Military Academy Auditorium, 320 Iwo Jima Blvd., at 2:30 p.m. There will be a press availability at 3:30 p.m., followed by an informal gathering for veterans with the Secretary at 3:45 p.m.

"At a time when our national domestic debate is centering on health care, it is entirely appropriate that we seriously address the practical problems associated with the health care costs for veterans," Ortiz said. "As Americans, we must never forget the sacrifice made for our country, and for the sake of democracy, by the men and women who served in our armed forces. I know I share the Secretary's commitment to ensuring that the needs of veterans are recognized and met."

"The State of Texas is home to nearly 2 million veterans. These numbers become all the more telling when one considers that health care requirements only increase with age, and that more and more veterans move to South Texas upon retirement for a desirable climate," Ortiz said.

Both Congressman Ortiz and Congressman de la Garza have been interested in issues confronting veterans since each was elected to the House of Representatives. They have jointly sponsored legislation to establish a VA hospital in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

"We are certainly pleased that Secretary Brown has accepted our invitation. We thank him for his interest in South Texas. His visit is one which we know will be meaningful and productive for our veterans, and we know he will learn a great deal from his visit," the South Texas Representatives said.

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