

# Congresswoman Heather Wilson Making a difference...

Proposing a national cemetery for Albuquerque,  
what it means to be a veteran, and Lt. Comdr. Kurt Barich



**M**y grandfather flew in World War I, but they thought he was too old to fly in the Second war, so he became a courier pilot and towed targets for gunnery practice. Late in the war, he was asked to assemble a unit to fly the wounded out of the jungle in the China-Burma-India theater. He'd trained the unit and half the men were on a ship bound for England and then Asia when we dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, ending the war.

Sharing that story with the China-Burma-India veterans' group meeting at the Palo Duro Senior Center got the conversation rolling about their experiences half a century ago and what it means to be a veteran.

Our conversation turned to veterans' benefits, and then Bill Drum pointed



Lt. Comdr. Kurt "Gumby" Barich  
United States Navy Pilot

out that the National Cemetery in Santa Fe would be filled in just a few years. There is a need for a new National Cemetery in Albuquerque for those who have earned that final measure of respect. I agreed to explore the possibility, and you'll find more information about it on the other side of this newsletter.

**"It's like a melody you learned as a child that lingers even now...you know it and can sing it without the music or reading the words...it's part of who you are."**

**G**etting special recognition for those who have given extraordinary service is important. It's also deeply moving and a good lesson for all about the real cost of keeping America free.

Lt. Commander Kurt Barich always dreamed of flying, just like his dad, a retired Navy pilot. A graduate of Sandia High School and UNM, a Navy ROTC scholarship put him on the road to achieving that dream.

When the U.S.S. Enterprise was dis-

patched to the Middle East in 1998, Kurt was in his 13th year of Navy service with thousands of hours of flying experience. He was piloting an EA-6B Prowler when a night landing went wrong because the deck wasn't clear. He was listed as lost at sea.

At a Navy ceremony in Albuquerque, we'd arranged to present a flag flown over the Capitol to the Barich family. At the first echoes of Taps, Kurt's father stood up facing me, the flag between us. His face was etched by an anguish I hope never to know.

The man who inspired the boy, who pinned golden wings on his son's chest, on this day would cradle in his arms a flag where once he had cradled a boy filled with promise. It was heartbreaking.

There are fewer veterans these days in Congress, and I'm one of the younger ones. My military experience makes me more sensitive to the concerns of veterans, makes me better able to understand, relate better. It's not that you've shared life experiences, but there's a sense of shared values...duty to God and Country, service before self, and integrity always.

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I'm proud to have the chance to speak up for my fellow veterans in the House of Representatives, and to help so many at home in the Albuquerque area get the benefits or honors they're due. Let me know if I can help you.

## *A letter from Sara...*

"I attended the ceremony at the New Mexico Veteran's Memorial this morning hoping not only to visit with my veteran friends but to hear you speak. Your speech was, by far, the most heartfelt of the bunch, the most moving, and...the words most easily understood by those who have fought for us....I missed my grandparents today. I missed having a hand to hold...thank you for taking time to be with us and actually sounding as if you weren't reading from a piece of paper, but speaking from your memories and experiences."

*Sara Elton  
Albuquerque*

Place  
33 Cent  
Stamp  
Here

Your Congresswoman

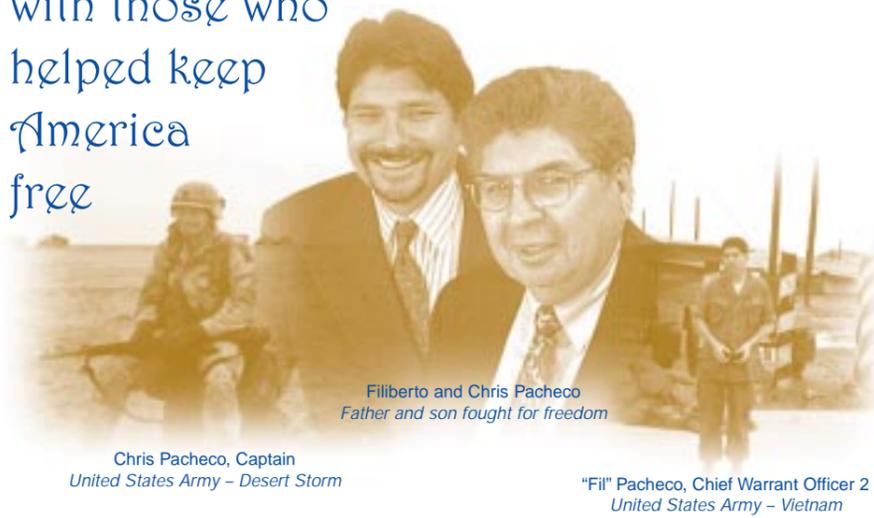
Heather Wilson  
625 Silver Ave. SW, Suite 340  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

*Thank you for taking a few minutes to let me know how you feel about these issues.*

Keeping faith  
with those who  
helped keep  
America  
free

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-3101  
Public Document

*Heather Wilson*  
MC



Filiberto and Chris Pacheco  
Father and son fought for freedom

Chris Pacheco, Captain  
United States Army - Desert Storm

"Fil" Pacheco, Chief Warrant Officer 2  
United States Army - Vietnam

**"Being a veteran - and the first woman veteran to serve in Congress - I feel a special kinship with all those who answered their nation's call to service. So, it's especially gratifying when we're able to help New Mexico veterans resolve issues about pensions, medals earned, and other special concerns...and we do it every day."**

**Congresswoman Heather Wilson**

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense. • Designed, printed, and mailed by New Mexicans in New Mexico

*It's your turn!*

*¡Es su turno!*

America long has shown its final measure of respect for our veterans of military service by providing burial plots and markers in national cemeteries.

In New Mexico, the national cemetery in Santa Fe - opened in 1868 - is expected to be closed to additional burials as early as 2008. This troubles many veterans because the only other national cemetery in the state is near Silver City, far from the population center of greater Albuquerque.

The federal government is in the process of opening new national cemeteries around the country, the latest in Seattle. Leaders of veterans' groups here propose that Albuquerque be added to the list of new sites.

Heather introduced legislation to choose a site for a new national cemetery located in or near Albuquerque to be ready when Santa Fe closes. You can express your feelings on this issue by using the questionnaire below and putting it in the mail.

If you would like to express your opinion, on this idea, you also can write to:

U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20420



Suzanne Bruckner, Captain  
United States Army - Desert Storm

The second issue on the questionnaire concerns sending American troops to trouble spots around the world in cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations. Should those troops have to serve under the command of foreign military authorities or should they serve only under American commanders?



David Bernd, Lieutenant Colonel  
United States Air Force

For additional information about these and other issues, there are several ways to contact Heather's office:

You can write to or visit the local office at 625 Silver, Suite 340, Albuquerque, NM 87102. Our phone number is 346-6781.

Por tiempo América ha cumplido su última muestra de respeto con nuestros veteranos de servicio militar al proveer sepulcros y piedras sepulcrales en cementerios nacionales.

En Nuevo México, se espera que el Cementerio Nacional de Santa Fe — de abertura en 1868 — deje de aceptar más entierros tan pronto como 2008.



Stan Thevenet, Lieutenant Colonel  
United States Army

Esto le preocupa a muchos veteranos porque el único otro cementerio nacional en el estado está cerca de Silver City, alejado de el centro de población de Albuquerque y sus alrededores.

El gobierno federal se encuentra en proceso de abertura de cementerios nuevos a lo largo del país, el último en Seattle. Los líderes de grupos de veteranos proponen que Albuquerque sea agregado a la lista de nuevos sitios.

Heather ha presentado un proyecto de ley para elegir un local para el nuevo cementerio nacional cerca de o en Albuquerque. Usted puede expresar sus pensamientos sobre este tema al usar el cuestionario al fondo y al mandarlo por correo.



Arthur Ramirez, Seaman  
United States Navy - Korea

Si usted desea apoyar ésta idea, usted también puede escribir a:

U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs  
National Cemetery Administration  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20420

El segundo tema en el cuestionario trata con el envío de tropas americanas a sitios problemáticos por todo el mundo en cooperación con organizaciones nacionales, tal y como las Naciones Unidas. ¿Deberían estas tropas de servir bajo la dirección de autoridades de fuerzas armadas extranjeras o deberían de servir bajo dirección de comandantes americanos?

Tenemos varias fuentes para comunicación con la oficina de Heather Wilson, para recibir más información acerca de éstos y otros temas:

Usted puede escribir o visitar a la oficina local, 625 Silver, Suite 340, Albuquerque, NM 87102. El número telefónico es 346-6781.

[www.house.gov/wilson](http://www.house.gov/wilson)

For the latest information on issues you care about... visit Heather's new congressional Website: [www.house.gov/wilson](http://www.house.gov/wilson) and sign up for a weekly E-Mail Newsletter. *Este sitio de web tiene información en español.*

**Constituent #1**

**Constituent #2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL CEMETERY**  
Do you support opening a new national cemetery in Albuquerque?

**CEMENTERIO NACIONAL**  
¿Apoya usted la abertura de un nuevo cementerio nacional en Albuquerque?

**SENDING TROOPS ABROAD**  
Should American troops sent to world trouble spots serve only under American commanders?

**TROPAS EN EL EXTRANJERO**  
¿Deberían las tropas americanas enviadas a lugares problemáticos servir solamente bajo la dirección de comandantes americanos?

sí/yes  no       sí/yes  no

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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sí/yes  no       sí/yes  no

Please provide your address so I can stay in touch with you. Also, if you provide me your e-mail address I'll send you a weekly e-mail newsletter to keep you up-to-date on the issues you care about.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Quiero ayudar a hacer el cementerio realidad. ■ I want to help make the cemetery a reality. ■