

## Rep. Israel Honors Gold Star Families During Memorial Day Ceremony

Thursday, May 24, 2007

---

5/25/2007 Huntington, NY—On Memorial Day, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) honored four Gold Star families who have lost loved ones in the Global War on Terror. After the Huntington Memorial Parade at Reviewing Stand, Congressman Israel presented yellow roses to Dorine Kenney, mother of Jacob Fletcher, Pat and Rick Bruckenthal, Parents of Nathan Bruckenthal, Dawn Esposito, Mother of Michael Esposito and Alexa Ruiz, the widow of Jose Ruiz.

“Gold Star Mothers serve as the stewards of their children’s sacrifice, and it’s fitting that we honor them today,” said Congressman Israel. “As we celebrate Memorial Day, the thoughts and prayers of all Americans are with the families who have lost a loved one. We must continue to honor their memory by taking care of our troops and military families.”

Jacob Fletcher joined the army after September 11, 2001 at the age of 27, fulfilling a lifelong dream to serve his country. He was with the 173rd Airborne Brigade and parachuted into northern Iraq in March 2003.

Michael Esposito received the Bronze Star with Valor for his heroic actions in battle in Afghanistan. A member of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment of the Army's 10th Mountain Division, SGT Michael Esposito put the safety of his men above that of his own in clearing a suspected compound and was mortally wounded by enemy fire.

Nathan Bruckenthal received the Bronze Star with Valor. He joined the Coast Guard in 1998. He was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and a Combat Action Ribbon for his action in and around the port of Um Qasar. He volunteered for a second deployment in March 2004. His courage protected the sailors aboard an off-shore oil platform and the terminal itself.

Jose Ruiz was a gifted computer network engineer who joined the Army in November of 2003, spurred by a desire to serve his country following 9/11. He was assigned to Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment.