



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF OREGON, INC.

PO Box 1730 ★ Wilsonville, OR 97070-1730

1/26/2021

The Honorable Tim Knopp  
Oregon Senator  
900 Court St. NE, S-425,  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**Ref: American Legion Department of Oregon Letter of Support for the Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway.**

Dear Senator Knopp,

Since 2008, the non-profit Bend Heroes Foundation has initiated legislation for eight veterans highways across Oregon honoring nearly one-half million Oregonians who served in the Armed Forces of the United States during five major wars over the last 102 years: WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf/Afghanistan/Iraq.

Nearly 6,000 veterans lost their lives, about 15,000 were wounded, almost 1,000 became Prisoners of War (POW), and 999 Oregonians remain Missing in Action (MIA) during those wars. Thirty veterans connected with Oregon received the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military award for valor during combat from the Civil War to Vietnam.

The highways are:

World War I Veterans Memorial Highway on US Hwy 395

WORLD WAR II VETERANS HISTORIC HIGHWAY on US Hwy 97, a portion of SR 126\*

Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway on Interstate 5

Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Highway on Interstate 84

Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway on US Hwy 101\*

Purple Heart Trail on Interstate 5\*\*

Oregon Medal of Honor Highway on US Hwy 20\*

POW/MIA Memorial Highway on US Hwy 26\*

\*First in the USA \*\* Connects Purple Heart Trails in California and Washington, creating the first continuous Purple Heart Trail across the USA

Attached is a map of the highways and photos of highway signs. The highways range in length from 292 – 471 miles. The combined length of the highways totals almost 3,000 miles or the distance across our great nation.

Over 90 highway signs have been installed by the Oregon Department of Transportation and others on the 8 border to border highways at the cost of over \$100,000 funded by Bend Heroes Foundation and its many generous partners.

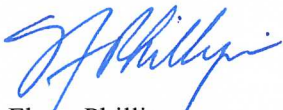
Now, Bend Heroes Foundation has requested legislation designating the 477 mile U.S. Highway 30 across Oregon as the “**Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway**” honoring past, current, and future veterans not now honored by the 8 “new” veterans highways: those who served and will serve in peacetime and future wars.

U.S. Highway 30 is the last and the longest border to border highway not now designated as a veterans’ highway. Bend Heroes Foundation has requested the legislation to require the display of the seals of the six military services and the Oregon Army and Air National Guard on all signs. As in the past, BHF will raise funds to pay the Oregon Department of Transportation to fabricate and install up to 10 signs on U.S. Highway 30. All existing highway names will be preserved.

**The American Legion Department of Oregon** and many of its 112 Posts with over 12,000 members across Oregon have already supported the Bend Heroes Foundation veterans’ highway projects through testimonies supporting legislation, donations, and dedications of the veterans’ highways.

We are honored and proud to endorse legislation for the “**Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway**” as it perfectly supports one of our founding principles: “*To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars.*”

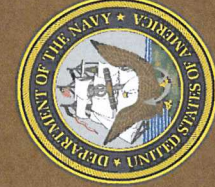
Respectfully, for the Commander



S. Flynn Phillips  
Department Adjutant

Cc: Steve Adams, Department Commander

# Oregon Veterans Memorial Highway



## **OREGON HONORS 480,000 WARTIME VETERANS WITH 93 SIGNS ON EIGHT MAJOR HIGHWAYS**

During the last 12 years, the non-profit Bend Heroes Foundation was successful in requesting the Oregon legislature and Oregon's Governors to adopt laws honoring nearly one-half million Oregon veterans who served during 5 major wars during the last 102 years: **WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Wars**. Almost 6,000 veterans from Oregon made the supreme sacrifice, an estimated 15,000 Oregonians were wounded and over 910 veterans and civilians became Prisoners of War (POWs) during those wars. One thousand (1,000) Oregonians (999 veterans and 1 civilian) still remain Missing in Action (MIA) from WWI to the Vietnam War. Thirty (30) Medal of Honor recipients (Civil War to Vietnam) have close ties with Oregon.

The honors to Oregon's 479,800 wartime veterans were accomplished by 93 large signs installed by Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and others on 8 border-to-border highways totaling almost 3,000 miles in length across Oregon. Each highway displays 10-18 signs with half facing in each direction. The highways range in length from 292 to 471 miles.

The 8 Veterans' highways are:

WWI Veterans Memorial Highway.....	10 signs on U.S. Hwy 395
WWII Veterans Historic Highway.....	18 signs on U.S. Hwy 97/S.R. 126
Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway.....	10 signs on Interstate 5
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway.....	17 signs on Interstate 84
Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway....	11 signs on U.S. Hwy 101
Purple Heart Trail.....	5 signs on Interstate 5
Oregon Medal of Honor Highway.....	12 signs on U.S. Hwy 20
POW/MIA Memorial Highway.....	10 signs on U.S. Hwy 26

A map displaying the 8 border to border highways is attached.

The **WWII Veterans Historic Highway** is the first highway to honor WWII veterans as well as inform travelers of nearby WWII training facilities. The **Purple Heart Trail** on Oregon's 308 mile long I-5 connects with California's and Washington's Purple Heart Trails on Interstate 5 thereby creating the first Purple Heart Trail spanning our nation in any direction. Likewise the 338 mile long border-to-border **Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway** along the beautiful Oregon coast on US Hwy 101 is another first in our nation. And the border to border **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway** along U.S. Hwy 20 is our 4th "first in the nation" highway. The **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** along U.S. Hwy 26 is the 5th "first in the nation" highway and last border to border highway dedicated by Bend Heroes Foundation and its partners. At the Foundation's request, Idaho will designate its 401 mile US Hwy 26 as POW/MIA Memorial Highway in 2021. The Foundation has requested the National League of POW/MIA Families to extend the highway across America. The Oregon POW/MIA Memorial and Oregon Medal of Honor Highways intersect with all of the war highways.

Crossing the other war highways is the 451 mile **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway** honoring 30 Medal of Honor recipients connected with Oregon who acted with “*conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty at the risk of his life*” during combat with an enemy of the United States thus receiving our nation’s highest award for military valor during 8 wars over a 108 year period (Civil War to Vietnam War).

Bend Heroes Foundation is coordinating the designation of 11 more state Medal of Honor Highways across America on U.S. Highway 20, the longest highway in the nation and stretching 3,365 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa and Indiana have already adopted the Oregon model. Together, Oregon and those 6 states account for more than two-thirds (68%) of the total distance across our nation. The remaining 5 states have committed to designating Medal of Honor Highways. See attached map.

The 12 states honor their state’s recipients collectively honoring about two-thirds of all 3,507 awards across America’s 50 states presented since President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation creating the Medal of Honor award in 1862 and 1863. Bend Heroes Foundation has requested the U.S. Congress to designate U.S. Hwy 20 across America as the “**National Medal of Honor Highway**” as a tribute to all 3,507 recipients and future recipients. If granted, that national highway would also parallel the coast to coast Lincoln and Eisenhower Highways created by Congress many decades ago.

Oregon’s veterans’ highway signs were funded by veterans’ groups, Boards of County Commissions, civic organizations, several non-profits, businesses and individuals. Bend Heroes Foundation raised over \$110,000 to pay Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and others to fabricate and install the 93 honorific signs across Oregon. No state highway funds were used.

A map and photos of veterans at signs on each of the highways are shown below.

This project has been featured in the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs newsletter, local media and national American Legion, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), VFW and Vietnam Veterans of America magazines.

Oregon’s Legislators, Governors, Department of Transportation and many patriotic donors have made this 12 year project a reality.

It has been a high honor and privilege leading this legacy project honoring Oregon’s nearly one-half million wartime veterans. **They will not be forgotten in Oregon.**

Dick Tobiason

Chairman, Bend Heroes Foundation, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization located in Bend, Oregon

<https://www.facebook.com/bendheroes/>

Project Manager, Oregon Veterans Highways

LTC US Army Retired, Master Army Aviator, Vietnam War Veteran

Member: American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order Purple Heart, Oregon Veterans Motorcycle Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America



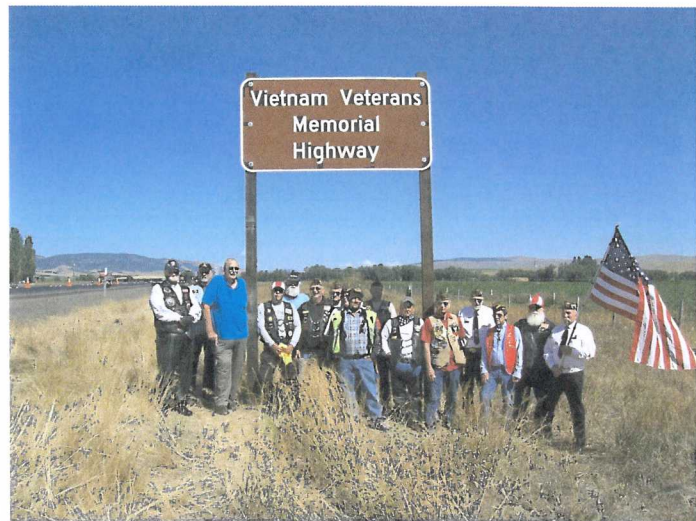
WWI Veterans Memorial Highway Sign on U.S. Hwy 395 Near Burns



WWII Veterans Historic Highway Sign on U.S. Hwy 97 at Intersection of Interstate 84



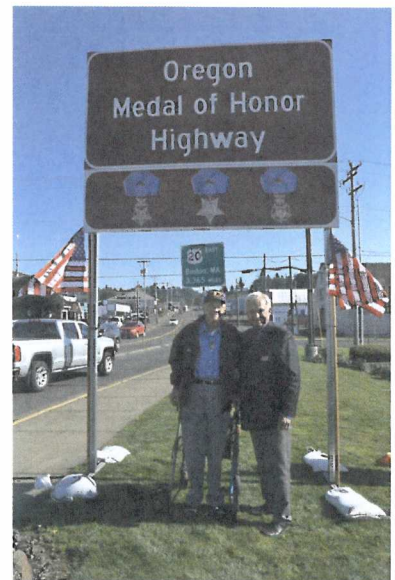
Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway and Purple Heart Trail Signs on Interstate 5



Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway Sign on Interstate 84 Near La Grande



Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway Sign on U.S. Hwy 101 Near Warrenton

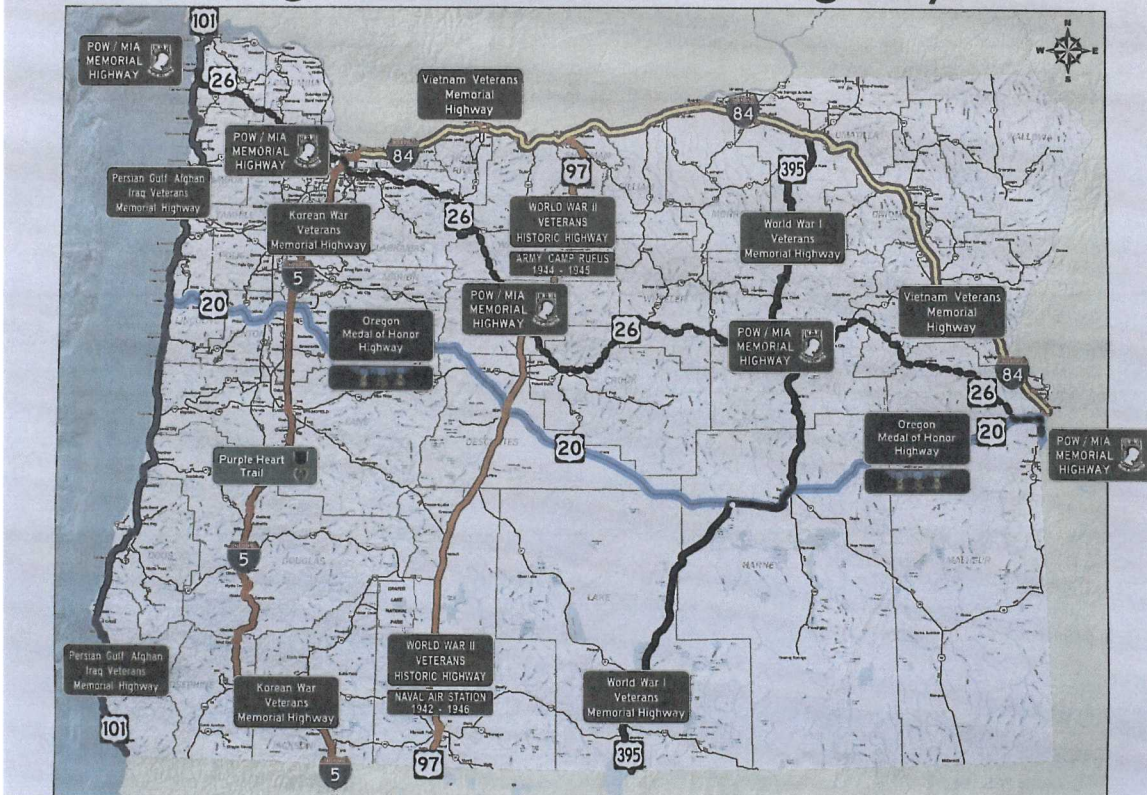


Bob Maxwell and Dick Tobiason at Oregon Medal of Honor Highway Sign on U.S. Hwy 20 at Newport

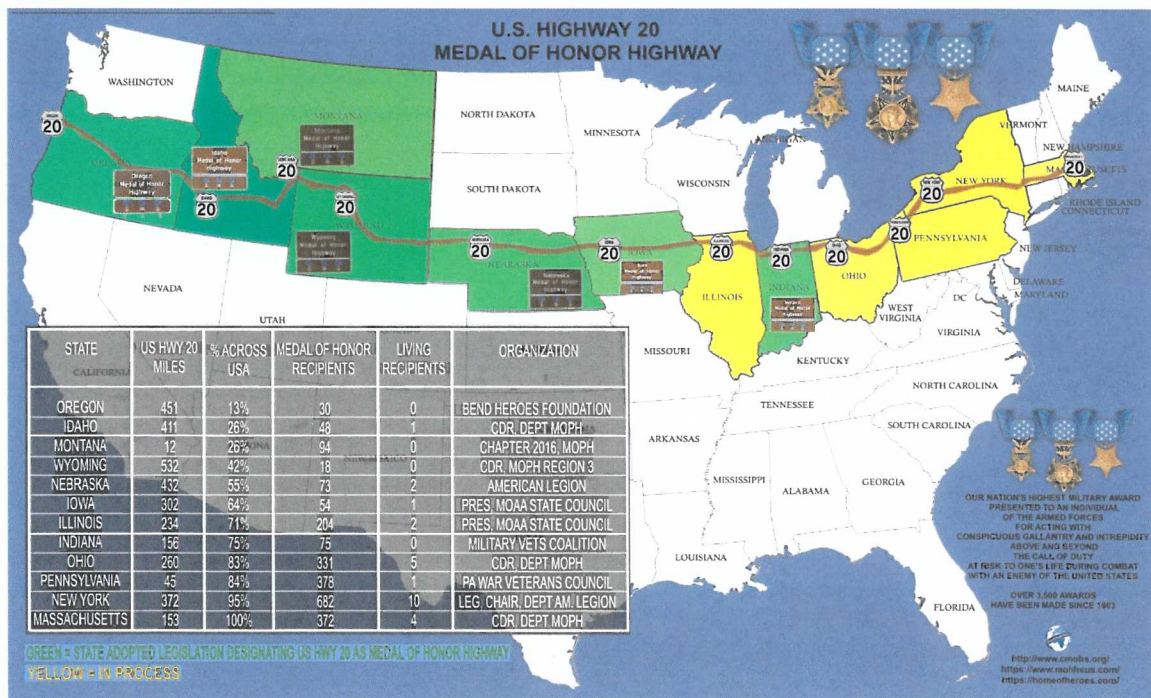


POW/MIA Memorial Highway Sign on U.S. Hwy 26 Near Vale and Oregon/Idaho Border Highway Dedicated During Smoky Conditions on Sept. 18, 2020 – National POW/MIA Recognition Day

# Oregon Veterans Memorial Highways



Map of 8 Oregon Veterans Highways Initiated by Bend Heroes Foundation, 2,970 Total Miles



Medal of Honor Highway Across America on US Highway 20, Longest Highway in America  
Green states have adopted laws creating State Medal of Honor Highways. Yellow states are in process.



# The Oregon Legionnaire

The Voice of Oregon's Veterans Since 1919 January 2021



IN A CHANGING  
WORLD, ONE  
THING STAYS  
THE SAME:

*The Military  
Experience.*

IT'S THE BOND

**Notes from Commanders,  
Commission Reports,  
Auxiliary, SAL  
Trivia and so much more...**

*between veterans who  
have served America, from  
the fields of Europe to the  
jungles of Asia to the  
deserts of the Middle East  
and everywhere in between.*

“WE WILL NOT FAIL

*those with whom we've  
served,” was the promise  
by generations of veterans.  
Help us continue the legacy.*

## Inside This Issue

The Legionnaire in 1921  
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White House to sign NDAA  
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Proud to be a Veteran  
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USS GUAM LPH-9 TRAGEDY  
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**JOIN**

*today's American Legion -  
bonded through service,  
committed to the future.*



THE  
AMERICAN  
LEGION