



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF OREGON, INC.

PO Box 1730 ★ Wilsonville, OR 97070-1730

1/22/2021

The Honorable Paul Evans  
Oregon Representative  
900 Court St. NE, H-471,  
Salem, Oregon 97301

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

Dear Representative Evans,

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