



VETS NEWS

July | August 2011

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Jim Willis, Director

HONOR FLIGHT TAKES WWII VETERANS TO D.C.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEND HEROES FOUNDATION.

27 Oregon Veterans Visit National Memorials and Congressional Leaders on Their Visit to the Capital

World War II veterans from Oregon were greeted by students as they visited the National World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. in May.

Navy veteran Roy Bunting of Redmond was serving aboard the *USS Waters* in the south Pacific when he witnessed one of the most iconic moments in U.S. military history, the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima's Mt. Suribachi in February 1945. He and the crew would take part in 32 different invasions as they delivered U.S. Marines to fight on the beaches at Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Eniwetok and others.

Those experiences are ones he will never forget, however his recent trip with 26 other Oregon World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., on May 18-22, is now "one of the top three events to ever happen in my life," Bunting said.

Thanks to Honor Flight of Eastern Oregon (HFEO) and the generosity of many benefactors, these men were able to visit the National World War II Memorial and other historic sites. Once there, the 52-member group, who hailed from nine Oregon cities east of the mountains, had breakfast with Sen. Ron Wyden and Rep. Greg Walden followed by a tour of the Capitol.

Another familiar face joined them at the memorial as World War II veteran and former Sen. Bob Dole welcomed them to "their memorial." A memorial service honoring the nations' "Greatest Generation"

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Director's Message

*Jim Willis,
Director,
Oregon
Department
of Veterans'
Affairs*

As this issue goes to press, the legislature has concluded the work of this session and will return in February 2012 for its next annual session.

Among the bills passed this session recognizing veterans who have served our state and nation, were HB 3416 which created the WWII Memorial Task Force. Their task will be to build Oregon's own WWII Memorial on the grounds of the State Capitol.

The Memorial will be built at the intersection of Court and Cottage Streets on a 90 by 90 foot section of ground. It will feature story boards that will cover each of the theaters of war, including the home front, and contain the names of all 3,757 Oregonians who were killed in action during the war.

Central to the Memorial will be a 33-foot, five sided obelisk constructed from Georgia granite and featuring the seals of all of the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces who served during WW II.

Dedication of the Memorial is scheduled for May 8, 2012 to coincide with the 67th Anniversary of VE Day. Oregon's remaining 30,000 WW II veterans and their families will be remembered at the dedication as well as the 152,000 men and women who served. It is hoped that by holding the event in May that the weather will cooperate and our special guests will be comfortable in what will be a day dedicated to their service.

Also this session, SB 951 was passed and in a special ceremony in Governor Kitzhaber's office,

LEGISLATURE PASSES BILLS RECOGNIZING VETERANS' SERVICE

the Korean War Veterans Honor Day was signed into law (see story on opposite page). This bill sets aside every June 25th as Korean War Veterans Honor Day in the hope that Oregon's 37,500 veterans of what has been called "the Forgotten War" will themselves never be forgotten, but rather, honored for their service in a war for which there is still no peace treaty.

Lastly, the governor also held a ceremony to sign SB 74 that made every March 30th Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. Oregon has some 120,000 Vietnam veterans. It is fairly well known that many of them greet each other by saying, "Welcome Home." Through this legislation, they have now received a welcome home and recognition of their service that has been long overdue.

I would like to thank all the members of the Oregon House and Senate who worked on these bills and to all of those who voted for their passage.

For a wrap-up of other bills, resolutions and memorials impacting veterans, their families and survivors, please see page 5 of this edition of the VETS NEWS.

As always, my thanks to everyone who continues to volunteer their time at the Oregon Veterans' Home and for your generous contributions to the continued operation of the Home and its services.


Jim Willis, Director

ODVA'S CONLEY ELECTED NASWVC PRESIDENT

The deputy director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has been elected as president of the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators (NASWVC). Val Conley will assume her duties as the president on August 1.

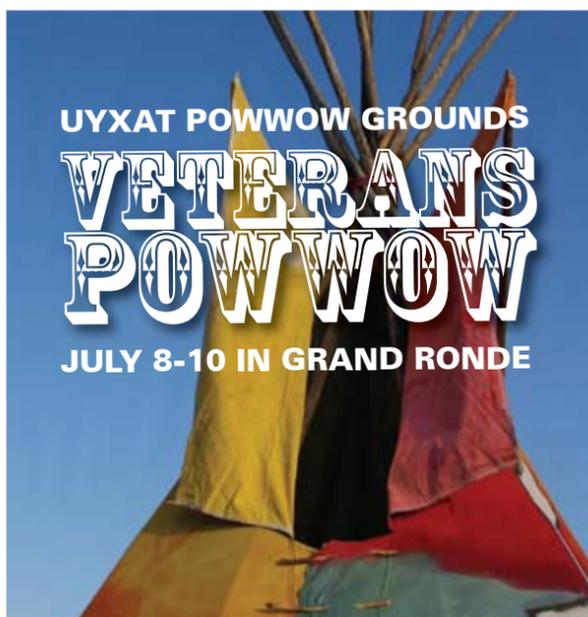
The purpose for NASWVC is to exchange ideas, information and training to facilitate reciprocal service for women veterans and to secure uniformity, equality and effectiveness in providing these services.

Conley said the 12 year-old organization will again be increasing its efforts to identify issues of concern to the women veteran's community, and develop recommendations to address these concerns through legislative, programmatic, and outreach activities.

"We must have equal services throughout the country for women veterans so that these veterans are able to access all services without problems or delays, to ensure that women veterans are aware of all their benefits and for them to have a person they can contact should any questions or problems arise," Conley said.

ODVA Director Jim Willis appointed Conley as the agency's deputy director on June 1. She replaced Paula Brown who retired in March. Conley has more than 32 years of service at ODVA. During the past eight years she has been the administrator of veterans' services and most recently served as acting deputy director.

UYXAT POWWOW GROUNDS
VETERANS POWWOW
JULY 8-10 IN GRAND RONDE

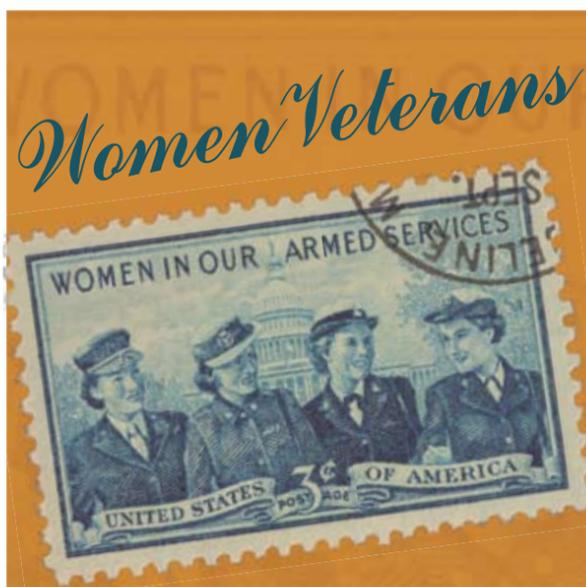


Tribal leaders invite all veterans, dancers, and the public to be part of this yearly Native American tribute to veterans. Arts, crafts, and food vendors are also welcome.

Free parking and camping is available. No drugs, alcohol or pets are permitted in the arena.

For more info contact Chris Tinney at
503-883-3610

Women Veterans



Save the dates!
March 30-31, 2012

Oregon Women Veterans Conference 2012
 Salem Conference Center | Reserve beginning January



VETS NEWS
 700 Summer St., NE
 Salem, OR 97301-1285
 Phone: 503-373-2386
 Fax: 503-373-2362
 www.oregon.gov/odva
 vetsnews@odva.state.or.us

Nicole Hoefft, Managing Editor
Mike Allegre, Associate Editor / Staff Writer
Dan Long, Production / Staff Writer
Robin Steckley, Staff Writer

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Input for the next issue must be received by August 1, 2011.

LEGISLATION INTENDED TO REMEMBER THE KOREAN WAR

Laughter and high spirits rang out from a sea of baby blue jackets gathered outside the Governor's Ceremonial Chambers at the State Capitol this past May 17. Veterans of the Korean War drove from all corners of Oregon to witness Gov. John Kitzhaber sign Senate Bill 951 that designates June 25 of each year as "Korean War Veterans Honor Day."

"The Korean War is often referred to as the Forgotten War," Kitzhaber said as he addressed a room of about 30 veterans. "It was a war that is difficult to understand even by contemporaries. And clearly in history it has been overshadowed by World War II and by Vietnam."

"But we stand here today to say loudly and clearly that we remember our Korean War veterans. We remember your honor. We remember your courage and we remember your sacrifice. And those battles that many of you were a part of can't be forgotten," Kitzhaber said. "Through difficult circumstances and pretty difficult terrain, our soldiers always fought the battles. Through your efforts you preserved a free and prosperous republic. A truly remarkable accomplishment."



Rep. Brad Witt, Gov. John Kitzhaber and ODVA Advisory Committee member and Korean War veteran Irv Fletcher attended the signing of SB 951 that designates June 25 of each year as "Korean War Veterans Honor Day." —PHOTO BY NICOLE HOEFT

Attending the bill signing ceremony were the co-sponsors of the bill, Sen. Laurie Monnes-Anderson and Rep. Sherrie Sprenger. Representatives Brad Witt, Julie Parrish, and Maj. Gen. Fred Rees, Oregon's Adjutant General, were also present to honor the Korean War veterans. They also took time after the ceremony to meet with the veterans and their families.

VETERANS' CAREGIVERS ELIGIBLE FOR VA BENEFITS

Reprinted in part by Michael A. Fuoco, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Family caregivers who for years have been frustrated at the lack of federal governmental support for the daily needs of loved ones severely injured in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are now able to apply for Veterans Affairs Department benefits for the first time ever.

The department announced in May it was rolling out the long-awaited Family Caregiver Program, providing financial, health insurance and counseling benefits for primary caregivers of post-9/11 veterans whose physical and neurological injuries require daily attention.

"I know many veterans and their family caregivers have been waiting anxiously for this day and I urge them to get their applications in as soon as possible so they can receive the additional support they have earned," said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki.

The application has set in motion a process that will include clinical eligibility assessments, caregiver training, and home visits, among other requirements. Caregivers deemed eligible will receive a monthly stipend, medical insurance, mental health counseling, and "respite care," or up to 30 days' time off during which a professional would care for the veteran.

VA spokesman Drew Brookie said the quicker someone eligible applies, the sooner they will receive benefits, which are retroactive to their application date.

Such benefits are a godsend for primary caregivers of post-9/11 veterans, many of whom gave up their jobs, health insurance and, in essence, their lives to care daily for severely injured family members.

Advocates of primary caregivers have for years noted they are the wars' collateral damage, suffering financial, physical and mental health tolls themselves in their devotion to injured loved ones. They also have noted the extraordinary costs the VA would incur if the wounded warriors were institutionalized instead of being cared for by a family member at home.

And, not insignificantly, studies have shown wounded veterans do much better physically and mentally when cared for by a loved one.

The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, signed into law a year ago by President Barack Obama, required the VA by Jan. 31 to start providing benefits. The VA has eased restrictions for the program and now says about 3,500 veterans will meet the criteria. The program is expected to cost about \$770 million over five years.

Download a copy of the caregiver program application at www.caregiver.va.gov.

I Got Mine!

Military service graphic license plates are available for your vehicle.

A Technical Analyst at ODVA, Brent Koester (US Navy), has worked in service to veterans since 2001.

"I chose to use a Veterans plate because I have pride in my nation and my time in service. Serving in the military was one of the best experiences of my life and led to many more experiences."

"I still have friends from my time in service that I keep in touch with on a regular basis and they will be close friends for the rest of my life. I chose the license plate displaying the South West Asia medal as this is the Medal for Desert Storm which is the war I served in."



The new graphic plates also support the Oregon Veterans' Home. Just visit your local DMV office and ask how you can get one of the new veteran license plates for your automobile.

Contact ODVA for more information: 1-800-828-8801

www.oregon.gov/odva

MILITARY CONVENTIONS, REUNIONS AND EVENTS

Patriotic July 4th Weekend at Volcanoes Stadium salutes all men and women of the armed forces July 1-3, 7 p.m. More than 65 veterans will be honored on the field, with 45 veterans groups represented. Fireworks display after each game.

For information: Jerry Howard 503-428-5246, j.howard@volcanoesbaseball.com

FORE Our Troops will hold 9th Annual Golf Scramble July 12, at Chehalem Glenn Golf Course, Newberg, OR.

*For information: Verl Miller, 503-576-0811
To register: www.chelhalemglennc.com/fore2011*

USS Boston CA-69/CAG-1 and SSN-703 is having a reunion of all Officers, Crew, USMC, and Flag Personnel, July 14-17, in Chicago.

For information: Arthur Hebert, 603-672-8772, www.ussboston.org

The Wall: American Veterans Traveling Tribute will be on display July 27-31, in Sutherlin, OR, in Central Park. AVTT is a traveling memorial to honor, respect, and remember those who served, and those who gave their lives in defense of freedom, including Law Enforcement and Firefighters.

For information: www.sutherlintributewall.com

196th Light Infantry Brigade will hold their reunion July 28-30, at the Hilton Bellevue, Bellevue, WA.

For information: Bob Lee, 541-374-8675, www.196th.org

Marine Corp League will hold their 88th National Convention July 31 - Aug. 6, at the Riverside Double Tree Hotel, Boise, ID.

For information: Art Kilton, 208-440-4057, www.mcleague.com

Disabled American Veterans will hold their National Convention Aug. 6-9, at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA.

For information: 504-561-0500

Jewish War Veterans will hold their 116th Annual National Convention Aug. 7-14, at the Omni Jacksonville Hotel, Jacksonville, FL.

For information: 904-355-6664

The Big Red One will hold their 93rd reunion, Aug. 17-21, at the Adam's Mark Buffalo-Niagara Hotel, New York, NY.

For information: Society of the 1st Infantry Division, 215-661-1969, Soc1ID@aol.com, www.1stid.org

Tribute to Fallen Soldiers 2nd Annual Motorcycle Ride will be held Aug. 20-21, in Roseburg, OR.

For information: Warren Williamson, 541-466-3533

USS Bon Homme Richard CV/CVA 31 will hold their 26th reunion Aug. 25-27, at the Holiday Inn Hotel, 919 Kruse Way, Springfield, OR.

For information: Jim Kosinski, 805-650-9134

USNR Midshipmen's School will hold their reunion Sept. 25-30, in Los Angeles, CA.

For information: Ken Boyd, 405-570-6421, ynnek7301@gmail.com

USS Bayfield (APA-33) will hold their annual reunion Sept. 29-Oct. 3, at the Mainsail Suite and Hotel, 5108 Eisenhower Blvd. in Tampa Bay, FL.

For information: Louis Green, 541-832-3311

Oregon State Military Officers Association will hold their bi-annual convention Oct. 8, at the Oregon Garden Resort, Silverton, OR.

For information: John Stensland, 503-362-8715

USS Clinton APA-144 will hold their 18th annual reunion Oct. 10-14, in Orlando, FL.

For information: Duncan Atkinson, 409-945-6148

Oregon Women Veterans meet the 1st Thursday monthly, 6 p.m. for a potluck gathering, all women veterans welcome at the Heeran Center Building, 2222 Coburg Rd., Eugene, OR.

For information: Sonja Fry, 541-607-7428

American Legion Post 75 meets the 1st Saturday monthly for a Fundraiser Breakfast, 7 a.m. - 12 p.m., at Post 75, 125 N. Bridge St., Sheridan, OR.

For information: Jim Gordon, 503-843-3773

Vietnam Veteran 25th Infantry Division & 1st Air CAV Veterans meet the 2nd Tuesday monthly, at Superking Buffet, 5105 SE 82nd Ave., Portland. All veterans are welcome to meet for lunch and conversation.

For information: Gary Hartt, 503-632-6955

SUBMIT EVENT INFORMATION

By mail: ODVA, Attention Public Information, 700 Summer Street, NE, Salem, OR 97301-1285.
By email: vetsnews@odva.state.or.us
Online: www.oregon.gov/odva/info/events.shtml

DEBIT CARDS FOR VA BENEFITS

March 1, 2013 will be the last day veterans will receive their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits via paper checks. U.S. Department of Treasury officials have announced a new rule dealing with electronic benefit payments. The rule expands the security and ease in which veterans receive their federal benefits via electronic means.

Consequently, the VA is strongly encouraging all veterans receiving federal benefits to begin receiving them electronically as soon as possible.

For most veterans, the VA benefits they receive are essential to their lives. Just last year, \$69 million in Treasury checks were forged and often getting a replacement check can take months. VA Sec. Eric Shinseki said veterans choosing to use electronic means to deposit their benefits increase the payments' safekeeping, convenience and dependability.

Veterans who do not have electronic payments established by March 1, 2013, will receive pre-paid debit cards instead of checks. Acting as a financial representative for the U.S. Treasury Department, Comerica Bank will deploy the debit cards, which will be named the Direct Express Card.

Changes made to the electronic deposit rules will not affect veterans already receiving payments via direct deposit. For those veterans who will receive their first disability or pension payments after May 1, 2011, they will not have an option: their payments will only be delivered electronically.

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All proceeds from the sale of the book go to support the Oregon Veterans' Home.

WYDEN VISITS OVH CONSTRUCTION SITE

Less than two months before it will officially open, Sen. Ron Wyden visited the construction site of the Oregon Veterans' Home Community Center in The Dalles on June 3. And by his reactions to its progress and expert workmanship, Oregon's senior senator gave it a ringing endorsement.

Escorted by ODVA's Project Manager John Osborn, Wyden said the addition is just another testament to the quality of care that veterans receive at the Home and the commitment of the staff for those veterans.

"This is the best of the Oregon spirit," Wyden said. "Oregonians feel very strongly about those who serve our nation. When our veterans come here, we want them to know that they're special and they will not be forgotten on our watch."

Wyden was pleased that the 9,300 square foot center will allow the community to get involved with residents and encourage special events to take place at the Home.

As the tour group admired the masonry work being done on the outside of the center, Osborn said the tentative target date for the center's grand opening is right after August 1.

"We've had some delays, but the contractors have worked hard to finalize the work on the center," Osborn told Wyden and Irv Fletcher, a member of ODVA's Advisory Committee.

The \$3 million center was developed by the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide a much needed place to gather for social and



Senator Ron Wyden discusses the construction of the new Community Center at the Oregon Veterans' Home with Dana Hale of Hale Construction N.W. Inc., the company charged with building the addition. John Osborn, ODVA Project Manager (center), looks on. —PHOTO BY MIKE ALLEGRE

recreational activities on the grounds of the Home. Osborn said funding has been made possible by Federal and State matching funds.

"We're anxious because this center will fill a need for residents and their families. We haven't

had a place in the past where everyone can come together," Osborn said. "The grand opening will be the first event hosted at the center."

SINE DIE: 2011 OREGON LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

SALEM – After a successful 2009 Legislative Session when 39 veteran bills were passed, the 2011 Legislature continued to support Oregon veterans passing an additional 25 bills aimed at employment, reintegration, outreach and expanded benefits.

Employment

Perhaps the most significant bill of the session was House Bill 3207, which mandates public employers to interview veterans for positions if the veteran can prove their military education and skills meet the minimum qualifications and desired attributes of the positions. Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis testified before the Legislature that many veterans are qualified for public sector position; however, they have trouble getting interviews because their military background seemingly doesn't fit the need even if that background really does. HB 3207 is intended to get veterans into interviews with hiring managers so veterans can prove they are qualified.

The Legislature also passed Senate Bill 277, which clarified that local governments must abide by state Veterans' Preference rules. Because of the way the statute was written previously, some local government entities did not think they had to apply the five-point or 10-point veterans' preference to veterans seeking employment or promotion. SB 277 ensures that Oregon veterans will receive these points when applying for public employment at any level.

In partnership with the Oregon Community College Association and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, the Legislature passed SB 275, which mandates community colleges use a consistent means to apply

military education and skills transfer credits. ODVA testified that the American Council on Education (ACE) has created an extensive crosswalk of military courses and skills and has recommendations of how many civilian college credits should be awarded for each. The Oregon University System currently uses ACE and Oregon's 17 community colleges now will do so as well. SB 275 will ensure Oregon veterans receive full college credit for their military experience regardless of what public school they attend in Oregon. The goal of SB 275 is not only that student veterans receive appropriate and consistent credit for their experience, but also to apply these credits so that veterans can re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible.

Reintegration and Outreach

House Bill 2403 and Senate Bill 241 were designed to increase the ability of ODVA to reach veterans by partnering with other state agencies. HB 2403 ensures that Oregon's major state agencies work with ODVA and the Military Department on reintegration issues. SB 241 is a companion bill that seeks to have state agencies ask their clients if they have served in the military and if so provide information about veteran benefits. Together, the bills create a "No Wrong Door" approach to helping veterans receive the benefits they have earned through their military service. The concept is simple: if a veteran engages the State of Oregon anywhere in the state, they will be able to access information about veteran benefits. There are roughly 340,000 veterans in Oregon, but only 100,000 receive any type of veteran benefit. The goal is to ensure that every Oregon veteran eligible for benefits receives them.

A continuing concern is the reluctance of returning active duty, National Guard and Reserve veterans to self-identify if they have a problem with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, Military Sexual Trauma, thoughts of Suicide or other critical issues. House Joint Memorial 8 and House Bill 3500 require the Pentagon and the Oregon Military Department respectively to determine if there are military cultural barriers that keep those needing help from seeking it and reporting back to Congress and the Oregon Legislature. The goal is to identify strategies where active duty and veterans can feel comfortable seeking help without any type of stigma attached to seeking that help.

House Bill 2409 request the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to export its expertise on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, Military Sexual Trauma and other military health issues to the private sector via continuing medical education classes. Many veterans do not use the VA system for their health care; however, treating veterans can be complex and private sector health care providers may not have the expertise to properly identify and treat conditions related to military service. By partnering with the VA, private health care providers can learn about the unique health care needs of Oregon veterans and treat their conditions appropriately and seek help from the VA if need be.

Expanded Benefits

Mental health caseloads at the VA continue to rise to the point where providers cannot see their patients as regularly as needed. Senate Joint Memorial 5 asks

SEE LEGISLATURE ON PAGE 8

The Oregon State Fair will honor Veterans, Freedom and America

VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY

AUGUST 30, 2011

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WOUNDED VET, FAMILY, MOVE INTO SPECIALLY MADE HOME

By Raelyn Ricarte, Hood River News, February 2011
(Reprinted with permission)

“Without further ado, welcome home soldier,” said Spc. Kevin Pannell as he handed the keys of the home near Parkdale to Staff Sgt. Christian Bagge.

Pannell, 33, and Bagge, 29, are both double amputees who had residences built to accommodate their wheelchairs by Homes for Our Troops, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization.

Pannell lost both legs in an enemy grenade ambush during a 2004 deployment to Iraq and he and his wife moved into their new Sandy home in December. He met Bagge in 2005 when the combat veteran was undergoing medical treatment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for the loss of both legs.

Bagge, who grew up in Mosier (located between Hood River and The Dalles), deployed to Iraq in 2004 with other Oregon National Guard soldiers from The Dalles Armory. He lost his legs following the June 3, 2005, explosion of two bombs while on a routine road-clearing mission about 100 miles north of Baghdad.

He said being visited by Pannell, who walked into his hospital room on prosthetic legs, gave him hope for the future. If mobility were again possible, then Bagge, an avid outdoorsman, knew that some normalcy could be restored to his life. Just three months before the tragedy occurred, Christian and Melissa (Eagy), a native of The Dalles, had married and he wanted their plans for the future to continue as unimpeded as possible.

“Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines are people who understand sacrifice and what it means to move on; I’m always impressed by people who have served,” said Bagge.

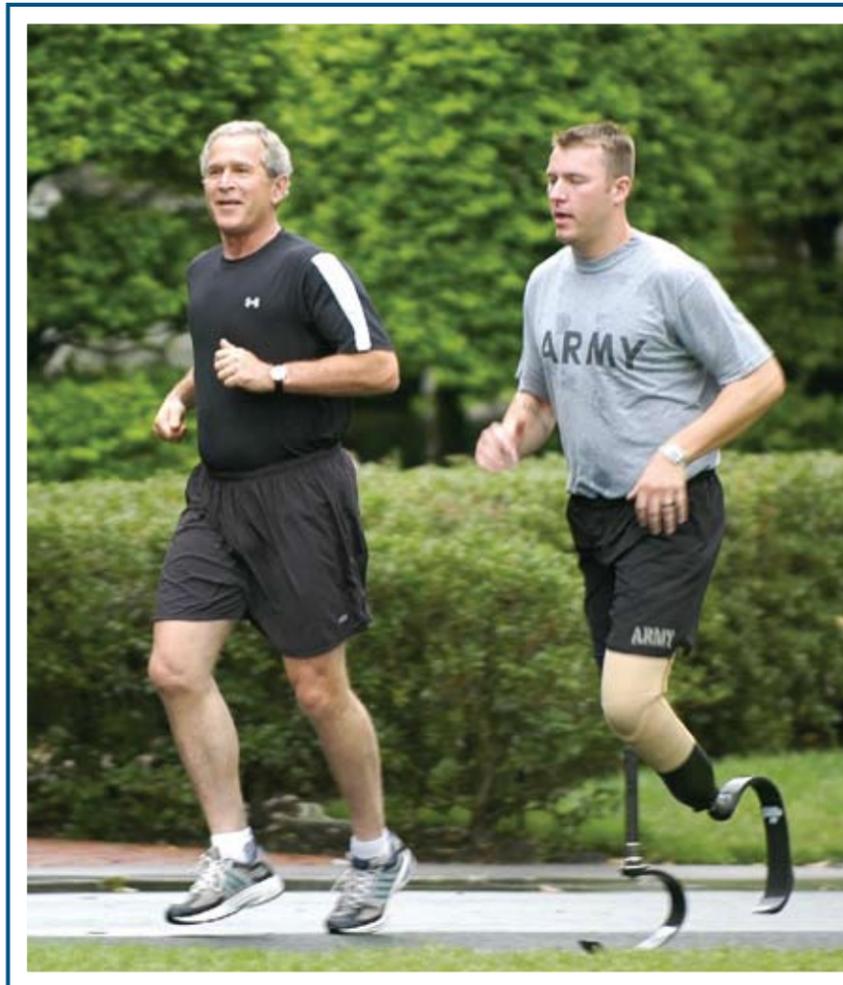
He thanked the many veterans in the crowd of more than 200 people who had come to the key ceremony organized by Homes and Advantis Credit Union of Milwaukie, which raised \$150,000 for the project. The volunteer labor force that began working on the home last August was supervised by Kase Construction of The Dalles.

The Gorge Heroes Club assisted with meals and other support for the Build Brigade in August and the Feb. 5 key ceremony. Also present at the event were 15 soldiers from Alpha Company assigned to The Dalles Armory. Three of these infantrymen had been with Bagge when the explosion occurred and struggled to keep him alive while awaiting the arrival of a medevac helicopter to transport him off the battlefield.

“I would not be here today if these men from my platoon - Nick Mendez, Jeremy Kitchen and Adam Campbell - had not worked so hard to save my life,” said Bagge.

“Every day, when they (Mendez, Kitchen and Campbell) wake up they remember what happened and these guys suffer. I love you all and I’m proud that you are here today,” he said. “I will always be proud of the almost eight years that I served my country.”

He then thanked all of the community members and contractors who had volunteered time to help



Following his recovery, Bagge and his family (above) have moved into a new home near Parkdale built to accommodate his physical requirements by Homes for Our Troops, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization.

Former Staff Sgt. Christian Bagge jogs with President George W. Bush around the White House in this 2006 photograph during his rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C.

build the single-story house that provides him with easy access to every room. He and Melissa are now raising two young children, Noah and Brynne, so a home that allows him to be easily mobile is even more appreciated.

“It’s just so amazing that so many people I’ve never met are here supporting me and that’s a testament to our country,” said Bagge.

He asked those in attendance to remember that even as the ceremony took place, and for a moment every day, there were military personnel fighting for America’s freedoms and their lives on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Hood River legislators Rep. Mark Johnson, the father of a deployed Army officer, and Sen. Chuck Thomsen welcomed the Bagges to Hood River County, where they both reside, and invited him to visit Salem.

“I’d be honored to have you as my guest of honor on the floor of the House,” said Johnson after commenting that the Bagge house stood as a legacy to American generosity and patriotism.

John Gonsalves, founder and president of Homes for Our Troops, said there were a growing number of triple and quadruple amputees at Walter Reed and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., in recent months. He said these injuries were a result of the enemy adapting to America’s armoring vehicles for better troop protection by building bigger bombs.

“Although we should be grateful for their survival, we also have to look into the mirror as Americans and ask, ‘What do we owe them?’” said Gonsalves. “We need to be in a position where every community is doing what we did here.”

He said more than 1,000 homes were needed across the nation for service members with severe disabilities caused by service on the front lines.

The Dalles soldiers helped the Bagges load the furniture from their The Dalles home into a U-Haul truck on Friday, Feb. 11. They stayed after the ceremony to move the family’s belongings into the new 2,600-square-foot residence.

“Helping Christian get moved in and being there to honor his family at the key ceremony can’t make up for the sacrifices they have made on behalf of this country but will help provide them with an opportunity to re-establish themselves,” said 2nd Lt. Brian Fike, commander of The Dalles unit. “We are his brothers in arms and this is just the right thing to do.”

Also pitching in to help the Bagges move in were emergency responders from the Parkdale, West Side, Hood River, Odell and Pine Grove fire departments. They escorted the family to their new home via fire engine in a Highway 35 procession that was also joined by a vehicle from the Oregon State Police.

The Patriot Guard Riders, under the direction of The Dalles resident Rod Runyon, formed a flag line at the entrance to the private road and outside the Bagge house.

Safeway employees from Hood River delivered more than \$500 of goods - everything from diapers to cooking spices - and handed the Bagges \$300 in gift certificates after the ceremony. Prior to his military service, Christian had worked for the store and Linda Hutson, head clerk, said the employees are honored to have them in Hood River County and plan to continue their support.

“We have adopted them; they are part of the family now,” she said.

Congress to cap VA mental health provider caseloads at 60 per provider so that Oregon veterans can access mental health care when they need it.

Senate Joint Memorial 3 urges Congress to allow victims of Military Sexual Trauma to seek treatment with any provider they choose at VA expense. Under current law, MST victims can obtain free counseling at the VA. The Legislative Task Force on Women Veterans' Health Care recommended that VA pay for all MST counseling regardless of where the victim seeks that counseling, because some victims may be more comfortable seeking treatment privately instead of through a VA facility.

Senate Bill 338 creates a Task Force to ensure community colleges implement the so-called Dependents Tuition Waiver program already in place at Oregon universities. The program allows dependents of those killed in action (KIA) or dependents of 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans to attend college via tuition waiver on a space-available basis. The Task Force is to report back to the 2012 Legislature on its progress.

Learning the lessons of previous wars, Senate Joint Memorial 2 urges Congress to establish a dedicated health care fund for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans to ensure there is money to pay for their eventual health care costs in the VA system.

HB 3208 allows for the construction of two additional veterans' homes in Oregon, while HB 2578 stipulates the third veterans' home will be constructed in Roseburg. A second veterans' home is being built in Linn County, adding 150 beds to the existing 151 beds located at the Veterans' Home in The Dalles.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Magazine Subscription Program, residents at the Oregon Veterans' Home enjoy reading current magazines while relaxing at the Home.

The individuals listed below have recently joined dozens of previous donors to support this meaningful program. Their generosity is greatly appreciated by our veteran residents.

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Ron Lake
Pete Macnab
Mary J. McDonald
Gary Van Orman
Myrle Smith
Dick & Judy Wiley
Gerry Willis

For information concerning the Magazine Subscription Program, contact Linda Adams at the Oregon Veterans' Home by calling 1-800-846-8460 or 541-296-7152 or e-mail inquiries to: adamsl@odva.state.or.us.



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TRIBAL LEADER, “MARCE” NORWEST PASSES

GRANDE RONDE – Grande Ronde Tribal Elder and Korean War veteran Marcellus “Marce” John Norwest, 82, died May 22, in McMinnville.

A proud veteran, Norwest served during the Korean War from February 1953 to November 1955. He entered the U.S. Army in the early 1950s and served with the 532nd Combat Engineers as a machine gunner and fired 50-caliber cannons. Norwest also served as a heavy equipment operator in other locations, such as Fort Lewis, Wash., and Camp San Luis Obispo and Fort Ord in Calif. In Germany he served as a military policeman.

After his military service he worked as the fire warden in Chiloquin and in lumber mills in Alaska and Oregon. He retired as the Forestry Patrol Officer for the Grand Ronde Tribe at age 79.

Usually Norwest was master of ceremonies at the Tribe’s annual Memorial Day ceremonies. With grieving hearts, this year the Veterans’ Special Event Board asked Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno to do the honors.

Norwest was one of the founding members of the Grand Ronde chapter of the Northwest Indian



Marcellus “Marce” John Norwest speaks at a Memorial Day event at the West Valley Veterans’ Memorial on the tribal campus.

- PHOTO COURTESY OF SMOKE SIGNALS, GRAND RONDE TRIBE

Veterans Association and became a member of the West Valley Veterans Honor Guard. He was also a driving force behind the West Valley Veterans’ Memorial located on the tribal campus.

Leno said Norwest was a committed, dedicated Tribal member and a good friend to many. “Marce set the standard for the Veterans Honor Guard. He initiated the Veterans Powwow. He really put us on

the map as far as people requesting our Honor Guard.”

Beginning this summer, the Veterans Powwow held in Grande Ronde every year will be called The Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow in Norwest’s honor.

ODVA Director Jim Willis commented that there were two things about Norwest that impressed him the most.

“One was his private dignity. Marce was a man of few words. And two, his commitment to younger people. He was always setting a good example for youth, and had good expectations for them, for their future. He did that very eloquently and well,” Willis said.

Norwest was born on May 8, 1929, in Klamath Falls, the son of Leo and Mary Duvall Norwest. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Sharon. Four of his seven children preceded him in death.

His funeral service was held May 27, in the Tribal gymnasium. Norwest was interred in the Grand Ronde Tribal cemetery.

OBAMA TO AWARD MOH TO WASHINGTON SERGEANT

WASHINGTON DC – An Army Ranger who lost his right hand and suffered shrapnel wounds after throwing an armed grenade away from his fellow soldiers will be the second living Medal of Honor Recipient from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On July 12, President Barack Obama will award Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry, with the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry. Petry will receive the Medal of Honor for his courageous actions during combat operations against an armed enemy in Paktya, Afghanistan, on May 26, 2008. At the time of his actions, Petry was assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Petry now serves as part of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga.

“It’s very humbling to know that the guys thought that much of me and my actions that day, to nominate me for that,” said Petry, on learning he had been nominated for the medal.

Petry’s actions came as part of a rare daylight raid to capture a high-value target. The 31-year-old native of Santa Fe, N.M. was clearing the courtyard of a targeted compound with Pfc. Lucas Robinson when they came under fire. A bullet pierced both of Petry’s legs, and he and Robinson took cover by a chicken coop.

As Sgt. Daniel Higgins arrived, a grenade was thrown from the other side of the coop. It landed about 30 feet away and exploded, wounding Higgins and Robinson. When a second grenade landed just a few feet away from the three wounded Rangers, Petry grabbed it and tried to toss it away, but it exploded in his hand.

Petry enlisted in 1999 and has completed multiple combat tours totaling 28 months in Iraq



Sgt. 1st Class Leroy A. Petry

and Afghanistan. His previous decorations include two Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart and three Army Commendations Medals.

Last year, Obama awarded the first Medal of Honor of the current wars to Staff Sgt. Sal Giunta, also for actions in Afghanistan.

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TRANSPORT PROGRAM SERVES VETERANS

PORTLAND – Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services Division are actively seeking volunteer drivers who are veterans with a desire to serve their community and fellow veterans. The agencies have teamed up with Ride Connection to address the unique transportation needs of veterans living in that county.

Program spokesperson James Uyeda said this volunteer program will help provide no-charge, personalized transportation to veterans who can no longer drive or use public transportation.

“The trips taken through the program may include visits to the doctor or dentist or for other personal needs such as grocery shopping,” Uyeda said. “In

some cases, the only way our riders get out of their home is with the assistance of dedicated volunteer drivers.”

Ride Connection recently implemented a similar program to serve veterans in Washington County by partnering with Disability, Aging and Veteran Services. So far, more than 25 veterans have volunteered their time and services.

Uyeda said volunteer drivers could choose to use their own car or a Ride Connection vehicle to transport veterans to and from essential appointments. Those interested in volunteering should call 503-528-1738.

was held on site and Walden's staff presented each veteran with a flag that had been flown over the Capitol and a Congressional Record tribute to the veterans.

The group visited the Lincoln, FDR, Vietnam War and Korean War Memorials before crossing the Potomac River to see the Marine Iwo Jima Memorial, Women in Military Service for America Museum, and Tomb of the Unknowns.

Oregon Medal of Honor recipient and World War II veteran Bob Maxwell of Bend was among those making the trip. He laid the HFEO wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns after the group viewed the changing of the guard ceremony.

On their way to Dulles Airport for the return flight to Portland, the group visited the Smithsonian's Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum to view the *Enola Gay* B-29 bomber that dropped the atomic bomb over Hiroshima in 1945.

Everywhere they went the veterans received accolades from individuals and groups, especially

students, for their service and sacrifice. On arrivals at both Dulles and Portland airports, fire trucks honored the veterans with an arch of water sprayed over the aircraft.

"All of us were like a bunch of young sailors again instead of the old salts, soldiers, and Marines that people may have thought that we were," Bunting laughed. "It was quite a time for all of us and we're all thankful to the people who made it possible."

HFEO is one of more than 100 hubs in the national Honor Flight Network honoring veterans of World War II by taking them free of charge to Washington D.C. to visit their memorial on the National Mall. More than 75,000 World War II veterans across America have been treated to a "trip of a lifetime."

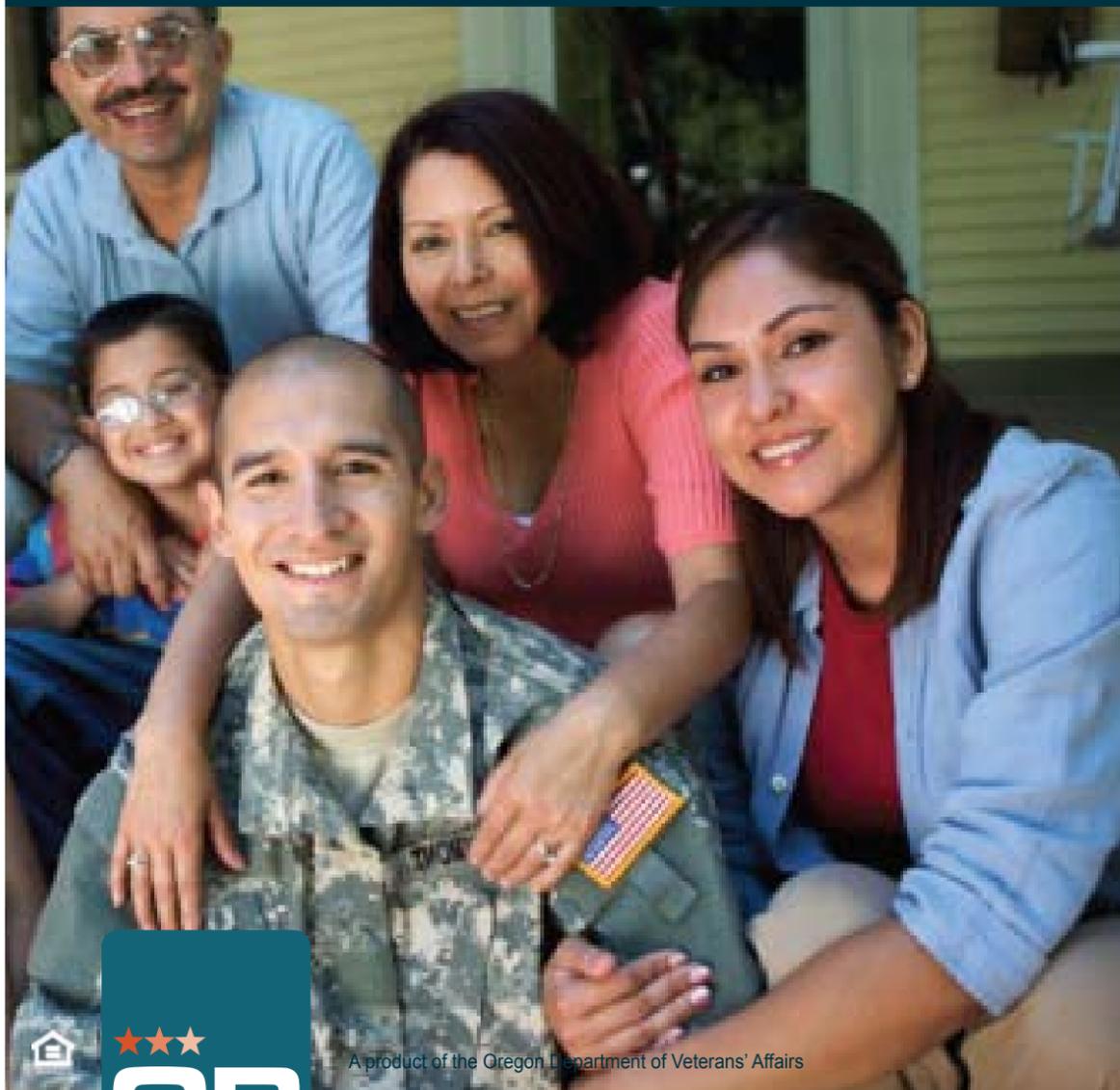
HFEO's service area covers 20 cities east of the Cascades and has scheduled another trip to Washington D.C. for September 21-25. Donations are needed to fund this and another trip next year. HFEO is managed by the non-profit Bend Heroes Foundation. Donation information can be found at: www.bendheroes.org or call 541-388-5591.



Roy Bunting points to the Iwo Jima Memorial 66 years after he witnessed the American flag being raised on Mt. Suribachi in 1945.

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PROFILE: BLANCHE OSBORN

Blanche Osborn Bross was born on July 21, 1916, and lived in Oregon since the age of eight.

In 1943, Blanche heeded the call to duty by joining the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP), an experimental program developed to compensate for the lack of men available for pilot training; when American men were critically needed for combat duty during World War II, important piloting jobs across the country were left vacant. WASPs like Blanche spent countless hours training to assume piloting jobs – delivering planes from factories to their domestic bases, towing targets for gunnery practice, and training cadet pilots.

More than 25,000 women applied for the prestigious WASP program, and while 1,830 were chosen for training, a select 1,074 women graduated from the rigorous program. After graduating, Blanche became one of 17 women sent to Columbus, Ohio to learn to fly four-engine aircraft. In Ohio, Blanche became a pilot of the legendary B-17 "Flying Fortress," ferrying the enormous bomber between bases. Fortunately, at 5 feet, 8 inches tall, Blanche was just tall enough to reach the rudder pedals.

Later she was sent to Fort Myers, Fla. to assist in gunnery training. As a pilot, she took gunners up in the air where they fired at targets towed by a B-25. Many of the gunners had been in male-dominated combat and were shocked to greet women pilots in the cockpit. One soldier even exclaimed, "I have to write home about this!"

After spending close to a year at Fort Myers, Blanche and three other WASPs were transferred to Las Vegas where they were used in the engineering squadron to test repaired aircraft. The program generated significant publicity during the war, and Blanche was featured in a famous picture of female pilots walking off of the "Pistol Packin' Mama," a B-17 bomber (pictured above, Blanche is on the far left). The photograph has since been used in advertisements for clothing lines, fashion magazines, and historical chronicles.

Blanche lived to fly, and always quickly pointed out she always felt accepted by the men in the military. However, in 1944 a bill that would have allowed women to enter the air force did not pass, and the WASP program was dismantled.

For many years, one distinct honor alluded Blanche and the other female pilots. The WASPs had retained their civilian status while flying aircraft in World War II, and therefore, were not considered 'veterans' after the war. At long last in 1977, Blanche and other female pilots were finally recognized for their invaluable service to their country when the WASPs were finally designated as veterans.

Blanche died shortly after her 92nd birthday in 2008.

Read more stories like Blanche's in *150 Years of Oregon Veterans*. See ad on page 4 of this issue.

VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICERS

County	Telephone Number	Service Officer
Baker	541-523-8223	Jane Chandler
Benton	541-758-1595	Don Johnson
Clackamas	503-650-5631	Janice Harlan-Raisl
.....	503-650-5768	Rick Rutherford
Clatsop	866-325-2429	Kenneth H. Rislow
Columbia	503-366-6580	Joseph Pyle
Coos	541-396-3121, Ext. 362	Mary Ann Sackett
Crook.....	541-447-5304	Angela Gilley
Curry	866-298-0404	Frank Van Meter
Deschutes	541-385-3214	Keith Macnamara
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Gilliam	541-384-6712	Bryan Hunt
Grant	541-575-1631	Bob Muenchausen
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Hood River	541-386-1080	Lester Logsdon
Jackson	541-774-8214	Renee Burgdorf
Jefferson	541-475-5228	Patricia White
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Morrow	877-999-8387	Linda Skendzel
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Polk	503-373-2085	ODVA
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Disabled American Veterans	503-412-4750	Robert Lougee
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Paralyzed Veterans of America	503-412-4762	Ken Fink
Veterans of Foreign Wars.....	503-412-4757	Jack Zule

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.....	503-559-3284	Oregon State University Gus Bedwell
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Southern Oregon University	503-559-1386	Marty Kimmel
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Quarterly meetings of the Advisory Committee are held in the Oregon Veterans' Building, 700 Summer Street NE, Salem, Oregon. Special needs will be met for those who have a disability. For arrangements and meeting dates, please call 503-373-2383.

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HONOR FLIGHT TAKES WWII VETERANS TO D.C.



27 Oregon Veterans Visit National Memorials and Congressional Leaders on Their Visit to the Capital

Navy veteran Roy Bunting of Redmond was serving aboard the *USS Warrors* in the south Pacific when he witnessed one of the most iconic moments in U.S. military history, the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima's Mt. Suribachi in February 1945. He and the crew would take part in 32 different invasions as they delivered U.S. Marines to fight on the beaches at Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Eniwetok and others.

Those experiences are ones he will never forget, however his recent trip with 26 other Oregon World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., on May 18-22, is now "one of the top three events to ever happen in my life," Bunting said.

Thanks to Honor Flight of Eastern Oregon (HFEO) and the generosity of many benefactors, these men were able to visit the National World War II Memorial and other historic sites. Once there, the 52-member group, who hailed from nine Oregon cities east of the mountains, had breakfast with Sen. Ron Wyden and Rep. Greg Walden followed by a tour of the Capitol.

Another familiar face joined them at the memorial as World War II veteran and former Sen. Bob Dole welcomed them to "their memorial." A memorial service honoring the nation's "Greatest Generation"

World War II veterans from Oregon were greeted by students as they visited the National World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. in May.

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