



# VETS NEWS

May | June 2009

Jim Willis, Director

[www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva)

## SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO HEAR HAAS CASE

By Tom Mann

WASHINGTON, DC – The United States Supreme Court has refused to hear an appeal by a Navy veteran who argues he was exposed to Agent Orange while aboard ship off the shore of Vietnam, resulting in disability presumed to be caused by the chemical.

Because the case was not heard, Navy veterans aboard ships who never stepped foot in Vietnam during the Vietnam War will not be awarded VA compensation benefits based upon the presumption conditions due to exposure to Agent Orange.

The culmination of this court case, known as Haas v. Nicholson, means that the Veterans Affairs Regional Office in Portland will adjudicate “Blue Water” Navy veteran claims based upon a lower court ruling upholding the VA’s position that veterans must have stepped foot in Vietnam to qualify for the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange. As many as 422 claims by Blue Water veterans have been on hold at the Portland Regional Office during the court case appeal process.

Between 1991 and 2002, the VA recognized the Vietnam Service Medal as evidence of having served in Vietnam. However, the VA changed its internal policies in February 2002 when it ruled that veterans had to have actually stepped foot in Vietnam to qualify for the presumption of Agent Orange exposure.

Agent Orange is presumed to cause a variety of health conditions, including various cancers

SEE HAAS CASE ON PAGE 4

## VA: RECOVERY SPENDING INCLUDES \$250 TO ELIGIBLE VETERANS

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will spend more than \$1.4 billion as part of President Obama’s economic recovery plan to improve services to America’s Veterans. VA’s Internet site – [www.va.gov/recovery](http://www.va.gov/recovery) – provides current information about VA’s work to deliver its portion of Recovery Act funds into the economy to benefit Veterans.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) enables the VA to improve medical facilities and national cemeteries, provide grants to assist states in acquiring or constructing state nursing homes and extended

care facilities, and to modify or alter existing facilities to care for Veterans.

VA will dedicate ARRA funds to hire and train 1,500 temporary claims processors to speed benefits delivery to Veterans and pursue needed information technology initiatives for improved benefits and services. Funds will also be used to oversee and audit programs, grants, and projects funded under ARRA.

As part of the President’s Recovery plan, VA will also make one-time, tax-free payments of \$250 to eligible Veterans and survivors to mitigate the effects of the current economy.

SEE RECOVERY ON PAGE 4

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## Director's Message

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

The Red Lion on the River in Portland was the setting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Induction Ceremony for the Oregon Military Hall of Fame. Over 650 veterans, family members and supporters attended the ceremony held on Saturday April 18.

Inductees were recognized in two categories, Service to Country and Community and Service Above and Beyond the Call of Duty.

The ceremony was conducted by Remembering America's Heroes, a non-profit corporation dedicated to educating our youth and our communities about the meaning of service and sacrifice on the part of our veterans. (See article on page 5 of this edition of the VETS NEWS)

I would like to use my message to recognize former Marine Corps Sergeant and Korean War Veteran Ernie Argo of Lebanon.

Ernie was the only inductee in the category of Service to Country and Community and what a life of service it has been.

Ernie Argo moved to Oregon with his parents and they settled in the Jefferson area. Jefferson High School would not accept Ernie's academic transfer, so he quit school and went to work for the railroad with his father. In 1951, Ernie enlisted in the United

# SERVICE TO COUNTRY

States Marine Corps. He served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, 1<sup>st</sup> AMTRAC BN, B Company in Korea as a mechanic, testing landing craft.

In 1954 he left active duty at the rank of Sergeant but remained in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1959. Ernie joined the Santiam Detachment of the Marine Corps League (MCL)



**Former Marine Corps Sergeant and Korean War Veteran, Ernie Argo, of Lebanon.**

and is a lifetime member. He was the local Marine Corps League Commandant three times and served also as the Department of Oregon Commandant. He formed a Marine Corps Drill Team, marching throughout Oregon in parades and other events.

Ernie is a life member of both the American Legion Post 51 in Lebanon and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 584 in Albany where he served as Post Commander three times. During his term as Post Commander, the building was remodeled in its current configuration. He was also responsible for the flagpole that stands in front of the Post Home. Ernie never missed a meeting while holding office.

He was part of the MCL crew that built permanent restrooms at Timber Linn Memorial Park in Albany, which also served as the site of the MCL Clubhouse.

Ernie helped with the construction of the Linn County Veterans Memorial located in Timber Linn Park. The Memorial commemorates those Linn County Veterans who gave their lives during the 20<sup>th</sup> century wars. The original memorial has been incorporated into the current Linn County Veterans Memorial and Ernie made a significant contribution to that memorial as well. He was responsible for procuring the 155mm Howitzer gun that sits at the centerpiece of the Memorial today.

Ernie served as President of the Linn County Veterans Council (LCVC) four times. In 1987, Ernie was honored as the Linn County Veteran of the Year. LCVC organized and hosts the largest Veterans Day observance west of the Mississippi. Ernie was also part of the American Legion Color Guard that won a national championship. The Color Guard stood duty at many area funerals and flag ceremonies.

SEE ARGO ON PAGE 6

# OBAMA REVERSES COURSE OF ACTION ON VETERANS CARE

By Tom Mann

WASHINGTON, DC – President Obama has dropped his controversial plan to charge the private insurance of service-connected disabled veterans for their VA health care. The President originally had put the idea in his 2010 budget and was immediately confronted by every federally chartered veterans organization in the country.

The Governor's Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs also unanimously condemned the idea, passing a resolution asking the president to cease and desist from any action that would involve charging service-connected veterans for the care of their service-related conditions.

"I believe the president was misled by the people at the Office of Budget and Management," said Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis. "You cannot break faith with our veterans and expect us to just stand by – especially on an issue like this."

Obama's original plan was aimed at saving \$540 million dollars.

"The president erred thinking he could help balance the budget on the backs of disabled veterans," Willis said. "We are very pleased he rethought his position and agreed with the entire veterans community that charging a disabled veteran for his or her care is unthinkable."



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Published every other month for Oregon veterans and others interested in news affecting veterans and their dependents.

If you wish to receive the VETS NEWS regularly, send your name and address to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, Attention Public Information, 700 Summer Street, NE, Salem, OR 97301-1285. If you are a veteran, please include your era of military service.

When credit is given to the source, VETS NEWS articles may be reprinted. However, please call the editor to assure accuracy and timeliness of the articles. Reunions printed upon space availability. (Input for the next issue should be received by June 1, 2009.)

# BLAZERS HOST OREGON GUARDSMEN, FAMILIES

PORTLAND -- For Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Evans and his family, spending an evening with an NBA Portland Trailblazer's basketball team was a dream come true.

"We don't get a chance to go to the games, so they really enjoyed this," Evans said about his four sons, while he hoisted his youngest, Jacob, onto his shoulder for a picture with Blazers head coach, Nate McMillan. "They're going to remember this forever."

The Evans' joined 30 other Oregon National Guard members and their families at the Memorial Coliseum, the evening of Feb. 9, during the annual "Make It Better Holiday Carnival" hosted by the Blazers and Nike. The event had to be cancelled last December because of the snow and ice storm.

Evans is assigned to the Army Guard's Alpha Battery, 2-218 Field Artillery Battalion. He will deploy to Iraq this summer along with more than 3,000 other soldiers.

Traci Rose, vice president of community relations for the Blazers said the event is a way to say thank you to various groups throughout Oregon.

"Our organization is very sensitive to what's going on with the war and the families who are affected," she said. "Every year we get together and throw a big carnival for a group, and this year we wanted to host military members and their families."

The event included carnival-style games, an inflatable play zone, a video game kiosk, double-shot basketball and ping-pong. Nike also provided special gift bags for the children. Several of the soldiers' children ran excitedly from one player to the next asking for autographs.

Military families filled up on hotdogs, cotton candy and popcorn, or played games alongside the towering NBA players in the carnival-like atmosphere. Blazers Head Coach, Nate McMillan, welcomed the soldiers and their families before introducing nearly 10 team members scattered

throughout the crowd. McMillan told the soldiers it was "their night," and thanked them for their service and sacrifice.

For the players, Rose said, it is a chance to give back to the community and show their appreciation for the sacrifices soldiers and their families make. "In all honesty, the soldiers are the heroes."



The Rose Garden and PGE Park beckon veterans, their families.

## SUMMER OF BASEBALL FOR VETERANS

By Christopher Dauterman

Military veterans are invited to Portland to enjoy three baseball games at PGE Park.

The summer kicks off on May 23 with Military Appreciation Night, presented by the U.S. Army, when the Portland Beavers baseball team hosts the Nashville Sounds. Veterans can only receive discounted tickets by calling and purchasing tickets from team's main office.

The first 1,903 fans through the door at PGE Park that night will receive military style caps.

On June 13, the Portland VA Medical Center is hosting a special Welcome Home game at the ballpark. Free admission is extended to war veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF). An RSVP is required for admission by emailing: [welcomhome@va.gov](mailto:welcomhome@va.gov).

This program provides veterans from VA Medical Centers and nursing homes the opportunity to attend a ball game free of charge. More than 50 cities across America participated in the event last year.

Also, members of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) can get free admission to Beavers baseball on June 26. An RSVP is required for admission by emailing [davbeavers@gmail.com](mailto:davbeavers@gmail.com).

This is the ninth consecutive year the Beavers have hosted DAV Day at the ballpark. To learn more about DAV Day at the Ballpark go online at [www.dav.org/news/MLB.aspx](http://www.dav.org/news/MLB.aspx).

The director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, Jim Willis, is grateful to the Portland Beavers for their recognizing veterans.

"America's game showcases the fighting spirit that forever lives within our veterans. My deepest appreciation is extended to those that provide a patriotic observance of those that wore the uniform," Willis said.

Willis is encouraging everyone to go to the ballpark this summer and get involved. "Attending community events is important and veteran involvement is significant."

Discounted tickets are only available by calling the Beavers' main office. The offer will not be valid at the box office. For more information about tickets, call Jen Manlig at 503-553-5443, or email [jmanlig@pgepark.com](mailto:jmanlig@pgepark.com).

The Beavers are the Triple-A minor league baseball club of the San Diego Padres. PGE Park is located in Portland at 1844 S.W. Morrison, one block east of East Burnside Ave.



## You Showed Courage On The Battlefield

If you're struggling with thoughts of suicide, please show courage again by calling for help

**1-800-273-TALK**  
**1-800-273-8255**  
(press 1)

You're not alone - your fellow veterans care about you!

**Make the call!**

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

and diabetes. VA began denying claims by Blue Water veterans if they could not prove they had "boots on the ground" in Vietnam despite earning the Vietnam Service Medal.

Jonathan L. Haas, USNR (Ret.), filed a claim for Type II Diabetes based upon Agent Orange exposure in 2002 and was denied because he had not stepped foot in Vietnam. Haas appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals and again was denied. Haas then appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims where a three-judge panel reversed the VA and ordered it to re-address its rules for Blue Water veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange.

The VA appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which reversed the Court of Appeal for Veterans Claims in favor of the VA. In October 2008, Haas filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case, thus leaving in place the U.S. Court of Appeals ruling.

For Oregon Blue Water Navy veterans who have filed claims against the VA for conditions presumed to be caused by Agent Orange, this is grim news. Under the current ruling, if a veteran cannot prove he had boots on the ground in Vietnam, or that he was directly exposed to Agent Orange aboard ship, the claim likely will be denied.

If you have questions about your claim, please contact your veteran service officer or the federal VA at 800-827-1000.



These payments will be issued as early as June 2009. VA estimates \$700 million in payments will be made to eligible beneficiaries as part of this measure.

VA beneficiaries must also have received compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), or spina bifida benefits at any time between November 2008 and January 2009.

Veterans and their dependents who receive benefits must reside within the United States and its territories. No application is necessary. VA will use its existing payment records to determine eligibility for the \$250 payment.

Beneficiaries will receive their payments the same way they receive their monthly VA benefits (by direct deposit or mail). VA will inform beneficiaries and the public when releasing the payments. This payment is not countable in determining eligibility for VA pension or Parents' DIC.

VA beneficiaries who also receive benefits from the Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board will be paid through those agencies, and will therefore not receive the payment from VA.

More details, including VA stimulus project guidelines, will be available in May.

# VETS/FAMILIES ADMITTED FREE TO ROSE FESTIVAL, PARADE

For the first time ever, the Portland Rose Festival is opening the Waterfront Village in the Tom McCall Waterfront Park one week early. To celebrate Portland's patriotism, free admission to the Waterfront Village will be provided for all current and former U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, and their families from May 22-25.

To honor their service, the Rose Festival is asking veterans to join the Danner Memorial Day March that will proceed down Naito Parkway on May 25 at 1:45 p.m. A commemoration ceremony will be held at 2:30 p.m. at the south end of the park. A military fly-over has been requested and a 21-gun salute is planned.

According to Marilyn Clint, associate executive director of the Portland Rose Festival, all uniformed military members, both on active duty and all veterans from other eras, are invited to march in the parade and attend the ceremony. The families of veterans, active military, and fallen heroes are also invited to march.

"On Memorial Day weekend we honor our veterans who lost their lives in action or have since passed away," Clint said. "We also celebrate our American spirit, the tradition of community pride and military service of our

local and national heroes who have given so much for our freedom."

The ceremony will include patriotic songs and guest speakers. The Portland Police and Fire Bureaus will be involved. The Oregon Military Museum will provide an historical display.

Clint said this Memorial Day event is sure to grow in popularity in coming years. "This march will be just 10 blocks long so all veterans can participate."

Those interested in participating should gather by the Burnside Bridge on the north



Portland Rose Festival, Veterans' Victory Parade, circa 2007

end of Waterfront Park no later than 1:30 p.m. Groups are encouraged to fill out the application posted on the Rose Festival website. Schedule updates and information is also available at [www.rosefestival.org](http://www.rosefestival.org). For more information, e-mail [lauram@rosefestival.org](mailto:lauram@rosefestival.org).

## Lending A Helping Hand

**Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs**

### Claims and Counseling

- Service-Connected Disability
- VA Health Care Enrollment
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- GI Bill
- Pension
- Dependent and Survivor Benefits

**Whether you're just back from a combat zone or have been home for 60 years, you may be eligible for federal VA benefits. Give the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs a call so we can direct you to the Veteran Service Officer nearest you!**



**800-692-9666**

# STATE TO HONOR MILITARY FAMILIES ON MAY 8

SALEM – The State of Oregon will designate May 8 of each year as Military Family Appreciation Day as a way to honor the sacrifices made by military families in support of the state and nation.

This year's event will include celebrations at the State Capitol and in 14 communities throughout Oregon.

The Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services initiated the idea for a day to raise awareness about families. Task Force Chairman Paul Evans noted that an annual military family appreciation day "will help strengthen the bonds between communities and their veterans and families."

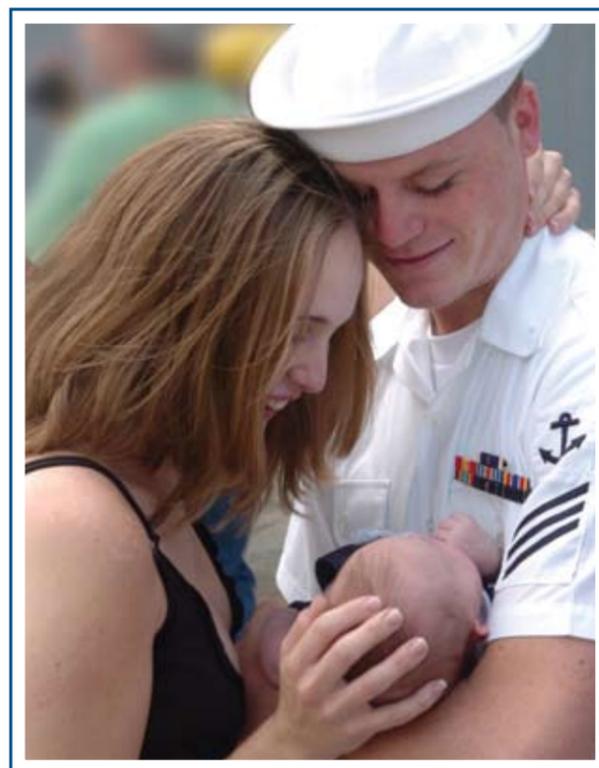
This year's Military Family Appreciation Day will begin at the State Capitol at 9 a.m. with speakers and presentations and will include a bill-signing ceremony with

Governor Ted Kulongoski who will sign into law a variety of veterans' bills.

Starting at 6 p.m., local communities will hold events throughout the state that will include an educational presentation, a community service project and community picnic or potluck, bringing together military families and their neighbors.

The communities involved are: Medford, Gresham, Bend, Tigard, Springfield, Pendleton, The Dalles, Klamath Falls, Warrenton, La Grande, Roseburg, Canby, Independence and Coos Bay.

For more information about Military Family Appreciation Days or specifics about events in local communities, please go to [www.oregon.gov/ODVA/TASKFORCE/MILFAM.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODVA/TASKFORCE/MILFAM.shtml) or call Michelle Kochosky at 503-584-2245.



## OREGON MILITARY HALL OF FAME INDUCTS EX-POWS, EIGHT OTHERS FOR MILITARY SERVICE

Eight individual veterans and a group of ex-Prisoners of War from Oregon have been inducted into the Oregon Military Hall of Fame and recognized for their distinct military service. The Remembering America's Heroes (RAH) 3<sup>rd</sup> annual induction ceremony, on April 18, was held at Portland's Red Lion Hotel-Jantzen Beach.

These Oregon veterans were recognized in one of two categories: Above and Beyond the Call of Duty and Service to Country and Community.

Honored in the Above and Beyond the Call of Duty category were 204 Oregon ex-POW's and six individuals: Capt. Edward Allworth, Col. Rex T. Barber, Sgt. John Noble Holcomb, Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Marc Lee, Sgt. Harry Niehoff, and Pfc. Stuart Stryker.

Honored for his Service to Country and Community was Sgt. Ernest Argo. All inductees were presented a commemorative plaque and their stories will be included in upcoming Oregon Military Hall of Fame displays and events.

Special guests at the induction included former Gov. Victor Atiyeh, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis, Col. Michael Howard, and former KGW sportscaster and World War II veteran, Doug LaMear.

A partial list of veterans who have already been inducted into the Oregon Military Hall of Fame includes Medal of Honor recipients

David R. Kingsley, Arthur J. Jackson and Robert D. Maxwell, Marion E. Carl, Roberta Boyd Sandoz-Leveaux, and Oregonians who served in the 41st Infantry Division, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and the Chosin Few-Oregon Chapter.

RAH Executive Director Ken Buckles notes that the Hall of Fame has recognized only a fraction of those Oregon veterans who deserve induction, so the Hall's Board is taking nominations all year long. For more information about the Oregon Military Hall of Fame, visit the RAH website at [www.rahusa.us](http://www.rahusa.us).

## CLEAN-UP NEEDED ON MEMORIAL

In preparation for Memorial Day ceremonies to be held at the Vietnam Veterans of Oregon Living Memorial, the Friends of the Vietnam Veterans of Oregon Living Memorial have scheduled a clean-up party for Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, between 8 a.m. and dusk. Volunteers are needed and will be provided with tools, gloves, and a free lunch.

The Memorial honors 801 Oregonians who are listed as killed or missing in action as a direct result of the Vietnam War. It is located at Portland's Washington Park across from the Metro Zoo, and next to the World Forestry Center. Interested persons should contact Jerry Pero at 503-866-3990.

### Change your world—Become a teacher

#### Teacher Information Session

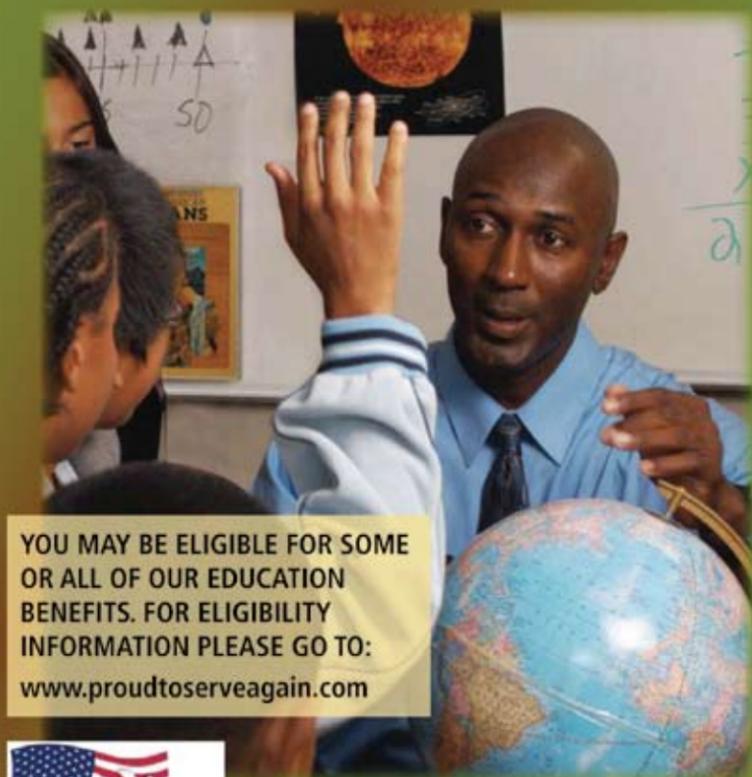
For all Vets, current or retired and AD, NG, and Reserve personnel

May 27, 2009, 6:30-8pm  
Portland State University  
Room 338 Smith Memorial Student Union  
1825 SW Broadway, Portland

#### Find out about

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[northernntt@gmail.com](mailto:northernntt@gmail.com)



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# VA REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITIES WITH NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

WASHINGTON DC -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced a new partnership to help non-government organizations (NGOs) plan, improve and carry out their own programs on behalf of veterans, their families and their survivors.

VA officials say the new NGO Gateway Initiative is one more way to extend services to veterans by identifying their unmet needs of veterans, families and survivors, working with VA to help minimize duplication of effort and confusion among NGOs with veterans programs.

In addition, the program will encourage continuous feedback from NGOs on issues such as physical and mental health, employment, and satisfaction with government services and benefits affecting veterans.



ARGO FROM PAGE 2

In addition to this service to his fellow veterans and their families, Ernie also found time to serve more than 1,000 hours at the Lebanon Community Hospital where he worked with his wife Marie.

Ernie and Marie also worked in support of local Girl Scouts along with daughters Dianne and Debbie. Ernie also volunteered to help build the Whispering Winds Girl Scout Camp and was honored when he was named an Honorary Girl Scout.

In what was left of his limited time, Ernie was a member of the Rollin' Oldies Car Club and restored and displayed a number of vintage automobiles. Members of the club say that Ernie was never too busy to help another member or to recruit new members.

When it was time to restore the old Lebanon railway depot, Ernie was right there as part of the team that completed the task.

In 2008, the American Red Cross honored Ernie for his 105 whole blood donations. It seems that whenever and wherever he was needed, Ernie was there for his community.

While slowed to some degree by poor health, Ernie always has a quick smile for his friends and fellow veterans. In my letter to the selection committee concerning Ernie's latest honor, I said, "If I were to seek a role model for the perfect community volunteer, I would need to look no further than Ernie Argo."

Thanks Ernie for all you have done for your community, state and nation. Well-done Marine!

Jim Willis, Director

VA acknowledges a long tradition of working with national veterans service organizations on programs benefiting all veterans. VA also has had close relationships with private-sector groups, churches, charities and other non-profit organizations that provide housing for homeless veterans.

"The Veterans Coalition is dedicated to marshalling energy and resources from all

communities to better serve service members, veterans and their families," said Harry Walters, chairman of the Veterans Coalition and former VA administrator. "Together we can do a better job than any of us can do alone."

For information, call Geoff Deutsch, 703-408-0122 or Laurie Tranter, 202-461-7600.

## BILL TO CREATE VET CORPS NOW BEFORE THE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON D.C. – A bill to establish a service corps of veterans dedicated to serving other veterans and the greater community has been passed by the U.S. Congress and was sent to President Obama for his signature.

The Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) Act, includes language authored by Congressman John P. Sarbanes (D-MD) to create the Veterans Engaged for Tomorrow (VET) Corps.

The mission of VET Corps is to provide veterans with a new means to serve their country; put veterans back to work; train them for civilian careers and provide services for disabled or older veterans as well as the public.

"VET Corps provides veterans an opportunity to continue their tremendous service to our nation," Sarbanes said.

"It will also help mitigate the disproportionately high levels of unemployment in the veteran population while providing disabled or older veterans with tangible benefits," he added.

"It is only natural that veterans would be the first to answer President Obama's call to community service. VET Corps will allow them to participate in a meaningful way and help smooth their transition back to civilian life."

## VA, DOD ANNOUNCE LIFETIME ELECTRONIC RECORD FOR VETS

WASHINGTON DC – President Obama, along with VA Secretary Shinseki and Defense Secretary Gates, have announced that VA and DoD have taken the first step in creating a Joint Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record – a comprehensive system that allows the streamlined transition of health care records between DoD and the VA.

Both Departments will work together to define and build a system that will ultimately contain administrative and medical information from the day an individual enters military service throughout their military career, and after they leave the military. Creation of this Joint Virtual Lifetime Record will take the next step to delivering seamless, high-quality care, and serve as a model for the nation.

Obama said the quality of care veterans receive should never be hindered by budget delays and that he had worked with Secretary Shinseki to support advanced funding of veterans medical care that will provide a timely and predictable flow of VA health care funding from year to year.

He noted that his proposed budget for VA will:

--Increase funding by \$25 billion above baseline over the next five years.

--Dramatically increase funding for veterans' health care.

--Expand eligibility for veterans' health care to over 500,000 veterans who were previously denied care by 2013.

--Enhance outreach and services related to mental health care and cognitive injuries, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, with a focus on access for veterans in rural areas.

--Invest in better technology to deliver services and benefits to veterans with the quality and efficiency they deserve.

--Provide greater benefits to veterans who are medically retired from service.

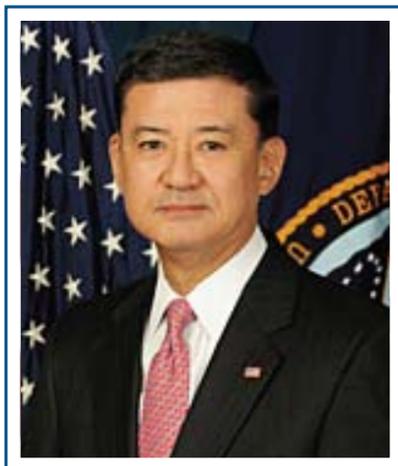
--Combat homelessness by safeguarding vulnerable veterans.

--Facilitate timely implementation of the comprehensive education benefits that veterans earn through their dedicated military service.

# OPEN LETTER TO VETERANS FROM VA SECRETARY

WASHINGTON – Following is an open letter to Veterans from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki:

“My name is Ric Shinseki, and I am a Veteran. For me, serving as Secretary of Veterans Affairs is a noble calling. It provides me the opportunity to give back to those who served with and for me during my 38 years in uniform and those on whose shoulders we all stood as we grew up in the profession of arms.



VA Secretary Eric Shinseki

“The Department of Veterans Affairs has a solemn responsibility to all of you, today and in the future, as more Veterans join our ranks and enroll to secure the benefits and services they have earned. I am fully committed to fulfilling President Obama’s vision for transforming our department so that it will be well positioned to perform this duty even better during the 21st Century. We welcome the assistance and advice of our Veterans Service Organizations, other government departments and agencies, Congress, and all VA stakeholders as we move forward, ethically and transparently, so that Veterans and citizens can understand our efforts.

“Creating that vision for transforming the VA into a 21st Century organization requires a comprehensive review of our department. We approach that review understanding that Veterans are central to everything VA does. We know that results count, that the department will be measured by what we do, not what we promise, and that our best days as an organization supporting Veterans are ahead of us. We will fulfill President Lincoln’s charge to care for “. . . him, who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan . . .” by redesigning and reengineering ourselves for the future.

“Transforming any institution is supremely challenging; I know this from my own experience in leading large, proud, complex, and high-performing organizations through change. But the best organizations must be prepared to meet the challenging times, evolving technology and, most importantly, evolving needs of clients. Historically, organizations that are unwilling or unable to change soon find themselves irrelevant. You and your needs are not irrelevant.

“Veterans are our clients, and delivering the highest quality care and services in a

timely, consistent and fair manner is a VA responsibility. I take that responsibility seriously and have charged all of the department’s employees for their best efforts and support every day to meet our obligations to you. Our path forward is challenging, but the President and Congress support us. They have asked us to do this well—for you. Veterans are our sole reason for existence and our number one priority—bar none. I look forward to working together with all VA employees to transform our department into an organization that reflects the change and commitment our country expects and our Veterans deserve.

“Thank you, and God bless our military, our Veterans, and our Nation.”

## DoD LAUNCHES NEW SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

WASHINGTON DC – As part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, the Department of Defense launched a new social marketing campaign called Our Strength is for Defending. This research-based prevention strategy is designed to empower service members to intervene in situations where possible sexual assaults may occur.

“We want to capitalize on the strength of our men and women in uniform to ensure they know how to safely intervene in situations to prevent this horrible crime,” said Kaye Whitley, director, sexual assault prevention and response office.

The campaign’s informational materials and public service announcements address topics such as active bystander intervention; crime reporting; supportive behavior for victims of sexual assault; and services provided by sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates within each of the armed forces.

The campaign was developed with the assistance of Men Can Stop Rape, an organization that has successfully deployed sexual assault prevention programs throughout the United States and several countries.

“Although we are rolling out this campaign during Sexual Assault Awareness Month, our goal is to continue to push hard on these messages throughout the year. Prevention requires everyone to be alert 24 hours a day. We need service members to be constantly on guard to protect their friends and co-workers, both on and off the battlefield,” Whitley said.

This will be the department’s fifth year directly participating in this important national event.

For more information on DoD events during Sexual Assault Awareness Month, visit [www.MyDuty.mil](http://www.MyDuty.mil).

## Attention All Veterans!

Did you experience any unwanted sexual attention, uninvited sexual advances, or forced sex while in the military? Does this experience continue to affect your life today?

Both women and men can experience sexual harassment or sexual assault during their military service. VA refers to these experiences as military sexual trauma, or MST. Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively affect a person’s mental and physical health, even many years later.

Some problems associated with MST include:

- Disturbing memories or nightmares
- Difficulty feeling safe
- Feelings of depression or numbness
- Problems with alcohol or other drugs
- Feeling isolated from other people
- Problems with anger or irritability
- Problems with sleep
- Physical health problems

If you have experienced military sexual trauma, [seek help](#) by calling the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs at **800-692-9666**, and ask to speak to a counselor.

# MEMORIAL DAY

## Albany

**May 25** – Speaker: *Jim Willis, Dir., ODVA.*  
**8 a.m.** – Ceremony to be held in Timber-Linn Park.  
**10 a.m.** – Ceremony, Willamette Memorial Park. Free lunches, VFW Post 584, 1469 Timber St. S.E., and Legion Post 10, 1215 Pacific Blvd. S.E.  
**2 p.m.** – Ceremony at Twin Oaks Cem.  
Contact: *Don Epperson, 541-971-3750*

## Beaverton

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Beaverton Memorial Park on Watson St.  
Contact: *Marv Doty, 503-644-0350*

## Bend

**May 24 – 9:30 a.m.** – Service organizations, high school NJROTC units will place flags, Pilot Butte Cem.  
**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Flag ceremony, Deschutes Memorial Gardens, Hwy. 97.  
**1 p.m.** – Ceremony, Deschutes Memorial Gardens, N. Hwy. 97. Open House, VFW Post 1643, N.E. 4th and Olney.  
Contact: *Bob Cusick 541-389-0995*

## Buck Hollow

**May 25 – 10:30 a.m.** – Ceremony, Buck Hollow Cem., Willamina Creek Road to Buck Hollow Road.  
Contact: *Kevin Scott 503-474-7275*

## Coos Bay

**May 23 – 11 a.m.** – Parade downtown with marching bands, veterans groups, and community organizations.  
Contact: *Gene Melton, 541-290-4222*  
**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Services, Ocean View Cem., 1525 Ocean Blvd. N.W.  
**12 p.m.** – Sunset Cem., 63060 Millington Road.  
Contact: *Bill Keller, 541-888-6556*

## Corvallis

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Ceremony, Crystal Lake Cem., Crystal Lake Drive.  
Contact: *Nicky Jones, 541-753-4149*  
**2 p.m.** – Ceremony, Benton County Veterans Memorial, Kings Blvd. Local veterans killed in Iraq/Afghanistan, Purple Heart recipients honored on “Purple Heart Walkway of Honor.”  
Contact: *Les Whittle, 541-752-3222*

## Dallas

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony and Avenue of Flags, Dallas Cem., 2065 S.W. Fairview Ave. Speaker: Capt. Bob Bacca. Limited seating.  
Contact: *Al Ratzlaff, 503-623-2591*

## Depoe Bay

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – 64th annual Fleet of Flowers memorial honoring veterans lost or buried at sea.  
Contact: *Barbara Leff, 541-270-3839*

## Eagle Point

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Eagle Point National Cem., 2763 Riley Road. Guest speakers, military music.  
Contact: *Rick Colclasure, 541-778-7051*

## Eugene

**May 25 – 9 a.m.** – Mass, “Salute to Veterans.” Mt. Calvary Cem., 220 Crest Dr.  
Contact: *Tim Garrison, 541-686-8722*  
**12 p.m.** – “Salute to Veterans” Lane Memorial Gardens, 5300 W. 11th Ave.  
Contact: *Dee Harbison, 541-343-1684*  
**2 p.m.** – “Salute to Veterans,” West Lawn Memorial Park, 225 S. Danebo Ave.  
Contact: *Randy Wood, 541-342-8281*

## Florence

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Memorial service, Elks Lodge 1858, 1686 12th St.  
Contact: *Ted Naylor, 541-997-2610*  
**11 a.m.** – Joint dedication ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park. Speaker Val Conley, ODVA Veterans Srvs. Administrator. Contact Bob McGuire, 541-902-7884

## Forest Grove

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Forest View Cemetery, 1161 Pacific Ave. Speaker: Sgt. Major Mike Bruno.  
Contact: *Jim Craigg, 503-357-3660*

## Grand Ronde

**May 25 – 8 a.m.** – Memorial services, Grand Ronde Cem., Grand Ronde Road.  
Contact: *Kevin Scott 503-474-7275*

## Grants Pass

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, parade of flags, guest speakers, Hillcrest Memorial Park, 945 N.E. Hillcrest Drive.  
Contact: *John Woods, 541-479-2707*

## Gresham

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Service at the Heroes Memorial, Powell and Tribute.  
Contact: *Gail Hanna, 503-667-1623*

## Hillsboro

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Fir Lawn Memorial Park, 1070 W. Main St.  
Contact: *George Anderson, 971-404-7905*

## Hood River

**May 25 – 9:45 a.m.** – Procession with a Color Guard and high school band to march through Idlewild Cemetery.  
Contact: *Patrick Scranton, 541-386-1080*

## Independence

**May 25 – 10:30 a.m.** – Independence State Airport Memorial Tribute. Community picnic, Nutsch Aviation Hangar: \$5. Shuttle bus service available.  
Contact: *Andy Andersen, 503-838-4231*

## Klamath Falls

**May 25 – 9:30 a.m.** – Parade downtown.  
**11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Veterans Memorial Park. Speaker: CWO Ron Young, Jr., ex-POW. Veterans with proof of honorable service will be awarded Oregon Honorable Service Medal. Forms at Co. Veterans Service Office, 123 N. 4th St., or at [www.klamathveterans.com](http://www.klamathveterans.com).  
Contact: *Klamath County Veterans' Service Office, 541-883-4274*

## La Pine

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Services at Community Cem., Reed Road off of Hwy. 97. Open house, Legion Post 45, 52532 Drafter Road, at 12 p.m.  
Contact: *Pat Cotton, 541-536-1402*

## Lebanon

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Ceremony, nearly 400 donated casket flags displayed. IOOF Cem., Hwy. 20 and Cem. Road.  
Contact: *Fred Schaefer, 541-258-7453*

## McMinnville

**May 23-25** – Weekend celebration, Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum, Hwy. 18, 500 N.E. Capt. Michael King Smith Way. Ceremony, May 25. Check website: [www.sprucegoose.org](http://www.sprucegoose.org).  
Contact: *Laura Graham, 503-434-4185*

## Milwaukie

**May 25 – 8:30 a.m.** – Ceremony, Pioneer Cem., north of Waverly Drive on S.E. 17th Ave. Information: [www.milwpioneercem.org](http://www.milwpioneercem.org).  
Contact: *Mark Neubauer, 503-997-9495, email: [info@milwpioneercem.org](mailto:info@milwpioneercem.org)*

## Mt. Angel

**May 25 – 9:30 a.m.** – Memorial service, patriotic music at Calvary Cem., Hwy. 214. Mass will be celebrated. Inclement weather services: St. Mary Parish Church, 575 E. College St.  
Contact: *Jerry Lauzon, 503-845-6882*

# EVENTS ~ 2009

## Newberg

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Memorial Park, 4<sup>th</sup> and Howard St. Guest speaker: Col. (Ret) David R. Beecroft, USAF. BBQ, Memorial Park after the ceremony.  
*Contact: Don Miller 503-538-6108*

## Nyssa

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Memorial service, Hilltop Cemetery.  
11:30 a.m. – Memorial service, city boat ramp, Snake River Park.  
*Contact: Bill Thomson, 541-889-6649*

## Ontario

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Ceremony, Evergreen Cem., located on S. Park Blvd.  
10:30 a.m. – Services at Sunset Cem. on Sunset Dr. two blocks south of S.W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
*Contact: Stephen Farrow, 541-881-1389*

## Pendleton

**May 25 – 9 a.m.** – Services, Pioneer Bishop Chapel. VFW Post 922 Aux. to place flowers at six war memorials.  
*Contact: Gary Ward, 541-276-0308*

**11 a.m.** – Services at Olney Cem., Avenue of Flags, guest speakers.  
*Contact: John Cook, 541-276-2032*

## Portland

**May 22-25** – Portland Rose Festival celebrating spirit-tradition of U.S. military and their families with free admission to Waterfront Village. Information: [www.rosefestival.org](http://www.rosefestival.org).  
*Contact: Laura Mears 503-227-2681*

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Ceremony, Oregon Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington Park, 400 S.W. Canyon Road. 801 Oregon servicemembers' names killed during the Vietnam War will be read.  
*Contact: Ron Cannon, 503-819-4228*

**10 a.m.** – Ceremony at Willamette National Cem., 11800 S.E. Mt. Scott Blvd.  
*Contact: Roger Huntley, 503-273-5250*

## Prineville

**May 25 – 10:30 a.m.** – Parade downtown. Services, Juniper Haven Cem., north of town at the Pioneer Section.  
*Contact: Bob Cusick, 541-389-0995*

## Rainier

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Memorial observance, Hudson Cem. Veterans Memorial, 7900 Larson Road.  
*Contact: 503-741-0916*

## Redmond

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Redmond Cem., Avenue of Flags, Yew Ave. and Old Bend-Redmond Hwy.  
*Contact: Dennis Guthrie, 541-280-5161*

## Reedsport

**May 24 – 4 p.m.** – Community BBQ, Reedsport High School, Hwy. 101.  
**7 p.m.** – 29 Palms U.S. Marine Corps Band—free concert at high school. Tickets available at local banks.  
**May 25 – 12 p.m.** – Parade downtown.  
**1:30 p.m.** – U.S. Army Green Beret Skydivers will parachute in to the memorial service, Hahn Memorial Park. 29 Palms U.S. Marine Corps Band will perform.  
*Contact: Joe Mirvis, 541-361-9080*

## Roseburg

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Tribute, Roseburg National Cem. National Anthem: Maddie Bright, daughter of Pfc. Dean Bright, who was killed while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.  
*Contact: Dodie Blessing, 541-459-1512*

## Salem

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Program, City View Cem., 390 Hoyt St. S.E., Keynote Speaker ODVA Deputy Director Paula Brown. Luncheon, VFW Post 61, 630 Hood St. N.E.  
*Contact: Kerry Wymetalek, 503-364-7997*

**May 30 – 2 p.m.** – Ceremony, Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial. Speaker: Jim Willis, ODVA, Director. Names of fallen servicemembers inscribed on the granite wall. Location: ODVA grounds, 700 Summer St. N.E.  
*Contact: Robin Steckley, 503-373-2390*

## Scappoose

**May 25 - 10:30 a.m.** – Memorial observance at the Veterans Memorial. Keynote Speaker ODVA Outreach Manager Dave Cooley.  
*Contact: Ronald Urban, 503-543-7482*

## Sheridan

**May 25 – 12 p.m.** – Memorial services at the cemetery near Hwy. 18.  
*Contact: Kevin Scott, 503-474-7275*

## Siletz

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Tribal ceremony, Government Hill. Proceeds to the Veterans Memorial. Lunch: Tribal Community Center.  
*Contact: Delores Pigsley, 541-444-2532*

## Sisters

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Memorial service, the Village Green Park.  
*Contact: Bob Cusick, 541-389-0995*

## Springfield

**May 25 – 10:30 a.m.** – “Salute to Veterans,” Springfield Memorial Gardens, 7305 Main St.  
*Contact: Gene Drake, 541-746-5311*

## Tigard

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Ceremony, Crescent Grove Cem. Speaker: Col. (Ret.) Harley Ray. Potluck, Post 158, 8635 S.W. Scoffins St.  
*Contact: Bernie Healy, 503-624-2332*

## Terrebonne

**May 25 – 9 a.m.** – Service at cemetery.  
*Contact: Dennis Guthrie, 541-280-5161*

## The Dalles

**May 25** – Ceremonies at these locations:  
**8:30 a.m.** – Wreath-laying, Boat Basin.  
**9:30 a.m.** – Park Lawn Cemetery, Three Mile Road.  
**11 a.m.** – Odd Fellow Cemetery, Cherry Heights Road.  
**11:45 a.m.** – Kelly View Point Cemetery, Sorosis Park.  
**2 p.m.** – Oregon Veterans' Home, 700 Veterans' Drive.  
*Contact: Vandee Mauser, 541-993-4300*

## Tualatin

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** Ceremony, Winona Cemetery, Tualatin Road  
*Contact: Dale Potts, 503-701-0392*

## Vale

**May 25 – 11 a.m.** – Services, Valley View Cem., 1699 Valley View Road.  
*Contact: Bill Thomson, 541-889-6649*

## Wasco

**May 25 – 10 a.m.** – Annual parade, Historic Train Depot, at Clark and Fulton Streets. Veterans invited to ride on the parade float. BBQ, traditional family events afterwards.  
*Contact: Geneva Sutton, 541-442-8559*

## Willamina

**May 25 – 9:30 a.m.** – Services at the Willamina Cem., off of Main St.  
*Contact: Kevin Scott, 503-474-7275*

## Winchester Bay

**May 26 (Tue.) – 12 p.m. and 6 p.m.** – Two free outdoor concerts: 29 Palms U.S. Marine Corps Band, Jason Boe Park (12 p.m.); Sportsmen's Cannery (6 p.m.). Seafood BBQ served.  
*Contact: Joe Mirvis, 541-361-9080*



# FRIENDS OF THE HOME



*Donations to the Oregon Veterans' Home Trust Fund continue to be received. We deeply appreciate the thoughtfulness and generosity of an ever-growing number of Friends of the Home. To become a friend of the Home, use the gift form on page 12, and make a tax-deductible donation today. Those who contributed during the months of February and March, 2009 are listed below:*

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# 2009 SCHEDULED REUNIONS AND EVENTS

**Disabled American Veterans** will hold their state convention May 12-16, at the Holiday Inn, Ontario, OR. Reservations: 541-889-8621. A Hells Canyon Boat Trip will be available on May 11, before the convention. For information: Mike Ward, 541-389-0664. Email: mikewa@co.dechutes.or.us.

**Merchant Marine and Armed Guard** will hold their 23rd annual convention May 14-17, in Tampa, FL. Coordinating with The American Victory, a historic cruise will be offered May 16. For progress updates: 352-397-1540. Email: morrisharvey27@yahoo.com. For information on The American Victory, visit the website: [www.americanvictory.com](http://www.americanvictory.com)

**American Veterans** will hold their state convention May 15-17, at the Eagles Lodge, 568 2nd St., Coos Bay, OR. For information: Gene Melton, 541-290-4222. Email: oldfossil137@yahoo.com.

**Greater Salem Area Veterans Organization** will have their annual Oregon's Educational Military Display May 22-June 12 in the galleria at the Oregon State Capital. For information, Mac MacDonald 503-364-4299.

**American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor** will hold their 69th annual convention May 26-30, in San Antonio, TX. For reservations: The Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade; 1-800-THE-OMNI/1-800-843-6664; website, [www.omnihotels.com](http://www.omnihotels.com). Reservations must be made by May 8.

**Military Order of The Purple Hearts** will hold their State Convention June 6, at 9 a.m. at the Village Green Resort, 725 Row River Road, Cottage Grove, OR. For information, call Robert Haltiner, 503-657-7085; or email to: rhaltiner7085@msn.com.

**Blackbird Association** is having their reunion June 11, at John Ascuaga's Nugget, 1100 Nugget Ave., Sparks, NV. For information on the Blackbird Association reunion, write to: PO Box 338, Penn Valley, CA 95946.

**American Legion** will hold their State Convention June 24-27, at the Shilo Inn 536 SW Elizabeth St., Newport. For information, call the American Legion Headquarters: Phone (541) 265-7701 - Fax (541) 265-5687.

**The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Oregon** will have their Department Convention June 25-24 at the Red Lion Inn 200 N Riverside Avenue, Medford, OR (800) 733-5466 For information, Roger Ege, 503-255-5808 email orvfwHQ@aol.com.

SEE REUNIONS ON PAGE 12

## MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM

Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Magazine Subscription Program, veterans residing at the Oregon Veterans' Home enjoy reading current magazines. The individuals listed below have recently joined dozens of previous donors to this meaningful program. Their generosity is greatly appreciated by our veteran residents.

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

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ODVA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA provides that no qualified person with a disability shall be kept from participation in, or be denied a benefit of the services, programs, or activities of ODVA because of that disability. This publication is available in alternate formats. For this service, or concerns regarding ADA, contact the ADA Coordinator at 503-373-2380.

### HIPAA Statement

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, known as HIPAA. You may obtain a copy of the ODVA Notice of Privacy Practices anytime by way of the following:

- \* Access ODVA's website at [www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva)
- \* Call ODVA at 1-800-828-8801 ext. 2141 or 503-373-2141
- \* Write to ODVA's Privacy Officer to have a copy mailed to you; or
- \* Ask for a copy the next time you visit ODVA.



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at 1-888-673-8387 or by email at [orvetshomeloans@odva.state.or.us](mailto:orvetshomeloans@odva.state.or.us).



**Veteran's Powwow 2009** will hold their Powwow July 10-12, at Uyxat Powwow Grounds, under the tent in Grand Ronde, OR. For information: 503-883-3610.

**Blinded Veterans** will hold their convention Aug. 17-22, at the Double Tree Lloyd Center, 1000 NE Multnomah Street, Portland, OR. Reservations: 503-281-6111. For information, call Frank Armstrong, 541-265-9087.

**Naval Cryptologic Veterans Association** is having their 31st National Reunion Sept. 9-12, in Portland, OR, Red Lion, Jantzen Beach. For information: 360-256-5788 or 541-689-0721, website: [www.usncva.org](http://www.usncva.org). or by email to: 2009portland@usncva.org.

**Nike Veterans** is having their national reunion Sept. 11-13, in Anchorage, AK at the Sheraton Anchorage. For information, contact Greg Durocher, 907-786-7009 or 907-337-2553. Email: [gfdurocher@usgs.gov](mailto:gfdurocher@usgs.gov).

**USMC Motor Transport Association** is having their 13<sup>th</sup> reunion Sept. 13-16 in Indianapolis, IN. For information, contact Terry Hightower, 910-324-7281, PO Box 1372, Jacksonville, NC 28541. Email: [secretary@usmcmta.org](mailto:secretary@usmcmta.org).

**Society of the Third Infantry Division** is having their 90th reunion Sept. 16-20, at the Clarion Hotel in Springfield, MO. For information, contact Linda Irvine, 360-663-2521. Email: [info@thereunionbrat.com](mailto:info@thereunionbrat.com).

**Oregon Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America** will hold their State Convention Sept. 25-27, at the Red Lion Inn, 200 N Riverside Avenue, Medford, OR. For information, contact Merv McConnel, email [mervmc@west-point.org](mailto:mervmc@west-point.org).

**USS Begor APD-127** is having their reunion Sept. 29-Oct. 3, in Portland, OR. For reservations: Red Lion Hotel Jantzen Beach, 503-283-4466, or: [theredlionjantzenbeach.com](http://theredlionjantzenbeach.com). For information, contact Rich Parady, 315 W. Evans Creek Road #50, Rogue River, OR 97537; 541-582-1761. Email: [rogriv@q.com](mailto:rogriv@q.com). Website: [www.ussbegor.org](http://www.ussbegor.org).

**The Oregon Historical Marker Committee** will hold a public meeting inviting comments and community input regarding the Camp Adair Historical Marker. Tuesday, May 19, at 10:00am, at the EE Wilson Wildlife Area, 2955 Camp Adair Rd, in Monmouth. For more information, call 800-574-9397.

# GOT YOURS YET?

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has worked with the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles and the Oregon Legislature to bring you new graphic designed veteran license plates for your vehicle. Now you can show your loyalty to your branch of service or show that special medal you earned.

Just visit your local DMV office and ask how you can get one of the new veteran license plates for your automobile.

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## Oregon Veterans' Home Gift Form

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Salem OR 97301-1285

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE OREGON VETERANS' HOME!  
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# 15 STEPS TO STUDYING UNDER THE GI BILL

*(Printed from MilitaryTimes.com)*

Whether you're planning for four long years of college or eight intense weeks of high-tech training, you should start the process of claiming your GI Bill benefits about a year before you leave the service, said Regina Lewellyn of the University of Tennessee's Office of Veterans Affairs.

Timelines differ from one school to the next, so consider this checklist a general guideline.

Follow these steps to ensure you get paid promptly upon completing the first month of your post-military education:

As soon as you decide

1. Get organized. Dedicate a binder or folder to your educational paperwork so it's always within reach. Include a calendar to record important deadlines. Once you receive your discharge, include a copy of Form DD-214.

2. Request copies of your military educational transcripts. Those courses could count for college credit. It's also a good idea to request copies of your high school transcripts and those for any college courses you may have completed already.

One year prior to separating

3. Start looking into schools. Enrollment is up, and if you wait too long to apply, you may not be accepted, Lewellyn said.

4. Check in with your chosen school's veterans coordinator, who can explain steps specific to the institution.

5. Find out any applicable deadlines, including those for application and registration.

Six months prior to starting

6. This is the latest many schools recommend applying, so if you haven't already, it's time.

7. Once you've been admitted, complete VA Form 22-1990, your application to receive GI Bill benefits. If you fill out the form online, print a copy. If you complete the form by hand, find out whether you should mail it to VA yourself or turn it in to your school's veterans office.

8. Submit your copy of Form 22-1990 — or the original form — to your school as well as a copy of your Form DD-214 and proof of any extra GI Bill contributions, if applicable.

9. Watch for your GI Bill certificate of eligibility to arrive in the mail from VA.

10. Find out the deadline to register for courses. Students who register the earliest are the most likely to get the courses they want.

One month prior to registration

11. If it's been three months and you still haven't received your GI Bill certificate of eligibility in the mail, it's time to ask

questions. Your school's veterans office is a good place to start.

12. Schedule a meeting with an academic adviser in your department to be sure you're signing up for the right subjects.

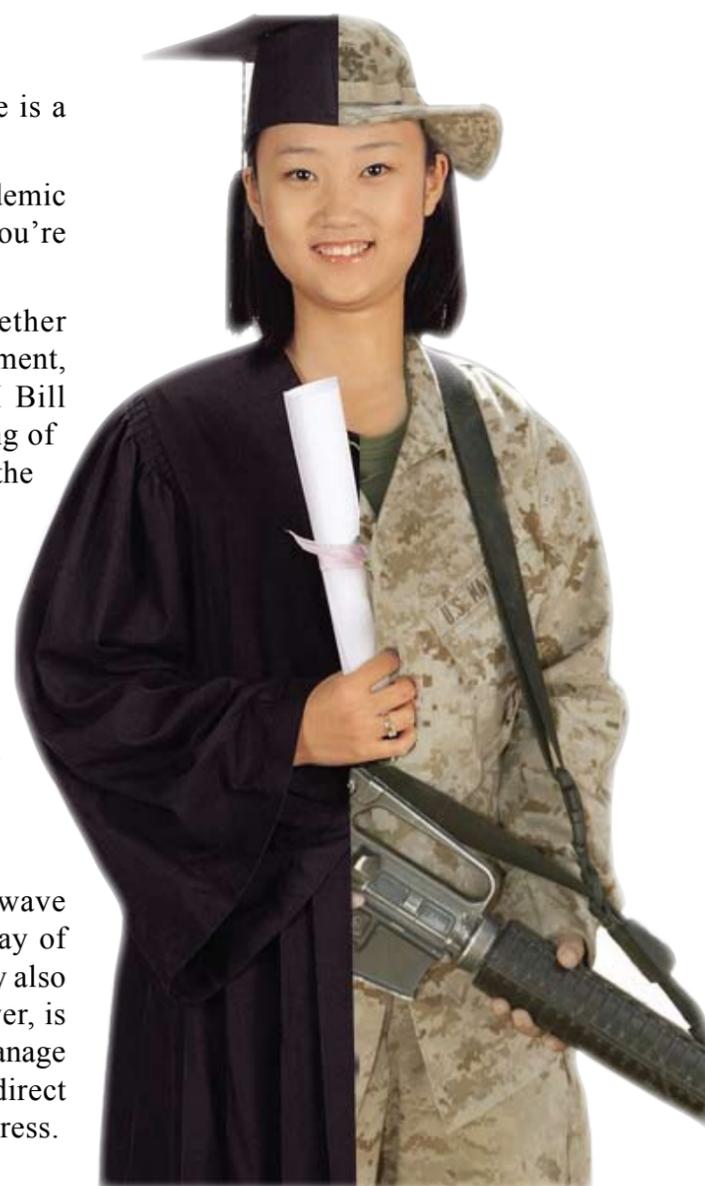
13. If necessary, check to see whether the school will allow you to defer payment, since you won't receive your first GI Bill reimbursement check until the beginning of your first full month of classes — at the earliest.

After you register

14. Request that your school certify your enrollment with VA. You'll likely need to fill out a form for this. If the school doesn't certify that you've enrolled, you won't be paid your benefit.

Once classes have begun

15. Visit <https://www.gibill.va.gov/wave> to verify your enrollment on the last day of every month you attend classes. You may also call 877-823-2378. The website, however, is recommended because it allows you to manage other aspects of your benefit, including direct deposit information and changes of address.



## VA TO ACCEPT NEW GI BILL APPLICATIONS ONLINE IN MAY

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has confirmed with Congress that it will begin accepting online applications for the Post 9/11 GI Bill certificate of eligibility beginning May 1.

According to Keith Wilson, VA's education service coordinator, all 530 new claims processors have been hired; all four claims processing centers will be ready on June 1; and staff training is underway for the August 1 launch of the New GI Bill.

VA's goal is to process applications within 24 days of receipt, according to Wilson. Approved certificates of eligibility, including a calculation of the applicant's benefit, will be sent directly to the student not the school.

For more information, contact the VA at 800-827-1000 or visit their website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

## 4 STEPS TO FIGURING THE NEW GI BILL TUITION RATE

*Reprinted from Military.com*

The New GI Bill goes into effect Aug. 1, 2009 and will offer three major education related benefits, but there are specific rules and policies governing each of these benefits.

The benefits include tuition and fees, a monthly living expense stipend (or housing allowance), and up to \$1,000 a year for books and supplies.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is for individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a

service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

There are four steps to determining how much of your tuition and fees will be covered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

To learn the basics about the other stipends visit the VA's GI Bill website: [http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI\\_Bill\\_Info/benefits.htm#CH33](http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm#CH33) Or, call for more specific guidance at 1-888-GIBILL-1.

## NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS SEEKING OREGON TRIBAL VETERANS

The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw Indians are seeking to honor Oregon tribal veterans. Native American Medal of Honor medallions are being awarded to a group of veterans at the Salmon Ceremony each year.

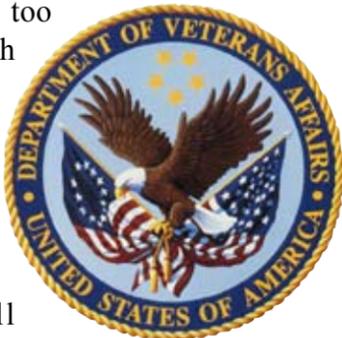
If you are a tribal veteran, have your family members submit your name, address, military information, including branch of military and dates of active service.

Send your information to: Tribal Council Secretary, 1245 Fulton Ave., Coos Bay, OR 97420.

## VA ASSISTING VETERANS WITH HEALTH CARE COSTS

PORTLAND – For veterans struggling financially due to a job loss or decreased income, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers an assortment of programs that can relieve the costs of health care or provide care at no cost.

Veterans whose previous income was ruled too high for VA health care may be able to enter the VA system based upon a hardship if their current year's income is projected to fall below federal income thresholds due to a job loss, separation from service or some other financial setback.

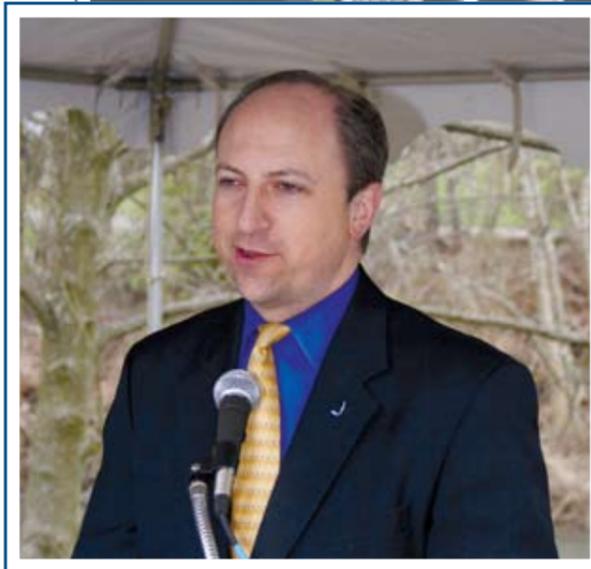


Veterans determined eligible due to hardship can avoid co-pays applied to higher-income veterans. Qualifying veterans may be eligible for enrollment and receive health care at no cost.

Also eligible for no-cost VA health care are most veterans who recently returned from a combat zone. They are entitled to five years of free VA health care. The five-year "clock" begins with their discharge from the military, not their departure from the combat zone.

Each VA medical center has an enrollment coordinator available to provide veterans information about these programs. Veterans also may contact VA's Health Benefits Service Center at 877-222-VETS (8387) or visit the VA health eligibility website at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility).

## AFGHAN IRAQI MEMORIAL REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY



The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs honored those who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom on the sixth anniversary of the war at a wreath laying ceremony at the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial on March 19. The keynote speaker was Speaker of the Oregon House Dave Hunt (above). Also speaking was Representative Sal Esquivel, who is a Vietnam veteran (below).

At top, onlookers include Paul Evans, Military and Veterans Services Advisor to Governor Kulongoski and members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services, including Chair Jean Cowan and Representatives Greg Matthews, Betty Komp, Tim Freeman, Jim Weidner, Debbie Boone and Chuck Riley.

The Grand Ronde Color Guard presented the Colors for the event. Karen Haltiner stands next to the memorial during the wreath laying ceremony (at right).



# LAST CHANCE: SUBMIT STORIES FOR THE ODVA OREGON VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

SALEM – As part of the Oregon 150 celebration, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has been soliciting stories from veterans for a book project aimed at exploring 150 years of service by veterans in the state.

Many VETS NEWS readers have responded and we want to thank those of you who have shared your stories. We are in need of stories from veterans of Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

We will continue to collect stories until June. You can submit anything you feel would benefit the project – stories, pictures, memorabilia or just a simple letter like the one below:

*Dear ODVA,*

*I noted in your last mailing, your department wants military stories. I was not a hero, but I sure did my part. I'm smiling (in the picture) because the war was over for me and I was still alive – 25 missions.*

*I was an aircraft commander – pilot of a B-17, 602<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 398 Battle Group 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. It was a "killing field" – we lost upwards of 38,000 pilots, bombardiers, navigators and crewmen, and another 25,000 POWs. That is more than the Navy lost in WWII and twice the loss of the Marine Corps.*

*Sincerely,*

*Bill Markham*

*Former Speaker Pro Tempore*

*Oregon House of Representatives*

If you are interested in contributing, please contact Mike Allegre (503-373-2389 [mike.allegre@state.or.us](mailto:mike.allegre@state.or.us)) or Robin Steckley (503-2390 [robin.steckley@state.or.us](mailto:robin.steckley@state.or.us)). Thank you again for your service and we look forward to hearing from you!



**Bill Markham, circa, 1945.**  
**Happy headlines signal end of the war.**

## 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
Clatsop .....	503-325-2429	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
Douglas .....	541-440-4219	Mary Newman
Gilliam .....	541-384-6712	Paul Conway
Grant .....	541-575-1631	Bruce B. Makela
Harney .....	541-573-6024	Anne Lessar
Hood River .....	541-386-1080	Patrick Scranton
Jackson .....	541-774-8214	Marty Kimmel
Jefferson .....	541-475-5228	Tom Weiss
Josephine .....	541-474-5454	Lisa Shipley
Klamath .....	541-883-4274	Kathy Pierce
Lake .....	541-947-6043	G. Don Boone
Lane .....	541-682-4191	Joseph Reiley
Lincoln .....	541-574-6955	John Reed
Linn .....	800-319-3882	Kim Grooms
Malheur .....	541-889-6649	Bill Thomson
Marion .....	503-373-2085	ODVA
Morrow .....	877-999-8387	Juanita Cox
Multnomah .....	503-988-3620 Ext. 26123	Katie Pereaault
Polk .....	503-373-2085	ODVA
Sherman .....	541-565-3408	Paul Conway
Tillamook .....	503-842-4358	Steve Weld
Umatilla .....	541-278-5482	Peggy Raines
Union .....	541-962-8802	Timothy H. Jederberg
Wallowa .....	541-426-3155 Ext. 241	Renee Beaudoin
Wasco .....	888-804-1817	Patrick Scranton
Washington .....	503-846-3060	Doug McEllven
Wheeler .....	800-982-1172	Paul Conway
Yamhill .....	503-434-7503	Debbie Gill

Service Organizations	Telephone Number	Service Officer
American Legion .....	503-412-4771	Greg Demarais
Blinded Veterans Association .....	541-265-9087	Frank Armstrong
Disabled American Veterans .....	503-412-4750	Jay E. Woodbury
Military Order of the Purple Heart .....	503-412-4770	Jennifer Burt
Paralyzed Veterans of America .....	503-412-4762	Ken Fink
Veterans of Foreign Wars .....	503-412-4757	Jack Zule

State Offices-ODVA	Telephone Number	Service Officer
Salem .....	1-800-692-9666 or 503-373-2085	Gus Bedwell Mitch Sparks Gina Thomas Jerry Wilson Doug Yerke
Portland .....	503-412-4777	Deanna Barnes Ron Kincaid Linda McMillan Gordon Padgett Ed Van Dyke

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Irv Fletcher, <b>Chair</b> 1272 Mayanna Drive Woodburn, OR 97071 503-981-4356	Tino E. Ornelas 22504 SW Riggs Road Beaverton, OR 97007-8467 503-844-9000	Charles E. Schmidt PO Box 1394 Hines, OR 97738 541-573-3130

Meetings of the Advisory Committee are held in the Director's Conference Room, 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.



**Address Changes /  
New Subscriptions**

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 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/ State/ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/ State /Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip and mail to ODVA, 700 Summer St NE, Salem, OR 97301-1285.  
 Changes can also be e-mailed to: [VETSNEWS@ODVA.state.or.us](mailto:VETSNEWS@ODVA.state.or.us)

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