



VETS NEWS

January | February 2011

Jim Willis, Director

www.oregon.gov/lodva

www.facebook.com/lodvavet

MEDAL OF HONOR AWARDED FOR OREGON SOLDIER RESCUE

Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta

MEDAL OF HONOR
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Their patrol was nearly over. The men from B Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment were on their way back to their base when the still of the night was shattered by AK-47 automatic rifle fire and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). Walking point, leading a squad of eight soldiers, was Sgt. Joshua C. Brennan, a well liked and respected Oregon soldier from Ontario. Brennan and his squad had just walked into an insurgent ambush and were in a fight for their lives against an estimated 15 hardened Taliban fighters.

As tracer rounds filled the air, the Americans immediately began returning fire; the enemy was so close their muzzle flashes gave away their positions. The squad had at least two men down – one was Brennan.

What happened next in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan on the night of Oct. 26, 2007 will live forever in military annals and would earn then-Spc. Salvatore Giunta the Medal of Honor.

Brennan was down and severely wounded. As the rest of the squad fought to regain the initiative, two Taliban fighters emerged from their positions, picked up the American and began carrying him away.

Brennan's closest friend in the Company, Giunta, reacted immediately to the ambush by returning fire and engaging the enemy with grenades. Giunta ran to the first wounded man, Spc. Frank Eckrode, and drug him back to safety. Giunta next went to find his friend, Brennan.

SEE RESCUE ON PAGE 3

BALLOT MEASURE 70 MAKES ORVET HOME LOAN LIFETIME BENEFIT

SALEM – Oregon voters overwhelmingly approved Ballot Measure 70 on November 2 with 84 percent of the vote, to allow a constitutional amendment to expand the ORVET Home Loan to more veterans and making it a lifetime benefit.

Originally approved in 1945, the Oregon Constitution had limited the veteran loan to veterans who had served on active duty for 210 consecutive days and had to be used within 30 years of being discharged from service.

“Back in 1945, those rules may have covered all the World War II veterans; however, times have changed and a lot of our Oregon veterans – especially National Guard veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan – were left out,” Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Director Jim Willis said. “All of Oregon’s Vietnam veterans also were barred due to the 30-year rule and we needed to fix that,” he said.

SEE LOANS ON PAGE 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- Director's Message.....Page 2
- Klamath Veterans' Court.....Page 5
- American Service FlagPage 6-7
- Friends of the Home.....Page 8
- OVH Comm. Ctr. Groundbreaking..Page 9
- Female Veteran Suicide RatesPage 10
- Veterans Service OfficersPage 11



Director's Message

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

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2011

We Look Back as a Very Busy 2010 Closes and We Look Forward to a Promising 2011

On November 18, we broke ground on the new Stan and Jean Adams Veterans' Community Center (see related story on page 9).

I want to thank all of the veterans, elected and appointed community and state leaders who participated in the event. We look forward to this new facility as we continue to serve our residents at the Oregon Veterans Home, "The place where honor lives."

As we here at ODVA look ahead to 2011, we hosted a Commanders Meeting on November 19, to chart our course.

Commanders and Presidents from all of Oregon's major veterans organizations were present for the six-hour event held at the Broadway Commons meeting facility in Salem.

During the course of the meeting, items briefed included the passage of Measure 70 during the November election, which will allow qualified Oregon veterans lifetime use of the state home loan program. The program had been limited to thirty years from date of discharge. ODVA looks forward to serving those veterans who had previously lost this benefit due to the thirty-year expiration.

The group was also briefed on the findings and recommendations of the legislatively directed task forces on Women Veterans Health Care, Veterans Transportation and Veterans Reintegration. A brief of legislative concepts was also completed to include such items as veterans employment, defining disabled veterans, a Vietnam Veteran Welcome Home day, Veterans Service Officers on campus, veterans education credit, veterans transportation issues, women veterans health care and a host of others, all intended to better serve our veterans here in Oregon.

A review of the proposed ODVA 2011-2013 budget was also presented with a clear understanding that money would be extremely tight during this session and that support from the veteran's organizations would be needed to support an adequate budget during the session.

For more information on these and other veterans issues please go to our website at www.oregon.gov/odva.

Also featured during our briefings was a workshop conducted by Gail Yakopatz, President of Honor Flight of Oregon. Honor Flight is dedicated to transporting WWII veterans to the WW II Memorial in Washington D.C. as a

way of thanking them for their service and sacrifice during the War. Gail stressed the need to establish an Honor Flight Hub in the Portland Metro and Willamette Valley area to assist with her hub in Grants Pass and the Eastern Oregon hub in Bend.

You can contact the Grants Pass Hub at (541) 955-4544 or the Eastern Oregon Hub at (541) 388-5591. The website is www.honorflight.org. Our congratulations to Gail and the good work being done by all of the Honor Flight volunteers around our state.

In our next issue of the VETS NEWS, we will update you on the progress of the 2011 Legislative session and important legislative issues developing in the U.S. Congress. As always, thank you for supporting the Oregon Veterans' Home and our troops returning from the Middle East and service around the world.

I wish each of you a very prosperous, happy and healthy New Year!



Jim Willis, Director

CHARITABLE CHECK-OFF HELPS VETERANS' HOME RESIDENTS

Wintertime in Oregon means thoughts of holidays, a new year, snow, family and friends. Yet, there is something else very important at this time of year.

Tax time.

As you prepare for the April 15 tax deadline, know that you have an important opportunity to enhance the lives of those who reside at the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles.

Through Oregon's Charitable Check-off campaign, individual taxpayers may donate all or a portion of their state tax refund to the Oregon Veterans' Home. Your donation will help offset some of the costs of caring for these honorable people.

The Home receives no General Fund dollars from the state for the operation and maintenance

of the facility. Please take the time while filling out your personal state income tax this year to include the code for the Oregon Veterans' Home on the Charitable Check-off portion of your tax form.

In order to donate a portion of your refund to the Home, simply enter your donation into the line on the form labeled "Oregon Veterans' Home" (Long form, line 62 and Short form, line 32). The Oregon Department of Revenue will do the rest.

If you have any questions about the Charitable Check-off campaign, call the Department of Revenue at 503-378-4988 and press 0.

If you would like to become a regular donor to the home, see page 8.



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

Tom Mann, Managing Editor
Mike Allegre, Associate Editor / Staff Writer
Dan Long, Production / Staff Writer
Nicole Hoeft, Staff Writer
Sue Shaffer, Staff Writer
Robin Steckley, Staff Writer

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

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 February 1, 2011.)**

Giunta told *Vanity Fair Magazine* what happened next:

“I just kept on running up the trail trying to find Brennan and see what (was) up, why he was all the way up there. I kept on running and I saw three guys. There were two guys carrying one guy – one had his arms and the other had his legs. I got my gun in my hand, just running at him. At that time, the thought was: Who the hell is up here and how did they get up here? How did they pass us?”

“All of a sudden, I only knew one of them, and it wasn’t the one that I wanted to know. It was Brennan – and he was the one being carried away. Just running and shooting, running and shooting, trying to close the gap with them. I shot at both of them. I killed one, I guess. The other one I shot... but didn’t see him, and by the time my magazine was already empty, I was at Brennan.”

Brennan was badly wounded, but still was talking. Brennan, Eckrode and Specialist Hugo Mendoza needed to be evacuated. Brennan and Mendoza later died of their wounds.

On Nov. 16 at the White House, President Barack Obama honored now-Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, 25, by awarding him the Medal of Honor for his actions that night. Giunta remains conflicted by the award.

“I’m not at peace with that at all,” Giunta said. “In this job, I am only mediocre. I’m average. And coming and talking about it and people wanting to shake my hand because of it, it hurts me, because it’s not what I want. And to be with so many people doing so much stuff and then to be singled out and put forward...I mean, everyone did something.”

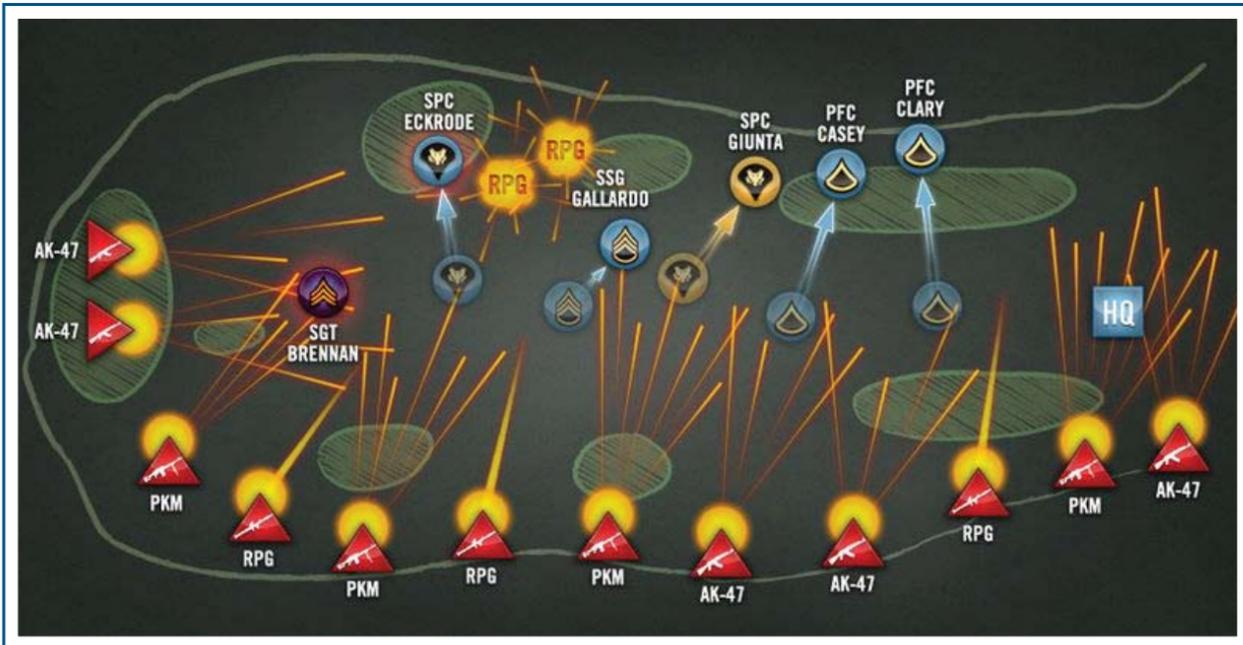
When Brennan’s family heard Giunta was named the first living Medal of Honor recipient since the Vietnam War, they felt honored and proud. Giunta tried to save Brennan’s life and rescued him from Taliban fighters who were trying to drag Brennan away.

In a story that appeared in the *Madison Journal Sentinel* in Sept. 2010, Mike Brennan, 47, Joshua’s dad said, “I was thrilled to hear he got it. It’s not just about him running up there to save Josh. But it’s such an honor for all of the people who fought with him.”

Mike Brennan still wears his son’s dog tags around his neck. He wears the St. Christopher medal he gave his son to keep him safe in battle. He sometimes wears his son’s T-shirts. Every morning he shaves with his son’s shaving gear. On his wrist he wears a bracelet inscribed with Josh’s name.

And, of course, he thinks about his oldest child every day.

Josh Brennan grew up in Oregon with his mother, Janice Gates. He spent summers with



Ambushed! — This diagram shows placements of Giunta and Brennan’s unit as well as that of the enemy. Their unit was surrounded on three sides during the ambush.

his father, a police officer in Madison, Wis., and attended school in McFarland between the ages of 8 and 10. He ran track and played football at Ontario High School.

He was five months into his second tour of Afghanistan when he was killed. Sgt. Brennan earned three Bronze Stars, including one for valor, and two Purple Hearts.

Members of Josh Brennan’s family traveled to Italy in 2008 to visit soldiers in his unit. Also on the trip was Mike Brennan’s older brother, Terry, and Terry’s son Joseph. In a strange twist, Joseph Brennan joined the Army after his cousin’s death and was assigned to Josh’s unit. Not just the regiment or battalion, but the same platoon and squad.



Sgt. Joshua C. Brennan

“We didn’t want him to do it because we didn’t want to go through all of this again in case something happened to him,” his mother, Laurie Brennan told the newspaper. “He said it was in God’s hands.”

In a phone call from Afghanistan during Christmas 2009, Joseph Brennan mentioned something that shocked his father.

“Joe said, ‘Tell Uncle Mike, we got the guy.’” Though official military sources will not confirm it, Terry Brennan said his son told him the unit had captured a “high-value target” believed to be the planner of the ambush that killed Joshua Brennan and Spc. Hugo Mendoza.

“If it’s true, it’s almost full circle for Josh’s cousin to get the guy who planned the ambush,” Terry Brennan said.

Seven soldiers have been awarded the Medal of Honor since 2001. Giunta is the 87th living recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Provided in part by Meg Jones, Madison Journal Sentinel

CANNON RETIRES FROM VETERANS TRAINING POST

SALEM – Leaving a legacy of 33 years of service to Oregon veterans, Ron Cannon has retired from his post as the director of the United States Department of Labor’s Veterans Employment and Training Service Division. More than 60 people gathered in November to wish Cannon well in his retirement.

“On behalf of more than 341,000 Oregon veterans we thank you, Ron, for your dedicated and heartfelt service to your fellow veterans,” Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Director Jim Willis said as he presented Cannon with the Director’s Distinguished Service Award.

A Vietnam combat veteran, Cannon lost his leg below the knee after stepping on a land mine in 1968. After his recovery, he returned to Oregon and became the state’s first Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) staff member with the Employment Department.

“Serving veterans has always been my honor and pleasure,” Cannon told the jovial crowd.

“It’s something that I’ve loved doing and will miss. Your being here shows the partnerships and the joy we’ve all shared to deliver the maximum services to Oregon veterans.”



Ron Cannon (left) receives the Director’s Distinguished Service Award from ODVA Director Jim Willis.

PHOTO BY TODD BROWN

Ballot Measure 70 not only makes the ORVET Home Loan a lifetime benefit, it expands the eligibility to more veterans. "Our goal was to make sure that everyone who is considered a veteran in Oregon could be eligible for the loan," Willis said.

Under the new rules, a veteran is eligible for the ORVET Home Loan if they meet any one of the following three conditions listed below:

1) Served on Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States and meets one of the five following criteria:

- For a period of more than 90 consecutive days beginning on or before January 31, 1955 and was discharged or released under Honorable Conditions; or
- For a period of more than 178 consecutive days beginning after January 31, 1955 and

was discharged or released from active duty under Honorable Conditions; or

- For 178 days or less and was discharged or released from active duty under Honorable Conditions for a service-connected disability; or
 - For 178 days or less and was discharged or released from active duty under Honorable Conditions and has a disability rating from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; or
 - For at least one day in a combat zone and was discharged or released from active duty with an Honorable Discharge.
- 2) Received a combat or campaign ribbon or an expeditionary medal for service in the Armed Forces of the United States and was discharged

or released from active duty under Honorable Conditions;

3) Is receiving a nonservice-connected pension from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

"The new rules really open the program to the vast majority of Oregon veterans," Willis confirmed. "We want to thank the voters of Oregon for their tremendous support of the state's 341,000 veterans spanning from World War II to Iraq and Afghanistan," he said.

For more information about the ORVET Home Loan program and to establish your eligibility, please contact ODVA at 503-373-2051 or toll free at 888-673-8387. You also are encouraged to visit the ORVET Home Loan website at: www.oregon.gov/odva/homeloans.

Home loans exclusively for Oregon veterans.



15-Year Term

3.25% fixed

1.375% Origination Fee
*3.518% APR

30-Year Term

3.75% fixed

1.375% Origination Fee
*3.902% APR

**Up to \$417,000
Single Family Residence
Owner Occupied**

*APR based on \$165,000
15-year or 30-year loan with 20% down
Effective date 12-2-10.
Rates are subject to change.



A product of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

Now a lifetime benefit.

To apply for a home loan or to find out more about your eligibility, call the Home Loan Department at Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

503-373-2051 | www.oregon.gov/odva/homeloans
Toll free in Oregon 888-673-8387 | 700 Summer Street NE, Salem OR 97301

VETERANS COURT OPENS IN KLAMATH FALLS

by Steve Tillson

KLAMATH FALLS – Oregon’s first Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) began operation Nov. 9, in Klamath County. The day began with a grand opening ceremony attended by local and state veterans, dignitaries and the public culminating the months-long planning and implementation process to open the new court. The court was formed in response to increasing numbers of veterans coming before the Klamath County Circuit Court charged with criminal offenses.

This phenomenon has been observed nationwide and led to the 2008 formation of this country’s first VTC by the Hon. Robert T. Russell, Jr. in Buffalo, N.Y. Since then, jurisdictions across the country have mobilized to form VTCs to address the specific problems and treatment needs of justice-involved veterans. Oregon’s VTC is the 45th such court in the nation.

Why Veterans Treatment Courts

From World War II to Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom and all eras in between, some veterans have returned to their communities with health problems that interfere with responsible social functioning. When not properly treated, these health problems can lead to unemployment, homelessness and repeated involvement in the justice system.

Based on a successful, evidence-based treatment court model common to Drug Court programs, a VTC prioritizes treatment over incarceration. Nationwide studies of the treatment court model over the past 20 years validate its effectiveness and cost savings to the public. For every dollar invested in treatment courts, the public saves an average of \$3.36 by reducing the costs of incarceration and repeat offending. The veteran benefits by gaining wellness and restoring honor. The community benefits through increased public safety.

How it works

Key to the operation of the Klamath County VTC is the collaborative partnership of the judicial system, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the county Veterans Service Office, veterans service organizations, community agencies and volunteers. Members partner in a treatment team which convenes before each court session to review cases and develop problem solving court recommendations. This coordinated response addresses an array of issues from community protection and restitution to offender rehabilitation.

Weekly court appearances afford close judicial supervision of the veteran defendant’s progress. The court hands out encouragement and sanctions as warranted. A distinguishing feature of Veterans’ Treatment Courts is the assignment of a veteran peer mentor to each defendant.

The support afforded by a healthy role model who has “been there” contributes to the success of the defendant. Linking the veteran to rated VA and VBA benefits funds treatment services while helping the defendant get back on his or her feet.



Treatment team for the Klamath County Veterans Treatment Court (left to right): Bill Gourley, Deputy District Attorney; Steve Tillson, Treatment Court Coordinator; Kathy Pierce, Veterans Service Officer; Kiki Parker-Rose, Community Corrections Director; Hon. Marci Adkisson, Circuit Judge; Rose Ewing, Training Faculty, Tulsa (OK) Veterans Treatment Court; Joe Barrett, VA Addictions Therapist; Lisa Anglin, Peer Mentor Coordinator; Sergeant John Hanns, Klamath Falls Police Department; Paul Skinner, VA Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist; Hon. Robert T. Russell Jr., Training Faculty, Buffalo (NY) Veterans Treatment Court; Steve Hedlund, Defense Attorney

Not for every veteran offender

To enter the program the defendant must plead guilty to the offense. This willingness of the veteran defendant to accept responsibility for the offending behavior is the foundation for positive change. Some charges, such as Measure 11 offenses, felony weapons offenses, sexual offenses and commercial drug offenses render the defendant ineligible for the program.

The District Attorney’s office may screen away any case when victim or community safety cannot be reasonably assured. As the VTC is a treatment court, the veteran must be diagnosed with a treatable substance abuse and/or mental health disorder. Admission decisions are made by treatment team review incorporating prosecution, defense, probation and VA treatment personnel recommendations.

From vision to reality

Development of the Klamath County VTC began with the discussions between Klamath County District Attorney, Ed Caleb and Klamath County Veterans Service Officer, Kathy Pierce. Caleb and Pierce broadcast a call to veterans service organizations, VA treatment personnel, attorneys and court personnel leading to formation of a planning committee. This committee met weekly to discuss the problems of justice involved veterans and resources available to address those problems.

Treatment court personnel from the Oregon Judicial Department guided program design to follow the established successful model adopted by other jurisdictions in the country. Implementation planning accelerated when the Klamath County team became one of 11 jurisdictions nationwide to attend a week-long pilot training for the establishment of Veterans Treatment Courts.

This training, presented and funded by the Veterans Treatment Court Planning Initiative of the National Drug Court Institute and the

U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, was held in Buffalo, N.Y. last October. The Klamath County team returned home understanding the best practices necessary to implement a successful VTC.

The promise of Veterans’ Treatment Courts

“Veterans have a whole different bag of ghosts they carry,” says Ron Ballard, Commander of the Klamath Falls VFW. When those “ghosts” lead to the veteran becoming involved in the justice system, a Veterans Treatment Court is able to respond in a manner cognizant of those ghosts and the interventions necessary to bring wellness to the veteran defendant.

The VTC is a special program but is not a “get out of jail free card.” The participating veteran must admit guilt and participate in a rigorous program of treatment and community service. The close judicial supervision of the veteran’s compliance and progress brings a high level of accountability to the process. By assuring veteran participation in rated VA and VBA services and benefits, the VTC seeks to recognize the veteran’s service to our country while administering justice for the veteran and the community.

The outstanding feature of VTCs is the collaboration among justice system and VA/VBA personnel. These partners have done their jobs independently for years. At little additional public expense, combining forces to create coordinated responses to veteran offending and treatment needs promises improved outcomes for the veteran who has run afoul of the law. To learn more about Veterans Treatment Courts visit www.nadcp.org.

Steve Tillson is the Treatment Court Coordinator for the Oregon Judicial Department’s 13th Judicial District serving Klamath County. Contact Tillson: 541-883-5503 ext. 263, or steve.tillson@ojd.state.or.us

THE SERVICE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

By Joe Knight, *Elks Magazine*, Nov. 2010

There is an eye-catching flag sometimes found hanging in the windows of homes all across America, but it's not Old Glory and it's not a state flag. This flag usually is small and white with a red border. Some examples of this flag have one blue star in the center; some have two. Others have more blue stars, and others still have gold stars covering the blue stars, with a border of blue showing around the edges.

Many Americans have never seen this flag, and sadly, even some of those who have seen it don't know its name. Once very common in the United States, this flag is called the service flag, and it has graced the windows of American homes during times of conflict ever since World War I.

What is the Service Flag?

The service flag (sometimes referred to as the blue star banner) is the official flag that, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, only immediate family members of U.S. military personnel and organizations to which service members belong (including employers) can display during times of conflict to indicate that they have loved ones, members, or employees serving the nation.

The U.S. Department of Defense defines "immediate family" as being the spouses, parents (including stepparents and foster parents), children (including stepchildren), and siblings of military personnel. The flag itself has a white field with a red border and can be of any size as long as it has the proportions of the U.S. flag and is no larger than the U.S. flag when the two flags are flown together. All family members currently serving in the U.S. military are represented on the service flag by a blue star, which stands for hope and pride, while those family members who have died during their service, whether as a result of enemy action or from other causes, are represented by a gold star, which stands for sacrifice.

The History of the Service Flag

The service flag was initially created in 1917 by former Ohio National Guard Captain Robert L. Queisser as a way of honoring his sons, who were serving in World War I. Although it was not authorized by the U.S. government at that time, soon after its creation, the service flag's blue stars became widely recognized symbols indicating that the bearer of the flag had loved ones, or in the case of organizations, members, serving in the U.S. armed forces. Because many of these individuals were men, the flag was sometimes known as the son-in-service flag.



This World War II poster depicting a forlorn dog resting its head on a sailor's uniform used as a gold star service flag to promote caution and solidarity among Americans.

The first significant change to the service flag was made in 1918, after the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defenses proposed that the mothers of individuals killed while serving in the military should add a gold star to their mourning attire to distinguish themselves.

President Woodrow Wilson gave his support to this proposal, and from this new tradition came the practice of adding a gold star to the service flag to denote the death of a family member while in military service. As a result, mothers who lost a child in the war became known as "gold star mothers," and in 1929, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., a support group for women who had lost a child in the war, was formed. In addition to providing mutual sympathy for mothers whose children had died in the service of the country, the group was dedicated to supporting veterans in government hospitals.

Other star-based symbols besides the gold star were developed for the service flag during World War I as well. For instance, in 1918, a Massachusetts law directed that a blue star with a gold Greek cross in the middle be used to indicate that an individual had been wounded while in service.

The same law provided for the use of a point-down, five-point blue star surrounded by a red circle to indicate that an individual had become a prisoner of war. Another tradition called for the laying of a silver star over a blue star to



Since World War I, the service flag has offered America World War I-era service flag was made for John Shettle Division, American Expeditionary Forces.

announce that an individual had been wounded in service; however, all of these practices eventually fell into disuse, and U.S. Department of Defense directives concerning the flag now allow for the use of only blue and gold stars on the service flag.

This early care and attention to the etiquette and traditions surrounding the use of the service flag demonstrate how important the flag was to many people in the United States during World War I. In 1918, one writer went so far as to proclaim: "Next to the national flag itself, perhaps the most familiar emblem of wartimes in America is the 'service flag,' with its star or



ns a way of honoring U.S. military personnel. This
r, a member of the 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th



A mother whose son was killed during the Japanese attack on Hickam Field, which was part of the attack on Pearl Harbor, hangs a gold star service flag in her home.

1942 and still active today, Blue Star Mothers of America worked during World War II to help active-duty military personnel and their families by sending care packages to soldiers and offering aid to soldiers' families. It also encouraged the display of the service flag, which, although in popular use since World War I, was not officially recognized by Congress until eight months after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The service flags that appeared in the windows of houses all over America during World War II would undoubtedly have served as constant reminders of the war and of the sacrifices that were being made by friends, neighbors, and loved ones in defense of the United States, but it wasn't just private citizens who displayed the service flag during World War II.

Companies created service flags for their employees, and organizations flew them for their members, just as they had during World War I. These flags were usually larger than private service flags and some had a great number of blue and gold stars on them. Whereas private service flags were typically hung in the windows of homes, corporate and organization service flags were sometimes displayed on flagpoles or hung on factory floors or in places where organizations met.

Following World War II, the service flag found favor again during the Korean War, as a new generation of military personnel went off to serve the country in a distant land. The flag fell into disuse during the Vietnam War,

probably because of the war's unpopularity, and it wasn't used much during the first Gulf War, either. Today, however, with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the service flag has experienced renewed popularity among the family members of those men and women who bravely serve in the U.S. military. It reminds all Americans of the sacrifices that are being made in faraway places on their behalf and gives the family members of U.S. military personnel a way of proudly proclaiming the service of their loved ones and a way to demonstrate their support for the U.S. armed forces.



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. has been supporting US military personnel and the mothers of US military personnel since 1942.

Using the Service Flag Properly

The use of the service flag is primarily governed by U.S. Defense Department directive 1348.33-M, wherein those who display the flag are cautioned to treat it "with dignity and respect."

The directive specifically warns against using the service flag in advertising schemes, especially ones that call for the flag to be affixed to commercial items like embroidered pillows and handkerchiefs. It also prohibits the printing of the flag on any temporary objects, such as paper napkins or boxes.

Like the U.S. flag, the service flag is never to be used as an article of clothing or to have the halyard or staff upon which it is flown used to display advertisements. For further general guidance regarding proper uses of the service flag, those who fly it are encouraged to consult the statutes governing the proper use of the U.S. flag (section 176 of title 36 of the U.S. Code).

(The stories and photos were reprinted with the permission of the writer and Elks Magazine.)

stars representing individuals from the home, the church, the business or the factory who are serving under the colors in the uniform of a soldier." But perhaps nothing conveys the emotional tie Americans had to the service flag during this period as clearly as William H. Barter's 1918 poem "The Service Flag," which immortalizes the flag and all it represents.

The Service Flag after World War I

As popular as the service flag was during World War I, with the start of World War II there was a significant increase in its use, an increase in popularity that may be in part attributable to Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. Founded in



Students sew a service flag at Tufts University to honor fellow students serving in the military during World War I.



THANK YOU!

66NR Stream
 Access Computer Products
 American Ex-Prisoners of War
 —Big Timber Chapter
 American Ex-Prisoners of War
 —Dept. of Oregon
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #9
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #25
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #34
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #45
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #83
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #87
 American Legion Post #87
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #95
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #133
 American Legion Auxiliary Unit #136
 American Legion Auxiliary—Dept. of Oregon
 American Legion SAL Squad 1
 American Veterans Honor Guard
 Anonymous
 Hildur A. Bailey
 Marilyn Barney
 Ronald and Lucille Bennett
 Lloyd and Barbara Berg
 Kathleen R. Blome
 Bowlers to Veterans Link Supporters
 Paul E. Burger
 Harold Busby
 Calvary Baptist Church, Salem
 Charitable Checkoff Donations
 Leonard J. Chase
 Kris A. Cole
 James and Marion Crews
 Dallesport Elementary School
 —Ms. Moon's 1st Graders
 DAV Auxiliary Yamhill County Unit #5
 Larry Deibert
 Kirkwood Donavin
 Heather Drapeau
 Jacob Dream
 Tom and Marie Edwards
 Joanne Ehl
 Mary Anne Enyeart
 Family Motor Coach Association
 —Lewis & Clark TT Chapter
 Farmers Insurance—Hillsboro

Fleet Reserve Association
 —Cherry City Branch
 Mike Fowler
 Mike Frahm
 Charles Frost
 Steve Galewski
 Mary Gifford
 Tony Giordano
 Stephen R. Gracon
 William and Betty Greig
 Gresham Ford
 Thomas and Virginia Hake
 Stephen W. Harrel
 Vic Hefferin
 Lani Holgate
 Lorris A. Hollinger, Jr.
 Rick Hutchison
 Allan R. Jones
 Larry and Sarah Keil
 Mary Louise Kelley
 Edward M. Kelly
 Diane Kock
 Korean War Veterans
 Robert W. Kuenzli
 KWVA—Iron Triangle Chapter
 KWVA—Oregon Trail Chapter
 Anne M. Laraia
 Madras Veterans Center
 Keith R. Masterson
 Florence McCulley
 Eugene Melvin
 Francis and Barbara Menard
 Mid-Columbia Extension Study Groups
 Gary and Janet Miller
 Darrell and Winifred Mitchell
 MOAA—Central Oregon Chapter
 MOC/MOCA #8
 R. J. Mockford
 Loyal Mohr
 Donald Moore
 Muttonheads 4-H Club
 National 4th Infantry Division Association
 —Northwest Chapter
 Wilma Nelson
 L. Nicholson
 Charles Norman

Bill Oleson
 Oregon CVSO Association
 Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America
 Oregon State Elks Association—Hood River
 Oregon Veterans' Home Gift Shop
 Parkdale Community
 Parkdale Grange
 Mary Parrott
 Clair E. Pense
 Gerard Perrone
 Mel and Norma Peterson
 Edwin W. Randall
 Floyd J. Roe
 Walter Roenicke
 Earle Schafer
 Robert Shaw
 Sky View Middle School
 Myrle Smith
 Dawn Smith
 Harry Taylor
 Territorial Elementary School
 —Mrs. Walton's 2nd & 3rd Graders
 Dennis and Darlene Teskey
 The Dalles USBC Association
 The Regence Employee Giving Campaign
 Tillamook Naval and Air Station and Museum
 Sally Turchetta
 Gary Van Orman
 VAVS
 VETERAN License Plates
 Veterans Care Centers of Oregon
 VFW Auxiliary #922
 VFW Post #1643
 VFW Auxiliary #2848
 VFW Post #4184
 Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 271
 Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 757
 Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 820
 Debbie Wentz-Cantrell
 Penny White
 Dennis A. Williams
 Gerald Williamson
 Ila Winslow
 Virginia L. Wood
 Gary and Carol Zwicker



VETERANS STATUS NOW ON ODL

SALEM—With the passage of Senate Bill 1000, starting in January, Oregon veterans can have the word “Veteran” put on their driver license if they choose. The voluntary designation will allow veterans to provide proof of their veteran status simply by showing their driver license.

The original idea was conceived during the Governor’s Task Force on Veterans’ Services in 2008. Numerous veterans had asked if there was a veteran identification card that could prove their veteran status. At the time, there was no such card, although some veterans have a VA Medical Card and/or a Military Retiree ID Card. Without such a card, veterans would have to bring their DD-214 to Oregon retailers offering veteran discounts.

“By placing the word veteran on their driver license, a veteran can prove his or her veteran status simply and easily,” Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Director Jim Willis explained. “We think this will be a benefit for veterans, but it is completely voluntary and nobody has to have the designation unless they want it.”

To get the designation, simply bring your DD-214 that lists the character of discharge to your local Department of Motor Vehicles office and ask for the designation to be placed on your driver license. Also remember to bring proof of citizenship (Social Security number and full legal name).

The veteran designation is scheduled to be available in January. All DMV costs will apply. Check with your local DMV for more information.

GROVER NAMED VFW AIDE-DE-CAMP

VFW Post 5638 Commander Le Roy Grover of Stayton, was appointed as the National Aide-de-Camp to the national VFW Commander-in-Chief, Richard L. Eubank.

The prestigious honor is awarded to a post commander who has been recommended for outstanding service to the post and the community above and beyond the call of duty.



Le Roy Grover

A veteran of the Korean War, Grover has served as Post 5638 Commander for 11 years, District 14 Commander for one year, Deputy Chief of Staff for two years and Senior Vice Commander for three years. His wife Agnes serves with the local and District VFW Auxiliary.

Donations to the Oregon Veterans' Home Trust Fund are deeply appreciated. The generosity of the ever-growing number of Friends of the Home continue to provide life enriching experiences to the veterans who call the Veterans' Home home. To become a Friend of the Home, use the gift form below. Your donation is tax deductible. Thank you again to those who contributed during the months of October and November 2010.



OREGON VETERANS' HOME GIFT FORM

When you gift \$35-\$64 receive an Oregon Veterans' Home Remembrance Pin.

Gift \$65-\$99 and receive two pins.

Gift \$100 or more and receive a listing on the Wall of Gratitude and two pins.

Please make checks payable to the Oregon Veterans' Home.

Send donations to:
 Oregon Veterans' Home
 c/o ODVA
 700 Summer St. NE
 Salem, OR 97301

I would like to donate \$ _____ to the Oregon Veterans' Home

In memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone (optional): _____

I would like to make a donation using: Personal Check Visa MasterCard

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you for supporting the place where honor lives!



Taking part in the groundbreaking (L-R) were: Cheryl Maitland, Oregon Veterans' Home; Jonathan Sanford, Sen. Ron Wyden's office; Bruce Craig, ODVA; John Osborn, ODVA; Butch Gehley, Veterans Care Centers of Oregon; Linda Adams, Oregon Veterans' Home; Ben Hier, Sen. Jeff Merkley's office; State Rep. John Huffman; ODVA Director Jim Willis; The Dalles Mayor Jim Wilcox; Cody Standiford, Rep. Greg Walden's office; Bob Decker, Pres., Westcare; Van Moore, Vice Pres., Westcare; Chris Morris and Matt Stoffregen, CB2 Architects.

GROUND BROKEN ON OVH COMMUNITY CENTER

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs officially broke ground on Nov. 18 for the new Stan and Jean Adams Veterans' Home Community Center in The Dalles. Fifteen community leaders and ODVA employees joined Director Jim Willis in the ceremonial ground-breaking near the main entrance to the Home, marking the beginning of major construction for the project, which is slated for completion in May.

"I am pleased to see the addition of this to the Oregon Veterans' Home," Willis said. "The residents, staff and visitors will now be able to gather for games, concerts, special events and meals in a space that will allow them to visit with other residents as well as visitors and community members.

ODVA project manager John Osborn said he was excited to see the project moving forward. "We're happy to provide the residents with a nice living area to visit relatives."

The new facility will be located close to the south side of the existing Veterans' Home building and cover about 9,300 square feet (150 by 60 feet). A multi-purpose building will put the new facility close to available utilities with enclosed breezeway concourses to the existing veterans' home building.

Linda Adams, the OVH admissions liaison, said with the new center they will not have to shuffle residents to activities because of the limited space at the Home.

The multi-purpose building will provide expanded meeting space for residents, the public and other outside groups attending events.

The new facility is designed to accommodate up to 250 people and will serve for a wide range of activities such as arts and crafts, games for independent or group activities, computer use, widescreen television viewing, a permanent stage for musical entertainment, live theater

performances, and a canteen-snack bar separate from the main open space.

Rep. John Huffman said the project was just a continuation of good projects going on in the area, such as staffing the VA clinic and organizing community outreach. "This community always supports its veterans, and it's been exciting to watch the community support the veterans' home and the community center," Huffman said.

The \$2.8 million project is being funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (65 percent) with matching state funds (35 percent).

HIPAA Statement

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.

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:

- * ODVA's website at 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.

I Got Mine!

New military service graphic license plates are now available for your automobile.

Major (ret.) Mike Allegra, served in the U.S. Air Force and Oregon Air National Guard's 142nd Fighter Wing in Portland. Mike proudly displays the plate he ordered when they first became available. It reflects his pride in his service and his branch. He also enjoys the positive comments from veterans and non-veterans alike.

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

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.

Dale Draper
RJ Mockford
C Nowland

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.

FEMALE VETERANS SUICIDE RATE NEAR TRIPLE THAT OF CIVILIANS

Courtesy of Portland State University

PORTLAND — Young women veterans are nearly three times as likely as civilians to commit suicide according to new research published by researchers at Portland State University (PSU) and Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).

The paper "Self-Inflicted Deaths Among Women With U.S. Military Service: A Hidden Epidemic?" appears in the December 2010 journal *Psychiatric Services*, published by the American Psychiatric Association. This work is the first general population study of current suicide risk among women with U.S. military service.

According to the data, female veterans between the ages of 18 and 34 are at highest risk.

"Women veterans are more likely to complete suicide than non-veteran women," said Bentson McFarland, M.D., Ph.D., a professor of psychiatry in the OHSU School of Medicine. McFarland co-authored the paper with Mark Kaplan, Dr.P.H., and Nathalie Huguet, Ph.D., of Portland State University.

"The rate was lower in the next oldest age group we studied (35 to 44 years of age) and the rate was lower still among those ages 45 to 64. However, even within this age group, the

rate was higher than civilian women's suicide rates."

The study examined data on 5,948 female suicides committed between the years 2004 and 2007. In the 18 to 34 age group alone, there were:

- 56 suicides among 418,132 female veterans (1 in 7,465);
- 1,461 suicides among 33,257,362 non-veterans (1 in 22,763).

"This study shows that young women veterans have nearly triple the suicide rate of young women who never served in the military," said Mark Kaplan, co-author of the study and professor of Community Health at PSU. "The elevated rates of suicide among women veterans should be a call-to-action, especially for clinicians and caregivers to be aware of warning signs and helpful prevention resources such as the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline [1-800-273-TALK (8255) press "1"]."

The research, funded by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, was conducted by tracking suicide data in the 16 states that constitute the National Violent Death Reporting System, a program within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

MILITARY REUNIONS AND EVENTS

Veterans of Underage Military Service meet the first Friday monthly, at Shari's Restaurant, 122nd and SE Sunnyside, Portland, at 10:30 a.m. For information: Willie Paradise, 503-665-1739.

Hire America's Heroes Career Day

The event connects corporate America with the skills and abilities of military service members and veterans. The event features:

- Employer Panel - Executives from Microsoft, Amazon, General Electric and others will discuss their company military recruiting programs.
- Coaching Assistance - Assistance is available to guide veterans through the job search with resume assistance, interview prep, identification of transferable skills, etc.
- Employers connecting with veterans - All afternoon.

Sat., Feb. 5, at Qwest Field Event Center, 800 Occidental Ave. S., Seattle. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

More information: www.hireamericasheroes.org/

Submit Reunion information please mail to:

Public Information

Department of Veterans' Affairs

700 Summer St. NE

Salem, OR 97301-1285

Email: Sue Shaffer, shaffes@odva.state.or.us

Fax: 503-373-2362

HELPLINE FOR VETS/ FAMILIES

The Oregon Partnership (OP) has added a groundbreaking Military Helpline to its crisis lines services. The Helpline – 888-HLP-4-VET – is assisting veterans and their families in gaining access to the resources they deserve along with anonymous, confidential crisis intervention and sensitivity to military-specific issues.

Suicide and mental health issues are at record levels among American military members – in the war zone and after returning home. The six months after members return to their families is a "window of risk" for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues.

OP Crisis Line Operations Director David Corse said after experiencing war, getting on with life in American society can be overwhelming.

"The Helpline bridges the access-to-service gap that many of these Oregonians face, especially after returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. "Our trained team of specialists, many who have a military background, is here to help you 24 hours a day, and callers don't have to identify themselves."

With help from Sen. Ron Wyden, the Oregon National Guard Reintegration Team funded the helpline, which started last May. Corse said since then it has taken nearly 1,700 calls from veterans and family members.

"That's the tip of the iceberg. Many are feeling discouraged, anxious, hopeless or frustrated. Some are concerned about reintegrating back into society, about a battle buddy, or how to navigate the VA system," Corse said. "Thankfully callers are coming away with many more resources than they knew were there."

Additionally, OP has just started an online chat service and can help in-lieu of a phone. Using "chat" in a crisis is new, but some feel more comfortable with electronic communication.

The Helpline offers some of the following assistance:

Immediate mental health assistance and service referrals in addition to suicide crisis intervention from a team of military veterans and trained volunteer crisis workers.

Direction from an experienced team have clinical and operations professionals.

Specialized referrals to services provided by the VA, vet centers, and reintegration teams, and a myriad of community based services.

To contact the Helpline, call 888-457-4838 (4VET) or, go online: www.orphnership.org



OREGON VETERANS HISTORY BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

You can now own a piece of Oregon history, as the new book produced by the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, 150 Years of Oregon Veterans, will arrive in January.

With more than 275 full-color pages, over 200 personal accounts of veteran's stories and 650 full-color photographs, it is a 15.5 by 8.5 inch soft cover tabletop style-book. There has never been a book quite like this one.

There are stunning collection of stories representing 150 years of conflicts including the Indian and Civil Wars, World War World War II, the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and present campaigns in the Middle East.

You may order the book by mail or by phone using a credit card. Checks should be made out to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs and mailed to:

ODVA Cashiers
700 Summer St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-1285

To order by credit card, call 503-373-2384. You may also download an order form at www.oregon.gov/odva/veterans_book.shtml.

The cost is \$39.95. All proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles.



CONCERT TO SUPPORT OREGON'S FALLEN

Nashville recording artist Rockie Lynne will be on stage at Salem's Historic Elsinore Theater to headline a benefit concert to support and promote Oregon's Tribute to Fallen Soldiers organization. The concert is being staged on Fri., Jan. 28, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., and located downtown at 170 High Street.

The free public benefit concert is being billed as An Evening with Rockie Lynne: A Tribute to Oregon's Fallen Heroes. All donations will help support the 2nd Annual Tribute to Fallen Soldiers Motorcycle Ride.

A former member of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, N.C., Lynne, has a passion for the military and using his status as an entertainer to support the troops.

Lynne, best known for his hit single "Lipstick." He is currently touring the country promoting his current CD "Songs For Soldiers" where one third of the proceeds are given to troop related charities.

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
Douglas	541-440-4219	Mary Newman
Gilliam	541-384-6712	Bryan Hunt
Grant	541-575-1631	Bob Muenchausen
Harney.....	541-573-1342	Guy McKay
Hood River	541-386-1080	Lester Logsdon
Jackson	541-774-8214	Renee Burgdorf
Jefferson	541-475-5228	Patricia White
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	Russ Snow
Marion.....	503-373-2085	ODVA
Morrow	877-999-8387	Linda Skendzel
Multnomah	503-988-3620, Ext. 26123	Katie Pereault
Polk	503-373-2085	ODVA
Sherman	541-565-3408	Bryan Hunt
Tillamook	503-842-4358	Steve Weld
Umatilla	541-278-5482	Peggy Raines
Union	541-962-8802	Byron Whipple
Wallowa	541-426-3155, Ext. 241	Linda McIntyre
Wasco	888-804-1817	Lester Logsdon
Washington	503-846-3060	Doug MacEllven
Wheeler.....	800-982-1172	Bryan Hunt
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	Salina Norton
Military Order of the Purple Heart	503-412-4770	Jennifer Burt
Paralyzed Veterans of America	503-412-4763	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	Jessica Garcelon Leah Rickert Mitch Sparks Gina Thomas Jerry Wilson Doug Yerke
Portland	503-412-4777	Deanna Erhardt Donna Hunt Linda McMillan Russell Snow Ed Van Dyke

Campus Service Officers	Telephone Number	Service Officer
.....	503-373-2186	Dave Cooley

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Nanci L. Visser 13934 NW Meadow Ridge Dr. Portland, OR 97229 503-614-8463	Eugene J. LaBonte 8825 Hebo Road Grand Ronde, OR 97347 503-879-5342	J. Ryan Howell, Chair 1780 NW Valley View Drive Albany, OR 97321 541-990-4176
Kevin J. Owens 2249 Commercial St. North Bend, OR 97459 541-756-2390	Gerard F. Lorang 3914 SW Hewett Blvd. Portland, OR 97221-3103 971-404-5154	David Fairclo 20751 Amber Way Bend, OR 97701-8510 541-382-8281
Irv Fletcher 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

Quarterly 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.



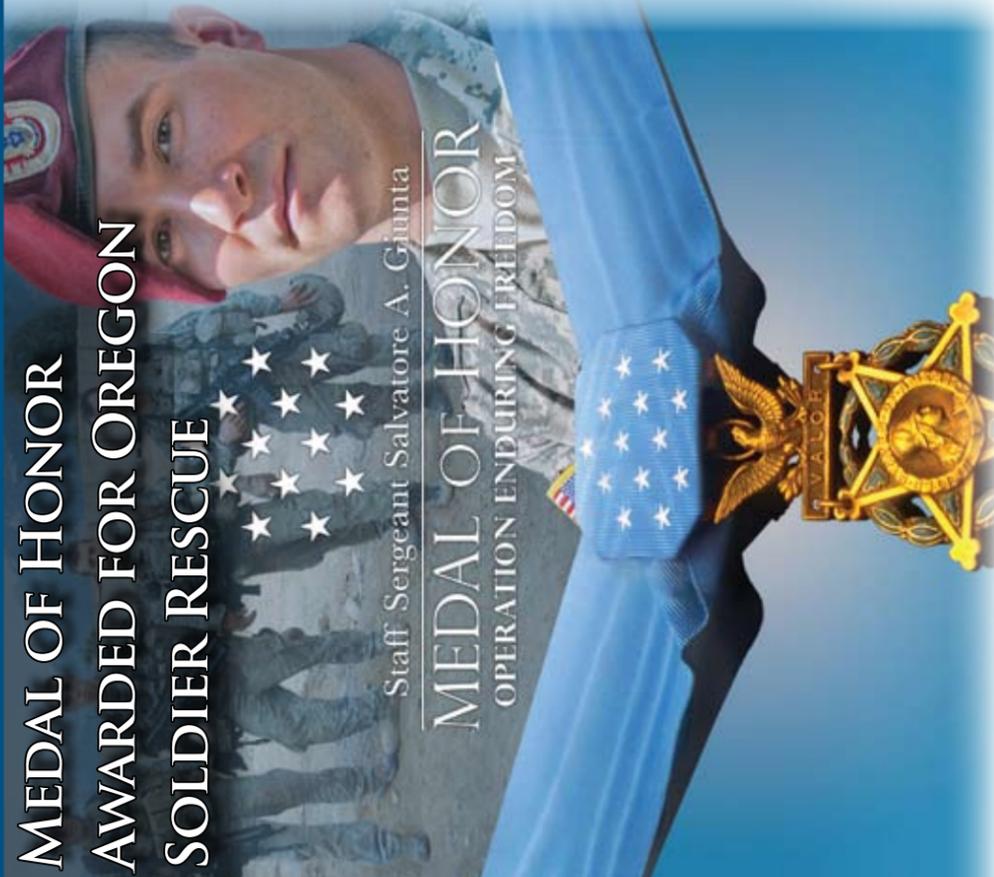
VETS NEWS

January / February 2011
Jim Willis, Director

www.oregon.gov/odva www.facebook.com/odvavet

MEDAL OF HONOR AWARDED FOR OREGON SOLDIER RESCUE

Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta
MEDAL OF HONOR
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM



Their patrol was nearly over. The men from B Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment were on their way back to their base when the still of the night was shattered by AK-47 automatic rifle fire and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs). Walking point, leading a squad of eight soldiers, was Sgt. Joshua C. Brennan, a well liked and respected Oregon soldier from Ontario. Brennan and his squad had just walked into an insurgent ambush and were in a fight for their lives against an estimated 15 hardened Taliban fighters.

As tracer rounds filled the air, the Americans immediately began returning fire; the enemy was so close their muzzle flashes gave away their positions. The squad had at least two men down – one was Brennan.

What happened next in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan on the night of October 26, 2007 will live forever in military annals and would earn then-Specialist Salvatore Giunta the Medal of Honor.

Brennan was down and severely wounded. As the rest of the squad fought to regain the initiative, two Taliban fighters emerged from their positions, picked up the American and began carrying him away.

Brennan's closest friend in the Company, Giunta, reacted immediately to the ambush by returning fire and engaging the enemy with grenades. Giunta ran to the first wounded man, Specialist Frank Eckrode, and drug him back to safety. Giunta next went to find his friend, Brennan.

SEE RESCUE ON PAGE 4

IN THIS ISSUE

- Director's Message..... Page 2
- Klamath Veterans' Court..... Page 5
- American Service Flag Page 6-7
- Friends of the Home Page 8
- OVH Comm. Ctr. Groundbreaking.. Page 9
- Female Veteran Suicide Rates Page 10
- Veterans Service Officers Page 11

BALLOT MEASURE 70 MAKES ORVET HOME LOAN LIFETIME BENEFIT

SALEM – Oregon voters overwhelmingly approved Ballot Measure 70 on November 2 with 84 percent of the vote, approving the constitutional amendment to expand the ORVET Home Loan to more veterans and making it a lifetime benefit.

Originally approved in 1945, the Oregon Constitution had limited the veteran loan to veterans who had served on active duty for 210 consecutive days and had to be used within 30 years of being discharged from service.

“Back in 1945 those rules may have covered all the World War II veterans; however, times have changed and a lot of our Oregon veterans – especially National Guard veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan – were left out,” Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Director Jim Willis said. “All of Oregon’s Vietnam veterans also were barred due to the 30-year rule and we needed to fix that,” he said.

SEE LOANS ON PAGE 4

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
700 Summer Street NE
Salem, OR 97301-1285
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 22
Salem, OR



VETS NEWS

January / February 2011
Jim Willis, Director

www.oregon.gov/odva www.facebook.com/odvavet

Address Changes / New Subscriptions

ADDRESS AS IT APPEARS NOW:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/ State/ Zip: _____

NEW ADDRESS:

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