



VETS NEWS

March/April 2005

www.oregon.gov/odva

JIM WILLIS, DIRECTOR

Veterans Address Legislative Issues at Muster

On the front steps of the State Capitol in Salem, Oregon, hundreds of veterans and veterans' supporters gathered on February 9th during the biennial Veterans Muster to discuss current legislative issues that will impact Oregon's veteran community.

The United Veterans' Groups of Oregon (UVGO) hosted the 2005 Veterans Muster, where veterans were joined by local legislators who attended to show their support.

Serving as master of ceremonies, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Deputy Director Paula Brown opened the ceremonies by introducing the Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, Karen Minnis.

Speaker Minnis praised all veterans for their service and sacrifice. During her speech, Speaker Minnis outlined her intent to help serve veterans and the veteran community's issues of interest as these issues present themselves on the House floor.

Under Speaker Minnis, the 2005 Legislative Session opened with a newly-formed House Veterans' Affairs Committee, chaired by Representative Donna Nelson.

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis commended Speaker Minnis for the creation of the Committee.

Willis expressed appreciation of this first step in addressing the issues facing veterans locally and nationally.

"It is time in this country for Congress to pass legislation that mandates funding for a federal healthcare system," said Director Willis. "If a vet anywhere in America loses a benefit, then all vets are in jeopardy of losing a benefit."

He thanked all members of the Legislative Assembly who attended the Muster for showing support of veterans. Willis also thanked veterans' service organization officers and county veterans' service officers for working "in the

trenches" every day for veterans.

Members of the Governor's Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Governor's Senior Policy Advisor on Veterans Affairs, Craig Campbell, also attended.

Representative Donna Nelson, Chair of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, addressed attendees. She extended an invitation for all veterans to visit the Committee's weekly hearings, held on



Veterans attend a Veterans Muster, February 9, 2005, held on the front steps of the State Capitol Building in Salem, to discuss current legislative issues that impact Oregon's veteran community. (Photo by Richard Gorby)

Message From the Director

With the start of the 73rd Session of the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon veteran community can look to the future with a level of optimism not seen in some years. The newly-appointed House Committee on Veterans' Affairs created by Speaker Karen Minnis and chaired by Representative Donna Nelson has the opportunity to address a number of issues important to veterans throughout Oregon.

I think Oregonians will see the Legislature addressing issues important to members of the Oregon National Guard and Reserves, that will recognize their important contributions and sacrifices to our Nation's Global War on Terrorism.

On February 4, with the help of Speaker Minnis and Chair Nelson of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, former U.S. Navy Petty Officer Alan Sohler of Hillsboro, received his Purple Heart medal on the floor of the Oregon House of Representatives. Mr. Sohler was a member of the famous Seawolves; the only land-based Navy Helicopter Squadron that served in the Vietnam War. While the Purple Heart was presented 36 years after the fact, Sohler's wife, son and fellow veterans were pleased and proud to be present while he was honored. The men and women of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs join me in thanking all the members of the Oregon House of Representatives for extending this courtesy to Mr. Sohler, his family and friends.

On February 9, the traditional Veterans Muster was held on the steps of the State Capitol. The United Veterans' Groups of Oregon Commander Dick Lucht, and Robert Haltiner coordinated the event this year during which the veterans attending heard comments

Continued on Page 3

Continued on Page 2

Message

Continued from Page 1

from Speaker Minnis, Representative Nelson, and Mr. Lucht. It was also my honor to speak at the event. I was pleased to see attending the Muster, several members of the Governor's Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee, representatives from the county veterans' service offices, national veterans' service officers as well as officers and members of several veterans' organizations, their auxiliaries, and veteran supporters. Several members of the Oregon Senate and House of Representatives also attended.

The Legislative process is just one of the democratic principles for which members of the American Armed Forces have fought and died since the creation of our country. While there are those that criticize the process, they should remember that the freedom to criticize and to disagree is yet another freedom for which the veterans of this state and our nation have paid.

I want to close by thanking all of you who continue to support the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles. We are proud of the Home; the hard working staff and volunteers who provide quality care to those who live in the "Place where Honor lives."



Director

State Veterans' Home Loans Available

While many veterans are aware of their U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (federal VA) home loan guaranty benefit, some are not aware of their state veterans' home loan benefit. Oregon is one of only five states that has a state veterans' home loan program.

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) makes state veterans' home loans to veterans with qualifying active duty service who are still within 30 years of discharge from that qualifying service. It is not necessary for a veteran to have enlisted into the military from Oregon to be eligible for an Oregon state veterans' home loan. Veterans may have enlisted from any state.

Remember, too, that in 2000, Oregon voters approved Ballot Measure 83 to extend eligibility to veterans who served after the Vietnam War, which now includes Oregon National Guard members who have been activated and deployed to theatres of operations such as Afghanistan and Iraq.



60th Anniversary

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs will mark its 60-year Anniversary on March 12, 2005.

In 1944, Oregon voters approved an amendment to the Oregon constitution authorizing a program to offer home and farm loans to World War II veterans. On March 12, 1945, the legislature signed the act (Chapter 201, Oregon Laws 1945) creating the office of Director of Veterans' Affairs.

Hugh E. Rosson, a World War I veteran was the very first Director appointed by then Governor Earl Snell, on June 27, 1945. Rosson immediately began taking steps to establish a Department of Veterans' Affairs, and specifically to organize a loan department for administering that benefit.

Written inside the first biennial report to the Governor, issued in September of 1946, are the words - "I have the honor to transmit herewith the First Biennial Report of the Director of Veterans' Affairs, covering the period from June 15, 1945, to September 30, 1946." The report addressed to the Governor of Oregon, The Honorable Earl Snell and signed by Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) second Director George E. Sandy, presents a look at the very beginnings of the Department and the programs that were formed to administer benefits to veterans.

Over the last 60 years, the Department has faced numerous challenges and experienced tremendous successes as various factors have impacted the Department and its programs. There were times when the Department had to bend and times when it bravely had to stand in opposition of change.

One thing that has remained constant through all the years is the mission and desire of the Department to serve veterans, their dependants and survivors. The Department celebrates reaching this 60th anniversary milestone, but even more so, the Department's employees, past and present, are honored to have the opportunity to assist veterans and their families in obtaining the benefits they have earned by their honorable service to this state and country. The Department's employees pride themselves on serving veterans - one veteran at a time - to meet their unique needs.

The Department looks forward to the future and the challenges and opportunities it may bring. The Department strives to ensure that every Oregon veteran, their dependents and survivors are aware of the benefits to which they are entitled and to assist them in applying for those benefits. For information about veterans' benefits, call 503-373-2085 or toll free 1-800-828-8801 ext. 2085.

Veterans can apply for a state veterans' home loan at ODVA's Salem office or via a participating private-sector mortgage broker or lender. Participating lenders and brokers are located throughout Oregon. ODVA lending staff and participating private-sector mortgage brokers and lenders are eager to assist and understand the special circumstances of veterans.

At the time this publication went to print in February 2005, interest rates lower than 5% were available. The maximum loan amount for a state veterans' home loan is currently \$359,650. Oregon veterans' home loans are serviced by ODVA for the entire life of the loans.

To find out more about your eligibility for a below-market interest rate ODVA state veterans' home loan, call 800-828-8801, extension 2070 or 503-373-2070.

The State of Oregon and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs honors and appreciates your military service.



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If you wish to receive the *VETS NEWS* regularly, send your name and address to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, Attention Communications Unit, 700 Summer Street, NE, Salem, Oregon 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 April 1, 2005.

Muster

Continued from Page 1

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. in the Capitol.

“We welcome your testimony and learning about any issues you’re concerned about,” Representative Nelson said. “There are 120 issues this year relative to you – you deserve our attention so we’re glad [Speaker Minnis] made this happen.”

During the Veterans Muster, UVGO Chairman Dick Lucht expressed the organization’s support of pending legislation, the outcome of which could impact veterans.

Lucht said the UVGO is a veterans’ voice on legislative matters and that it was important to utilize that vocal piece. Lucht encouraged veterans to go inside the Capitol and visit legislators to urge their support of legislation affecting veterans.

- IMPORTANT - When Disabilities Worsen, Increased Benefits May Be Available

If you receive U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation or VA pension, it is important to remember that if your disabilities worsen, you may be eligible for a higher rate of benefit payments.

For veterans who receive compensation for service-connected disabilities, if the service-connected condition worsens, you can request a reevaluation of the disability by the VA. Depending upon the results of the reevaluation, your disability rating for that condition could be increased entitling you to increased VA benefit payments.

Veterans who receive a nonservice-connected pension may be eligible for additional benefits if they become permanently housebound or require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

For more information about your eligibility for these benefits, please contact the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs at 1-800-296-9666 or 503-373-2085 or your county veterans’ service office (see list on page 11). Obtain the benefits to which you are entitled – at the level to which you are entitled.

Tax Deadline Approaching

Remember the Oregon Veterans’ Home



The deadline for filing Oregon Individual Tax Returns is rapidly approaching. If you are due a refund when you file, please consider sharing some or all of that refund with the Oregon Veterans’ Home – your Veterans’ Home.

The Home is Oregon’s only state veterans’ home and serves veterans and their spouses in need of extended nursing home or rehabilitative care.

This will be the third year Oregonians have had the option of sharing some or all of their Oregon tax refund with the Oregon Veterans’ Home by using the Charitable Checkoff portion of their Oregon income tax return.

“Last year, generous Oregonians donated \$13,010 to the Home using this method,” said Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

Charitable Checkoff donations are sent directly to the Oregon Veterans’ Home Trust Fund by the Oregon Department of Revenue.

“The Trust Fund is a tremendous benefit for the residents at the Home,” Director Willis said. “It helps maintain a high quality of life for the residents, paying for everything from special food treats to emergency repairs. It’s especially important because the Home has received no tax dollars from the State General Fund.”

Tax-deductible contributions to the Oregon Veterans’ Home are fast and simple to do. For those filing Oregon Form 40S (the short form):

- Locate Line 30 on the form.
- Enter number “12” where it reads “Enter Code”.
- Choose an amount or select “other” and enter the amount of your choice.

For those filing Oregon Form 40 (the long form):

- Locate line 61 on the form.
- Enter the number “12” on the line where it reads “Enter Code”.
- Choose an amount or select “other” and enter the amount of your choice.

If using the services of a tax professional, inform the preparer that you want all or a designated portion of the refund to go to the Oregon Veterans’ Home, Code #12.

FINAL REMINDER

Be Sure to File for Veteran’s Property Tax Exemption by April 1 Deadline

If you are a disabled veteran or the surviving spouse of a veteran, you may be entitled to exempt \$10,460 or \$13,930 of your homestead property’s assessed value from your property taxes. For each assessment year after January 1, 1998, the exempt amount increases by three percent. The exemption is first applied to your home and then to your taxable personal property. If you are a qualifying veteran or a qualifying veteran’s surviving spouse and live in your home, you may apply for the exemption.

How to apply:

The veteran’s exemption is not automatic. You MUST apply to receive it. The deadline is April 1, 2005. The veteran’s property tax exemption is not allowed unless you file an application by the deadline. Application forms may be obtained at county assessor’s offices.

- If you did not file for an exemption for last year, you must file an application for the exemption on or before April 1, 2005.
- If you filed a claim last year, you must file a new claim by April 1, 2005 to avoid a late fee. (If not filed by April 1, the county assessor will notify you and for a \$10 fee, you can file until May 1, 2005. The May 1 deadline only applies to those who filed a claim and received the exemption the previous year.)
- Surviving Spouse: The surviving spouse can file a claim at any time during the current tax year if the war veteran died anytime during the previous tax year, or if the homestead property was acquired after March 1 but prior to July 1, and the veteran died within 30 days of the date property was acquired.

For more information about the program contact your county assessor’s office, or call the Oregon Department of Revenue at 503-378-4988 or toll free within Oregon at 1-800-356-4222. More information is also available on the Oregon Department of Revenue’s website at www.Oregon.gov/dor.





Friends of the Home

Donations to the Oregon Veterans' Home Trust Fund continue to be received. We are deeply appreciative of the thoughtfulness and generosity of an ever-growing number of Friends of the Home. Those who contributed during the months of December 2004 and January 2005 are listed below:

Mel and Norma Peterson
 Patricia Carty
 Clarrine Nasan
 Jeff and Sue Ford
 Dennis Brown
 Florence McCulley
 Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America
 Paul E. Burger
 Elizabeth and Laurence Beck
 Jerry and Cathy McKay
 Steven L. Covey
 Dewey and Emma France
 Samuel Dalesky
 Lloyd and Lani Holgate
 Leland and Virginia Ashworth
 Jack and JoNell Moore
 American Legion Umpqua Post #16
 VFW Blue Mountain Post #4567
 Ronald Collins
 Colin Ackerson
 Frank Hotchkiss
 Dale Albee
 Betty L. Bruner
 Edwin and Lucille Richardson
 Herb and Lois Gedney
 Doris Gallagher
 VFW Post 3452
 Darrell and Lael Cooksley
 Raymond Buckno
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles McDonald
 Sunset Grove Ladies Golf
 Dorothy McKee
 Rocco and Anne Laraia
 Fred Liddell
 Richard Herstine
 William Reagan
 Mid Columbia Amateur Radio
 Ted and Irene Nelson
 National Order of Trench Rats Dugout 394
 Military Order of the Purple Heart
 Dallas Rotary Club
 Gretchen Johnson
 Andrew and Winifred Mitchell
 Jack C. Means
 Pumpkin Ridge Partners
 Roy Coppinger
 Norman and Diane Harrell
 American War Mothers
 James Arendt
 Frank and Bernadine Kelley
 Ben Wright
 Paul and Susan Jensen
 Harold and Karen Gigstad
 Clarence Medack
 Charitable Checkoff Donations

Oregon Restaurant Association
 Michael and Kathryn Lysaght
 Mabel VanDyke
 David and Carol Boyles
 Bonnie Betts
 James Richard
 Marvin Prestwood
 Silverton Elks Lodge #2210
 Marion Lashbaugh Estate
 Donna Albee
 Calvin Collins
 Jack L. Johnson
 Steve March
 Carol North
 Ronald and Joann Meisner
 Lew Crites
 Paula Harrington
 T. A. Watts
 Oregon Veterans' Home Gift Shop
 William Pendarvis
 Robert M. Lee
 Beverly Imper
 VETERAN License Plates
 Harold Baughn
 Major Sam L. Eddy
 Ray Dahl
 D. C. and Helen Weaver
 Joe L. Bourne
 Dee Mitchell
 Michael Herrick
 James B. Trent
 Richard Malowney
 Lois Curtner
 American Legion Umpqua Post #16
 U.S. Marine Corps Coordinating Council
 Clifford & Martin, Inc.
 Jay and Darlene Richardson
 AMVETS Post #1984
 Donald and Imogene Spencer
 Howard J. Britain
 Richard A. Hess
 American Legion Pioneer Post #149
 Knights of Columbus Council 10838
 Irvin H. Fletcher
 Leo Greenstein
 Stanley and Kay Varuska
 American Legion Baird-Heaton Post #152
 David and Alice Wagstaff
 Richard L. Chambers
 Paul F. Arnott
 Evan Owens
 Robert A. Henry
 Paul E. Burger
 Mabel Russell
 Daniel Watson

American Legion Auxiliary District #8
 Jack T. Magnuson
 Marietta and Pierce Dickey
 Tom and Virginia Hake
 Steve and Sharon Crabb
 Richard and Kathryn Lutes
 Loretta Asa
 Donald McDonald
 Clarence and Audrey Loughmiller
 Waves National Webfoot Unit #46
 Dennis Jones
 Bernhard Baer
 Warren and Audrey Levecke
 Margaret Asa
 Donna Stump
 DAV Auxiliary Yamhill County #5
 Barlar Boothe
 DAV Auxiliary #4
 B. F. Croucher
 Women's Auxiliary of the Military Order
 of the Cooties
 Donald and Edith McDaniel
 Thomas and Darlene Lewis
 Phil Szymkowicz
 Tony Giardano
 Janice Benham Langlow
 Mr. and Mrs. Todd Hanna
 Columbia Gorge Doughnut Co.
 Wilson V. Palmore
 AMVETS Post #1993
 Laretta Nelson

AMVETS Makes Large Donations

In early January 2005, American Veterans (AMVETS) Post 1984 presented the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs with a \$3,000 donation for the Oregon Veterans' Home. Deputy Director Paula Brown accepted the generous donation, which came on the heels of another large donation made by the organization.

Just a couple short months earlier in October 2004, the organization presented ODVA Veterans' Service Administrator Val Conley with a \$2,000 donation for the Edward K. Crouch Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is designated specifically to aid disabled veterans.

AMVETS, like several other veterans' organizations, has a long-standing history of making sizeable donations in support of veterans and the Veterans' Home located in The Dalles.

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis commented, "The generous donations of veterans' organizations are greatly appreciated and have a profoundly positive impact on veterans and their families in Oregon."

Veterans' Home Report

This report on the Oregon Veterans' Home is presented on behalf of the Governor's Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC). The VAAC consists of nine members appointed by the Governor, all of whom are required to be veterans. Veteran representation on the Committee currently includes World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm veterans.

~Evelyn Anderson, VAAC Chairperson

The Oregon Veterans' Home, which opened in 1997, has entered its second year with Veterans Care Centers of Oregon (VCCO) as the contract operator. VCCO, a private non-profit corporation directed by an eleven-person board of directors is composed primarily of veterans. VCCO was created to provide future continuity for the residents and employees at the Home that are employed by the contract operator. The VCCO Board signed a contract with Westcare, a reputable management company with a long history of success.

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA), VCCO, and Westcare, have diligently worked together to deliver affordable, high quality care to the residents of the Oregon Veterans' Home.

With the added involvement of VCCO and the increasing onsite volunteer efforts and involvement of veterans' organizations and other volunteer groups and individuals, the Oregon Veterans' Home is under more scrutiny now than

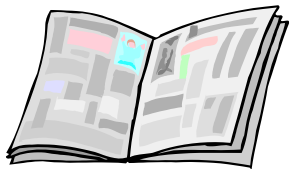
ever before in its history. This involvement is in addition to two distinctly separate stringent surveys (inspections) conducted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Oregon Department of Seniors and People with Disabilities. With that being said, the VAAC is proud to report that the Oregon Veterans' Home's good name, honor, integrity, and reputation of delivering high quality care are absolutely intact.

Below is a re-cap of some happenings the VAAC believes may be of interest to all Oregonians, especially veterans, their families, citizens of Wasco County where the Home is located in The Dalles, veterans' organizations and auxiliaries, legislators, and volunteers.

- High quality care is delivered to residents and is evidenced by receipt of very good results on both the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (federal VA) survey (inspection) and the state Department of Seniors and People with Disabilities survey (inspection).
- Delivery of high quality care and customer satisfaction is confirmed by a survey of family members.
- Gaining Medicaid certification has resulted in approximately 40 additional residents being served at the Home.

- A Wing, which was previously vacant, is being utilized as a result of an increase in the number of residents being served.
- To meet the needs of additional residents, staffing levels have been increased by 25 percent providing additional jobs and support to the local economy.
- VCCO held an open Board meeting in The Dalles to interact with local citizens about the Home in their community.
- Purchasing and operational efficiencies have been gained under VCCO, the current contractor.
- The application process has been streamlined to be more responsive to veterans and their families and allow for same-day admissions often necessary to meet the needs of veterans and their families.

The Governor's Advisory Committee commends the current contract operator, Veterans' Care Centers of Oregon, for its outstanding efforts and numerous accomplishments with the Oregon Veterans' Home. Additionally, the Committee appreciates Oregonians' continued interest and generosity toward the Home. Your support, donations, and volunteer efforts are all appreciated. Thanks for making the Oregon Veterans' Home the "Place Where Honor Lives".



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.

Kevin McNally
 Craig C. Nowland
 Dallas Rotary Club
 Bill Moskaluk
 Mike Ryan
 Jim Page
 Mrs. Robert Wright
 Waves National, Webfoot #46
 Clarence and Audrey Loughmiller
 Donald and Edith McDaniel
 Cara Kidd
 James M. Audritsh
 Gordon Halsten

For information concerning the Magazine Subscription Program, please contact Roxane Kuehl by calling 1-800-846-8460 or 541-296-7151 or by e-mail at kuehlr@odva.state.or.us.

Oregon Veterans' Home Gift Form

"Give to those who have already given of themselves"

Charitable donations made to the Oregon Veterans' Home in any monetary amount are welcome and greatly appreciated. All donors receive a special letter of thanks from the Director of Veterans' Affairs and have their name included in the donor registry located in the lobby of the Home. If your gift to the Oregon Veterans' Home is:

- \$35 - \$64, you will receive one Oregon Veterans' Home remembrance pin. Remembrance pins are designed especially for our valued donors. The distinctive emblems can be worn on a lapel, vest, jacket, blouse, hat or tie.
- \$65 - \$99, you will receive two remembrance pins.
- \$100 or more, you will receive two remembrance pins and for one year your name will appear on the "Wall of Gratitude", the Home's donor recognition display, which is prominently located in the lobby area of the Home (updated annually).

Here is my gift in the amount of: _____

I prefer not to receive an emblem

Check is enclosed (Please make checks payable to the "Oregon Veterans' Home".)

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard

Account #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

I am making my donation to the Oregon Veterans' Home

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Please send my "Remembrance Emblem(s)" to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Send acknowledgements to: Name & Address: _____

Your gift qualifies for a charitable contribution tax deduction.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE OREGON VETERANS' HOME
 The Place Where Honor Lives!

Please clip this form and mail with your donation to:

Oregon Veterans' Home, c/o ODVA, 700 Summer Street NE, Salem, OR 97301-1285

Nicholson Confirmed as VA Secretary



Jim Nicholson, former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, was confirmed in January as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“The challenge of leading such an organization is daunting, but I am prepared to accept it,” Ambassador Jim Nicholson told a Senate Committee during a confirmation hearing on January 24, 2005.

Most recently, Nicholson served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican. He is a West Point graduate and served eight years as a U.S. Army Ranger. The Vietnam veteran said that his military background provided preparation for the job because he could sympathize with the sacrifices that veterans have made. After 22 years in the Army Reserve, Nicholson retired as a Colonel.

“I have had the privilege of wearing the uniform of the United States Army in combat,” he told the committee. “So I have seen both the horrors of war and the heroes of America making the greatest sacrifices of military service on behalf of their comrades and our nation.”

President Bush nominated Nicholson after Anthony Principi submitted his resignation in December. As VA Secretary, Nicholson will lead more than 230,000 employees and the nation’s second largest federal agency.

During his testimony, Nicholson outlined principles he will aim to attain during his post. These include ensuring that veterans have access to the best healthcare in the most appropriate clinical settings delivered in a timely, caring and compassionate manner.

He also said he wants prompt, accurate, equitable and understandable decisions on benefits claims for veterans, dependents and their survivors.

In February, Nicholson announced that President Bush will seek a record \$70.8 billion in the 2006 fiscal year budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the majority of those funds would be targeted for healthcare and disability compensation.

Nicholson was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. He obtained a master’s degree in public policy from New York’s Columbia University and a law degree from the University of Denver.

Lung Cancer May Be Linked to Gulf War Fires

A committee of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concluded during a 2004 study that occupational and environmental exposure to combustion products has been shown to demonstrate an increased danger of lung cancer in veterans of the Persian Gulf War.

These exposures could have resulted from oil well fires, exhausts and other sources while these veterans served in the 1991 Gulf War.

While presenting their findings to the federal government, these scientists identified a possible link between lung cancer in Gulf War veterans and their exposure to combustible products during the Gulf War. However, the report does not declare a cause-and-effect relationship between the two, and scientists added that their studies were not exclusive to examining veterans.

The report was titled Gulf War and Health, Vol. 3: Fuels, Combustion Products and Propellants. It is the third in a series examining the health effects to which these veterans may have been exposed. The study is sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

It has not been uncommon for veterans of the 1991 Gulf War to report health problems that they attribute to their tour of duty in that region. These soldiers may have faced exposure to smoke from oil well fires in Kuwait, vehicle exhaust, heaters in poorly ventilated tents, cooking stoves, and hydrazines and nitric acid, which are ingredients used in Scud missile propellants.

These findings were part of a IOM investigation mandated by Congress to investigate exposure to chemical, biological or environmental agents during the Gulf War and their connections to health complaints by returning servicemembers.

In November 2004, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi announced a plan for an additional \$15 million in research funding for studying Gulf War illnesses.

“We still don’t have a definitive cause for Gulf War illnesses,” Principi said in a released statement. “There has to be a reason why some of our veterans came home healthy, while others serving alongside them did not.”

Memorial Planned for Canby

Vietnam veteran Mike Breshears has a dream for a memorial that honors Vietnam-era veterans. With perseverance, determination, and patience as the fundraising continues, he is confident it will be a reality.

Already secured for the roadside memorial is a quarter of an acre on Oregon 99E located in Canby next to Burgerville, which was donated by the restaurant chain’s owner, Holland Inc. Another large part of the future memorial is a UH-1H ‘Huey’ helicopter, which is being stored at Columbia Helicopters’ headquarters on the outskirts of Canby. The company, which maintains, operates and repairs helicopters, is storing the aircraft free of charge.

Some 25 Columbia Helicopter employees, many of whom are Vietnam veterans, donated labor and time to refurbish the worn-out 1971 Huey. It was cleaned up, given a fresh coat of paint, put back together and made to look like a MedEvac air ambulance.

The contractor who worked on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Portland’s Washington Park is involved in the project. The planned memorial will feature the Huey suspended approximately 20 feet from the ground with the appearance of coming to the

aid of two American soldiers and a Vietnamese girl.

For Breshears, the Memorial will be a reflection of a past which he knows he shares with many other Vietnam veterans. On Veterans Day in 1967, it was a Huey that saved his life. Breshears served as a U.S. Army combat photographer during Vietnam. It was on a barren hilltop near Dak To, with about 150 U.S. soldiers in battle that he and the soldiers were pinned down by enemy fire. Breshears was hit with shrapnel in both shoulders and in his right leg. The Hueys hovered in and airlifted the soldiers from the battlefield. To Breshears, it was like seeing angels come from the heavens.

The Memorial project has many volunteers and supporters who have been working hard helping to see the project through to completion. However, approximately \$400,000 is still needed. A grant writer is helping the project and volunteers are planning fundraisers.

For more information about this memorial project or how you or your group can help, contact Mike Breshears at 503-266-4257 in Canby.

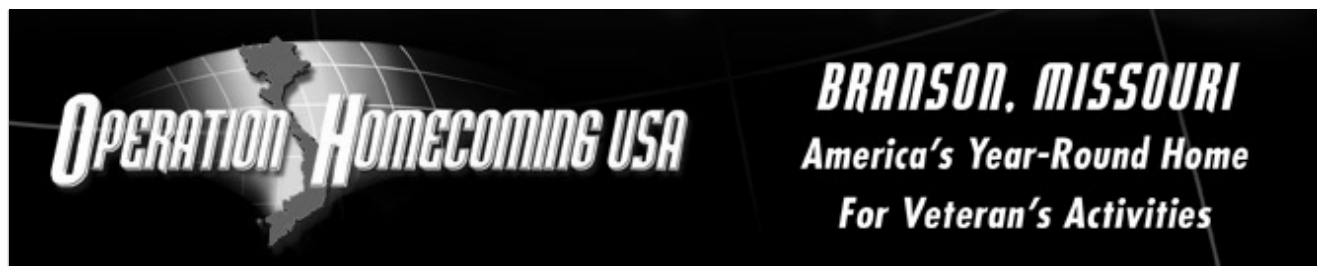
Military Display at State Capitol

Beginning May 2, 2005 the Greater Salem Area Veterans' Organization (GSAVO) will host a military educational display in the Galleria of the Oregon State Capitol Building in Salem.

The display will be featured at the Capitol through May 31st, and will include men and women's military uniforms of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces as well as uniforms of Soviet, Australian and German forces. Nearly a dozen display cases will be filled with photographs and artifacts from all eras of service.

The GSAVO has provided this annual display at the State Capitol Building for the last several years. Because of its location, it allows the public, visiting schools, civic groups and other interested persons an opportunity to view and ask questions about the military items displayed. The display is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Donations of military uniforms and artifacts are accepted by the GSAVO as well as monetary donations for the upkeep of the display. If you are interested in scheduling the display to be present at an event or location, or if you have items you wish to donate, please contact Mac MacDonald at 503-364-4299, or Jim Hardy at 503-364-5145.



Operation Homecoming U.S.A.

It has been thirty years since the end of the Vietnam War. Many believe the men and women who served in that conflict have never received the recognition they deserve for their selfless sacrifices and acts of heroism in service to their country.

What started as a conversation between two veterans has developed into 'Welcome Home...America's Tribute to Vietnam Veterans', the homecoming celebration they never received. Operation Homecoming USA, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, was established to make a desire become a reality. The organization, along with numerous supporters and volunteers, are preparing that long overdue homecoming recognition.

The event will begin on Monday, June 13, 2005 and continue through the week with closing ceremonies on Sunday, June 19. Branson, Missouri, already known as a year-round home for veterans' activities, will serve as a fitting host for the event. The organization's Board of Directors estimates

that as many as 100,000 participants from across the country will attend.

Several ceremonies and activities are planned including opening and closing ceremonies, golf-tournament, fishing tournament, welcome home parade, memorial service and more. Operation Homecoming

USA has confirmed several big-name performers including the Beach Boys, The Fifth Dimension, and Creedence Clearwater Revisited.

The Board of Directors said it feels this celebration is a profoundly important event for Vietnam Veterans, their families and loved ones, as well as our nation. It was a difficult time in our nation's history, but by honoring those who answered their country's call, the legacy of honor, duty and respect will be passed on.

To learn more about Operation Homecoming USA, visit their website at www.operationhomecomingusa.com on the Internet or call 1-888-265-8387. Online registration is available.



Afghan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial Needs Your Help

With every dollar collected, MJ and Clay Kesterson grow one step closer to memorializing Oregon's sons and daughters lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, including one of their own.

Their son Army Warrant Officer Erik Kesterson is one of 35 Oregonians as of February 18, 2005, who have died serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Kesterson had been in Iraq for just eight days when he was killed in a Black Hawk helicopter crash.

For the Kestersons, the fight to keep each fallen hero's memory alive wages on. After launching a campaign last year to create the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial to honor all Oregon servicemembers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, the couple from Independence is continuing their crusade by hosting fundraisers and teaming with local businesses to raise the estimated \$350,000 - \$500,000 needed for the memorial.

The planned memorial will feature a sculpture of an American soldier kneeling atop a 6-foot pedestal in a reflecting pool shaped like a world map. The Kestersons have joined forces with nearly all of the families of Oregon's

servicemembers who have died in Afghanistan or Iraq and are reaching out to Oregon's congressional, legislature and community leaders, along with area businesses and organizations for support. State Representative Donna Nelson, Chair of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, joined the Board of Directors for the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial Fund. The Kestersons are also working with the Oregon Department of Administrative Services and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to secure a site among the memorials surrounding the Veterans' Building, at 700 Summer Street NE, in Salem.

The Kestersons have raised about \$28,000 (as of this printing) and have fundraisers scheduled throughout the year. Approximately 300 replicas of the Memorial will be available on ebay.com over the coming months, with all proceeds benefiting the Memorial. Each replica stands nine inches high.

On October 30, the Kestersons held a rally on the Oregon State Capitol Building's front steps in Salem, to recruit financial supporters. Both Governor Ted Kulongoski and Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis were in attendance. MJ and Clay have traveled the state making

presentations, raising awareness, and seeking donations. Audiences have included veterans' organizations legislative committees, businesses, sporting events, trade fairs and shows and others.

In order to break ground on the Memorial by November 15, 2005 – the second anniversary of their son's death – the Kestersons are calling upon all Oregonians to donate at least one dollar in order to make this memorial honoring Oregon's newest veterans a reality.

"We need you to give up your [one cup of coffee]," MJ Kesterson said. "Don't buy a newspaper for one day. Instead help us memorialize the sons and daughters fighting in the war effort."

Anyone interested in donating funds or assisting with fundraising efforts, can contact MJ or Clay Kesterson at 503-606-2765 or visit www.freedomisntfreeoregon.org. Donations can be made payable to Afghan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial Fund and mailed to Afghan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial Fund, 763 Cessna Street, Independence, Oregon 97351. Businesses can contact the Memorial Fund at either 503-606-2765 or 541-461-4098 to become corporate sponsors, which are also needed.

2005 State Conventions

American Legion

Date: June 23 – 25, 2005
 Opening: Evening of June 22nd
 Place: Pendleton Convention Center
 Contact: Barry Snyder, 503-685-5006

American Ex-Prisoners of War

Date: May 14, 2005
 Place: To be announced
 Contact: Richard Crow, 541-336-3635

American Merchant Marine Veterans

—19th Annual National Convention—
 Date: May 15 – 19, 2005
 Place: Silver Legacy Hotel
 Reno, Nevada
 Contact: Shirley Cauble, 541-459-7982

American Veterans Association (AMVETS)

Date: June 4 – 5, 2005
 Place: Red Lion
 Coos Bay, Oregon
 Contact: Gerald Carver, 503-777-6677

Disabled American Veterans

Date: May 18 – 21, 2005
 Place: Shilo Inn
 Newport, Oregon
 Contact: Robert Haltiner, 503-657-7085

Korean War Veterans Association

Date: April 20, 2005
 Place: VFW Hall
 Albany, Oregon
 Contact: Walter Crews, 503-678-5592

Marine Corps League

Date: June 17 – 19, 2005
 Place: Seven Feathers Convention Hotel
 Canyonville, Oregon
 Contact: Robert Gilmore, 541-469-0299

Military Officers Association

Date: October 7 – 9, 2005
 Place: Riverhouse Hotel & Resort
 Bend, Oregon
 Contact: Gary Zwicker, 503-399-8359

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Date: June 3 – 5, 2005
 Place: Red Lion Inn
 McMinnville, Oregon
 Contact: Robert Haltiner, 503-657-7085

Military Order of the World Wars

Date: June 3 and 4, 2005
 Place: Shilo Inn, Airport Road
 Portland, Oregon
 Contact: Larry Cauffman, 503-540-0505

Non Commissioned Officers Association

Date: April 30–May 1, 2005
 Place: Red Lion Inn
 Klamath Falls, Oregon
 Contact: Walter Crews, 503-678-5592

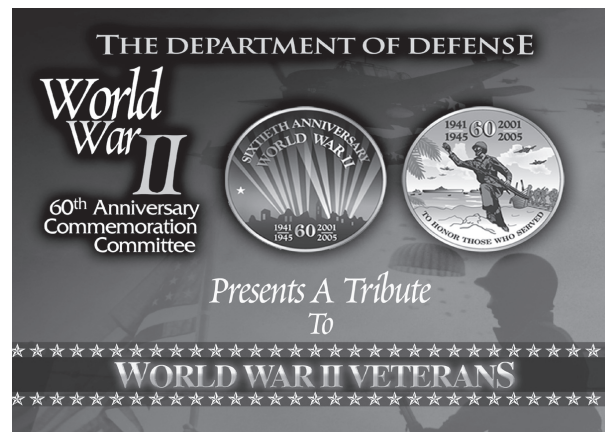
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Date: June 23 – 25, 2005
 Place: Seven Feathers Convention
 Hotel
 Canyonville, Oregon
 Contact: Wade, 541-276-5883

Vietnam Veterans of America

—No Convention this Year—

WWII 60th Anniversary Celebrations



In early 2004, the Department of Defense (DoD) designated the Department of the Army as the executive agent for World War II (WWII) 60th anniversary observances. The Department of the Army established a committee consisting of representatives from the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Coast Guard who would also serve as representative of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Six cities were selected to host regional celebrations sponsored by the WWII 60th Anniversary Commemoration Committee during 2005. The events will commemorate the outstanding service and sacrifice of the veterans of WWII. Vancouver, Washington was among the six selected cities and will host the northwest region celebrations. The northwest region consists of several states including Oregon.

Northwest region celebrations in Vancouver are scheduled for August 25th through the 28th.

Regional events will prelude the WWII 60th Anniversary celebration that will be held in Washington, D.C. on the weekend of September 2nd. Ceremonies will recognize WWII veterans, their contribution, and the impact of their contribution on our world today. Events will also serve to let these brave men and women know that their service and sacrifices will never be forgotten by a grateful nation.

As specific information becomes available for the Vancouver event, it will appear in future issues of the *VETS NEWS*. Additional information about the WWII 60th Anniversary Committee and scheduled events is available on the Internet at www.60wwii.mil or by telephone at 1-877-868-2058 (toll free).

New Warbirds Exhibit at Evergreen Aviation Museum

A new photography exhibit featuring photographs of modern and restored “warbirds” is on display at the Evergreen Aviation Museum through the month of March. *The Aviation Photography of Michael Pliskin* features photographs that were taken air-to-air and air-to-ground. Pliskin’s recently published images include coverage of the first SpaceShip One suborbital flight for the *Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association* magazine and website, and coverage of the final NASA X-43 Hyper-X Scramjet test flight for *Flight International* magazine.

Evergreen Aviation Museum is located at 500 Captain Michael King Smith Way, McMinnville, Oregon. The Museum is open every day, including weekends, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s Day, and Easter. Discounted admission prices are available for veterans, active duty and reserves (with Identification) and their immediate family members. For information, contact Nichole Wahlberg at 503-434-4006 or by email at nichole.wahlberg@sprucegoose.org.

Massing of the Colors

A Massing of the Colors and Service of Remembrance is scheduled at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem, on National Flag Day, June 14, 2005. The event is scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. National Flag Day is an opportunity for the nation to annually celebrate America’s flag.

Families of Oregon servicemembers who have died during Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom have been invited. The names of each fallen Soldier and Marine will be read during the Service of Remembrance.

Mark your calendar for this event, which is expected to be quite impressive and memorable. A massing of hundreds of flags is expected with the participation of numerous veterans’ organization’s and other groups’ color guards.

Persons or organizations interested in participating in the ceremony, should contact Mac MacDonald, Commander of the Military Order of the World Wars 15th Regional at telephone 503-364-4288, fax 503-364-6279, or mail at 1288 32nd Court NW, Salem OR 97304.

OPVA Provides Phone Cards to Oregon Troops

Sales from yellow, magnetic ribbons honoring Oregon troops have given the Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America (OPVA) a means to send phone cards to deployed servicemembers to help them call home.

Through Project Troops Need to Talk (T.N.T.), OPVA has sent more than 1,000 phone cards to Oregon servicemembers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Funds for phone cards are raised through the sale of magnetic yellow ribbons and lapel pins with crossing American and Oregon flags.

The \$10 cost of a magnetic yellow ribbon, which reads, "Support Oregon's Soldiers", covers the entire cost of one phone card and provides an Oregon soldier with about 15 to 20 international minutes of call time, which can be used in over 220 countries. Funds from the sale of \$5 lapel pins with crossing American and Oregon flags also provide for the purchase of phone cards.

OPVA believes Project T.N.T. has increased the community's awareness of how important it is for soldiers to keep in contact with loved ones and hopes that Project T.N.T. will ensure one phone card for every Oregon servicemember serving in the War Against Terrorism.

Units receiving phone cards from OPVA include the 3670th Maintenance Company of the Army National Guard based out of Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, Oregon. During the holidays, phone cards were also provided to wounded troops being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and members of 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment of the Oregon Army National Guard.

Donations for Project T.N.T can be made at the OPVA Office at 3700 Silverton Road NE in Salem, Oregon. Contributions can also be made at any Bank of the West, Banner Bank or Bank of Eastern Oregon. The account is: Oregon PVA- Project T.N.T.

President Bush Seeks \$70.8 Billion Budget for Federal VA

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced on February 7, 2005 that President Bush plans to seek a Department of Veterans Affairs budget of \$70.8 billion for the 2006 fiscal year.

The proposed budget will include a 2.7 percent increase over the current year's discretionary budget and include funds targeted predominantly for healthcare and disability compensation. There is \$33.4 billion requested for discretionary funding primarily for healthcare, and \$37.4 billion in mandatory funding, which would facilitate compensation, pension and other benefit programs.

"This budget demonstrates the President's ongoing commitment to provide the very best healthcare and benefits to those veterans who count on VA the most," Nicholson said in the release.

The fiscal year 2006 proposed budget includes:

- A request for \$2.2 billion in enhanced mental health services, totaling \$100 million above this year's funding level. This proposal would ensure a full continuum of care for veterans with mental health issues, to include comprehensive treatment for those veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Proposed funding for non-institutional long-term care to increase by more than 18 percent over fiscal year 2005, with investments totaling \$400 million.
- Continuation of the Presidential priority that the VA and Department of Defense work together to ensure that servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families receive timely, high-quality services.

Camp Adair Historical Markers Need Restoration

Historical markers are erected around the state to commemorate people, events, places, culture, geography, history, and geologic features. One such marker is the Camp Adair World War II Historical Marker located approximately 13 miles north of the city of Corvallis on Highway 99W.

This and other historical markers have been the work of the Travel Information Council (TIC) and its volunteers. The TIC was formed by the Oregon State Legislature in 1972 in response to Federal Highway Beautification Legislation championed by Lady Bird Johnson. Funding for the small agency comes from monies received from businesses and attractions that use the Council's services. TIC receives no public dollars to operate the program or pay staff.

Working under the TIC is a group of volunteers who donate their time, labor and resources to help restore historical markers in Oregon. Their current project is the restoration of the Camp Adair Historical Marker, which marks the site where military divisions were trained during World War II.

Once the second largest city in Oregon, Camp Adair was chosen by the United States War Department as a training site for Triangular Divisions. During World War II, Camp Adair served as home base to four infantry divisions (ID); the 91st ID POWDER RIVER Division, the 70th ID TRAILBLAZERS Division, the 96th ID DEADEYE Division, and the 104th ID TIMBERWOLF Division.

With the extensiveness of the restoration and depending upon the exact method used in the restoration, it has been determined that even with the donation of time, labor, and resources by volunteers, the project will require an estimated \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Because the Council does not have sufficient funds to cover the cost, donations are being sought to raise the necessary funds for the Camp Adair marker restoration project.

To help with the restoration of this important historical military marker, donations can be made to the Travel Information Council, 229 Madrona Ave SE, Salem, Oregon 97302. Please be sure to note on your contribution: 'Camp Adair Fund'.

For more information about the Travel Information Council or about the markers at Camp Adair, contact Wayne Sharp at 503-391-1964 or email bevwaysharp@aol.com.

VA Clothing Allowance

Veterans with service-connected disabilities or conditions that require the use of prosthetic or orthopedic appliances, which tend to wear or tear clothing, may receive an annual clothing allowance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The clothing allowance may also be available to veterans whose service-

connected conditions require prescribed medication that damages veterans' outer garments.

For more information, contact the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs at 1-800-692-9666 or 503-373-2085 or your county veterans' service office (see list on page 11).

New House Veterans' Affairs Committee Tackles Veterans' Issues

When the 2005 Oregon House of Representatives convened in January, it included a new committee created solely to focus on veterans' issues. The new House Veterans' Affairs Committee was established by House Speaker Karen Minnis.

"With so many Oregonians serving overseas, I thought it important that the House pay particular attention to the needs and welfare of all those returning home from military service," said Speaker Minnis in a statement. "The House Veterans' Affairs Committee will be a forum for reviewing the support Oregon provides its veterans and seeing how we can best address their needs."

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Jim Willis has publicly commended Speaker Minnis for establishing a Committee whose mission would be to fill the needs of the ever increasing veterans community.

"I think in naming a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs that Speaker Minnis has demonstrated a real concern for Oregon's veterans, their families and survivors. While we do not know the final outcome of the actions taken by the 73rd Session of the Oregon Legislature, I am optimistic that it will be a good one for those Oregon residents who so proudly served this state and nation."

The Committee meets every Tuesday and Thursday in the State Capitol at 8:30 a.m. The Committee's members are:

Representative Donna Nelson serves as the Chair of the Committee. Representative Nelson, from McMinnville, is a small business owner and a third-term representative in the House. Representative Nelson served on the Board of Directors of the Evergreen Aviation Museum for 24 years. She moved to McMinnville in 1971. Along with her term as Chair, Representative Nelson serves concurrently on the Trade and Economic Development Committee.

Currently, Representative Nelson is a Board Member of the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom War Memorial Fund, the non-profit organization spearheading a memorial for all servicemembers who died while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Representative Phil Barnhart, from Eugene, is a practicing psychologist and adjunct faculty at the University of Oregon. He also serves on the Environment and Water Committees. He has said his main issues of concern are those crafted to protect children, the poor and the elderly.

Representative Debi Farr of Eugene, is serving her freshman term as a member of the House of Representatives. She succeeds her husband Pat, for whom she served as Chief of Staff during his term.

Representative Brian Boquist from Dallas, is a military veteran and part-time farmer. Boquist recently returned from a tour in Iraq and is involved in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and the National Guard Association.

Representative Scott Bruun, whose district includes West Linn, Tualatin, Lake Oswego and Stafford is Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for a Portland-based commercial general contractor. He is Vice-Chair of the Trade and Economic Development Committee and serves on the Transportation Committee as well.

Representative Dave Hunt represents Clackamas County for the second time this session. He was elected Assistant Democratic Leader by his peers following the 2003 legislative session. He also serves on the Transportation Committee and the Elections and Rules Subcommittee on Campaign Finance Reform.

Representative Hunt is Executive Director of the Columbia River Channel Coalition, an association of port, business, labor union, and agricultural groups supporting effective maritime trade and transportation.

Representative Betty Komp is from Woodburn. Most recently, she was Principal of French Prairie Middle School and Chair of the Mt. Angel School Board. She also serves on the Revenue Committee.

All veterans are encouraged to meet with their representatives to discuss legislative issues affecting the veteran community.

Vets' Home Receives Donation



On January 29, 2005, Mattie Alexander, Supreme President of the Military Order of the Cooties Auxiliary (MCOA), presented a \$2,000 donation to the Oregon Veterans' Home. Accepting on behalf of the Home were Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Roxane Kuehl, Admissions & Liaison Officer for the Home. The donation is part of President Alexander's project to benefit brain-injured veterans.

This donation is just one of many provided by the MOC & MOCA to the Oregon Veterans' Home. One of the most visible is the beautiful grandfather clock that graces the lobby of the Home. Others are comfort items, an annual summer bar-b-que, recreational items, snacks and calendars as well as the comforting and uplifting presence of their members when visiting the Home, that never fails to cheer the veteran residents.

Looking For...

Ezra Scott, retired Army veteran is searching for other veterans who served in the Persian Gulf Command from January 1943 to March 1945, who performed maintenance on all types of motor transport vehicles possibly through one of the Medium Automotive Maintenance Companies. Scott toured with the 3410 Ordinance Medium Automotive Maintenance Company from Khorramshahr to Tehran and all maintenance points in between, along with the 3557 Medium Automotive Maintenance Company. Scott can be reached at 503-775-2169 or via email at www.pa2u3472@aol.com.

Korea Veterans of America is looking for all veterans who served in Korea from 1945 to present. For more information about the organization and how to join, contact Ronald Lewman at 541-937-2468 or visit their website at www.koreaveterans.org.

Legion Post Fundraiser

Pioneer Post #149 of the American Legion is having a dinner and auction on Friday, April 22nd at the Legion Hall, 4774 Lilac Lane NE, in Salem. This event is open to the public. For information, contact Barbe Hosier at 503-370-9907.

DAV Springfield

Disabled American Veterans, Springfield Chapter #42 holds meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The meetings are held at the Legion Post 40 located at 8th and C Streets in Springfield. Potluck dinner and social hour begins at 6 p.m. with the meeting starting at 7 p.m. For information, contact the Chapter at (541)726-7672.

NAAV Meeting

The National Association of Atomic Veterans will hold a meeting on April 18, 2005, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Tigard Legion Hall, 8635 SW Scoffins, in Tigard. Please call Duane Gaddis 503-618-8793 or Keith Whittle 503-289-2720 if you plan to attend.

Gold Star Wives

The Gold Star Wives of America is looking for spouses of United States Armed Forces servicemembers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 1945, the Gold Star Wives of America, a non-profit national service organization, has provided support for all war widows and service-related widows (open to men and women whose spouses died in active duty or from a service-connected disability). Remarriage does not bar membership.

The Gold Star Wives organization is encouraging spouses of servicemembers who died in action during the latest conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq to sign up for the GSWAmerica Yahoo Group. The email group allows survivors from around the country to discuss thoughts and feelings.

More than forty widows from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts are currently enrolled in the email group. To join, visit www.goldstarwives.org. At this time, the service is only available to "Post 9-11" widows.

Reunions

The 41st Infantry Division is having its 56th annual convention reunion in Reno, Nevada, April 11-14, 2005. For more information, contact Edward Bartlien, 215 E Eugene Street, Hood River, Oregon 97031.

China-Burma-India Veterans Association will hold its 2005 All West Reunion at the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay in Vancouver, Washington, April 14-17, 2005. For information, contact Lescher Dowling, 1122 Merrimac Drive, Sunnyvale, California 94087-1733, telephone 408-739-0652 or email lescher2@aol.com.

Northwest Chapter – 2nd Marine Division Association will hold its annual reunion at Hood River Inn, Hood River, Oregon, April 28-30, 2005. Veterans of Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan/Tinian and Okinawa are encouraged to attend. Contact Dave Dowdakin at 503-234-4242 or email DDowdakin@aol.com for more information.

The USS Vega AF59 will be holding its second reunion at the Shilo Inn in Portland, Oregon, May 13-15, 2005. For information, contact Merle Jackson at 541-548-5796 or email jcksnmj@bendcable.com.

7406th Support Squadron (Germany), will hold a reunion at the Holiday Inn at 400 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 19 - 21, 2005. For more information, contact Harold Cleet at 610-437-0823 or George B. Pittelkau at 503-266-9829.

Society of the First Infantry Division "Big Red One" will hold its 87th Annual Reunion in Arlington, Virginia, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, July 20-24, 2005. Anyone who served in the First Infantry Division is invited to attend. Contact the Society of the First Infantry Division, 1933 Morris Road, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania 19422, telephone 1-888-324-4733 or email Soc1ID@aol.com for additional information.

Vietnam Veterans of the 1st/12th, 4th Infantry Division, B Company, 4th Engineers and B Battery, 4th/42nd Artillery are invited to a reunion in Bismarck, North Dakota, August 25-28, 2005. For more information, contact Louis Roumagoux, 14130 NE Merchant Road, Carlton, Oregon 97111, or email lroumagoux@yahoo.com.

USMC Motor Transport Association will hold its 9th Reunion in Savannah, Georgia, September 18-21, 2005. For information, contact Hal Clapp, PO Box 1372, Jacksonville, North Carolina 28541-1372, telephone 910-346-8797 or email usmcmta@vol.com.

The 25th Infantry Division, Tropic Lighting, and the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment will hold their annual reunions on September 20-25, 2005, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All former members of these units are invited. Contact Fred Diverse at atfpdotd@mindspring.com or Merriweather Jones at either 503-393-7080 or merrijones@msn.com.

U.S. Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 3, will hold a reunion September 23-25, 2005, at the Boardwalk Hotel, in Las Vegas, Nevada. For information, contact Dwight Hintz 503-667-3761 or email pweatherway@aol.com.

COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICERS

County	Telephone Number	Service Officer
Baker	541-523-8223	Arda Johnson
Benton	541-758-1595	Don Johnson
Clackamas	503-794-5650	Janice Raisl
Clatsop	503-325-2429	Kenneth H. Rislow
Columbia	503-397-2268	Jeff Hill
Coos	541-396-3121 Ext. 362	Mary Ann Sackett
Crook	541-447-5304	Sid Carter
Curry	541-247-3205 Ext. 205	Mike McGuiness
Deschutes	541-385-3214	Patricia Ross
Douglas	541-440-4219	Mary Newman
Gilliam	1-888-804-1817	Linda Adams
Grant	541-575-1631	William G. Wynne
Harney	541-573-6024	Theresa Williams
Hood River	541-386-1080	Linda Adams
Jackson	541-774-7837	Marty Kimmel
Jefferson	541-475-5228	Bob Carroll
Josephine	541-474-1316	Rusty Kidder
Klamath	541-883-4274	Isabel Rodriguez
Lake	541-947-6043	Julian Garcia
Lane	541-682-4191	Joseph Reiley
Lincoln	541-574-6955	Beckie Hernandez
Linn	541-967-3882	Pat Brillon
Malheur	541-889-6649	Bill Thomson
Marion	(See below)	(None)
Morrow	541-676-5667	Juanita Cox
Multnomah	503-988-3620 Ext. 26123	Dave Raby
Polk	(See below)	(None)
Sherman	541-442-5248	Daryl V. Melzer
Tillamook	503-377-0294	Steve Weld
Umatilla	541-278-5482	Peggy Raines
Union	541-962-8802	Timothy H. Jederberg
Wallowa	541-426-3155 Ext.241	Timothy H. Jederberg
Wasco	541-506-2502	Linda Adams
Washington	503-640-3489	Jeff Hill
Wheeler	1-888-804-1817	Linda Adams
Yamhill	503-434-7503	Diane Cilenti

Services for veterans residing in Marion and Polk counties are provided at ODVA's Salem Counseling Office, 700 Summer Street NE.

**Salem Counseling Office--- toll-free 1-800-692-9666
in Salem 503-373-2085
TDD 503-373-2217
Portland Claims Office --- 503-326-2611**

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

**Veterans' Home Loans
Veterans' Benefits
Conservatorship
Oregon Veterans' Home (skilled nursing care)
503-373-2000
1-800-828-8801
ODVA Website: www.oregon.gov/odva**

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.

It's tax time again.

**Donate a portion of your Oregon income tax refund to the Oregon Veterans' Home.
It's easy!**

(See article on page 5)

On Form 40, look for line 61. **Enter code 12**

On Form 40S, look for line 30. **Enter code 12**

Then, enter your donation amount!

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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503-844-9000

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PO Box 1394
Hines, Oregon 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.

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City/ State /Zip _____

Please clip and mail to ODVA, 700 Summer St NE, Salem OR 97301-1285.

Changes can also be e-mailed to: stecklr@odva.state.or.us

Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
700 Summer Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-1285