

Vietnam veterans honored with I-84 Memorial Highway designation

Travelers along Interstate 84 in Oregon are seeing reminders of the sacrifice made by service men and women over 40 years ago. Large brown signs installed over that past several months identify I-84 as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway. The objective of this designation is to honor all veterans who served and those who became casualties during the war in Vietnam, the longest war ever fought by our nation.

Oregon State Council Vietnam Veterans of America (OSCVVA) made the highway designation request to legislators last year, with Governor Kitzhaber signing Senate Bill 461 into law on May 11, 2013. The law became effective January 1, 2014 and requires private funds to be used for the purchase, installation and maintenance of the signs. OSCVVA is providing the required dollars and has been working with ODOT to have the signs installed at various sites along the 378 miles of interstate that stretches from Portland to the Idaho border.

Nearly 20 signs have already been installed, including some near The Dalles where a Memorial Day dedication took place in May 2014.

“It’s a “long, long, overdue tribute” said Dallas Swaford of Oregon Veterans Home during the Memorial Day event.

Numerous signs installed between Boardman and Ontario

In eastern Oregon, signs were installed this summer and fall along 200 miles of freeway near Boardman, Hermiston, Pendleton, Meacham, North Powder, Baker City, Durkee and Ontario.

During a sign dedication event near Ontario, District 14 Assistant Manager Jeff Berry provided opening remarks before introducing key speaker Connie Tanaka to a crowd of veterans gathered at the ODOT Stanton Blvd. maintenance station. Tanaka, the Malheur County Veterans Service Officer, requested the event preceding the installation of the Ontario signs.

“This means a lot to the Vietnam Veterans,” said Tanaka. “It’s a great way to honor their service in an unpopular war.”

After the installation of signs near Meacham and North Powder, which also included a dedication ceremony, veterans advocate Dick Tobiason commended ODOT for their support.

“Thanks for all you have done to facilitate this most worthy project honoring all Vietnam Veterans,” said Tobiason.

Approximately 57,000 Oregonians served “in country” during the Vietnam War with 719 killed in action (KIA). Another 5,000 were wounded (WIA). Thirty-nine remain missing in action (MIA) after 40 years. Of the 333,000 veterans living in Oregon, a third served during the Vietnam conflict.

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Vets gathered for event at ODOT facility near Ontario



ODOT installs sign near North Powder