

OREGON POW/MIA MEMORIAL HIGHWAY ON U.S. HIGHWAY 26

FACT SHEET

On Memorial Day, 2019, the nonprofit Bend Heroes Foundation requested Central Oregon's state legislators to sponsor legislation designating U.S. Highway 26 as "**POW/MIA Memorial Highway**". At 471 miles in length, U.S. Hwy 26 stretches from the Oregon coast near Seaside to the Oregon/Idaho border at Nyssa. The House and Senate voted unanimously in favor of House Bill 3452 during June. Governor Kate Brown signed HB 3452 into law on July 23 with a ceremonial signing on Sept. 16. The law will become effective on January 1, 2020. The new law requires ODOT to install **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** signs paid for by veterans.

The purpose of the **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** is to honor Oregon's over 600 former WWI and WWII Prisoners of War (POWs), almost 200 POWs who died in captivity during WWI, WWII, Korean and Vietnam Wars and exactly 1,000 Oregonians who **still** remain Missing in Action (MIA) or "Unaccounted-For" from WWI to the Vietnam War, educate the traveling public and let the families of POWs and MIAs know Oregon supports their hopes and prayers for the return of their loved one's remains. The 1,000 MIAs are: WWI/21, WWII/887, Korean War/57, Cold War/2 and Vietnam War/33.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is earnestly searching for the remains of our nation's 86,500 MIAs/Unaccounted-For. About half were lost or buried at sea. DPAA lists the names of MIAs/Unaccounted-For by war (WWII to present) and state on its web site: <https://www.dpaa.mil/> DPAA also lists names of "Accounted-For". The names of our nation's 4,422 WWI MIAs also listed by state are found here: <https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/doughboy-mia-database-1917-1920.html>

The **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** is the 8th border to border veterans' highway initiated by Bend Heroes Foundation since 2008. It is believed to be the first border to border **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** in our nation. It intersects all 5 of Oregon's "War" highways, **Purple Heart Trail** and **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway**. There are POWs and MIAs associated with all of those highways except the **Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway**. Below is a map of the 8 veterans' highways with the 471 mile east – west **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** marked in black. At the Foundation's request, Idaho plans to designate its 400 mile U.S. Hwy 26 as **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** next year.

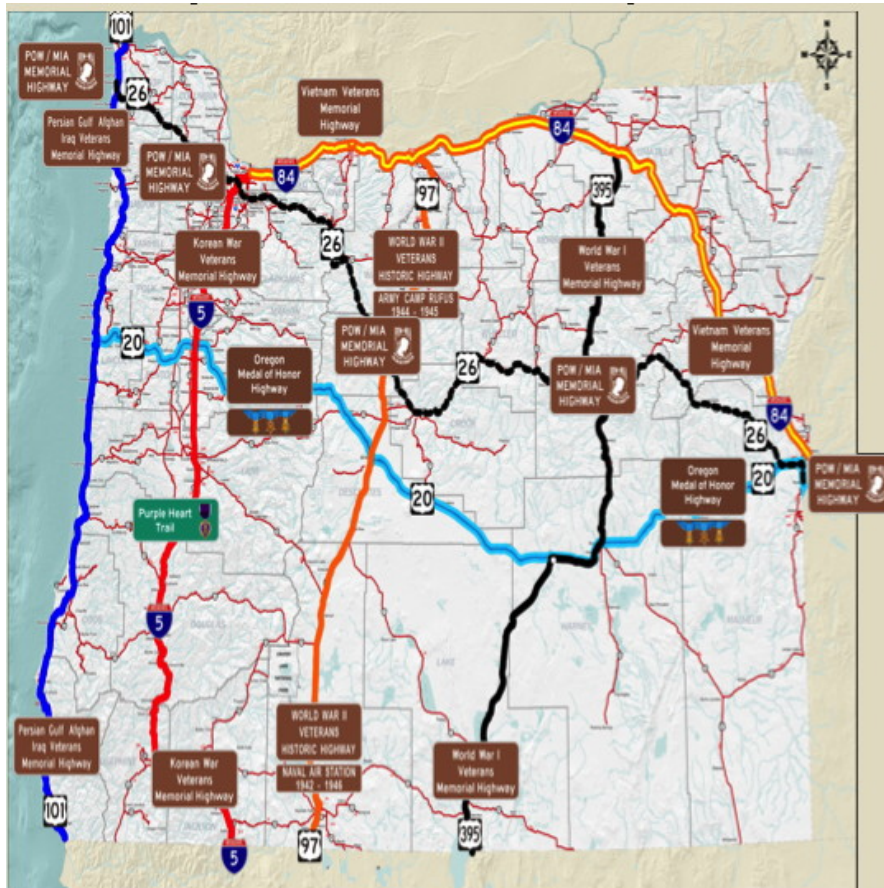
Bend Heroes Foundation will raise \$24,000 to pay Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to fabricate and install 12 or more signs on the newly designated **POW/MIA** highway beginning in early 2020. Below is an image of the ODOT - approved 4 ft. x 8 ft. **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** sign. Note the familiar POW*MIA logo on the sign.

With the installation of 12 signs on the **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** in 2020, the 8 veterans' highways will then display 91 honorific signs on 2,969 miles of scenic border to border highways in Oregon honoring almost one-half million Oregon veterans who served, died, became wounded, received the Medal of Honor or became POW or MIA during war since the Civil War. **They will never be forgotten in Oregon.**

Bend Heroes Foundation is deeply grateful for the outstanding support from the Oregon Legislature, Oregon's Governors, Oregon Department of Transportation, veterans' groups and the many donors over the last 11 years.

Tax deductible donations funding the **POW/MIA Memorial Highway** signs (\$2,000 per installed sign) can be sent to Bend Heroes Foundation: 1900 NE 3rd St., Ste 106, #205, Bend, OR 97701. Bend Heroes Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring and assisting veterans and first responders – Tax ID 27-207 1808.

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OREGON'S 8 VETERANS HIGHWAYS



**HALF SCALE POW/MIA MEMORIAL HIGHWAY SIGN,
WITH GOV. BROWN SIGNING HB 3452 SEPT.**

16, 2019

Photo by Flynn Phillips, Historian, American Legion Department of Oregon