

## MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY ACROSS AMERICA

### FACT SHEET



During 2017, the nonprofit Bend Heroes Foundation initiated the 451 mile **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway** across Oregon on US Hwy 20 honoring Oregon's 30 Medal of Honor recipients who earned our nation's highest military award during wars from the Civil War to Vietnam War.

The Oregon Legislature and Governor Kate Brown enacted the Foundation's request into law (HB 2100) on June 20, 2017. Twelve signs (6 eastbound, 6 westbound) were dedicated along the 451 mile U.S. Hwy 20 between Newport (Pacific Ocean) and the Oregon/Idaho border (photo below). The Foundation raised \$24,700 to pay Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to fabricate and install the signs (see attached photo). This is the first of a kind tribute to Medal of Honor recipients in our nation.

Several states have designated Medal of Honor Highways, Expressways, Bridges and Overpasses honoring local Medal of Honor recipients. The highways are marked with signs of varying size and design. Most of the signs display the name of a single recipient and sometimes a single version of the Medal of Honor medal. None of those highways honor all of a state's Medal of Honor recipients, are border to border in length or display all 3 versions of the Medal of Honor medal shown above.

Since the Medal of Honor medal was first presented during the Civil War, 3,515 awards have been presented with every state represented. Nineteen recipients received 2 Medal of Honor awards. As of July 18, 2022, there are only 66 Medal of Honor recipients living in the United States of America: <http://www.cmohs.org/living-recipients.php?p=1>

To earn the Medal of Honor a member of the Armed Forces had to act with ***conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty during combat at the risk of one's life against an enemy of the United States.***

Oregon House Bill 2100 creating the **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway** suggested a Medal of Honor Highway spanning our nation between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans could be created on U.S. Hwy 20 honoring all of a state's current and future Medal of Honor recipients and recipients from any state who travel on it.

At 3,365 miles in length, U.S. Highway 20 is the longest highway in our nation. Its western terminus is in Newport, OR on the Pacific Ocean, crosses 12 states with its eastern terminus in Boston, MA at the Atlantic Ocean (map below).

About 66% of all 3,515 Medal of Honor awards presented since 1863 are connected with the 12 states: Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts. The remaining 38 states account for about 33% of all recipients. Twenty-six (26) of our nation's 66 living recipients are also connected with the 12 states.

To promote more state Medal of Honor Highways, Bend Heroes Foundation requested the American Legion, VFW, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) to publish articles on the **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway** in their national magazines.

**American Legion**, August, 2018: <https://www.legion.org/magazine/242661/oregons-highways-honor>

**VFW**, August, 2017:

[http://digitaledition.qwinc.com/publication/index.php?i=424388&m=&l=&p=3&pre=&ver=html5#%22page%22:40,%22issue\\_id%22:424388](http://digitaledition.qwinc.com/publication/index.php?i=424388&m=&l=&p=3&pre=&ver=html5#%22page%22:40,%22issue_id%22:424388)

**Vietnam Veterans of America "Veteran"** May/June 2018 online publication included an article on the Oregon Medal of Honor Highway: [http://vvaveteran.org/38-3/38-3\\_directors.html](http://vvaveteran.org/38-3/38-3_directors.html)

**Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** published in its national magazine Nov. 2018:

[http://www.ggdigitalpublishing.com/publication/?i=535729&article\\_id=3220728&view=articleBrowser&ver=html5#%22issue\\_id%22:535729,%22view%22:%22articleBrowser%22,%22article\\_id%22:%223220728%22](http://www.ggdigitalpublishing.com/publication/?i=535729&article_id=3220728&view=articleBrowser&ver=html5#%22issue_id%22:535729,%22view%22:%22articleBrowser%22,%22article_id%22:%223220728%22)

Veterans' groups located in the 11 states east of Oregon agreed to work with Bend Heroes Foundation and their state legislatures to create state Medal of Honor Highways on U.S. Hwy 20 in those states. The groups are led by the American Legion, Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and state coalitions of veterans' groups. The Foundation drafts legislation for each state.

Legislatures and Governors in 11 of the 12 states - Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York have already designated state Medal of Honor Highway covering 95% of the 3,365 mile Medal of Honor Highway Across America between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Seventy two (72) signs have already been installed in 7 of those states. Note the display of the 3 versions of the Medal of Honor medal: Army, Navy/Marines/Coast Guard and Air Force. Legislation for the New York Medal of Honor Highway was signed by New York Governor Hochul on July 18. The Massachusetts Legislature has recently introduced legislation and held hearings.

The 12 states along US Hwy account for 36% of all 85,000 veterans Missing In Action (MIA) from our nation since WWI. Of the 48 Medal of Honor recipients still in MIA status, 13 or 27% are also associated with the 12 states.

The 12 states along US Hwy 20 account for about 66% (two thirds) of all 3,515 awards presented since 1863 while the remaining 38 states account for the remaining 33% (one third). A **National Medal of Honor Highway** would honor all 3,515 recipients and any future recipients from all 50 states and territories.

In anticipation of creating the 12 state Medal of Honor Highways, Bend Heroes Foundation requested the Oregon delegation in the United States Congress to initiate federal legislation designating US Highway 20 as the “**National Medal of Honor Highway**” just as Congress did for the east-west, coast to coast National Lincoln and Eisenhower Highways.

Bend Heroes Foundation is drafting letters the veterans leaders of the 12 state Medal of Honor highways project could process with their Congressional delegations in Washington requesting Congress to enact a **National Medal of Honor Highway Across America** law. Oregon’s senior senator is interested in sponsoring that legislation after Massachusetts has enacted its law designating their state Medal of Honor Highway.

For further information, contact: Dick Tobiason, Chairman, Bend Heroes Foundation and Project Manager, Oregon Medal of Honor Highway, Medal of Honor Highway Across America and National Medal of Honor Highway [dtobiason@bendcable.com](mailto:dtobiason@bendcable.com), 541.390.9932

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Map of the 3,365 mile U.S. Highway 20 Crossing 12 States between Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Legislatures in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York have designated Medal of Honor Highways in their states accounting for 95% of the coast to coast highway length.



OREGON MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN AT NEWPORT (1 of 12 signs on 451 miles of highway)

WWII MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT ROBERT D. MAXWELL SEATED.



IDAHO MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN (1 of 11 signs on 411 miles of highway)



MONTANA MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN (1 of 2 signs on 12 miles of highway)



WYOMING MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN (1 of 15 signs on 531 miles of highway)



NEBRASKA MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN (1 of 12 signs on 432 miles of highway)



IOWA MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN UNVEILED 7-24-21 (1 of 12 signs on 302 miles of highway)





INDIANA MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY DEDICATION, ANGOLA 10-9-20



INDIANA MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN NEAR OHIO BORDER (1 of 8 signs on 156 miles of highway)