

# Vietnam War Memorial Fund

P O Box 1448  
Boring, Oregon 97009  
503-663-6271

[VietnamWarMem@aol.com](mailto:VietnamWarMem@aol.com)

[www.ocvvm.com](http://www.ocvvm.com)

“Let Us Honor Our Warriors and Remember the Fallen”

May 1, 2023

Oregon State Legislature  
Joint Ways & Means Committee - Capital Construction Sub Committee

**Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, Sub-Committee Co-Chairs Girod, Holvey and committee members:**

Our Vietnam Veterans served with dignity and devotion only to be rebuked upon their return home. We remain committed to honor our Vietnam Veterans with a Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds. Located to the south of the World War II memorial, together, these two memorials will honor 75% of Oregon’s war dead and share some of the stories of the two wars that caused the most Oregonian casualties.

The Vietnam War Memorial Fund has accomplished the following:

- Adopted the Vietnam War Memorial Design on July 31, 2019
- Secured approval of the Memorial Design by the Oregon State Capitol Planning Commission, the City of Salem Historic Landmark Commission and the Oregon State Park and Recreation Commission
- Lobbied the passage of Senate Bill 319, the bill that establishes the Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds, which was signed into law on July 14, 2021
- Developed the Construction Documents for the Memorial
- Raised over 1.3 million dollars in revenue, pledges and in kind contributions

With these accomplishments, we are pleased to report that the project is shovel ready. The Vietnam War Memorial Fund is actively fund raising and we anticipate breaking ground on November 11, 2023 with completion on or before November 11, 2024.

We are asking for a Capital Construction Allocation in the amount of 1.85 million dollars. As the total cost will be over 4 million dollars, it is forecast that with this allocation, the funding breakdown will be 55% private donations and 45% state funds.

In addition to over **50 current legislators** who support our project and this allocation request, we have secured bi-partisan support from around our great state. You can see the list of those who support the Vietnam War Memorial on the following pages of this letter.

We ask that you give this project and our request the highest priority for funding in this cycle.

Thank you for your considerations,  
Steve Bates, President

**The Fund for a Vietnam Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds**  
*The Vietnam War Memorial Fund is a non-profit charitable organization*  
Tax ID Number: 82-2492302

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The following elected officials support the Capital Construction Allocation of 1.85 million dollars for the Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds:

## **OREGON STATE SENATE**

Senator David Brock Smith, SD1

Senator Floyd Prozanski, SD4

Senator Dick Anderson, SD5

Senator Cedric Hayden, SD6

Senator James Manning, SD7

Senator Sara Gelser Blouin, SD8

Senator Deb Patterson, SD10

Senator Kim Thatcher, SD11

Senator Aaron Woods, SD13

Senator Janeen Sollman, SD15

Senator Suzanne Weber, SD16

Senator Mark Meek, SD20

Senator Daniel Bonham, SD26

Senator Chris Gorsek, SD25

Senator Tim Knopp, SD27

Senator Dennis Linthicum, SD28

Senator Bill Hansell, SD29

Senator Lynn Findley, SD30

## **OREGON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Representative Court Boice, HD1, Representative Virgle Osborne, HD2

Representative Lily Morgan, HD3, Representative Christine Goodwin, HD4

Representative John Lively, HD7, Representative Boomer Wright, HD9

Representative Jamie Cate, HD11, Representative Charlie Conrad, HD12

Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, HD15, Representative Ed Diehl, HD17

Representative Rick Lewis, HD18, Representative Kevin Mannix, HD21

Representative Tracy Cramer, HD22, Representative Anna Scharf, HD23

Representative Lucetta Elmer, HD24, Representative Ben Bowman, HD25

Representative Dacia Grayber, HD28, Representative Susan McLain, HD29

Representative Brian Stout, HD31, Representative Cyrus Javadi, HD32

Representative Maxine Dexter, HD33, Representative Lisa Reynolds, HD34

Representative Jules Walters, HD37, Representative Rob Nosse, HD42

Representative Zach Hudson, HD49, Representative James Hieb, HD51

Representative Jeff Helfrich, HD52, Representative Emerson Levy, HD53

Representative E. Werner Reschke, HD55, Representative Emily McIntire HD56

Representative Greg Smith, HD57, Representative Bobby Levy, HD58,

Representative Mark Owens, HD60 and the Oregon Legislature Veterans Caucus

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## **FORMER LEGISLATORS WHO HAVE ENDORSED THIS PROJECT**

Former Senator Chuck Thomsen, SD26; Former Senator Lee Beyer, SD6  
Former Senator Alan Olsen, SD20; Former Senator Chuck Riley, SD15  
Former Representative Karin Power, HD41; Former Representative Brad Witt, HD31  
Former Representative Shari Schouten, HD27; Former Representative Jeff Barker, HD28  
Former Representative Anna Williams, HD52; Former Representative Gary Lief, HD2  
Former Representative Jeff Reardon, HD48; Former Representative Carla Piluso, HD50  
Former Representative Sal Esquivel, HD6; Former Representative Julie Parrish, HD37  
Former Representative Deborah Boone, HD32; Former Representative Duane Stark, HD4  
Former Representative Mike Nearman, HD23;  
Former Representative Margaret Doherty, HD35  
Former Representative Christine Drazan, HD39

## **ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES**

### **COURTS AND COMMISSIONS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THIS PROJECT**

Marion County – Polk County – Deschutes County – Lincoln County  
Klamath County – Douglas County – Umatilla County – Malheur County  
Clackamas County – Wasco County – Clatsop County – Linn County  
Baker County – Wallowa County – Lake County – Jefferson County – Crook County  
Sherman County – Jackson County – Gilliam County - Washington County  
Benton County - Harney County

## **OREGON MAYORS WHO HAVE ENDORSED THIS PROJECT**

Mayor Tom Ellis, City of Happy Valley; Former Mayor Casey Ryan; City of Troutdale  
Former Mayor Dan Holladay, City of Oregon City; Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland  
Mayor Stan Pulliam, City of Sandy; Former Mayor Chuck Bennett, City of Salem  
Former Mayor Lori Chavez DeRemer, City of Happy Valley; Mayor Joe Henry, Florence  
Former Mayor Bill King, City of Sandy; Mayor Steve Callaway, City of Hillsboro  
Former Mayor Russ Axelrod, City of West Linn; Former Mayor Shane Bemis, Gresham  
Mayor T. Scott Harden, City of Wood Village; Mayor Brian Cooper, City of Fairview  
Former Mayor George Endicott, City of Redmond

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Case for Support

## Oregon Vietnam War Memorial

State Capitol State Park, Salem

### *Welcome Home*

**Two words speak volumes.** When Vietnam veterans meet each other, they commonly say “welcome home.” This simple greeting is a painful reminder that Vietnam veterans were not welcomed when they returned from service. In contrast to the heroes’ reception for returning World War II soldiers, most Vietnam veterans came back to a nation fractured by an unpopular conflict. Instead of parades, they were ostracized. Instead of accolades, they were ignored, distrusted, or even attacked. Instead of the generous benefits that supported WWII veterans’ return to society, many Vietnam veterans struggled alone with the challenges of physical and emotional wounds, drug addiction, and homelessness. To hail a fellow Vietnam veteran with “welcome home” is a gesture of solidarity between soldiers whose honorable service has been largely forgotten.

**Oregon’s sacrifice.** Almost 3 million soldiers served during the Vietnam Era, 1955–1975. About 180,000 soldiers were from Oregon, and of those nearly 100,000 are still living today. Of the 58,318 American troops who died in Vietnam, 710 were Oregonians. Typical of Vietnam veterans in general, many Oregonians were drafted from working-class families, ineligible for college deferments.

**The missing monument.** Oregon’s Vietnam veterans have not only been forgotten personally, but also ignored publicly. In the Oregon State Capitol, there is a memorial to veterans of the Civil War. On state properties in the capital city of Salem, there are memorials honoring veterans of the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and Afghan-Iraqi Wars. Several Oregon communities have local Vietnam War memorials, but there is no state monument or memorial dedicated to Vietnam veterans. California and Washington erected memorials on their capitol grounds to honor their Vietnam veterans, and it is time for Oregon to do the same.

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**Time is of the essence.** Addressing the oversight of Oregon’s Vietnam veterans needs to happen soon. Oregon is losing its Vietnam Era veterans at the rate of eight per day. The average age of the state’s Vietnam veterans is over 72. Parents who lost sons and daughters in Vietnam are in their 90s, if not already gone, without public acknowledgement of their family’s sacrifice.

**Taking action to remember.** The Vietnam War Memorial Fund (VWMF) was founded in 2017 as a nonprofit charitable organization, established with the sole purpose of funding and building a Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon capitol grounds, now designated as State Capitol State Park. During 2018–2019, the VWMF Steering Committee engaged civic leaders, design professionals, and Vietnam War veterans to review concepts for the Oregon Vietnam War Memorial. A final design was approved on July 31, 2019.

**Sited with significance.** The Vietnam War claimed more Oregon lives than any war except World War II. It is fitting that an Oregon Vietnam War Memorial would be adjacent to the World War II Memorial, on a full acre in the southwest corner of State Capitol State Park. Together, these memorials will honor more than 75% of Oregon’s war dead. The Oregon Vietnam War Memorial will occupy the last available site for commemoration in State Capitol State Park, and the axis of its design was carefully planned to align with the existing World War II Memorial.

**A design rooted in nature and reflection.** In contrast to the austere and solemn WWII Memorial, the design of the Oregon Vietnam Veterans Memorial mixes art, nature, and tradition to create a gathering space beneath existing mature trees. Elements of the memorial are designed to inspire reflection, offer solace, and convey a long-overdue “welcome home:”

- A Soldier's Return sculpture by Oregon artist Libby Carruth depicts the struggles of Vietnam veterans who felt invisible upon their arrival back home.
- The Memorial Monument, a set of black granite columns, will include names of all Oregonians, from every branch of service, who died in Vietnam listed by their hometown. One of the columns will honor those Oregonians who served in Vietnam and suffered back home due to PTSD, infectious parasites, and Agent Orange.
- Brothers Benches will honor the four Oregon Vietnam Double Gold Star families from Boring, Jackson County, Klamath Falls, and Toledo who lost two sons in Vietnam.

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- Nurses Station, a sculpture by Oregon artist Rip Caswell, depicts a dedicated nurse attending to a wounded soldier.
- A Meeting & Gathering Area, near a feature with vegetation similar to Vietnam native grasses, will welcome veterans to share their experiences and provide a site for special events.

**Let no others be forgotten.** Because this is the last available commemorative site in State Capitol State Park, the VWMF Steering Committee made a commitment to include in its design elements to honor the sacrifice of other veterans and families who lack a memorial. The design includes a commemorative plaque to honor the six Oregonians who died in Operation Desert Storm, a memorial plaque to honor the 6,000+ Oregon Gold Star Families, a display to honor all Oregonian Purple Heart recipients, and stations to honor all Missing in Action and Prisoners of War from all conflicts.

**A memorial that comes alive.** Using technology that interfaces with visitors’ phones, the Oregon Vietnam War Memorial will feature interpretation of the site’s elements for a deeper understanding of their significance, and honor veterans with their oral histories of Vietnam Era experiences.

**Permissions are in place.** The Oregon Vietnam War Memorial was established by SB319, which passed unanimously by the Oregon State Senate and House of Representatives during the 2021 legislative session. The Governor signed SB319 into law on July 14, 2021. The design has been approved by the City of Salem Historic Landmarks Commission, Oregon Capitol Planning Commission, and the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission.

**An investment in our collective memory.** The Oregon Vietnam War Memorial will become a reality with \$4 million. The State of Oregon has already committed \$400,000, and, to date, an additional \$1,300,000 has been raised in private funds. Your contribution will ensure that Vietnam veterans are publicly welcomed home in a long-overdue tribute to their service and sacrifice.

Learn more at [www.OCVVM.com](http://www.OCVVM.com)

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