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RE: HB 2344A: "Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to keep the World War II memorial located in the Capitol Mall up to date and maintain an educational tool as part of the memorial."

I am Dick Tobiason, Chairman, Bend Heroes Foundation, a retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel and combat wounded Vietnam veteran.

Thank you, Chair Manning, Vice Chair Thatcher, and distinguished committee members for this opportunity to testify to the Senate Committee Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs in support of HB 2344A.

I thank Vice Chair Thatcher for introducing HCR 23 on the Senate floor on April 21 and arranging for Bonnie Gilbert, my wife Mary Jane, and me to witness the unanimous Aye vote while seated with you and your colleagues. It was a joyful conclusion to a solemn duty 80 years after the end of WWII.

Bend Heroes Foundation made a significant donation to the Oregon WWII Memorial on behalf of WWII Honor Flight veterans the Foundation took on trips to Washington, DC, Oregon's and 150,000 WWII Veterans honored by the WWII Memorial Highway (US Hwy 97) we initiated with this Committee. This Committee could thus expect our interest in updating and maintaining the magnificent WWII Memorial.

Over the last 3 years I have sent multiple letters to 2 ODVA Directors requesting 164 Oregonians by name be added to the WWII Memorial. The 164 names are listed in 9 broad categories:

CATEGORY	MISSING NAMES
MIAS (UNACCOUNTED FOR)	69
ACCOUNTED FOR MIAS	5
POWS	10
CIVILIANS WAKE ISLAND	31
CIVILIAN WAR CORRESPONDENTS	2
BURIALS AT ABMC CEMETERIES	31
BURIED AT SEA	8
USCG	5
NISEI	3
TOTAL	164

I also recommended creation of a new searchable website to replace the deleted website which listed the names on the memorial and other useful information. Hopefully the “educational tool” described in HB 2344A will accomplish that and more.

I made those recommendations based on this statement on the WWII Memorial dedication plaque: **“Dedicated this 6th day of June 2014 to all Oregonians who faithfully served both here at home and overseas during WW II”** (my emphasis added)

ODVA’s volunteer historian informed me they have another 250 names to add to the memorial. That would be about 380 names or about 10% of the existing names could be added. That means 90% of Oregon’s WWII Veterans were honored when the memorial was dedicated almost 11 years ago.

The existing memorial honors 3,771 Oregonians “Killed in Action” according to a plaque at the memorial. The names are listed on 10 panels at 400 names per panel. Civilian names are not included because the criteria is restricted to service members notwithstanding the “all” Oregonians statement.

While HB 2344A will see more veterans honored on the Oregon WWII Memorial, some veterans who died will not be honored as the “Killed in Action”, and “in theater” criteria preclude some from being honored. For example, 4 Oregon Coast Guardsmen who were killed aboard the “USS Serpens” at Guadalcanal (“in theater”) when their ammunition ship accidentally exploded are not named on the memorial probably because their deaths were classified as “accidental” not KIA. However, they are honored with others on a large memorial at Arlington National Cemetery near the Pentagon. Certainly, they would be honored on the WWII Memorial if the criteria is revised to include deaths by accident - Died Non Battle.

In contrast, 14 Oregon Merchant Mariners were killed when an ammunition ship accidentally exploded at Port Chicago, California. Their names are included on the memorial even though they do not meet the “in theater” and “Killed in Action” criteria in HB 2344A. A plaque at the memorial describes the horrific accident claiming 320 lives. HB 2344A should be amended to include accidental deaths (Died Non Battle) anywhere.

The criteria in HB 2344 does not include deaths classified as Died Non Battle (DNB-accidents, disease), Died of Injury (DOI), and FOD (Finding of Death). The criteria should be revised to include all deaths, no matter the cause to be consistent with “all” in the dedication plaque statement. All lives lost anywhere during service to our nation during declared war deserve to be honored and memorialized.

The National Archives reports 1,108 Army/Army Air Forces war deaths classified as: DNB, DOI, and FOD during WWII. That is a very significant percentage of the 2,345 total deaths from all causes. For example, Multnomah County suffered 965 Army/Army Air Forces deaths (26% of all Oregon deaths) with 383 deaths in the 3 categories (40%).

I spot checked the first 125 of 1,002 Army/Army Air Forces death records (524 KIA, 478 non-KIA) in the 1946 NARA records for Multnomah County and indeed found DNB, DOI,

and FOD honored on the WWII Memorial. In the sample selected, 14 DNBs, 9 DOWs, and 1 DOI were displayed on the memorial while another 19 DNBs and 1 DOW were not. The names criteria in HB 2344 does not reflect actual practice.

The National WWII Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC honors 405,400 war dead of all causes of which 291,552 were battle deaths KIA and 113,842 were non-KIA deaths. The National WWII Memorial does not distinguish between battle and non-battle deaths and displays 4,048 gold stars on the Price of Freedom Memorial. "The 4,048 gold stars represent Americans who gave their lives in service during World War II. Each star represents approximately 100 service members." Oregon should follow that national precedent. Incidentally, the gold stars were made in Oregon.

Salem's Associated Press War Correspondent Asahel Bush was killed during a Japanese bombing attack in the Philippines. He was awarded a Purple Heart by the military and as a civilian laid to rest in ABMC's Manila American Cemetery.

Salem's New York Herald Tribune War Correspondent Ralph Barnes was killed in an airplane accident in what is now Montenegro. He was the first of 38 WWII war correspondents to die. As a civilian he was laid to rest in ABMC's Florence American Cemetery in Italy.

Correspondents Barnes and Bush died "in theater". Their service and sacrifice should be recognized by revising (2) (c) to include them in the "educational tool".

Oregon's WWII Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS) Hazel Ling Yee and Ethel Marion Sharon were among 38 WASPs who died during training or delivering military aircraft during WWII. They endured discrimination and paid for their uniforms and lodging. Belatedly WASPs were given veterans status just as the Wake Island civilians received. Both WASPS died stateside and were laid to rest in Portland. Their service and sacrifice should be recognized by revising (2) (c) to include them in the "educational tool". Remember the plaque dedication statement - "..... **all Oregonians who faithfully served both here at home and overseas during WW II**".

The 6 civilians killed by a Japanese balloon bomb in Bly, Oregon should also be included in the educational tool – they are already named on "The Japanese" plaque at the memorial and on a memorial near Bly. They are the only Americans directly killed by the enemy within the 48 states.

The deaths of the 10 civilians described above (and the 31 Wake Island civilians in HCR 23) resulted from being exposed to the risk of death during war by our federal government just as service members were.

With regard to the "educational tool", I again urge ODVA to identify war dead POWs, MIAs, ABMC burials, Battan Death March, Nisei, Wake Island civilians, War Correspondents, WASPs, and Japanese balloon bomb deaths by category and symbols. For example, almost half (49.5%) of Oregon's reported 3,771 WWII war dead were laid to rest overseas (982) in ABMC cemeteries or are still MIA overseas (884). Because their remains are not

in Oregon, their families cannot honor them on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, National Wreaths Across America Day, birthdays, etc. They can visit the WWII Memorial if living nearby or search the proposed “educational tool” as a meaningful substitute.

The Oregon Fallen War Heroes Memorial in Central Point lists the names of about 6,000 war dead from the Civil War to the present. The names on the granite monuments can also be found on that memorial’s searchable website. It is known that the Central Point WWII listing does not completely agree with the names on the Salem memorial. The Central Point memorial should be referenced in the ODVA “educational tool” and vice versa.

While there are many war memorials in Salem, ODVA does not have a website listing names of all war dead by war and service as does the Central Point memorial. ODVA should develop “educational tools” for all wars. I understand HB 2344A is restricted to WWII but wanted to be on the record. It was one of my recommendations made to ODVA 3 years ago.

According to the National WWII Museum in New Orleans and the Department of Veterans Affairs, only 1,400 WWII Veterans are living in Oregon meaning 99.99% of Oregon’s 146,633 WWII veterans have passed away. ODVA should complete its update of the WWII Memorial well before the last WWII Veteran passes and unveil the added names and “educational tool” in a public ceremony saluting the Greatest Generation. .

I have requested the Oregon State Capitol Foundation to consider dedicating a memorial near the WWII Memorial honoring the 31 Wake Island civilians identified in HCR 23. The Foundation is waiting for the Legislature to complete action on HB 2344A before making a decision.

In sum, I recommend the following revisions to HB 2344A:

1. Page 1, line 14: (2) (c) include civilian War Correspondents, WASPs, and the victims of the Japanese balloon bomb incident near Bly, Oregon.
2. Page 1, line 26: “or stateside” be added after “in theater”.
3. Page 2, line 9: add (E): The service member’s death was classified as Died Non Battle, Died of Injury, Finding of Death by the National Archives Research Administration.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2344A with new amendments.

I would be pleased to respond to your questions.