

NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY ACROSS AMERICA

FACT SHEET



AMERICAN LEGION AND VFW HIGHWAYS ACROSS AMERICA:

Over the years working with state legislatures, American Legion and VFW Posts have created 2 veterans highways spanning our nation between Canada and Mexico. The highways run north – south crossing 6 states: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas.

American Legion Memorial Highway on the 1,872 mile US Highway 281

Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Highway and **Texas Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway** on the 1,885 mile US Highway 83

PURPLE HEART TRAILS:

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) Departments have worked with state legislatures over many years to create **Purple Heart Trails (PHTs)** in every state. The first Purple Heart Trail spanning our nation in any direction was created on the 1,380 mile, north – south Interstate 5 spanning Washington, Oregon and California between Canada and Mexico. Oregon filled the gap between the existing Washington and California PHTs in 2015.

Thus, there are at least 3 veterans’ memorial highways spanning our nation between Canada and Mexico but none yet spanning our nation between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

STATES WITH BORDER TO BORDER VETERANS HIGHWAYS:

On a smaller scale, border to border state veterans’ highways have been created in many states notably the 6 states on US Hwy 83 and US Hwy 281 and Oregon. Over the last 10 years the nonprofit Bend Heroes Foundation and the Oregon Legislature designated 6 border to border highways honoring nearly one-half million war veterans who served from WWI to the present. The final Oregon veterans’ highway signs project managed by the Foundation is the **Oregon Medal of Honor Highway** honoring all 30 of

Oregon's Medal of Honor recipients who earned our nation's highest military award during wars from the Civil War to Vietnam War. 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 to fabricate and install the signs. This is the first of a kind tribute to Medal of Honor recipients in our nation.

MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAYS:

Several states have designated Medal of Honor Highways, 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 the 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, 3,508 awards have been made with every state represented. As of December 21, 2019 there are only 71 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** was initiated by Bend Heroes Foundation. HB2100 suggested a National 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 recipients as well as all of our nation's current and future Medal of Honor recipients. 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 eastern terminus in Boston, MA at the Atlantic Ocean (map below).

About 2,360 recipients or two-thirds (67%) of all 3,508 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. Twenty-six (26) of our nation's 71 living recipients are also connected with those 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#{)

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

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

[http://www.qgdigitalpublishing.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.qgdigitalpublishing.com/publication/?i=535729&article_id=3220728&view=articleBrowser&ver=html5#{)

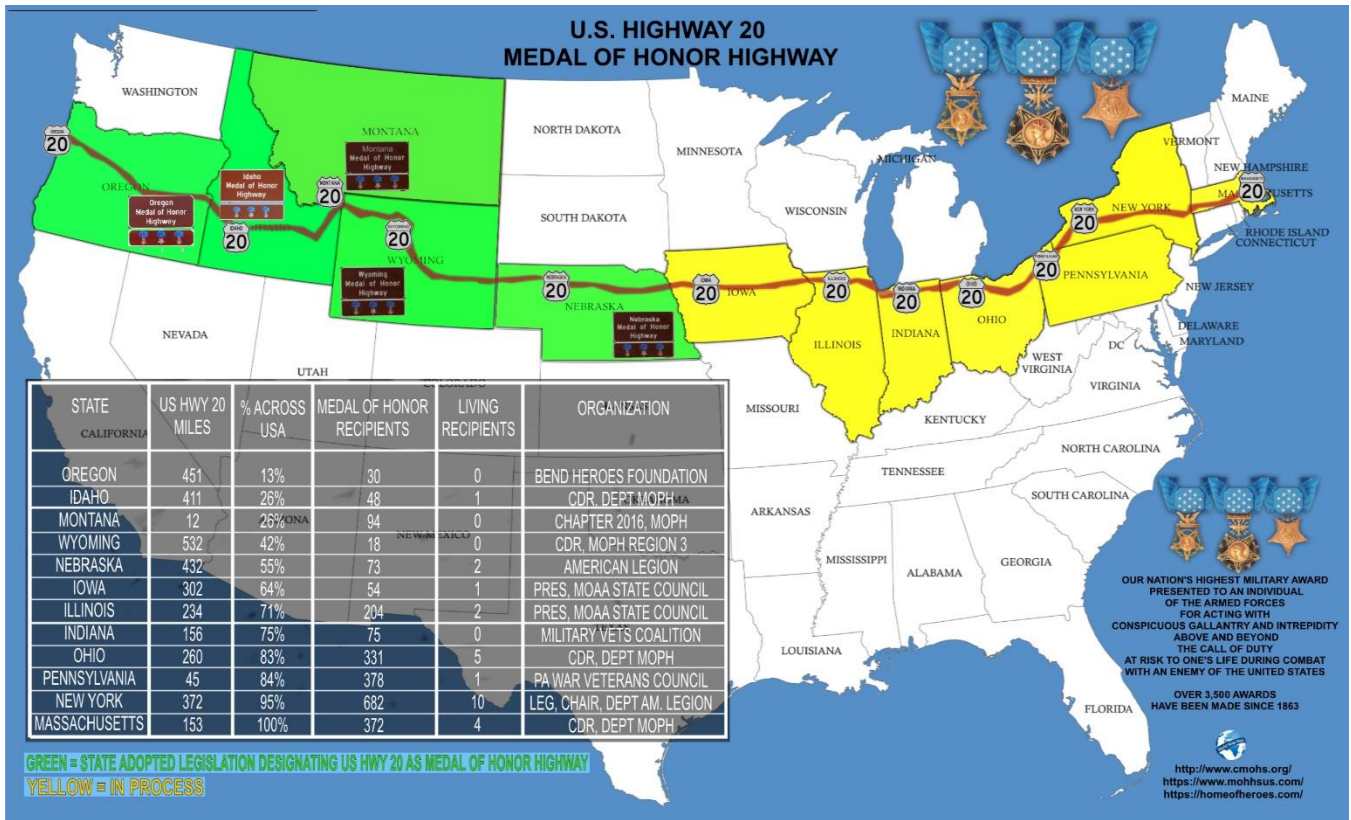
Note statements in the publications on creating a Medal of Honor Highway on US Hwy 20 across America.

As a result of the articles and prior discussions with the Foundation, veterans’ groups in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana, New York and Massachusetts are working together to create state Medal of Honor Highways on U.S. Hwy 20 in their states. The groups are led by the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), American Legion, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), VFW and state coalitions of veterans’ groups.

Legislatures in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming adopted laws last year designating U.S. Hwy 20 in their states as Medal of Honor Highway. Since then those states have dedicated 27 more Medal of Honor Highway signs: Idaho/11, Montana/2 (U.S. Hwy 20 is only 12 miles long in in MT) and Wyoming/14. Nebraska is in the final process of designating its 432 mile segment of U.S. Hwy 20 as the “**Nebraska Medal of Honor Highway**” and will add 10-12 more signs. Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska state Medal of Honor Highways cover 55% of the 3,365 mile **National Medal of Honor Highway Across America** between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Indiana plans to designate its 156 mile segment as “**Indiana Medal of Honor Highway**” very soon raising the total to 60%. See attached map.

For further information, contact: Dick Tobiason, Chairman, Bend Heroes Foundation and Coordinator, National Medal of Honor Highway Across America dtobiason@bendcable.com, 541.390.9932

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Map of 3,365 mile U.S. Highway 20 Crossing 12 States between Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska (5 states in green) have designated Medal of Honor Highways in their states accounting for 55% of the coast to coast highway. Thirty-nine (39) state Medal of Honor Highway signs have been installed on 1,416 miles: Oregon/12, Idaho/11, Montana/2 and Wyoming/14.

Map provided by Miguel Dominic, Idaho MOPH



OREGON MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN



IDAHO MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN



MONTANA MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN



WYOMING MEDAL OF HONOR HIGHWAY SIGN