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## Cadence Call ODVA Newsletter - Quarter 1, 2021

*Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs sent this bulletin at 03/03/2021 10:00 AM PST*

Please consider forwarding ODVA's newsletter to others who may be interested in services, programs and initiatives for veterans in Oregon. [Click here to subscribe.](#)

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# CADENCE CALL

*This is our cadence. Sound off!*



[www.oregon.gov/ODVA](http://www.oregon.gov/ODVA)

Quarter 1 2021

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## ODVA Director Message

[The Mission Continues](#)

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In 2020, ODVA faced unforeseeable and unprecedented challenges posed by COVID and budget uncertainties. The ODVA team met those challenges head on and with flexibility, resiliency and innovation ensured Oregon veterans and families continued to receive the service and assistance they needed and earned.

This year has begun with a similar fast paced cadence that began with the start of the 81st Oregon Legislative session. In February, ODVA presented the biannual 2021-23 Governor's Budget and priorities for veterans to the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development. As part of its budget package, ODVA put forward two policy option packages designed to support mission critical IT and operational modernization efforts and continued investments in grants and pass-through funding to partners to deliver services to Oregon's veterans and their families.

As COVID-related challenges continue to challenge and shape how the state conducts important business, I invite those interested in following Oregon veteran legislation or learning more about ODVA's 2021-23 Governor's Budget to follow the links in the [2021 Legislative Update](#) section.

### Oregon Veterans' Homes

As a prioritized group in Oregon, the Homes' residents and staff participated in the last of three vaccine clinics held at each facility this winter. Thankfully, both Homes' are remaining free of the virus and admissions and visitations have resumed with protective protocols in place.

The care and support our care providers have given to the residents of the two Oregon Veterans' Homes throughout the pandemic has been nothing short of commendable. Pinnacle Quality Insight, a nationally recognized customer satisfaction firm, has interviewed the customers of both Oregon Veterans Homes regarding their satisfaction levels over the last twelve months.

Based on these interviews, Pinnacle has determined that both Homes have qualified for the Pinnacle

Customer Experience Award™ for satisfaction ratings across numerous service areas including Overall Satisfaction, Quality of Food, Cleanliness, Individual Needs, Communication from Facility, Safety and Security, Overall Customer Experience and more. The Customer Experience Award™ is awarded to care providers who have achieved best-in-class customer satisfaction standards within their peer group.

***Congratulations to our Oregon Veterans' Homes*** for achieving this high honor that truly demonstrates our dedication and care of our honored veterans, especially during these historically challenging times.

### **COVID-19 Vaccines for Veterans**

Veterans seeking to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine and who are currently enrolled in VA health care will receive contact by their local VA facility when vaccines are available. ODVA encourages all veterans and their families to check the status of vaccinations and learn about the specific vaccination plans on the local VA Medical Center [websites](#).

### **Veteran Town Hall Series Continues**

As part of ODVA's work to ensure all veterans access their earned benefits, on March 25<sup>th</sup> ODVA will host a special virtual town hall focused on Vietnam veterans.

During this town hall, I will be joined by Director Renaye Murphy, Portland VA Regional Office - Veterans Benefits Administration, to share new Blue Water Navy Act benefit and resource information as well as take questions from callers. I encourage Vietnam veterans to register, attend and share this event information broadly. Learn more and register for townhalls at [ODVA's Townhalls webpage](#).

March 29<sup>th</sup> marks 48 years since the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam in 1973. Unlike veterans of previous wars, the troops returning home from Vietnam did not receive a warm welcome or appreciation for their sacrifices. Oregon will honor our Vietnam Veterans and their families for their sacrifices on March 30<sup>th</sup> with a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day," which recognizes the men and women who were denied a proper welcome upon returning

home.

## ODVA Women Veterans Coordinator

I am excited to welcome Jessica Bradley, ODVA's new Women Veterans Coordinator. The Women Veterans Coordinator position was created in 2016 to work with historically underserved women veterans in Oregon to address the impacts of those inequalities and provide access to veteran benefits and services. Jessica has already hit the ground running, working to provide the first ever Virtual Women Veterans Conference to be held May 22. Sign up to receive conference and women veteran related emails on ODVA's [women veterans webpage](#).



ODVA Director Kelly Fitzpatrick



Kelly Fitzpatrick is the director of the Oregon State Branch of the American Legion and Governor's Office. She is a recipient of multiple military awards and decorations including the Purple Heart, the Service Medal and the Army Parachutist Badge.

## Oregon Veteran Initiatives and Programs

### VA COVID-19 Vaccinations for Veterans

If you're a veteran who already receives care at a VA medical center, your facility will contact you when a vaccine is available to you. You don't need to sign up or take any additional steps to receive contact.

To check the status of vaccination groups or to learn about the specific vaccination plans in your area, visit you local VA Medical Center websites:

**Portland:** [Website](#) or call the COVID Vaccination Info Line: 503-220-3434

**Roseburg:** [Website](#)

**White City:** [Website](#)

**Walla Walla:** [Website](#)

**Boise:** [Website](#)

Veterans who are not enrolled or do not currently receive care at the VA can visit the [VA's eligibility webpage](#) to learn more about enrollment.

## Oregon Veterans' Homes

Residents and staff at the Oregon Veterans' Homes in The Dalles and Lebanon have received complete doses of the COVID-19 vaccine thanks to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs and its partnerships with Veteran Care Centers of Oregon (VCCO) and Consonus Healthcare.

Three clinics were held in December, January and February to ensure all staff and honored residents at the Homes had the chance to receive both doses of the Pfizer vaccine. In Lebanon, 88% of residents and 55% of staff received the immunization, and 97% of residents and 58% of staff did so at The Dalles.

**For more information** about the Oregon Veterans' Homes, visit [oregonveteranshomes.com](http://oregonveteranshomes.com) or subscribe to the Homes' weekly [COVID-19 updates](#).

## Attention Blue Water Navy Veterans

The historic Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act in 2019 extended presumptive benefits related to Agent Orange exposure to any veterans who served on a vessel that came within 12 nautical miles of Vietnam and Cambodia during the Vietnam War.

It is estimated that there are still tens of thousands of Oregon veterans and surviving spouses that are newly eligible for monthly compensation related to their service but who have not yet applied for benefits.

For more information about the Blue Water Navy Act, and to understand how to work with a local veteran service office, read the cover story in the latest issue of [Oregon Veterans News Magazine](#) or plan to attend the upcoming [Vietnam Veterans Town Hall](#).

If you have any questions or are ready to submit a claim, schedule an appointment with a local Veteran Service Office in Oregon: [Locate Veteran Service Office](#)

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## 2021 Veteran Legislative Information

### Joint Ways and Means Hearings

ODVA 2021-23 Governor's Budget presentation: [Feb 8, 2021](#) and [Feb 10, 2021](#)

### Veteran Legislation Bill Digest

Anyone interested in tracking veteran-related legislation impacting Oregon veterans can sign up to receive ODVA's weekly Bill Digest : [subscribe here](#)

## ODVA Legislative Webpage

Learn how to track veteran legislation, follow veteran policy committees, and more as the 81st Oregon Legislative Session progresses: [click here](#)

## 2021-23 ODVA Governor's Budget

The latest agency budget information is available now: [click here](#)

## Contact ODVA's Legislative Director

Jennifer Donovan | [jennifer.donovan@state.or.us](mailto:jennifer.donovan@state.or.us) | (503) 373-2141

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## Veteran Benefit Updates



### COVID-19 vaccine updates

Register for updates from the federal VA on vaccines



### VA billing COVID-19 debt relief

Learn about debt relief options due to COVID-19



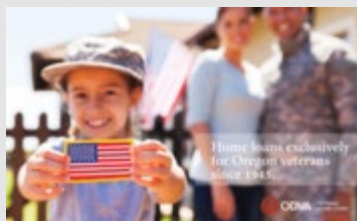
### Vietnam-era deck logs now digitized

Claims now easier, even for those previously denied



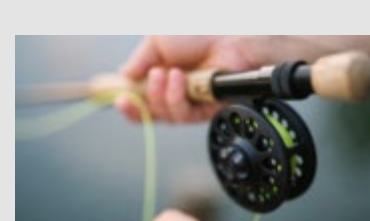
### Donate your Oregon tax refund

Charitable Checkoff program supports veterans



### Oregon Home Loans at all-time low

See current rates and how to become a borrower



### Recreation options for Oregon veterans

Stay up-to-date on programs and events

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## Upcoming Engagements



**Women's Military History Week:** ODVA will spotlight some of Oregon's extraordinary women veterans on Facebook during Women's Military History Week, March 15-19. Follow [ODVA's Women Veterans Facebook](#) page to keep up to date on all the latest information concerning women veterans in Oregon.

**Vietnam Veterans Town Hall:** March 25, from noon to 1 p.m., ODVA Director Kelly Fitzpatrick, joined by Director Renaye Murphy, Portland VA Regional Office -Veterans Benefits Administration, to share new Blue Water Navy Act benefit and resource information as well as take questions from callers during a virtual town hall focused on the Vietnam veteran community.

Trained and certified veteran service officers will be on hand to provide direct assistance and expertise. For more information or to register, visit [ODVA's Townhalls webpage](#).

**Virtual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day:** Follow ODVA on [Facebook](#) for a special virtual event on March 30, Oregon Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, as the state honors and recognizes all veterans of the Vietnam War.

**2021 Women Veterans Conference: Save the date!** The 2021 Women Veterans Conference will be held virtually May 22. Sign up to receive conference notifications and other women veteran related emails on ODVA's [women veterans webpage](#).



See a complete list of events at [oregondva.com](https://oregondva.com)

## Veteran Program Highlight



Did you serve in the **military**  
and now thinking about buying a home?

Learn about your lifetime Oregon veteran home loan benefit.



OREGON DEPARTMENT  
of VETERANS' AFFAIRS

**800-633-6826**

Providing home loans exclusively for Oregon veterans since 1945.

## Oregon Veteran Home Loan Program

Since 1945, the Oregon Veteran Home Loan Program — also known as the ORVET Home Loan Program — has been one of the signature benefits for the Oregon veteran community, offering the dream of home ownership to more than 334,000 Oregon veterans and their families to date and loaning more than \$8 billion.

The lifetime benefit is distinct from the federal VA home loan guaranty and may be used up to four times to purchase a single-family, owner-occupied residence up to the Fannie Mae limit.

For more than 35 years, ODVA loan specialist Cecil Baird has helped serve clients of the Oregon



Veteran Home Loan Program. Over the years, his duties have included determining eligibility, setting up automatic payments, managing the loan register and eligibility databases and responding to general loan servicing questions and concerns.

“The most enjoyable part of my work with veterans comes from the feedback I often receive as a result of being the contact person with whom the veterans and their families interact, as I am the recipient of genuine appreciation for the benefits our loan program,” Baird says. “Knowing that I’m part of a team that positively affects so many, not just through home financing, but through the other benefits and services as well, makes even the most difficult days worthwhile.”



### **ESTABLISH YOUR ELIGIBILITY TODAY**

For more information about this Oregon veteran benefit or to establish your eligibility, visit [orvethomeloans.com](http://orvethomeloans.com) or call 80-633-6826.

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*ODVA employee and Home Loan Specialist Cecil Baird has served veterans for more than 35 years.*

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## **Career Spotlight**



- [Program Analyst 3: Business Development Representative](#) (closes March 21)
- [PEM E - CIO, Information Services Manager](#) (closes March 28)

### **Get weekly veteran news and events straight to your inbox**

Choose your subscription topics to receive your customized news every Wednesday and stay up to date on veteran benefit updates, local and national veteran stories, topics of interest, events and

more! These stories are also available to read online at [ODVA's blog](#).

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Latest news, inspirational stories and updates affecting Oregon veterans.

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### Veteran Benefits Magazine

State and federal benefits in an easy to understand and organized format.

[Read now](#)

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