

## WWII Dog Tag Fact Sheet

Bend Heroes Foundation (BHF), a non-profit 501 c3 organization, is the custodian of the WWII Dog Tag display. The 76 dog tags belonging to 55 WWII Veterans were donated to the Foundation by several individuals who want to have the tags returned to their owners. The donors wish to remain anonymous. Reportedly the donors found the dog tags mostly in Central/Eastern Oregon in an area then known as the "Oregon Maneuver" – the training of three Infantry Divisions and associated support troops during WWII. About 10,000 square miles of public and private land in 7 counties of the high desert in Central/Eastern Oregon were required.

The 3 Infantry Divisions were the 91<sup>st</sup> "Powder River", 96<sup>th</sup> "Deadeyes" and 104<sup>th</sup> "Timber Wolves". The "Oregon Maneuver" was led by Major General Alexander M. Patch, IV Corps Commanding General. Following 3 months of training in the High Desert during the fall of 1943, the units continued training elsewhere and later fought in Italy (91<sup>st</sup>), Ryukyus/Philippines, (96<sup>th</sup>) and France, Belgium and Germany (104<sup>th</sup>). An "After Action" report of the "Oregon Maneuver" is available at the museum. The 3 Infantry Divisions are still active and are helping the Foundation find dog tag owners from their units.

Approximately 100,000 troops were involved in the training. Fighter and bomber aircraft from Redmond Army Airfield supported the maneuver. The Bend Bulletin provided daily coverage of the "Red" and "Blue" forces attacking and defending various critical terrain features and objectives shown on the map with the display.

Over 95% of the veterans who served during WWII have passed away and the possibility of returning dog tags to the original owners is quite slim. Therefore the Foundation's volunteer researchers are also diligently reaching out to family members and friends of the WWII veterans as well to return the 70+ year old and well preserved dog tags before it is too late.

So, how did the dog tags which are personal property of the veterans become separated from them during the "Oregon Maneuver"? The most plausible reason is the dog tags included "next of kin" (NOK) information – name and address of the veteran's wife or mother. Not wanting that information to fall into enemy hands during combat, new dog tags were issued during the Oregon Maneuver without NOK. NOK was not included on dog tags after mid 1943 coinciding with the Oregon Maneuver.

The Dog Tag exhibit also displays a map and brief description of the "Oregon Maneuver", history of dog tags and media reports. "Oregon Maneuver" web site: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon\\_Maneuver](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_Maneuver)

Those who believe they know of the owners of these dog tags can contact the volunteers named below. The Foundation relies on dedicated researchers and does not on its own verify dog tag ownership.

Those who want to donate WWII (only) dog tags can donate them to the museum to incorporate within the display as space allows.

While the Foundation has documented the dog tags, we do not have permission from owners or their families to release all of that information to the public.

It is important to return dog tags to their owners and families to honor the service and sacrifices of the WWII Veterans and bring closure.

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