



Over the past 21 years, the Oregon International Air Show, a licensed non-profit organization, has donated over one million dollars to local charities, including several which are associated with the U.S. military and supported over 550 community projects in Washington County and throughout Oregon.

Honoring Americans who are actively serving or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces is a cornerstone of the annual Air Show held in Hillsboro, Oregon. In addition to hosting a significant number of military performers and static displays the Air Show extends free admission to the Sunday show, every year, to all active military personnel and those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

It was in this spirit that the Oregon International Air Show agreed to include the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall as an exhibit in the 2009 Air Show. By agreeing to host the exhibit as part of the admission-based event, the Air Show did not intend to offend the memory of those whose names appear on the Memorial, their families or fellow veterans.

The primary objectives of the joint agreement were as follows:

- 1) **To significantly reduce the expense associated with bringing the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall to town.** Due to the significant expense associated with bringing the monument to town, a return visit of the Memorial to the State of Oregon was contingent upon additional funding and/or cost savings based on venue selection. The Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall is typically funded by corporate and sponsorship dollars and available to the public free of charge. This year, with the Air Show as a contributing sponsor, an estimated 85% of the expenses associated with the monument would have been offset through use of existing Air Show venue resources.
- 2) **To enable the citizens of Oregon and SW Washington the opportunity to view a replica of this important National Memorial and honor the servicemen and women of the US Military Forces.** Many citizens have not had, nor may ever have, the opportunity to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. In addition to offsetting the expenses associated with displaying the Monument, the Air Show planned to expand and extend free admission to everyone who is presently serving in any branch of the U.S. Military or has ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces, across all three days of the Air Show (traditionally Sunday only).

The original Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the traveling replica both stand for healing, reflection and honor. Regretfully, the positive sentiments and support received from veterans who welcomed the local level partnership between Dignity Memorial providers and the Oregon International Air Show were outweighed by the disappointment expressed by some veterans regarding the decision to include the Memorial as an exhibit at the admission-based Air Show event. Despite the well-intentioned efforts by the Air Show and Dignity Memorial providers to host a tour stop in Oregon, it has been made

clear, by many veterans, that a fee, of any kind, incurred by anyone, should not be associated with a visit to the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall. In honor of this heartfelt feedback, several other options to host the exhibit outside the Air Show gates were researched. However, due to logistics, security, and space limitations no other options were viable.

Therefore, it is with both understanding and regret that a decision was made to withdraw the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall exhibit from the Air Show.

For the past four years, local Dignity Memorial providers have been valued sponsors of the Oregon International Air Show and Veterans' Chalet. On an annual basis, Dignity Memorial providers host, at no charge, 600 veterans as honored guests. The Oregon International Air Show will continue to support this time-honored tradition and partner with the Dignity Memorial network to support and pay tribute to our country's veterans in many other ways.

If you have further questions or comments, please send them to the Air Show at Info@OregonAirshow.com or to Dignity Memorial at info@sci-us.com.

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