

# Local man returns from Honor Flight

By Craig Rullman  
Correspondent

Gordon Halsten of Sisters, 93, who served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1941-45 and was stationed at Sitka and Ketchikan, Alaska, as well as San Pedro, California, recently joined with other World War II veterans on an Honor Flight visit to Washington, D.C., where they visited the World War II memorial, the U.S. Capitol, and numerous other memorials including the Iwo Jima Memorial, where they enjoyed a special presentation by the United States Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon.

At the World War II Memorial, the veterans were greeted by U.S. Representative Greg Walden, who read a statement that he had read into the Congressional Record the day prior, honoring each veteran by name for their service.

At the Lincoln Memorial the veterans joined together to sing a rousing rendition of "God Bless America."

At the U.S. Capitol, where they were given a special tour, the veterans were greeted by Senator Jeff Merkley, who read a moving tribute.

The veterans were received well everywhere they went.

On the flight to D.C., the pilot announced: "We have special guests flying with us today — they are World War II veterans and they are the reason you're not speaking German or Japanese!"

Deborah Halsten, who accompanied her father on the trip, told *The Nugget* that the entire plane "erupted into applause."

On the return flight, a flight attendant made an announcement.

"Calling all WWII veterans—it's MAIL CALL!"

The veterans then received a personalized envelope full of thank-you notes, cards, and letters, written by school kids from Oregon.

The trip culminated in Portland, where, Deborah recalled, the veterans were greeted with "a full complement of honor-guard details from every branch of service, including a Marine playing bagpipes, and another unit of Marines who greeted each veteran with a warm 'Welcome home, soldier!' and escorted the vets through a large crowd of well-wishers."

Back at the hotel, where the staff never failed to greet the veterans at the door, waving flags, holding signs, and cheering, each veteran was presented with a handmade



Deborah and Gordon Halsten with Rep. Greg Walden at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

quilt made by the Quilts of Valor organization.

Deborah told *The Nugget*, "It was indeed the trip of a lifetime and one that restored our faith in the ordinary Americans' sense of patriotism and gratitude for the Greatest Generation. We only wish every veteran could experience such an outpouring of love and appreciation, particularly the Vietnam vets and also the 'forgotten' Korean War veterans."

Sponsored by Honor Flights of Eastern Oregon (HFEO), which covers all 17 counties east of the Cascade Mountains, and is one of 137 regions participating in the

Honor Flight Network, the Honor Flights are designed to honor World War II veterans by taking them to Washington, D.C., and specifically to visit the National World War II Memorial. HFEO is managed by the nonprofit Bend Heroes Foundation.

To date, approximately 170,000 WWII veterans from across the country have participated in the program, which was launched 11 years ago. World War II veterans travel free of charge, in appreciation for their service. More information about these flights can be found at [www.honorflight.org](http://www.honorflight.org) and [www.bendheroes.org](http://www.bendheroes.org).

# Authorities identify man killed by police

BEND (AP) — Authorities identified the man who was fatally shot in a Bend museum Tuesday, May 31.

Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel says 36-year-old Nicholas Berger was shot after Berger allegedly held a knife to a woman's throat and threatened to kill her inside the High Desert Museum.

Hummel says Berger grabbed a 38-year-old woman working in the museum gift shop. A struggle followed as the woman fought Berger while being forced through various exhibit halls. Approximately 30 other museum-goers were in the vicinity of the incident, some of whom Hummel says tried to help the employee.

Police say she was able to get away from Berger before police encountered him. An Oregon State Police trooper used a Taser and then fired three shots at Berger.

Berger died at the scene. A major crimes team is investigating.

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