

# Discussing ‘stolen vaor’ with tribal Veterans Service Officer

At Ease, Warm Springs! Again your Tribal Veterans Service Officer—your TVSO—is here to help the veteran, families, currently serving members and those thinking about joining the military.

Let’s talk about ‘Stolen Valor’ citizens. This is a modern American term for the behavior of military impostors or people who lie about their military service.

In recent years, especially since the global war on terrorism—or GWOT—after 9/11, there has been a rise in citizens impersonating veterans, or even currently serving service personnel.

While it is morally reprehensible, it is usually not a crime. The ‘Stolen Valor Acts’ of 2005, and amendment in 2013 made it a crime for someone to claim they received certain medals to obtain money, property or other tangible benefit. It is also illegal to forge, alter, or misuse military records.

My favorite examples of these goofs are the ones who are “in uniform” but have no clue how to properly wear ‘em, mix up branches, or just look all chewed up in it—Just to get free food or discounts!

Who violates their honor and integrity for 25-percent off at a crummy fast food chain? That’s redonkulous and of low moral character and if it’s you...you deserve the bad things that happen to you ‘cuz they are most likely of your own making.

No level of reasoning or rationalizing their actions can condone what they do or did because of what are called ‘Life Standards’ or just having modern standards to live by i.e.: Don’t steal, don’t lie, or don’t pretend to be a soldier when you weren’t.

Now don’t get me wrong, I understand that injuries or trauma can impair recall of military events, but those veterans aren’t typically big ‘going out in public’ types, and they stay at the house so no... I am not talking about them.



Rain Circle, Veterans Service Officer of the Confederated Tribes.

These people will typically blame Veterans Affairs (or another entity) with little to no explanation as to why they receive no benefits. The explanation and details of their service are usually vague, without details, without proof or, even better, ‘acquired’ from someone else’s story.

I have talked to plenty of these people in my time and they are easy enough to sniff out. They have no answers, None, for the easiest of questions! Questions like, Where did you go to training; Who was your drill Sergeant; What was your MOS?

These are questions that no veteran forgets! That transition from Civvies to Cammies is huge, and those memories are just as clear today, if not clearer, as they were the moments they were happening.

Answers you’ll receive from these knuckleheads are, “That was so long ago...” or “Man, I forget...” and my favorite: “bluh, uuhh, uuuuhh...” These are the replies one receives when these fact benders are asked about their enlistment. If you think it isn’t a big deal, Well here’s what happens if it goes unchecked:

**Marine imposter Rick Strandlof exposed on Anderson**

**Cooper 360.** He is infamous for claiming to be a Marine captain decorated with the Purple Heart and Silver Star in order to raise funds for a veteran focused non-profit organization that he started.

The FBI exposed Strandlof, who had adopted the false alias Rick Duncan, and eventually charged with violating the 2006 Stolen Valor Act.

Unfortunately, Standlof challenged the Stolen Valor legislation before the Supreme Court, arguing that the First Amendment protected his lies.

The court agreed that the law was too broad and overturned his conviction.

**Angel Ocasio sentenced to 3 years’ probation for Stolen Valor**

In 2010, Angel Ocasio claimed to have earned a Navy Cross, Purple Heart, Bronze Star and a Combat Action Medal for his time in Vietnam. But when the commander of a Marine Corps league checked the list of award recipients online, Ocasio’s name was absent.

Ocasio was later arrested and charged under the Stolen Valor Act. He received three months’ probation and community service for his crime.

**Douglas Stringfellow: The politician who faked a military record and paralysis to make it to Congress.**

Utah Representative Douglas Stringfellow claimed that he was a member of the elite OSS—the Office of Strategic Services—, a WWII-born intelligence agency that would later evolve into the CIA.

Stringfellow claimed he undertook a mission to save a nuclear scientist from the Nazis, was captured and tortured by the Germans until he was left paralyzed from the waist down.

He was really a private in the

Air Force. The OSS and the Silver Star Award was also untrue. But the best part: He wasn’t even paralyzed. The people of Utah believed the wheelchair routine and voted him into office.

After two years in his position, his secret got out, and his image was completely destroyed. The Church of Latter-Day Saints, his place of worship, shamed him and forced him to make a public confession of his misdeeds. He died in obscurity at 44.

We, as a people, believe ourselves to be honest, stand-up types with integrity and pride, but when we allow this in our community, those words end up meaning nothing and it shows in our everyday life.

The rot of stolen valor is a lie of omission, if you do nothing and allow your friends or family to continue the fictional story they’ve adopted as a lifestyle; it hurts us all. It will permeate, like the smell of rotten meat, into every part of their life to the point where nothing about them can be believed and that ‘smell’ gets on you if you are standing next to them, be a friend, help them out and call their BS, don’t be a Blue Falcon.

One of the most awkward things in life, I find, is to have the courage to tell someone you care about that they are full of it and need to get their stuff together because you know they are better than what they are doing or how they are being.

So, just like with the GWOT, in the case of Stolen Valor ‘If you see something say something.’

**The Blue Falcon:** This term applies to one who is willing to screw over, leave hangin’ or otherwise do wrong to his or her buddy. In service to the country, it is understood that we take care of each other but some folks never read that memo. Some examples can be... Someone who takes for themselves more than their fair share, only worries about themselves and no one else, refuses

to share important information with everyone, switches their old gear for another’s new gear, shirks their duties so others have to take care of it, sets themselves up for success while ensuring others fail, throws others under the metaphorical bus and too many other examples to list but you know one when you work with one.

It is also referred to as (in formal settings) ‘Bravo Foxtrot,’ from the Military phonetic alphabet, and in more relaxed environments as “Buddy F&#@%R”... Don’t be a Blue Falcon.

Remember to pay attention to your veteran after discharge! Every Veteran is different, and many may not show any signs of intent to harm themselves but some actions and behaviors can be a sign that they need help.

Learn to recognize some of the signs and take a self-check assessment at: [veteranscrisisline.net/signs-of-crisis/](http://veteranscrisisline.net/signs-of-crisis/)

The Veterans Crisis Line is 24-seven confidential crisis sSupport: 998 then press 1 or text 838255 [va.gov/REACH/default.asp](http://va.gov/REACH/default.asp)

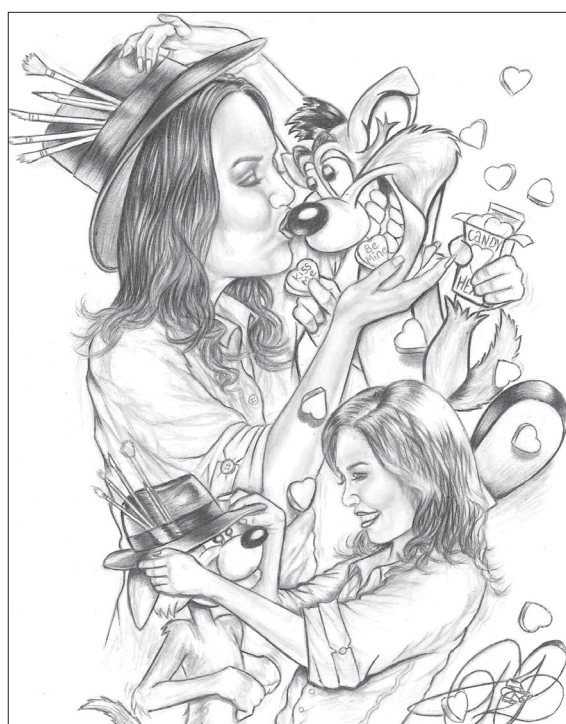
I know the frustration and confusion of Military paperwork very well.

Please bring in your DD-214. Don’t have it? I can help you get it.

If you haven’t brought your DD-214 in for archiving, please do so. I would hate for you to have that ‘inked’ copy lost or destroyed without a backup copy... I can be that archive. Also, if you have your 2-A/2-1/201 file on disk, or other storage device, and want it in hard copy form, too easy, bring it in.

I hope these articles in our newspaper help you and your veteran or veterans. My contact information is below, feel free to call me with your questions, thank you!

**Rain Circle, CTWS-TVSO,** 1144 Warm Springs St. Warm Springs, OR 97761. Cell: 541-460-8971. Office: 541-553-2234.



Valentines Wishes from Travis Bobb!



Warm Springs Recreation would like to invite you and your sweet baby to attend a afternoon of fun!

Come spend time with your sweet baby or babies and learn how to create your own homemade baby food from produce or foods you gathered.

The first 24 sweet babies will receive a special gift!

Date: **Wednesday February 15, 2023**  
Time: **5:15 PM until 7:00 PM**

Location: **Community Wellness Center Social Hall 2200 Hollywood Blvd., Warm Springs, Oregon 97761** Age: **newborn - 5 years old**

Little Tykes Regalia Fashion Show in the Social Hall for Walkers to 5 years old.

Family fun night of games & prizes.



For more information call: Recreation at 541-553-3243

## Men’s Fancy Special In Loving Memory of Fred Laddie Ike Jr.

1956 – 2021



**Lincoln’s Powwow  
Sinnasho, Oregon  
February 10-12, 2023**

## Community improvements: Projects for 2023

(from page 1)

Next is the renovation of the former elementary school. The plan is for the remodeled building to house a substance abuse disorder day treatment facility; trade and vocational schools; GED, college and computer training in partnership with Central Oregon Community College.

Tribal Social Services and Emergency Management will also be housed within the new building. Funding is from the Oregon Health Authority Behavioral Health System, and Ms. Cruz is the contact person.

The Community Skate Park is another project. This work is nearing completion at the Elmer Quinn Park. The project is made possible by a number of sources, such as the Skatepark Project, Tactics, Tribal Council, Jefferson County, the Warm Springs Community Ac-

tion Team, and the community. Points of contact are Michael Collins of Managed Care; and Andy Leonard of Prevention.

The long-planned Veterans Memorial is another project that Health and Human Services is planning to help with during 2023. The goal is to have the memorial built by July 4. Funding is from the State Veterans Office, the tribes’ Health and Human Services, and Pacific Source. The contact person is Veterans Service Officer Rain Circle.

Other projects include renovated and new playgrounds. Two playgrounds will be renovated, and one will be new. TJ Foltz is the contact. A remodel and renovation of the basketball court outside the Prevention offices is another project, with funding from the Oregon Health Authority.

The plan is to re-do the concrete, then lay a new style outdoor court and new hoops, as well as replace the fencing where needed.

And finally, a new program will be Community Housing Services. Funding will be used to help home owners with repairs, not to exceed \$5,000, the target being to help up to 80 home owners with the tribal community.

Jackie Minson is the contact person for this project, with the funding coming from Oregon Housing and Community Services.

The funding will also help with up to three months of past mortgage payments, separate from home repairs. Utilities arrears that can be paid include gas, electricity, phone and Internet. Help with security deposits or moving expenses would be available.