

KLAMATH COUNTY FINANCE
Contracts/Grants
305 Main Street, Room 230
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601

RE: LEGACY MEMORIAL TOURS

The most substantial project I've ever taken on started with a box of old letters, documents nearly 70 years old written by my grandfather during WWII to his family in Michigan while overseas digging graves for friends who'd fallen in battle. There is a line in one letter that sticks with me.

"...Sat in lawn chairs smoking cigarettes," he'd written. "Almost felt like civilians again."

Stories like this could not end with me. I approached my editor at the local newspaper I work at and asked him if we could pursue similar stories told in the letters of local veterans. We put an ad in our newspaper and waited.

A few days later, nearly 30 veterans or family members of veterans had gotten in touch with me, either through phone or coming to the newspaper building to drop off letters we could use for the project, entitled *Letters from War*. It ran as an eight part series last year with companion web videos and was nominated for a national contest. I received numerous phone calls, letters, and e-mails from families and strangers touched by the stories we told. A newfound pride seemed to emerge in the community because of the yarns of local heroes they didn't know existed.

A Legacy of Bravery hopes to accomplish the same goal.

The Klamath Basin boasts a powerful military presence. Kingsley Field's 173rd Fighter Wing of the Oregon Air National Guard is the fourth largest employer in the region, employing 600 full-time military and civilian workers, and an additional 400 part-time drill status guards. The names of hundreds of veterans are imprinted in brick in Veteran's Memorial Park. Several veterans' clubs and assistance programs are available. The community is proud of its veterans, and we believe others attending our tours will share in the humility we already feel.

The tours will also show off the historically rich area, Historical hotspots include several memorials, and the Bly Japanese balloon-bombing site, a location that claimed