

Heroes Hall at the OC Fairgrounds

MEDIA GUIDE

★ MUSEUM & EDUCATION CENTER ★



COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
COMMDEPT@OCFAIR.COM
(714) 708-1543

Contact Information

Media/Press

OC Fair & Event Center Communications Department
commdept@ocfair.com
(714) 708-1543
Press Releases: ocfair.com/newsroom
Photos: ocfair.com/heroes-hall/news

General Public

ocfair.com/heroeshall
heroeshall@ocfair.com
(714) 708-1613
[Facebook.com/heroesshallocc](https://www.facebook.com/heroesshallocc)

Exhibitions

Carol Singleton, Heroes Hall Supervisor
csingleton@ocfair.com
(714) 708-1976

Donations & Membership

Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation (a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization)
ocheroeshall.org
(714) 675-3653
admin@ocheroeshall.org

Although it's a separate entity from the Heroes Hall museum, the Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, provides support for exhibitions and education programs. The Foundation's fundraising support group, Super Heroes Guild, features special military ranks associated with membership levels:

\$100	Cadet	\$1,000	Captain	\$10,000	Colonel
\$250	Second Lieutenant	\$2,500	Major	\$25,000	General
\$500	First Lieutenant	\$5,000	Lieutenant Colonel		

Benefits vary with each membership category and all levels include invitations to all Heroes Hall and Super Heroes Guild events plus subscription to Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation e-newsletter.

For more information on becoming a member or to make a tax-deductible contribution, visit ocheroeshall.org

Visiting Heroes Hall Museum

General Hours

Open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday (closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

During the annual OC Fair (mid-July to mid-August)

Open Wednesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m., and Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

Closures

Heroes Hall is closed on some state holidays and during all-grounds events. An updated list of all-grounds events is available at ocfair.com/heroeshall.

Admission

Admission and parking are free, except during the annual OC Fair and all-grounds events.

Location

Heroes Hall is located to the west of Centennial Farm at OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, and accessible via Gate 1.

About the Museum

Heroes Hall at OC Fair & Event Center is a free veterans museum and education center that celebrates the legacy of Orange County veterans and others who have served our nation. Exhibitions housed in the former Memorial Gardens building located near Centennial Farm will rotate semi-annually and focus on the personal experiences of veterans. Heroes Hall is open year-round for a variety of events and programs as well as during the annual OC Fair and Imaginology.

Facts about Heroes Hall

Grand opening: Heroes Hall officially opened to the public on Feb. 15, 2017, the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Santa Ana Army Air Base.

Docents: Docents are regularly staffed at Heroes Hall, armed with knowledge to share with visitors and students on tours. Docents are also military veterans who often share their own experiences.

Tours: Students and school groups from all over Southern California have toured the museum; group tours have included everyone from military veterans, senior citizen groups, members from Wounded Warriors, Injured Warriors Motorcycle Club, Jr. League Juniors (ages 5-10) and Girls Inc, American Aviation Historical Society and Daughters of American Revolution. All groups are welcome.

Why is Heroes Hall located at the OC Fairgrounds?

The OC Fair & Event Center property was part of the Santa Ana Army Air Base (SAAAB), a 1,300-plus-acre training facility used during World War II. Orange Coast College, Vanguard University, Costa Mesa High School, Davis Elementary School, Tewinkle Park and several commercial and residential areas are also on former air base land.

From its opening in 1942 to its deactivation in 1946, SAAAB processed 150,000 cadets. At its most active it was home to 26,000 servicemembers – larger in population than any city in Orange County at the time except Santa Ana (32,000). Some of the more famous SAAAB servicemen included John Otterson, Joseph Heller, Joe DiMaggio and Don the Beachcomber.



Visitors to Heroes Hall can learn more about the history of the Santa Ana Army Air Base from the permanent exhibit, located on the museum's second floor, "The SAAAB Story."

Heroes Hall Exhibit Building

The Heroes Hall building was originally commissioned by the Army Corps of Engineers and built by the Griffith Company as part of the Santa Ana Army Air Base. SAAAB was the location for pre-flight training to thousands of Army airmen and airwomen who served during World War II. There were no runways or aircraft located at the base.

After the war, the State of California purchased the land as the new home of the OC Fair and the building was used for many purposes over the years including as an exhibit hall, offices and Board of Directors conference room under the name of Memorial Gardens.

Medal of Honor Courtyard & Walk of Honor

The exhibit building has two public entrances: One from the parking lot and another from the interior of the property that opens to the Medal of Honor Courtyard and Walk of Honor. At the center of the Courtyard is a 36,000-pound, 50-foot-wide cement star that is based on the design of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest U.S. military honor awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty.

Surrounding the Courtyard is the Walk of Honor, two semicircles of pillars with plaques honoring Orange County veterans who received the Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross or Air Force Cross.



There are also plaques honoring Orange County veterans who served in the Korean War, World War I and World War II as well as local veterans who lost their lives during the Vietnam War. The plaques were created by the veterans service organization AMVETS (American Veterans) and were formerly on display in Santa Ana.

Read more about the names featured on the plaques at ocfair.com/courtyard.

A-4M Skyhawk memorial

A Vietnam-era A-4M Skyhawk aircraft was relocated from the Santa Ana Civic Center to Heroes Hall and dedicated during a Veterans Day celebration on Nov. 9, 2019. The plane was part of Civic Center Plaza from 2008 to 2019.

The aircraft was transported to OC Fair & Event Center and lifted onto its new display pedestal, which is surrounded by hardscape and seating areas, on Sept. 26, 2019.

The aircraft is on loan from the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Fla.

Plane specifications:

Wing span: 27' 5"

Length: 41' 4"

Height: 15'

Max speed: 690 MPH

Range: 1,856 nautical miles

History and details:

- The A-4 Skyhawk is an attack aircraft developed for the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps in the early 1950s to provide close air support for Marines while flying from expeditionary airfields and aircraft carriers.
- Skyhawk planes first flew in 1954 and entered service with the Marine Corps at MCAS El Toro in September 1956. The aircraft played a major role during the Cold War and the Vietnam War.
- The A-4M Skyhawk that will be on display at Heroes Hall first flew in April 1970. The M model was the last production series of the Skyhawk.
- The aircraft was designed by legendary engineer Ed Heinemann and produced by Douglas Aircraft Company and later by McDonnell Douglas.
- The first 500 produced cost an average of \$860,000 each, less than the Navy's \$1 million maximum.
- A total of 2,960 were built in El Segundo and Long Beach, California, either as single-seat attack aircraft or as dual-seated advanced trainers that were also used in forward air control missions.
- The A-4 Skyhawk has wings so compact that they did not need to be folded for carrier stowage.
- The aircraft was capable of carrying a variety of missiles, bombs and other munitions. Its bomb load capacity was equivalent to that of a World War II-era B-17 bomber and it was able to deliver nuclear weapons using a low-altitude bombing system.
- The aircraft received many nicknames including "Scooter," "Kiddiecar," "Bantam Bomber," "Tinker Toy Bomber" and "Heinemann's Hot-Rod."
- Notable naval aviators who flew the Skyhawk include Lt. Commanders Everette Alvarez, Jr., John McCain, and Commander James Stockdale.



Current Exhibitions

The Heroes Hall building houses various exhibitions for approximately six-month periods. Each exhibition will focus on the personal experiences of our veterans.

Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in World War II

Debuted February 2022

Produced by The National WWII Museum, the exhibit features artifacts, photographs and oral histories to highlight some of the extraordinary achievements and challenges of African Americans during World War II, both overseas and on the Home Front. On display through September 18, 2022, *Fighting for the Right to Fight* illustrates how hopes for securing equality inspired many to enlist, the discouraging reality of the segregated non-combat roles given to black recruits, and the continuing fight for “Double Victory” that laid the groundwork for the modern Civil Rights Movement.



The SAAAB Story

Debuted February 2017; updated and reopened November 2021

The SAAAB (Santa Ana Army Air Base) Story exhibition celebrates the history of the flight training center, its contribution to the war effort, the airmen that served here and its role in the development of the growth of Orange County through film, photographs, maps, oral histories, works of art, and ephemera. The air base's location once included the land on which the OC Fairgrounds now sits, and Heroes Hall's building is a renovated barracks

from the base. The exhibit first debuted when Heroes Hall opened in 2017 but has been updated with several new artifacts and pieces of memorabilia.

Previous Exhibitions

Through Their Eyes: Artwork by Active Military and Veterans (October 2021-January 2022)

Juried show featuring artwork by 23 U.S. military veterans from Southern California. These artists have expressed their individual experiences through a variety of mediums including sculpture, photography, painting, carving and woodworking. The artists' subjects are as unique as the artists themselves and range from combat scenes to flowers, and from landscapes to surreal portraits. Though their artwork varies by subject and individual perspective, one thing unifies them: they have all served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Private Charles J. Miller: WWII Paintings from the South Pacific (November 2020 – September 2021)

The newest exhibit at Heroes Hall focuses on the World War II watercolor paintings of Private Charles J. Miller. The exhibit is the visual diary of Miller, who chronicled his military service in the South Pacific theater during WWII. Miller was a self-taught artist who had been drawing throughout his lifetime, teaching himself perspective, anatomy and drawing and painting techniques.

Fighting on the Home Front: Propaganda Posters of World War II (October 2019-March 2020)

Some 28 posters are featured in the exhibition on loan from the Detroit Historical Museum. To augment the traveling display, videos of propaganda cartoons produced by Walt Disney Studios and Warner Bros. were added as well as WWII newsreels. Another addition to the exhibit is a Victory Garden planted with fruits, vegetables and herbs. Created in collaboration with Centennial Farm, the garden illustrates how people grew their own food to help the war effort. The themes of the exhibition are conservation, recruitment, patriotism and security, highlighting how persuasion was used to encourage those on the home front to do their part to help win the war.

Victory From Within: The American Prisoner of War Experience (January 2019-September 2019)

Based on and named after the book by Tim O'Brien, the exhibit featured stories about Vietnam War veterans as told through text, photography, film, audio, digital media, art and personal items. Additional narratives and objects from Orange County veterans were included in the exhibition during its run.

Bravemind (July 2018-January 2019)

Bravemind is an interactive virtual reality exhibit showcasing technology that helps provide relief from post-traumatic stress. Developed by Dr. Albert 'Skip' Rizzo, Director for Medical Virtual Reality at USC's Institute for Creative Technologies, Bravemind features exposure therapy, a guided retelling of experiences that helps people manage their fears within a safe VR environment. This is primarily used to help veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress symptoms but can also assist those facing ongoing stress from painful situations by reducing anxiety.

Kimberly Millett's Operation Iraqi Freedom (October 2017-June 2018)

U.S. Army Public Affairs Specialist Kimberly Millett spent two deployments documenting the Iraqi War. Through photographs and commentary, this exhibition is an unbridled look at her interactions with Iraqis, the generals in charge of the war and the military fighting it. Rather than recording the violence of military confrontation, Millett highlights the times between conflict, when it is safe to show some intimacy and humanity.

The Things They Carried (February 2017-October 2017)

Based on and named after the book by Tim O'Brien, the exhibit featured stories about Vietnam War veterans as told through text, photography, film, audio, digital media, art and personal items. Additional narratives and objects from Orange County veterans were included in the exhibition during its run.

Educational Programming

11th Grade Curriculum

Heroes Hall worked with the Orange County Department of Education to provide 11th-grade students a unique way to meet a California State Standard requiring them to study the sacrifices of individual U.S. soldiers as well as unique contributions of special fighting units. Heroes Hall offers instructional guides for educators to be used in conjunction with a tour to the museum. The downloadable instructional guides can be found at ocfair.com/heroes-hall/educational-materials.

School and Group Tours

For groups of more than 10 people, call to schedule a tour at 714-708-1976 or email heroeshall@ocfair.com. Through the generosity of the Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation, OC Fair & Event Center offers a limited number of bus scholarships through the "Hall Aboard!" program intended for field trips to Heroes Hall. Scholarships are designed for schools located within the Orange Unified School District who may not otherwise have the means to support bus transportation for field trips.

Reading Library

Guests can peruse Heroes Hall's collection of books on a variety of topics from military history to the films of World War II. Of particular interest are books about Orange County veterans. These include "Korea: One POW's Story" by Lloyd Roberts, "The Yalu River Boys" by Dan King, "Single Handed" by Daniel Cohen, "From the Battlefields to the Home Front: The Kazuo Masuda Legacy" by Russell Shoho, and "A Young Man in the Wild Blue Yonder" by David Hayward, which is available for purchase in our museum store.

Historical Timeline

2013

- March 23: Formal discussions of a new veterans exhibit begin by OC Fair & Event Center Board of Directors.
- June 27: Veterans Memorial Task Force is created by OCFEC Board (members include Doug La Belle, Nick Berardino and Ashley Aitken).
- July 8: OCFEC Board votes to preserve the Memorial Gardens building to be used as part of exhibit.
- Sept. 24: The Memorial Gardens building is moved out of general event space to a temporary location onsite.

2014

- Jan. 24: Location near Centennial Farm is selected by staff and approved by OCFEC Board.
- Nov. 20: OCFEC Board approves funding of up to \$20,000 for architectural and engineering services to begin planning for the restoration and renovation of former Memorial Gardens building to become the Heroes Hall veterans museum building.

2015

- March 26: OCFEC Board approves creation of nonprofit foundation to fundraise for Heroes Hall.
- April 23: OCFEC Board approves the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws as amended for the new Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation.
- May 28: First appointees added to Heroes Hall Foundation Board: OCFEC Board members Doug La Belle, and Nick Berardino, and Eric Spitz, Aaron Reed and Lezlee Neebe.
- June 25: OCFEC Board approves Heroes Hall architectural design and CEQA determination.
- Aug. 27: OCFEC Board approves the development of architectural and constructions plans for Heroes Hall.

2016

- March 16: Groundbreaking ceremony at OC Fair & Event Center.
- April: Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation receives 501(c)3 nonprofit status.
- April 27: Equipment similar to that used to move the space shuttle Endeavor is used to move the Memorial Gardens building to its permanent location near Centennial Farm.
- Aug. 22: 50-foot-wide Medal of Honor star design is installed in the courtyard.
- Nov. 11: OC Fair & Event Center holds a public dedication ceremony on Veterans Day.

2017

- Feb. 15: The Heroes Hall museum exhibitions open to the public. *The Things They Carried* exhibit debuts.
- May 23: Heroes Hall hosts its first *Voices: Veterans Storytelling Project*. More than 150 members of the public attend.
- July 14: Story Booth unveiled at Heroes Hall's first OC Fair.

2019

- Aug. 8: Groundbreaking for the A-4M Skyhawk memorial
- Sept. 26: The A-4M Skyhawk moves from Santa Ana Civic Center to Heroes Hall
- Nov. 9: Dedication of the A-4M Skyhawk memorial at the Salute to Veterans/Veterans Day celebration.

2020

- July 6: Virtual Museum debuts, permanently highlighting stories and photos of Orange County veterans.

2021

- Nov. 11: Permanent exhibit *The SAAAB Story* reopens after being updated with new artifacts and memorabilia.

Photos

Santa Ana Army Air Base (SAAAB)

During World War II, the land on which OC Fair & Event Center sits was a part of the Santa Ana Army Air Base. From its opening in 1942 to its deactivation in 1946, SAAAB processed 150,000 cadets.



SAAAB troops in formation.



Aerial of a portion of the Santa Ana Army Air Base.



Typical barracks used for housing at SAAAB.

Initial Design Sketches of Heroes Hall



North View



South View

Exterior Photos



Interior Photos



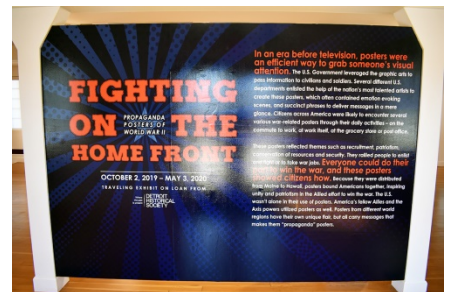
Exhibition Photos



Current Exhibit: Fighting on the Home Front



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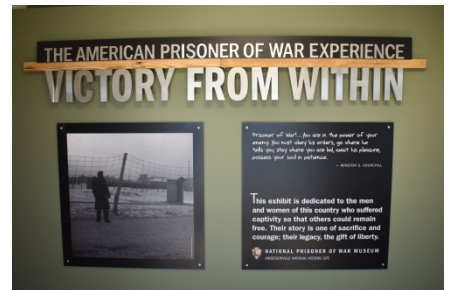
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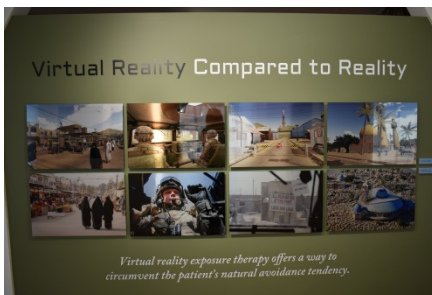
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Past Exhibit: Victory From Within



Past Exhibit: Bravemind



Past Exhibit: Kimberly Millett's Operation Iraqi Freedom



Past Exhibit: The Things They Carried