



## Blue Star Memorial Highway (BSH) Fact Sheet

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The North Carolina Department of Transportation has over 1,300 miles designated as the Blue Star Highway Network including all interstates, US routes, and most NC routes. This extensive network honors all veterans and military groups in the State. Requests for honorary designations for specific groups such as Bladen County Veterans or 100th Infantry, or a particular branch of the military are considered honored with the Blue Star Highway network. New interstate designations and segments are typically automatically added to the Blue Star Highway as completed.

### **Blue Star Memorial Highway Information**

The Blue Star Memorial Highways date back to 1949 as tribute to the men and women of the nation's armed forces. There have been numerous other requests to name additional highways in the State for specific veterans or military groups. However, because of the extensive network of Blue Star Memorial Highways that already commemorate our armed forces, the Department and Board of Transportation's Road, Bridge and Ferry Naming Committee consider such request duplicative. The Blue Star covers all military personnel and conflicts. The Committee has been historically consistent in response with all groups.

The Department receives requests from small groups specific to a certain area (such as Bladen County Veterans Memorial Highway) to large groups like the Purple Heart or Vietnam Veterans. Due to the importance and honor of service it would be difficult to choose and likewise, it would be extremely difficult to approve all requests due to number received. Local officials are encouraged to dedicate a municipally owned street or bridge within their boundaries, which needs no action by the Department or Board of Transportation. Additionally, some counties have memorials at their courthouses or office facilities recognizing local military personnel.

Due to legislative action, the Blue Star signage on US 70 reads "Blue Star and POW Memorial Highway" and I-95 through NC has a "Purple Heart Highway" designation.

The Blue Star designation is considered an "overlay" designation for the lengthy segments of roadways. Certain segments of these roadways may be dedicated for individuals.

The Blue Star Highway (BSH) designations in North Carolina to date:

- I-26 throughout the state
- I-40 throughout the state
- I-77 throughout the state
- I-85 throughout the state
- I-95 throughout the state
- US 70 throughout the state
- US 301 throughout the state



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- US 64 from TN state line to US 158 in Nags Head
- US 158 from Elizabeth City to Nags Head
- US 158 from Elizabeth City to Roanoke Rapids
- US 158 from Mocksville to Roanoke Rapids
- US 421 in Wilkes County
- US 421 in Yadkin County
- US 17 from Williamston to Elizabeth City
- NC 24 from US 17 in Jacksonville to NC 172
- US 74 from NC 38 in Hamlet to US 220 in Rockingham
- Sparta Parkway in Alleghany County

The Board of Transportation typically adds each new interstate segment to the BSH network as it is completed.

The original Blue Star Historical Markers are associated with the Garden Club of North Carolina. The markers are the shield shaped, grey markers more associated with historical sites and under the direction of the Department of Cultural Resources. The Department has a link on its website with mapping and information on these markers (<https://www.ncdot.gov/travel-maps/traffic-travel/blue-star-memorial/Pages/default.aspx>).

In May 2005, the Board of Transportation approved the installation of new color signage across the State to improve and expand the recognition along the BSH designation. The increase in signs and new format has been well received across the State. The Department has installed additional signs as requested by local officials.

We believe North Carolina has the largest Blue Star Highway system in the country with over 1,300 miles of highways across the State.

During times of active military conflicts, the Department sees an increase in the honorary sign requests for individuals either killed in the line of duty, recipients of medals and for outstanding service, or for more specific local units and groups. Requests are not limited to recent conflicts, but also for WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and Desert Storm veterans. The Department continues to support the BSH in recognition of the extensive number of military personnel, branches, military bases located in our state.