



HONOR FLIGHT Rochester Newsletter

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All Flights Reunion



More than 1,000 veterans, guardians, and guests attended the Honor Flight Reunion on Wednesday, November 9th at the Nazareth College Arts Center. The Reunion was sponsored by Legacy Senior Living Communities, and included performances by Prime Time Brass and the Roc City Singers.

Officer Michael Ciulla (right) led the crowd in the national anthem, and Fairport Boy Scout Mark Gabriele (below) played Taps to conclude the evening.



Thanks to the many HFR volunteers who helped to make this very special evening a reality!

For additional photos, please visit our new Facebook site:

www.facebook.com/HonorFlightRochester.



Recent Events

Missions 19 and 20

Honor Flight Rochester's 2011 flying season has concluded, with Mission 19 traveling on Oct 8/9 and Mission 20 on October 29/30.

In addition to visiting Arlington National Cemetery and their memorial, the 46 veterans of Mission 19 were thrilled by an unscheduled visit by retired general and former Secretary of State Colin Powell. Gen. Powell took time to board both HFR buses and speak to the veterans. The photo below shows the Mission 19 vets at the Marine Corps Memorial outside Arlington National Cemetery.



While the veterans of Mission 20 had smaller crowds on their visit to DC, they had to battle rain, wind, cold, and even snow! However, you can see by the Welcome Home photo that their spirits were not dampened one bit!



HFR Donation Summary

A wide variety of individuals donate to Honor Flight Rochester. Our many donations this calendar year include more than 600 gifts (ranging from \$5 to \$2,000) from individuals wishing to honor a family member or a friend who has passed. Numerous individuals have donated just because they want to help send ALL of our WWII veterans to Washington to see their monuments.

While HFR does not accept donations from veterans waiting to fly, a number of veterans have, after returning from their own "Missions" to Washington, sent us checks to help other veterans complete their dreams of an Honor Flight. Those donations are often tied to their birthdays or wedding anniversaries.

Students from area schools have held fundraisers to raise money for HFR, and a number of local organizations have also made donations (VFWs, Auxiliaries, Fire Departments, Labor Unions, Rotary Clubs, Rochester Airport TSA employees, Boy Scouts, churches, a U of R fraternity, American Legions to name a few). Some of the creative ways they have raised these funds include golf tournaments, pasta dinners, and school activities.

Some entrepreneurial volunteers have put out collection buckets for customers or staff to donate. This fall, one family of 6 great-grandchildren of a WWII Veteran, nicknamed "the Rickett 6-Pack", collected cans and bottles and with 5¢ deposits donated a check for \$435.55. A group of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans from the Bryant & Stratton Veterans Club who had read about HFR donated sufficient funds to cover the cost of sending one of their WWII compatriots to DC.

We also have individuals who have money taken out of their paychecks each month for Honor Flight and their company matches that amount. The employees of one local company that set up a payroll deduction program exclusively for Honor Flight have now contributed close to \$10,000 over the years.

In short, we have people of all age groups supporting our program in many different ways.



"We can't all be heroes, because somebody has to sit on the curb and applaud when they go by." (Will Rogers)



Veteran Remembrance—Elmer Pankratz

A lot of people watched an old flyboy struggle into the cockpit of a beautiful Mustang and when he finally settled in, the people may have noticed that the cockpit was barely large enough to contain the big smile on his face. Some may have wondered, "What's the big deal about just sitting in a cockpit in the blazing sun." That old guy named Elmer Pankratz knew exactly what a big deal it was because he had just gone back 60 years in time and he was in Germany sitting in the cockpit of his plane "You Cawn't Miss It". As his feet settled on the rudder pedals, as his right hand wound around the control stick, as his left hand touched the throttle, as he looked at the instrument panel, as he looked at the switches, as he thought about putting his oxygen mask on, he was in takeoff position ready to fly another mission. To this old guy, it was a very big deal.



So how could this all happen? Well first there had to be an Air Show at the Rochester Airport, then there had to be an organization called Honor Flight. This group of volunteers is dedicated to honoring WWII vets. Their big thing is getting vets to Washington to experience the WWII Memorial, but I found out they go way beyond that, they honor vets always and in any way that they can.

My friend Laura Greene, an active member of Honor Flight, called me about a need for a WWII fighter pilot for an interview at the Rochester Air Show. Laura and her husband Tim, solved my walking problem by dropping me off very close to the Honor Flight tent. There, I met Richard Bedford, a WWII P-47 pilot. The interview was set up next to a gorgeous, gleaming P-51 named Glamorous Gal. Richard was first to be interviewed, and while he was being interviewed, I was introduced to a young fellow named Chris Baranaskas. He was in a flight suit and it was like looking in a mirror at myself, 60 years ago. When I was told that he owned, and was the pilot of, Glamorous Gal, I was in awe and was in envy of this young man. It was when Chris invited me sit in the cockpit of his plane that prompted the beginning of this story. I missed the interview because I was not about to miss getting in that cockpit and I guess the TV outfit didn't have time to wait for me.

The day ended when Lt. Bedford and I rode in a golf cart on the infield side of the fence, and the announcers said that a couple of WWII vets were going by. We rode for about a mile along the fence while people applauded us old vets. To me, the people were not applauding me, they were applauding all vets, the living and specially the ones that are not here to receive this honor. While this was happening, Chris and his buddy were buzzing the field and doing some fine formation flying—it cannot get better than that.



My humble thank you to Laura, Chris, all the Honor Flight volunteers, and the people who honored us on our trip along the fence. A big page was added to my memory book that day.

Spring 2012 Flying Season



April 21/22	Mission 21
May 19/20	Mission 22
June 16/17	Mission 23

Leggy Awards

In November, our reunion host Anthony DiMarzo, President of the Legacy Senior Living Communities, presented two awards for outstanding volunteerism. Honored was Steve Rapp, a police Sergeant in Nunda who works also in social services for families in need throughout Livingston County. Steve serves as a Mission Flight Leader, is an active speaker spreading our word to community groups, has flown 3 hometown veterans on their final Mission, and also flew with the casket flag for the family of a WWII veteran, while leading a bus on Mission 14. Steve is a poignant voice on the DVD of the same name.

Also honored were Glen and Ramona Anderson, special reunion guests from Maryland. The Andersons coordinate ALL volunteer activity at BWI airport for as many as 15 Honor Flights per week. The public flight receptions, oxygen and water needs, private waiting room, and special arrangements with TSA security screening are all the work of the Andersons. Our Ground leaders in DC, Dave Nichols and Cara Gilbert, who also flew in for the Reunion, work closely with this special couple.

DiMarzo presents the annual "Leggy" Award to citizens who have made a difference in the lives of Rochester's senior citizens. Previous winners include Sheriff Patrick O'Flynn, Vince Hope, and the TV-8 documentary team of Meghan Backus and Jay Gardner.

Upcoming Events

Prime Time Brass 3rd Annual Benefit Concert for HFR

January 28 at 7 pm at the Aquinas Institute

Tickets: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door

Also featuring:

- the Aquinas Jazz Band
- the Ghost Riders
- Image City Sound Chorus of the Sweet Adelines
- American Legion Post 468 Color Guard
- Gates Keystone Club Police Pipes and Drums
- 5 time World Champion Empire Statesmen Drum and Bugle Corps
- a spectacular "Salute To The Heroes" Finale

Upcoming Speakers Bureau Talks

Nov 28 Avon United Methodist Church

Dec 15 Brockport Rotary Club

Feb 12 Greece Rotary Club

*** Save the Date ***

2012 HFR Volunteer Kickoff

March 1st, Perinton VFW Post 8495

GOD BLESS OUR TROOPS, AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.



Vince's Corner

As we conclude the year, our 3rd full flying season, it's natural to reflect gratefully on the secret to our Honor Flight success. As you know, with 20 Missions to our credit, we have now flown 948 Veterans from the Rochester hub of the national Honor Flight Network. How did this miraculous achievement come about?

Two words come to mind: Spirit and Support. The time and energy you have put into spreading the word, planning the details, giving selflessly has come back to our Veterans 100-fold. We all live off the incredible buzz that arises each and every mission. Our goals for you as volunteers are several: the opportunity to use your interests and talents to best advantage; to cross-train functions at EVERY level for consistent program quality; and to fly every volunteer who qualifies by age and physical stamina so the magic of Honor Flight grows with strength. Along with everyone who has stepped up, the Volunteer Resource Committee deserves applause for helping us advance these goals this year.

Community Giving is the other element that seems miraculous in these times of uncertainty. It begins and continues with our adoption by EVERYONE in local news media. Without an incredible "ever presence" where would we be? But the range of fund-raising initiatives held on our behalf—by school children, churches, clubs, businesses, and individuals as summarized elsewhere in this issue—is simply unprecedented. 1,841 donations came our way last year. And large gifts above \$1,000 are on the rise. But a whopping 1,800 gifts averaged \$90. As we learn from the "Rickett 6-Pack" (all aged 14 and under), the first dollar means as much or more to a Veteran as the last! YOU should be so proud of the public response to your good work.

The excellence you bring with you is what makes it all possible. Enjoy what you have built!

Happy Holidays,

Vince Hope

President

Honor Flight Rochester

Have a question, comment, or something to share?

DROP US A LINE!

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Thank
a
Veteran!