

HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

Highlights of the General Meeting - January 18, 2016

Honor Flight 2017 got off to an enthusiastic start with more than 70 attending, some generous donations, many testimonials from veterans and volunteers, both experienced and first-timers, and big plans for our four scheduled flights.

SCHEDULED FLIGHT DATES:

April 8 from Fort Lauderdale to Baltimore-Washington International
May 20 from Miami to Reagan National with Vietnam veterans likely serving as Elite Guardians
Sept. 9 from Fort Lauderdale to Reagan National (also possible alternative date for Elite Guardians flight)
Oct. 28 Historic Airbus 380 flight from Miami to Washington Dulles with 200 World War II veterans

GREAT WAY TO START THE YEAR: Fundraising remains the key to accomplishing the goals with 2017 off to a good start. Mike Brady presented a check for \$10,200 from last fall's Brady's Heroes golf tournament. Honor Flight shared proceeds with the Anthony Rizzo Foundation and NFL Alumni Association. ... Lauren Simone presented a donation of \$25,000 from the Florida Panthers and their "Heroes Among Us" program.... Fundraising chairman Stan Bostic estimated that Honor Flight will receive \$22,000 from the Feb. 10-13 Carnival Cruise.... Chairman Rick Asper later noted that with these donations Honor Flight is beginning the year with more than \$200,000 in the bank.

Stan also announced that Honor Flight's golf tournament is scheduled for Aug. 12 at Winston Trails in Lake Worth with a projected goal of \$30,000-\$35,000.... Stan had one more big announcement -- the gala is scheduled for Nov. 18 at the soon-to-be-named Rick Case Arena at Nova Southeastern University. **MAJOR VOLUNTEER CALL** -- These are significant projects. We need a big force of volunteers to assist Stan with the golf tournament and gala. Volunteers are needed to register participants, find sponsors, entertainment and items for gift baskets, raffles and auctions and fill in the many details of these events. If you can assist, email stanbostic@rickcase.com.

VIRTUAL HONOR FLIGHT: Our second Virtual Honor Flight was a big success and Chairman Rick Asper said that the Virtual Flights will become an annual event. He described the enthusiasm of teenagers sponsoring this event for veterans in the students' great-grandparents' generation. "Veterans were extraordinarily honored," Rick said. The 47 veterans, who can't travel on a regular Honor Flight, received the same recognition with mail call and a homecoming parade, plus dinner, USO-type show and Jim Naskrent's Honor Flight movie.

Mike Roland, who has been the driving force in Broward Schools' support of Honor Flight, has just retired after 50 years in education. He said his final act was putting December 7th again on the calendar for the next Honor Flight.... The movie of the Honor Flight experience is available on the website -- www.honorflightsouthflorida.org.

SPECIAL VIRTUAL HONOR FLIGHT: Honor Flight will be hosting a Virtual Flight 1-4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 11 at the Miami VA Hospital. Rick Asper described the event as "another reach-out to veterans;" this one for 55-60 wheelchair-bound veterans who reside at the hospital. Bev Engler and Elaine Martin are planning the event with mail call and the Honor Flight movie. Melissa Sauer and the Young Marines will be participating. We will be sorting mail call at the Feb. 1 meeting. If you can help Feb. 11 at the VA Hospital, email beverleyengler@yahoo.com.

RECRUITING FOR A HISTORIC FLIGHT: Our hub has the unique opportunity to fly 200 World War II veterans on our October flight. The cost -- absolutely ZERO for this jumbo-jet transportation. The requirement -- All 200 veterans must be World War II vets. Considering we will have three earlier flights, we will need to register approximately 400 World War II veterans. We currently have 64 on the list. We will be flying more Korean War veterans this year, but for this

special flight, the airline is requiring that all the veterans must be from World War II. "It is our solemn duty to find as many veterans as possible," Rick said. He estimated that there are approximately 8,500 WWII veterans in our zone.

So here's an assignment for all volunteers -- everyone needs to try to recruit a few veterans. Tell your friends, try to get a notice in your community, church or condo newsletter, hang a few signs in local restaurants or Legion posts, invite that older fellow you see in Publix. To try to get everyone involved, Rick said that the board has agreed to provide a guardian or staff seat on the plane to the volunteer who registers the most veterans. Rick said he will have final details on this recruiting award at the Feb. 1 meeting. To aid in your recruiting efforts, you can print out flyers from the website -- www.honorflightsouthflorida.org. Click on Media, then click on Support Materials.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS: We all look forward to flight days, but there is so much that has to be done in the months before. Occasionally, we have events to staff or need drivers. But we also rely on a lot of individual initiative. So if you can set up a fundraiser at a restaurant or another event, please check it out. Maybe you know a teacher who can have students write for mail call. And again, keep recruiting.

SPREADING THE WORD: The presentation season is picking up with invitations to schools and retirement villages. Mike Miskew is setting up a schedule and needs veterans, speakers and drivers. This is an important strategy to our hub. Broward schools have been our most loyal donors. At schools, presentations help build enthusiasm for their fundraising drives and a valuable history lesson for students. At retirement villages, we recruit many veterans for our flights.

Don't be intimidated thinking you have to give a long speech. Usually, a veteran will accompany you and the students spend most of the time asking them questions. You can shadow one of our regular speakers. A short video is available. Several volunteers and veterans described how these presentations are very rewarding experiences.

Jay Wein will be holding a presentation seminar at 5:30 before our next meeting on Feb. 1. If you aren't available that night but are still interested in presentations, email mikemiskew@gmail.com.

HONOR FLIGHT CONCERT: The American Legion Symphonic Band has offered to host a Veterans Day concert to benefit Honor Flight. It's an orchestra of 40-50 musicians and it will be a great patriotic event to honor our veterans. Honor Flight's responsibility -- To find an auditorium or a large church to hold the concert on Nov. 10-12. If you have a contact person, please check on it and email tchristensen720@aol.com.

ALSO NOTABLE: Vietnam veteran and volunteer Gunny Slagle presented a quilt that we will have veterans sign on flight days.... Mercy Iglesias announced that Lincoln's Beard Brewing Co., will be hosting a benefit for Honor Flight on May 7.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: 6:30 p.m., Feb. 1.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and let's all try to reach our goal of flying more than 500 veterans in 2017.

Tom Christensen,
Volunteer Coordinator