

HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

Highlights of the General Meeting - February 15, 2018

MOMENT OF SILENCE: The meeting opened with a moment of silence for the victims, families, students and all who were impacted by the tragedy the day before at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. Only one week earlier, many of us had witnessed hundreds of students celebrating veterans at the Virtual Honor Flight at South Plantation High School. Chairman Rick Asper said it was like “two contrasting emotions” in the memories of respect and excitement at one school and then the horrors at the other.

SPRING FLIGHTS: April 14 out of Fort Lauderdale and June 2 out of Miami. Rick is hoping to finalize the charter contracts soon.

VIRTUAL HONOR FLIGHT: South Plantation High students and Junior ROTC cadets again provided a night to remember for veterans who cannot go on one of the regular flights. From arriving to a saber salute to departing to an airport-style homecoming celebration, the veterans were thanked for their years of service long ago. The veterans and their guests were treated to dinner, entertainment, appreciation from two generals, our own Honor Flight movie and mail call.

“Despite the horror of yesterday (in the mass shooting) and that sadly the media didn’t come out to highlight the Virtual Flight, what these teenagers did was amazing for these veterans who are old enough to be their great grandparents,” Chairman Asper said. “I want all of us to focus that those teens and others are here to support our veterans. All we have to do is ask.”

Rick thanked Jay Wein for a “spectacular job” in coordinating the event with South Plantation teacher Jennifer Collins. Jay, in turn, thanked the many volunteers who drove veterans or contributed in other ways to turn this into such a successful event. One month before the VHF, only seven veterans were signed up, but then Elaine Martin, who was coordinating the registrations, and a team of volunteers went to work calling veterans. George Caffrey recruited 12 from the Nininger Veterans Home and we wound up honoring 51 more veterans. This was our fifth Virtual Flight, and third at South Plantation, and we now have given 235 veterans their own Honor Flight experience, the Virtual way.

Jim Naskrent has posted photos on the website -- <https://honorflightsouthflorida.pixieset.com/virtualhonorflight-southplantation/>

MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY: The biggest event ever for Honor Flight South Florida is just about four months away and we need everyone to get involved. Fundraising chairman Stan Bostic has prepared a list of committees and responsibilities for

Military Appreciation Day on June 23 in Pembroke Pines. We need volunteers to serve and lead committees for everything from entertainment and children’s activities to sales and security. Please read Stan’s attached list and see where you can best help. Email Stan at stanbostic@honorflightsouthflorida.org.

HONOR FLIGHT SUMMIT: Rick Asper, Mike Miskew, Ryan Paton and Jay Wein are attending the national Honor Flight Summit this weekend in Baltimore. Our hub is younger than most, but has developed a reputation for some innovative ideas, such as the Virtual Flights, Elite Guardians and inviting active duty military to assist us on flight days. Rick has been invited to speak about our “thinking outside the box” approach. The four board members are paying their own expenses to the summit.

PATRIOTIC CONCERT: We are still searching for a venue to host the American Legion Symphonic Band’s patriotic concert on Sunday afternoon, July 1. This will be a great day to honor our veterans and raise money to take more on flights. If you have a contact or know of a large church or city or community auditorium that might host the concert, please email tchristensen720@aol.com.

GOLF TOURNAMENT: Marine veteran and volunteer John Gullman gave an update on the South Florida Charity Classic golf tournament April 27 at Woodlands C.C. in Tamarac. Honor Flight and several other military charities will benefit from the event. John said he was hoping to raise enough money for each charity to receive at least \$10,000. The tournament is looking to register more golfers and sponsors. Please see the attached flyer. If you or a friend are interested, be sure to say you heard about it through Honor Flight and we are likely to receive a larger portion of the proceeds.

ALSO WORTH NOTING: A special thank you to Mission BBQ in Davie for supplying a dinner of brisket, pulled pork and all the sides. Mission BBQ is a big supporter of the military and has catered several events for Honor Flight. ... Also a big thank you to Alex Soufrine, owner of Landlubber’s in Plantation, for the donation of \$1,200. ... Elaine Martin said the “Painting with a Twist” party raised \$717. All these donations and fundraisers help us fly more veterans. ... Jim Naskrent is beginning to develop an online magazine on the website. He is requesting volunteers to write articles and supply photos of upcoming events or ones in which they have participated.

NEXT MEETING: 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 14. Check the website calendar for updates and register for meeting reminders at www.honorflightsouthflorida.org/register/

-- Tom Christensen, Volunteer Coordinator