

HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

Highlights of the General Meeting - July 27, 2016

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE JUMBO-JET FLIGHT?:

Postponed. Despite a strong late effort by many volunteers to register World War II veterans, the board has voted to postpone the Airbus A380 or 747 flight. The airlines interested in honoring U.S. veterans who liberated Europe required that the charters be filled with almost all WWII veterans. At the time of the board vote, 58 WWII veterans were registered. In the week since then, the list has grown to 74. We would have been able to carry as many as 200 veterans and probably would have needed another 50 registered because of the high percentage of veterans who decide not to fly. Chairman Rick Asper thanked volunteers, maybe our largest meeting ever, for the late recruiting effort. Assuming our list of WWII veterans grows significantly, we will try again for the large flight next fall. The wide-body planes will not be available in the spring.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?: We move forward with our goal of flying as many veterans to Washington as possible. Rick Asper confirmed a flight for Saturday, Oct. 29, out of Miami. Eastern Airlines again has provided an excellent charter rate and we will be carrying 67 veterans, plus guardians and staff.

WILL THERE BE ANOTHER FLIGHT IN THE FALL?: Very possible. The board will be meeting Sunday on whether to approve a second fall flight, tentatively scheduled on Sun Country, out of Fort Lauderdale on Wednesday, Sept. 21. This would be our first week-day flight and that raises some concerns: Will we have enough guardians and volunteers? Are we willing to accept what will probably be a smaller homecoming crowd? Rick explained that a charter flight would be much more expensive on a Saturday in September. The board will be voting on this flight with an announcement expected soon.

RECRUITING VETERANS: Rick urged everyone "to keep up the energy level" in trying to register veterans. Although we had to pass on the jumbo flight, there are signs that everyone's effort is paying off with some more applications coming in. All publicity helps, even a short article in your local, church or club newsletters. Jim Naskrent again stressed the impact of networking through veterans' children and grandchildren and your own friends and different organizations in spreading the word about the Honor Flight experience. If you don't know a veteran yourself, there's a good chance that a friend of a friend does. Everyone can join in on this mission.... Jim has updated the website with more flyers in helping the recruitment -- <http://honorflightsouthflorida.org/supportmaterial>. ... Mike Miskew said that a number of presentations are planned at retirement homes and elsewhere. If you would like to help with presentations or driving veterans, contact Mike -- mikemiskew@gmail.com. ... Radio stations AM-880 and AM-1360 have committed to promoting Honor Flight.

VIRTUAL FLIGHT: As you try to recruit veterans, you will find some who are hesitant about flying because of the long day, health or other concerns. There's a special experience for them also. Broward Schools will be sponsoring another Virtual Flight. The date is easy to remember -- December 7th, the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, at South Plantation High School. We again will try to replicate the full Honor Flight experience, with a catered dinner, USO-type entertainment, our own Honor Flight movie and homecoming greeting. We also plan to take the Virtual Flight experience on the road. Beverley Engler has found that the VA Nursing Home in Miami has at least 55 wheelchair-bound veterans and we want to make sure they also get the recognition they deserve. The date is to be determined.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jed Wolcott reported Honor Flight's bank balance at \$146,000. Although we continue to receive some flight discounts, he stressed the importance of fundraising to keep up with increasing charter rates.

BEER BASH FUNDRAISER: Mark your calendars for Saturday, Aug. 6. Quarterdeck is sponsoring a fundraiser to benefit Honor Flight at its restaurant at 1541 Cordova Rd., near 17th St. Causeway, in Fort Lauderdale. Invite your friends... and your World War II veteran too. Admission is \$15 with the event scheduled from 4-8 p.m. The attached poster has details on the local breweries participating. If you can help as a volunteer, please email Tom Christensen -- tchristensen720@aol.com.

FUTURE FUNDRAISING: Board member Stan Bostic, who has been active in charity fundraising for many years, stressed the importance of volunteers in the success of major events. He said plans are well under way for the Nov. 5 golf tournament at Madison Green C.C., West Palm Beach. Raffle tickets for a new car, sponsored by Rick Case Auto, are still available. Honor Flight will be sharing profits with the NFL Alumni Association and Chicago Cubs' Anthony Rizzo's charity. Stan said volunteers will be needed in finding sponsors and "goodie bag" contributions for Honor Flight's own golf tournament, probably near Memorial Day, and Military Gala in Summer, 2017.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, Aug. 17, 6:30 p.m., at Broward College in Davie.

-- Tom Christensen, volunteer coordinator