

HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

Highlights of The General Meeting - February 17, 2016

FLIGHT SCHEDULE:

Saturday, April 2: Eastern Airlines from Miami -- World War II veterans, accompanied by "Elite Guardian" Vietnam War veterans.

Saturday, May 21: From Fort Lauderdale.

October flight: Saturday date TBD, possibly the jumbo-jet flight out of Miami.

NEXT FLIGHT: The April 2 flight promises to be our most memorable flight yet -- the bonding of two generations who served the nation. There will be 80 World War II veterans each accompanied by a Vietnam-era "Elite Guardian." The usual guardian fee is being waived for Vietnam veterans. Chairman Rick Asper reiterated that Honor Flight South Florida's priority remains to fly World War II veterans and then Korean War veterans. This flight is possible because of a special charter rate from Eastern Airlines.

We have a full complement of World War II veterans, but some seats are available for Vietnam "Elite Guardians." For applications, go to www.honorflightsouthflorida.org; click on Media on the home page and then click on Support Materials.

If you have served on the "ground crew" either early in the morning, at homecoming celebrations in the evening or both, then you will want to be a part of this special day. Among the needs:

1. Check-in veterans at MIA at approximately 4 a.m.
2. Set up and assist with the anticipated large crowd at the evening homecoming.
3. Drive veterans early in the morning and/or home after the homecoming celebration.

If you can help on April 2 in Miami, please email Tom Christensen -- tchristensen720@aol.com.

MAIL CALL: For those who have already volunteered to call families for "mail call," Mike Miskew will soon be sending you your contacts. We need twice as much mail for this flight, so if you know of any schools or groups that can help write letters, please invite them to contribute. It's a great history lesson for students. And remember, we will have an equal number of Vietnam-era veterans on this flight. We will be sorting mail at the March 30 meeting.

RECRUITING WORLD WAR II VETERANS: This remains a top priority for all. We still have some seats available for the May 21 flight. Chairman Asper is trying to finalize plans for the jumbo-jet

flight in October. We will be able to take nearly 200 World War II veterans on that flight, so we need to do a lot of recruiting. Again for applications, go to www.honorflightsouthflorida.org; click on Media on the home page and then click on Support Materials.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jed Wolcott reports that the budget is in good shape to handle our three scheduled charters in 2016. He said that the three 2015 charters averaged \$51,000 in expenses. After guardian fees, the cost of the charters averaged \$24,000. Jed explained that this is an excellent rate with many hubs averaging nearly \$65,000 per flight. Rick Asper again thanked Broward schools for their generous contribution and said that he anticipates another big donation soon. Still we need more fundraising, so don't be hesitant suggesting your ideas.

VIRTUAL HONOR FLIGHT: Thanks to all who participated in the Virtual Honor Flight and a special thanks to South Plantation High School students and Junior ROTC for hosting the big event on Jan. 22. Sixty-five veterans, who because of health or other concerns would have never been able to go on the flight to Washington, received nearly the full Honor Flight experience. After dinner, they were treated to a 1940's USO-type show, Jim Naskrent's terrific documentary, mail call and the surprise homecoming-type greeting through the halls of South Plantation High. We are working to host more Virtual Honor Flights in both Broward and Miami-Dade.

THANKS AND FAREWELL: A special thank you to Rick Woolf, a Navy veteran who is moving to the The Villages. Rick has been a valuable member of the Honor Flight board who always went out of his way to honor our oldest veterans.

NEXT MEETINGS: Wednesdays, March 2, 16 and 30, 6:30 p.m., at Broward College in Davie. Watch the website for possible updates.

Tom Christensen
Volunteer coordinator