

HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

Highlights of the General Meeting - February 22nd, 2017

PRAYERS FOR RICK AND HIS WIFE: The meeting opened with Jim Naskrent's heartfelt words telling everyone that Chairman Rick Asper's wife Carol has been in a coma. Jim asked everyone to keep Carol and Rick in their prayers. Until Rick returns, board members and committee chairs continue to plan for the spring flights.

FLIGHT DATES:

April 8 -- Fort Lauderdale to Baltimore-Washington International.
May 20 -- Miami to Reagan National.
Sept. 9 -- Fort Lauderdale to Reagan National with Vietnam veterans serving as Elite Guardians.
Oct. 28 -- Miami to Washington Dulles -- Airbus 380 flight with 200 World War II veterans.

COUNTDOWN TO APRIL 8: Bev Engler said that 77 veterans -- 52 World War II and 25 Korean War vets -- are registered for the flight to Washington D.C. Mercy Iglesias is calling guardians and matching them with veterans. Guardian training is scheduled for Saturday, March 18 and Wednesday, March 22. Volunteers are starting to call veterans' families for mail call.

RECRUITING DRIVE: The April 8 flight shows our need to continue to recruit World War II veterans. While we are always happy to honor Korean War veterans also, the nearly one-third on this flight will be the most Korean vets who we have taken to Washington. Time is short with our chance to fly World War II veterans and there are only a few on our current list. Remember the mega-October flight must be all World War II veterans -- 200. So the priority for all volunteers is to try to recruit these veterans. "We know they're out there," Ryan Paton said. "We just have to find them." Ryan appealed to everyone to register two or three veterans. ... Please help interested candidates fill out their registration forms. Bev Engler suggested providing a self-addressed, stamped envelope to interested veterans to encourage them to proceed. ... She also reminded that it's important that veterans be capable of walking up and down the bus steps with help as needed. ... To aid your efforts to recruit veterans, you can find flyers and other recruiting materials on the website -- www.honorflightsouthflorida.org. Click on Media, then click on Support Materials. ... It was suggested that we regularly set up a table at the VA clinic on Commercial Blvd., to try to register veterans.

SPECIAL VIRTUAL HONOR FLIGHT: Honor Flight continues to find ways to honor veterans who are not able to go on the flights to Washington. A Virtual Honor Flight was held for 28 veterans at the Miami VA Hospital. All are in wheelchairs and full-time residents at the Community Living Center. The veterans were treated to a jazz band, color guard, mail call and our own Honor Flight movie. Jim Naskrent said it was "priceless" seeing the reaction of veterans receiving their mail packets from the Young Marines, who have been so helpful on flight days. Bev Engler said the "tears flowed" when the bagpipers began to play. Elaine Martin, who organized the day with Bev, presented certificates to the Young Marines. Then Young Marines leader Melissa Sauer gave framed photos of her unit to Elaine, Bev and Jim. ... George Caffrey is checking on the possibility of another Virtual Flight at Hollywood Hills High School.

PROFITABLE CRUISE: While some volunteers were busy at the VA

Virtual Flight, others of us.... well.... we were on the Carnival Victory cruise. It turned out to be much more than just a weekend party at sea. It was also very profitable. Thanks to Stan Bostic and his connections with cruise sponsors Invicta and the Jason Taylor Foundation, Honor Flight netted \$25,900 from the cruise.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We need a big force of volunteers to start working on the golf and gala fundraisers. Jim Naskrent said fundraising chairman Stan Bostic is especially excited about the possible entertainment at the November gala. If you can help with these projects, please email stanbostic@rickcase.com.

Volunteers are also needed for these events; email tchristensen720@aol.com if you can help at any of these:

Guardian training -- 9:15 a.m. (for volunteers), Saturday, March 18
Guardian training -- 5:30 p.m. (for volunteers), Wednesday, March 22
Special event at Bokamper's on the Intracoastal -- 6-10 p.m., Saturday, March 25
Air & Sea Show concessions booth -- 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7

HONOR FLIGHT SHIRTS: Jim Naskrent clarified the policy on shirts. Volunteers can order red, navy blue or light blue shirts -- long sleeve, short sleeve and golf shirts -- through Gratefull Thread in Sunrise (www.thegratefullthread.com). But Jim emphasized that volunteers wear the yellow "ground crew" T-shirts on flight days.

WORTH NOTING: Tuskegee Airman Leo Gray, who passed away in September, has been interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Lt. Col. Gray traveled on our April, 2015 flight and was involved in many Honor Flight activities. ... WWII Navy Seabee and active volunteer Harvey Mittleman was honored at a Florida Panthers game. ... Mercy Iglesias, who has been working to expand our recognition in Miami-Dade, will be hosting a presentation for the Coconut Grove Women's Club. ... Mercy is also organizing a fundraiser for May 7 at Lincoln Beard Brewing Co., in Miami. Honor Flight will receive all proceeds from a special Honor Flight beer. ... Ryan Patton, Mike Miskew, Paula Jarrett, Jay Wein and Tom Christensen attended the Honor Flight Summit in Baltimore. Among the many topics was preparing for the transition to flying more Korean War veterans. Ryan said we will be setting up a committee to work on this mission. All representatives were responsible for paying their own travel, hotel and registration expenses.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 15. Check the website calendar for meeting updates and other Honor Flight events.

-- Tom Christensen, Volunteer coordinator