

HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

Highlights of the General Meeting - March 15th, 2017

SUPPORT FOR AND THANKS FROM RICK: Honor Flight Chairman Rick Asper thanked everyone for their words of support during the past six weeks through his wife Carol's hospitalization and passing on February 25. He said he wanted "to share my grief with you because of our camaraderie, the brotherhood and sisterhood, in Honor Flight South Florida." Carol and Rick were married 27 years and she died on her 58th birthday.

Rick thanked board members, committee chairs and others who helped keep our operation running smoothly while he attended to the needs of his wife. "The veterans didn't suffer because others stepped up," he said. As an example, Rick pointed out that Vice Chairman Jim Naskrent led a presentation that resulted in Honor Flight receiving a donation of \$20,000-\$25,000. Rick said that everything is on track for the April 8 flight and vowed that "we keep doing our duties so we can honor all our veterans."

FLIGHT DATES: Currently there are only 15 World War II veterans on the list after the April 8 flight. So it's important for everyone to keep recruiting.

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.

COUNTDOWN TO APRIL 8: There are 77 veterans -- 52 World War II and 25 Korean War vets -- registered for the flight to Washington D.C. Guardian training is scheduled for Saturday, March 18 and Wednesday, March 22. Spirit charter flight 1941 is scheduled to depart by 6:30 a.m. and arrive at Baltimore-Washington International at 9 a.m. Veterans are then scheduled to head to the World War II and Korean War memorials, Changing of the Guard at Arlington Cemetery and the group photo at Iwo Jima. Rick Asper said he is striving for a 5:15 departure from Baltimore with an intended, earlier landing of 7:45 in Fort Lauderdale. ... We are very fortunate again with an extremely low-priced charter from Spirit. After guardian fees, the cost of the plane is approximately \$2,000, plus expenses for buses, police escorts, meals, T-shirts, caps, etc. This is the lowest-priced charter ever for the hub.

KEY NOTE ON TERMINALS: FOR DEPARTURE -- Veterans, guardians and volunteers should report to the lower (baggage) level of Terminal 4 **FOR ARRIVAL** -- The plane will arrive and homecoming celebration will be on the upper level of Terminal 2.

"GROUND CREW" VOLUNTEERS: Volunteers started signing up for our regular "ground crew" duties. This is an important part of the entire Honor Flight experience, making sure the day gets off to a smooth start and finishes with a grand celebration. "Yellow shirt" volunteers arrive at 4 a.m. and register and care for veterans. And then the night shift arrives at 5:30 to prepare the terminal, welcome the big homecoming crowd and assist veterans and clean up at the end of the evening. Ryan Paton thanked Steve Shapiro as being the key person in the operation, arriving first and leaving last with the Honor Chairs. If you can help on flight day, email tchristensen720@aol.com.

HOMECOMING: The highlight of the day -- for the veterans, guardians, volunteers and the thousands who come out to celebrate this moment in living history. Even if you're not part of the "ground crew" operation, you will want to be part of the celebration.

World War II veteran and loyal volunteer Harvey Mittleman remembered his homecoming experience. "I only saw the little kids at first thanking us."

He paused. "Even thinking about it, I get overwhelmed.... We're carrying the torch for the real heroes, the ones who didn't come back. Put it on your calendar."

Flight Dr. Phil Greenberg described homecoming as "the 4th of July meets Times Square. This is their ticket tape parade."

Everyone can help -- invite your friends and school groups, Scouts and other organizations. To assist in recruiting people to homecoming, Jim Naskrent has prepared flyers and maps -- www.honorflightsouthflorida.org/homecoming

FUNDRAISING: Stan Bostic is forming a team of volunteers to work on two major fundraisers. First up, the golf tournament scheduled for August 12. The gala is being rescheduled for either Oct. 14 or 21. These are big projects taking plenty of advance work, promoting the events, registering golfers, recruiting sponsors and finding donations for gift bags and auctions. Check Stan's attached sheet of the many golf duties and email with how you can help -- stanbostic@rickcase.com. Stan is trying recruit a big-name speaker and entertainer for the gala. ... Stan said the Carnival cruise was such a big success that he is hopeful of a similar cruise again next January or February. He watched the Invicta presentation on Evine TV and said many callers said the highlight was getting to meet many of our Honor Flight veterans. ... With major donations from the Lauderdale Small Boat Club, Florida Panthers and the Carnival cruise, the hub's bank account heads into the spring flight season with an all-time high of more than \$222,000, according to treasurer Jed Wolcott.

HOW CAN I HELP?: This is a familiar question from volunteers. We've already mentioned a few ways here. Assist with the golf tournament and gala. Take the initiative in leading other fundraising events. Flight day ground crew. Come to homecoming and invite your friends. ... And as always, **KEEP RECRUITING VETERANS.** Our roster of veterans is very short. Tell your friends. And don't get discouraged. Many veterans are hesitant, but assure them that our flights are absolutely free and we travel with a flight doctor and paramedics. If you know of a retirement home or association that might be interested in a presentation, email mikemiskew@gmail.com. There is a large presentation planned at King's Point in Tamarac, plus more schools. ... We are looking for a volunteer confident in digital graphics to assist Jim Naskrent with his many duties. ... If you have never filled out the volunteer application, please do so on the website -- www.honorflightsouthflorida.org.

WORTH NOTING: Jennifer Hamilton said it was an "honor and privilege" to succeed Mike Roland as Broward School's representative to Honor Flight. She said schools are currently in their fundraising drives. ... If you are planning or know of any Honor Flight or military-related events, post them on the website calendar. Email jimnaskrent@rickcase.com. Also check the website for meeting updates. ... Former Dolphins center Jeff Dellenbach is inviting veterans to his foundation's spring picnic Saturday, March 25 at Nova Southeastern University in Davie. Veterans are asked to arrive by 11 a.m. and go to the VIP tent. Veterans are invited from all conflicts -- from World War II all the way to the War against ISIS. If interested, email stanbostic@rickcase.com. ... "NCIS" has an episode about Honor Flight scheduled for Tuesday, March 28 on CBS.

-- Tom Christensen, Volunteer coordinator