

# HONOR FLIGHT SOUTH FLORIDA

## Highlights of the General Meeting - April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017

REVIEWING APRIL 8 FLIGHT: It was another great Honor Flight day in Washington for 79 veterans, with Senator Bob Dole, one of the driving forces behind the World War II Memorial, there to greet them. After also visiting the Korean War Memorial, Changing of the Guard at Arlington National Cemetery and the group photo at the Marines' Iwo Jima Memorial, there were a few surprise highlights to come.

With sirens screaming and bus horns blaring, veterans and guardians were treated to an exciting police motorcade through heavy traffic back to Baltimore-Washington International.

And then with veterans having just completed their mail call, there was more emotion with a big surprise to all on arrival in Fort Lauderdale. Chairman Rick Asper called it an "amazing experience" when hundreds of stranded Delta passengers cheered the veterans coming off the plane. Little did the veterans know there was an even bigger crowd waiting for them at the official homecoming. Ryan Paton commended all the "yellow shirt" volunteers who helped early in the morning and at homecoming.

NEXT FLIGHT -- MAY 20: After some lengthy "extremely stressful" negotiations, Rick Asper said the May 20 flight is confirmed out of Miami International Airport. Rick said he always books a primary and a backup airline, but because of complications with both, he wasn't able to confirm a charter on another airline, Miami Air, until Tuesday.

With 150 seats, the Miami Air jet is somewhat smaller than our usual charter. Eleven World War II and 59 Korean War veterans are confirmed for the flight. Rick said the flight would be nearly twice the cost of our next most expensive flight. At one point, Rick said he considered canceling the flight and moving it to September, but didn't want to penalize the veterans. Despite the late negotiations and price, Rick said "none of this will be observed by our veterans.... But it was definitely disturbing."

GUARDIANS NEEDED: Guardian coordinator Mercy Iglesias said we still need guardians for veterans in Plantation, Pembroke Pines, North Miami, Boca Raton, Pompano Beach and Hallandale. If you've never served as a guardian, it is an experience you will long remember. You can register on the website -- [www.honorflightsouthflorida.org](http://www.honorflightsouthflorida.org). The guardian fee is \$400. ... Guardian training is scheduled for 9:45 a.m. Saturday, April 29, 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 10 and Saturday, May 13 via the Internet for out-of-town guardians.

"GROUND CREW" VOLUNTEERS: Volunteers have started signing up for early morning check-in and evening homecoming. If you can help, email Tom Christensen -- [tchristensen720@aol.com](mailto:tchristensen720@aol.com).

HOTEL AVAILABLE AT MIA: Ryan Paton has reserved a block of rooms at Miami International Airport Hotel. The hotel is right in the terminal and convenient for the early morning departure. The Honor Flight rate is \$89, plus tax. Reservations for either May 20 or 21 can be made by calling 1-800-327-1276 and asking for the Honor Flight discounted rate under Confirmation 10700.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jed Wolcott reported that the hub has \$225,000 in the bank, but warned that the expensive May 20 flight was a sign that "we need to re-double our fundraising efforts with the new reality of flight costs." He said finances should be OK through 2017, but said donations have dropped and 2018 will be "very challenging." ... Rick said that we are still planning to designate September 9 as the Elite Guardians flight with Vietnam veterans serving as guardians. There will be no guardian-fees income from that flight.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE: So how do we "re-double" our fundraising? Stan Bostic is looking for more volunteers to assist in two major events -- the August 12 golf tournament at Winston Trails in Lake Worth and the October 14 military gala at Rick Case Arena at Nova Southeastern University. Stan has set goals of \$50,000 for the golf tournament and \$100,000 for the gala. He asked everyone to help find sponsors and auction items -- large or small -- for both events. Stan said among the entertainers, special guests and speakers are country singer Billy Dean, artist Michael Israel, former FBI Director Louis Freeh, FBI special agent George Piro, who interrogated Saddam Hussein, and a four-star general. Gala ticket prices will be in the \$150 range.

TIPPING A FEW FOR HONOR FLIGHT: Mercy Iglesias has arranged a fundraiser, Sunday, May 7, noon-9 p.m., Lincoln's Beard Brewing Co., 7360 SW 41st Street, Miami. Let's give this event good support. Lincoln's Beard will donate proceeds from a specially brewed Honor Flight beer to the hub.

RECRUITING WORLD WAR II AND KOREAN WAR VETERANS: With only 11 World War II veterans scheduled for May 20, again the emphasis is on the realization that time is short for giving these veterans the Honor Flight experience. We are happy to serve our Korean veterans too, but we still want to take more World War II veterans. Mike Miskew said that five veterans filed applications at a recent presentation at King's Point in Tamarac. More presentations are planned, including at Sunrise Lakes and the Davie-Cooper City Rotary Club. If you know a retirement village or group that would like a presentation, contact Mike Miskew -- [mikemiskew@gmail.com](mailto:mikemiskew@gmail.com).

Jim Naskrent has flyers available on the website -- [www.honorflightsouthflorida.org/support/material/](http://www.honorflightsouthflorida.org/support/material/) -- to assist in recruiting for our other two scheduled flights:

September 9 -- Fort Lauderdale to Reagan National with Vietnam veterans serving as Elite Guardians.

October 28 -- Miami to Washington Dulles.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

May is a busy month and we will need a lot of volunteers in action. If you can help at any of these events, email Tom Christensen -- [tchristensen720@aol.com](mailto:tchristensen720@aol.com):

Saturday, April 29: Distribute T-shirts and caps at guardian training, 9:15 a.m.

Saturday and Sunday, May 6-7: We have a good team of 22 Honor Flight volunteers working at the concessions stands at the Air & Sea Show on Fort Lauderdale Beach. It's part fundraising, part promoting Honor Flight.

Sunday, May 7: Fundraiser, noon-9 p.m., Lincoln's Beard Brewing Co., 7360 SW 41st Street, Miami.

Monday, May 8: We need a few Honor Flight veterans to join Rick Asper at the kickoff event of a major fundraiser at the Lauderdale Small Boat Club.

Wednesday, May 10: Distribute T-shirts and caps at guardian training, 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 13: Volunteers needed at Honor Flight table at Successful Aging Expo at Broward Convention Center, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Monday, May 29: Memorial Day event for veterans at Bokamper's on the Intracoastal; more information to come.

Monday, May 29: Honor Flight recruiting at Memorial Day events in Coconut Creek, Coral Springs, Davie, Deerfield Beach, North Lauderdale, Pembroke Pines, Plantation and Tamarac.

NEXT MEETINGS: Wednesdays, May 10 and 17, 6:30 p.m.

-- Tom Christensen, Volunteer coordinator