

Honor Flight Columbus

Volunteer

Update 8/2017

With your continued help and passion we have successfully completed three more flights and are halfway through our 2017 flight year. With your expertise, and feedback we will continue to improve on our goal of getting our senior veterans to Washington DC to see their memorials as safely as possible and giving them the welcome home they so rightly deserve. Any time you have feedback to share please send to info@honorflightcolumbus.org. We will make sure the right team(s) receives your input.

The board of directors would like to take this opportunity to share with you how we are doing and what feedback and changes have been put in place based on your feedback.

Operation News By The Numbers

So far this year we have completed:

- **3** flights, with September 9, 30 and October 21 flights scheduled and vets being called.
- Taken **247** Senior Veterans (**34** WWII, **105** Korean War, **3** WWII & Korean War, **2** All three wars, **7** Korean War & Vietnam and **96** Vietnam).
- **182** guardians
- Applications on file, **24** WWII, **120** Korean and **907** Vietnam
- A platoon of tired, but smiling volunteers.

Guardian Update:

An issue we have heard from some is the introduction of an age range for our guardians.

First, some background on how this discussion came about. We have been trying to tighten up our process and procedures. This included the Guardian selection process. From the first trip by Honor Flight Columbus, we have an unwritten rule - a veteran would not be assigned a guardian that is older than they are. Since the number of our WWII and Korean War veterans have decreased dramatically year over year and now that we

5,000 WITH MORE ON THE WAY

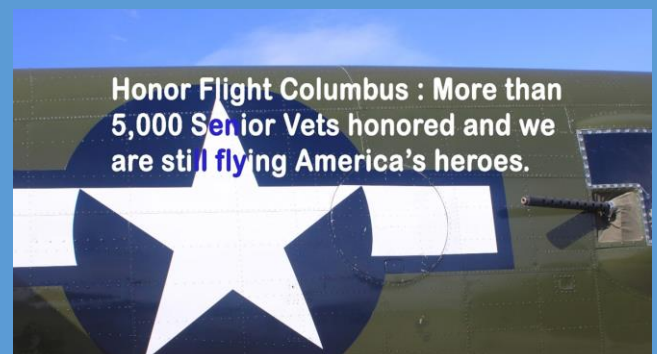
When the Southwest 737 lifts up from the runway on September 9, Honor Flight Columbus volunteers will mark a major milestone. Aboard will be the 5,000th Senior Veteran from central Ohio to go on this no-cost trip of Honor, Celebration and Sharing. 18 World War II, 54 Korean War, 11 Vietnam and 3 who were in during both the Korean and Vietnam War are scheduled for this 84th trip. All made possible by the hard work of dedicated volunteers.

Veterans from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War are on the ten-year-old organization's log book. "When we started," says Jim Downing, HFC president, "our goal was to get as many World War II veterans as we could to see their recently opened memorial. Thanks to the generosity of the people, organizations, and corporations of central Ohio, we are continuing with those service members and have moved into two more wars." The backlog of applications for veterans to fly now stands at just over 1,000. The primary sponsor of this flight is Vance Outdoors.

On these day-long trips, Senior Veterans fly to Baltimore and convoy in three motor coaches into Washington D.C. They visit the World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War memorials on the Mall, a change of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery and see the Air Force, Navy and Marine memorials built to honor veterans. To enable the vets to see so much in a single day, the convoy is escorted by the National Parks Police.

Included in the overall total of 5,000 are 31 veterans of any period who were terminally ill.

Honor Flight Columbus is the first Hub in the Honor Flight Network which now has more than 131 Hubs in 45 states. HFC is the third Hub to surpass the milestone 5,000 Senior Veterans.



are taking Vietnam veterans, the age range of people that we service has changed.

We researched other hubs and their guidelines. Most of them had age specified age ranges, several had stricter age limits. We then met with trip leaders, bus leaders and board members to review and edit these guidelines. And we have heard from you, our experienced guardians and we thank you for your input.

The guidelines were modified and then brought to the entire board for discussion. There it was decided that the age range of 18 to 65 would be a general guideline. On every flight this year we have had people serving as guardians that have been outside the age range guidelines. Our guidelines can be found on our website - <http://www.honorflightcolumbus.org/guardian.html> . Please share this information with others so that everyone can be operating with the same understanding of our guidelines.

Another goal we have this year is to enable more people to experience the life changing opportunity to be a guardian. At the beginning of 2017 we had 675 guardian applications of people who have never been on a flight. During each flight we strive to have a ratio of 60% experienced to 40% new guardians. We need the experience guardians to help lead the way to safely and effectively guide our veterans on flight days. And – with each flight our pool of experienced guardians has grown.

Our guardian training is evolving with each session. We now have a slide show as well as multiple sessions given by multiple people with more interaction.

With your input we have now replaced the paper gift bags with donated cloth bags to hold all the veteran's gifts given during the Welcome Home.

We have also heard that our Welcome Home Gauntlet is too long for our veterans after a tiring day in Washington DC. We have let the Ground Crew team know this feedback. One problem they are dealing with is Veteran family members are joining the gauntlet instead of meeting their veteran after the W and friends to join us at the end of the gauntlet in the big circle area. You can help us by encouraging family reunions with your Veteran be done after the event or quickly so that we can keep the congestion in the circle at a maintainable level.

Ground Crew Update:



First of all, THANK YOU for volunteering for the ground crew. The fall flight season is fast approaching and we will have lots going on with the ground crew!

We now conduct a brief meeting at 4 am and 8 pm for all the new volunteers on flight days to fill them in on what to expect, answer questions and talk about assignments.

Some of our special guests for the evening flights include:

- The 338th Army Band will be performing at the September 9 and October 21 flights.
- The Ohio State University Marching Band will be joining us on September 30.
- We have a dance team coming to perform on September 9th.
- Patriot Pin-Ups, lots and lots of scout troops, Mr. Lincoln, Franklin County Sheriffs Office, Blue Star Moms, and so many more wonderful people that help make the Welcome Home so successful.

There is a new volunteer opportunity for flights when we have lots of gifts, it is called Guardian Assistant. You would meet a Guardian and Veteran before they begin receiving gifts, your job is to carry the extra bags, gifts so the Guardian can assist their Veteran through the Gauntlet. You need to stay with that Veteran till they reach the inner circle and then move to the sides so the families can see their loved ones.

We are very excited for the next three flights as they are going to be action packed! Here's a note that describes how the vets feel about our work.

Dear Honor Flight volunteers,

To all of you wonderful People who make Honor Flight such an outstanding and memorable event, I send my most sincere and heartfelt "Thank You."

... I could not help but marvel at the friendly and efficient way in which everyone handled our arrival at the airport and got us onto our flight ... All of the singing, applause, cheers, smiling faces, handshakes,

kisses and hugs from family, friends and complete strangers, at the welcome home reception at the airport was the most joy-filled highlight of the trip. Never before had I felt so appreciated and loved. It was overwhelming and wonderful! ... I shall be forever grateful ... signed by a Korean War Vet.



Speakers Bureau and Programs

Upcoming events.



- August 19, Booth at Johnstown Legion Post 254 Open House
- August 26 HFC Booth at Traveling WWII Memorial – Heath
- Late August - OSU Army ROTC – Columbus
- September 15-16 OCSEA Veterans Conference - Westerville
- September 20 OSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION (OSURA) - Columbus
- September 22 Guest speaker for the Delaware County Vet Dinner
- October 28 Annual HFC Reunion. Held at Grace Polaris Church. All Honor Flight Columbus participants – veterans, guardians and volunteers – are encouraged to attend. The veterans look for others who were on their trip.
- October 29 Information Table and various volunteer needs at the 5K Run & Walk for Honor Flight Columbus at John Glenn International.
- November 11 the Westerville Rotary Noon Club is conducting the Rotary Honors Veterans 5K

Walk/Run. This event is combined with the Chase 5K Walk/Run and benefits Honor Flight Columbus and the USO.

- To participate in any of these, email jamachado@wildblue.net

The “Sponsor a Vet” Program

Our brand new Sponsor a Vet Program is in full swing. We have had many enquiries about the program from Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, Hospital departments, VFW’s, corporations, and one gentlemen was sponsored by a group of friends.

Requests are coming from all over the state of Ohio and we are very pleased with how it has been received.

The program was initially started as an outreach to schools but we are finding that this honor is one that many organizations are interested in participating in. To review, we are reaching out to schools and encouraging them to sponsor a fundraiser for Honor Flight.

For a minimum \$500.00 donation, the school/class can sponsor a local veteran for their upcoming Honor Flight. After the donation is raised, our Honor Flight Columbus volunteers will select one of the veterans assigned the trip to Washington, discuss the program with the Veteran and then connect the school/class with the veteran.



Heritage Elementary representatives Sponsoring A Vet

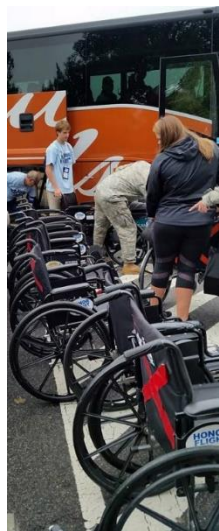
The school/class will be encouraged to write individual special mail call letters to their veteran. The school/class is invited to participate in the special “Homecoming” we give the vets when they return from

Washington, D.C. in the evening and meet their sponsored veteran. After the flight, the school/class would be encouraged to invite the veteran to the classroom to have the veteran share with the students their day of honor.

If you know of a school that would like to participate, now would be a good time for planning. For the 2017/2018 school year our flights would be this fall and next spring. It would be great if the students could see the process from beginning to end and get to meet their veteran. And – as we have seen – this does not need to be just Schools who would like the honor of participating in this program. We can adapt the program to all organizations.

There is excitement about this new opportunity to continue with our mission of Honor, Share, and Celebrate our Veterans of WWII, Korean, and Vietnam War.

To be connected with our Sponsor A Vet team – please email vp@honorflightcolumbus.org.



Wheel Chairs

Honor **Flight** is our name, but one of our basics is much less exotic. Our fleet of nearly 100 wheelchairs enables our Senior Vets the mobility needed to enjoy their day of Honor. All of our chairs have been donated, and each is a veteran in its own right.

Our smiling volunteer wheelchair wranglers make sure that before each flight, the chairs are safe to travel. With the abuse chairs often

get on a trip, we see a lot of wear and tear. Each one gets inspected and repaired. Thanks to so many people who donate chairs, we always have enough, and sometimes too many.

Chairs that are no longer suitable for our traveling fleet find new jobs. Once repaired for normal duty, surplus chairs find one of three homes.

- Loaner fleet for use by Columbus area groups hosting veteran events.

- We donate chairs to Honor Flight ground crew in Baltimore so that smaller Hubs flying into that airport can have chairs to use.
- And we give suitable retired chairs for home use to a group that provides chairs and other equipment to those who cannot afford them through other means.

Parades

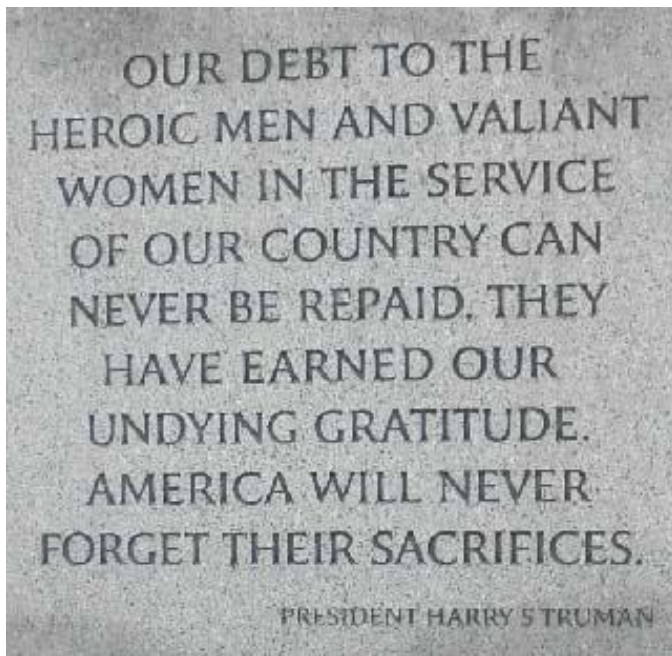
Volunteers participated, along with Senior Veterans, in several parades this first half of flying season: Memorial Day Parade in Worthington, Independence Day Parades in Westerville, Upper Arlington and Hilliard.

To further honor our senior veterans, we try to be in as many parades as we can. We use a float that is easy for veterans in get on. It has a canopy, to give them shade during the parade. In addition, it has lights, therefore can be in day and evening parades.

The float holds around 15 people. We try to have veterans from the local area ride on the float. When there are multiple parade occurring at the same time (like during the 4th of July) we ask for volunteers to drive their personal vehicle with a magnetic sign on it.

Then we try to have a Senior Veteran ride with them. If you know of a parade in your area that you think we should be in send a note to parades@HonorFlightColumbus.org.





Board of Directors:

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Kelly Mitchell, Groundcrew Coordinator
Judy McClland, Merchandise Manager
Rick Boggs, Webmaster
Leo Knoblauch, Parade Coordinator
Contact any of the above at
info@honorflightcolumbus.org

Our Mission:

Honor our nation's senior veterans with a trip to Washington, D.C. to visit their war memorials at no cost to them

Share their stories for the benefit of future generations

Celebrate their homecoming, affirming Their allegiance and service to our country

Please remember, if you shop at Kroger, or shop on Amazon you can earn money for Honor Flight Columbus without increasing the price of the goods purchased. Your fuel discount at Kroger isn't affected either. If you aren't signed up, go to the websites and get enrolled.



www.krogercommunityrewards.com



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