



HONOR FLIGHT®

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HonorFlight Rochester Going Strong

It's a new year, and with it comes a new flying season for Honor Flight Rochester. Things are getting underway quickly as we prepare for our scheduled missions this Spring.

With the news of the Honor Flight Buffalo hub closing, it is important to reassure the community that we are still operational. HFR is fiscally strong and we have a large corps of volunteers to sustain our mission.

We have plans to continue flying our World War II, Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War veterans and veterans of any era who suffer a catastrophic illness on a free Honor Flight. We continue to seek veterans from the Greater Rochester area for an Honor Flight.

While HFR is part of the national Honor Flight Network, we are a separate organization. We do our own fundraising and scheduling of Honor Flights. HFR's territory is east of Buffalo and west of Syracuse and down the Southern Tier.

We should also consider it possible that others in Buffalo could revive the program there. In the past, HFR volunteers assisted other New York cities establish their Honor Flight hubs.

Thanks to the generosity of the Greater Rochester community – Honor Flight Rochester has three missions scheduled for the Spring:

Mission 46 (April 30 – May 1)

Mission 47 (May 21 – May 22)

Mission 48 (June 18 – June 19)

So please continue to get the word out, and encourage veterans to sign up and apply to fly with us.

Latest News

Volunteer Party a Great Success!

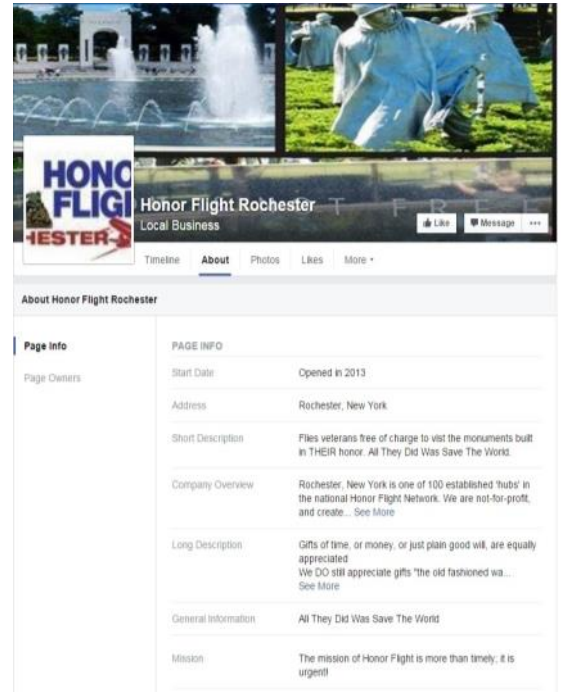
Thank you to all of our volunteers, veterans and families who attended the Volunteer Party on the 16th of January. A great time was had by all! Below are some of the photos from the event.



HFR Facebook Hits Milestone

Our Honor Flight Rochester Facebook page hit a new milestone on December 4 with, 2,000 likes, reported Heather Henry, who manages the HFR Facebook. It has grown since then, and that means more than 2,000 people are following the page, see the posts and pictures, and interact with our page. “Thank you all for allowing me to help maintain it,” said Heather. “I really am honored to be a part of Honor Flight and I appreciate the ability to interact with so many people as part of such a wonderful organization.”

The HFR Facebook page can be found at www.facebook.com/HonorFlightRochester and does not require a Facebook login to view.



Operation Taps

Operation Taps is a nationally recognized local organization, run by long time Honor Flight Rochester supporter Tom Allen, of Prime Time Brass. While not affiliated with Honor Flight Rochester, Operation Taps is a program that may be of interest to our volunteers and veterans.

The objective of Operation Taps is “To promote Taps bugler volunteerism among the civilian brass playing community, and to encourage music organizations to proactively connect with their communities to pay tribute to America's Military Heroes.”

While every American that has served in the US Armed Forces has the right to a full military honors funeral, including the playing of Taps, hundreds of thousands are buried each year without this honor. Operation Taps aims to encourage musicians to become involved, and to ensure that a live Taps bugler can be made available for this important service.



More information about Operation Taps can be found on their website at www.operationtaps.org



Veteran Memories—Peter “Harmonica Pete” DuPré

During his senior year of high school, Peter “Harmonica Pete” DuPré worked full-time at Bausch and Lomb (B&L) doing binocular repair. One of the bombs at Pearl Harbor had hit the binocular supply for the Pacific fleet, and every set needed adjustment. At B&L, Pete was trained by “a cute little blonde girl from Franklin High” named Jane Szelag. They were married for 70 years, and had 5 children (four boys and a girl), and all but one lives in the Rochester area. Pete went back to work at B&L after the war and later worked at Prudential. He retired early and they moved to Florida due to Jane’s health.



With Jane on their 50th Anniver-

Pete was the eldest of four orphaned boys, and while his work at B&L earned him a deferment, he turned it down when it came up again. By then, his brother Dave was a bombardier in the Air Force, Paul was in the Marines, and Tommy was in the Army.

While Pete’s initial Army assignment was going to be in binocular repair, he was sent to Ft. Bragg as part of an effort to create a mobile hospital there. He was later deployed to the Army’s 114th General Hospital in Kidderminster, England. Pete says, “Think of M.A.S.H. with more room and more equipment”. He somberly recalls “There were huge numbers of soldiers with terrible, terrible wounds during the Battle of the Bulge” and that the staff joked about “working 40 hours a day”.

Pete and his brother Dave were able to get together in England a couple of times before Dave’s plane was shot down and he became a POW. After he was liberated by Gen. Patton’s spearhead, Dave called Pete’s number and asked for “Cpl. DuPré”. Pete (who had been promoted since their last meeting), responded, “This is Sgt. DuPré”. Dave responded, “Well, damn it, this is Lt. DuPré!”

Like so many other WWII veterans, Pete had reservations about traveling on an HFR trip because he had not been on the front lines. However, his work as a medic helped ensure that wounded soldiers from the front line could get back “with the boys” as quickly as possible. Pete’s grandson was his guardian for his honor flight on MI 15 (April 8-9, 2011), and his nephew who was stationed at the Pentagon was able to meet them. Unfortunately, the weather for their trip was very chilly with freezing rain, but Pete is still thankful that he went. He was impressed with the reception at BWI, thought that the Korean Memorial was the most authentic, and said that the banquet was a high point. The weather was so bad that Arlington Cemetery was closed—the HFR buses were escorted in by two security vehicles so our veterans could at least see some of the monuments. The only other movement at Arlington that day was the marching of the Honor Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns.



Pete has traveled with The Greatest Generation Foundation on the three most unbelievable trips of his life: to Bastogne, where he and fellow HFR veteran Jack Foy met the King and Queen of Belgium; to Germany in October, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of the war; and to Pearl Harbor in December. Pete will include anecdotes of these trips and other life events in his upcoming autobiography WWII Incidentally. You can find videos on YouTube of him playing “God Bless America” in the elevator of Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest and playing “America the Beautiful” at the *Arizona* Memorial (*left*). Pete will don a tuxedo for an upcoming trip to D.C. in April to play his harmonica at the Luke’s Wings Heroes Gala.

Mail Bag: Letters from Veterans and Family



I know, as a guardian, that the trip with my dad would be emotional—perhaps even life-altering, but what I didn't anticipate was the impact of seeing our fellow countrymen's appreciation of his service through his eyes... the smile on his face and the deliberateness of his handshake.

He turned to me as we walked into the International Room at the airport and whispered, "You know, I think I mattered, Honey."

Yes, these veterans mattered. Thank you for showing them so.

To our Mission 44 crew: job well done, all.

With heartfelt admiration,

Tracy W.

Dear Mr. Stewart,

Thank you and your Honor Flight staff for providing me with a great trip to Washington, D.C. this past October 24th and 25th.

This was the first time in 63 years anyone had thanked me for my service in the US Army. Honor flight did that.

Thank you again,

John B.

Honor Flight 44,

There are no words to express the joy and excitement of the Honor Flight #44.

We started fresh and came home beat. But a welcoming party made it all worthwhile. Everything from the time we left Rochester until our return was phenomenal.

Thank you. Like the little boy said to his daddy, "Can we do it again, Daddy?"

Yours Truly,

Ed M.

Cpl. USMC

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Talks & Ground Events

- Mar 19-20 Rochester Home & Garden show
- Mar 30 *Legacy @ Park Crescent*
- May 14 Avon Rotary Blue Jean Ball
- Apr 16 *Rochester Blue Star Mothers*
- May 11 *Retired Men's and Women's Club of Greater Rochester*
- July 18-23 Allegany County Fair
- Aug 4 Deer Run Winery benefit
- Aug 8 4th. Annual HFR Golf Tournament @ Locust Hill Golf Course
- Sep 16 BOMA Golf Tournament

*(Talks in italics)

2016 Flying Schedule



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|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Mission 46 | April 30 - May 1 |
| Mission 47 | May 21-22 |
| Mission 48 | June 18-19 |

Please visit our website for information about the Spring Welcome Homes!



Inspiring ideas for inside and out.

A Message from Rich



Thank you volunteers for a truly outstanding year! In 2015 our six missions were filled with 314 veterans. Without question each veteran had their “trip of a lifetime.” Since 2008 when the Rochester Hub was formed, 2121 veterans have taken their Honor Flight. This heartwarming success is because of you. Your commitment and tireless dedication continues to make sure that each veteran is provided the best experience possible.

On January 16th we held our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration at the Millennium Lodge at Canal Park. A great time was had by all and the turnout was big with 130 in attendance. We started off by socializing with appetizers then followed with a dinner of pizza, wings and desserts. To our credit we kept a concise program with board chairman Peter Glennon, president Rich Stewart and vice president of operations John Burns all expressing the highest levels of gratitude to you volunteers.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Colonel Woody Mench Volunteer of the Year Award to Rick and Laurie Palmer. They received the award as a team, unfortunately Rick was home sick so Laurie accepted for both of them with Rick connected by cell phone. This is the first time a husband and wife have shared the honor. Both are exemplary in what they do, Rick as a flight leader and Laurie as a safety leader. Their history and activities reach back to our early years as a hub. In fact, they even helped set up the first Syracuse Honor Flight. In carrying on Woody’s legacy of passion for veterans, his wife Marion presented the award. The next time you see Rick or Laurie please congratulate them for all they do for Honor Flight.

The crescendo of the evening’s camaraderie was the harmonica playing of veteran Pete Dupre. His rendition of America the Beautiful was a truly patriotic moment and kept us all with rapt attention. Last month while at the USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor, Pete played this solo that went viral on the internet. At 92 years of age, Pete is an inspiration for all of us.

As for the future, please be on the lookout for the March date and place of the Volunteer Kickoff. This is a great way to learn what opportunities are available in Honor Flight and express your interest to the leaders of those areas. Our next mission will be the weekend of April 30th/May 1st and I look forward to seeing you then. This promises to be another great year for Honor Flight Rochester.

Once again, thank you volunteers.

Best regards,

Rich Stewart

**Have a question, comment, or something to share?
DROP US A LINE!**

VolunteerHonorFlightROC@gmail.com

**Thank a
Veteran!**

This newsletter is brought to you by the Volunteer Resource Committee.