



NEWSLETTER

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VETERAN SALUTE TED ELLSTROM

BY CHARLES DeROLLER

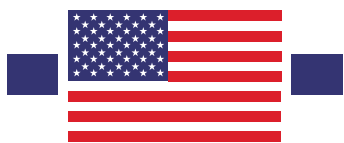
Ted “the Crazy Swede” Ellstrom describes his service time as “a varied career.” Most people would likely describe it as “terrifying,” though it didn’t start out that way.

Mr. Ellstrom graduated in 1940, “during the scare period” he says. Still, despite the foreboding of war, he was caught off guard upon hearing of the December 7th, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Navy. “Where the heck is that?” he asked about Oahu, Hawaii. But Ted didn’t wait for an answer, he traveled to Pope Airfield and enrolled in the Army Air Corps.

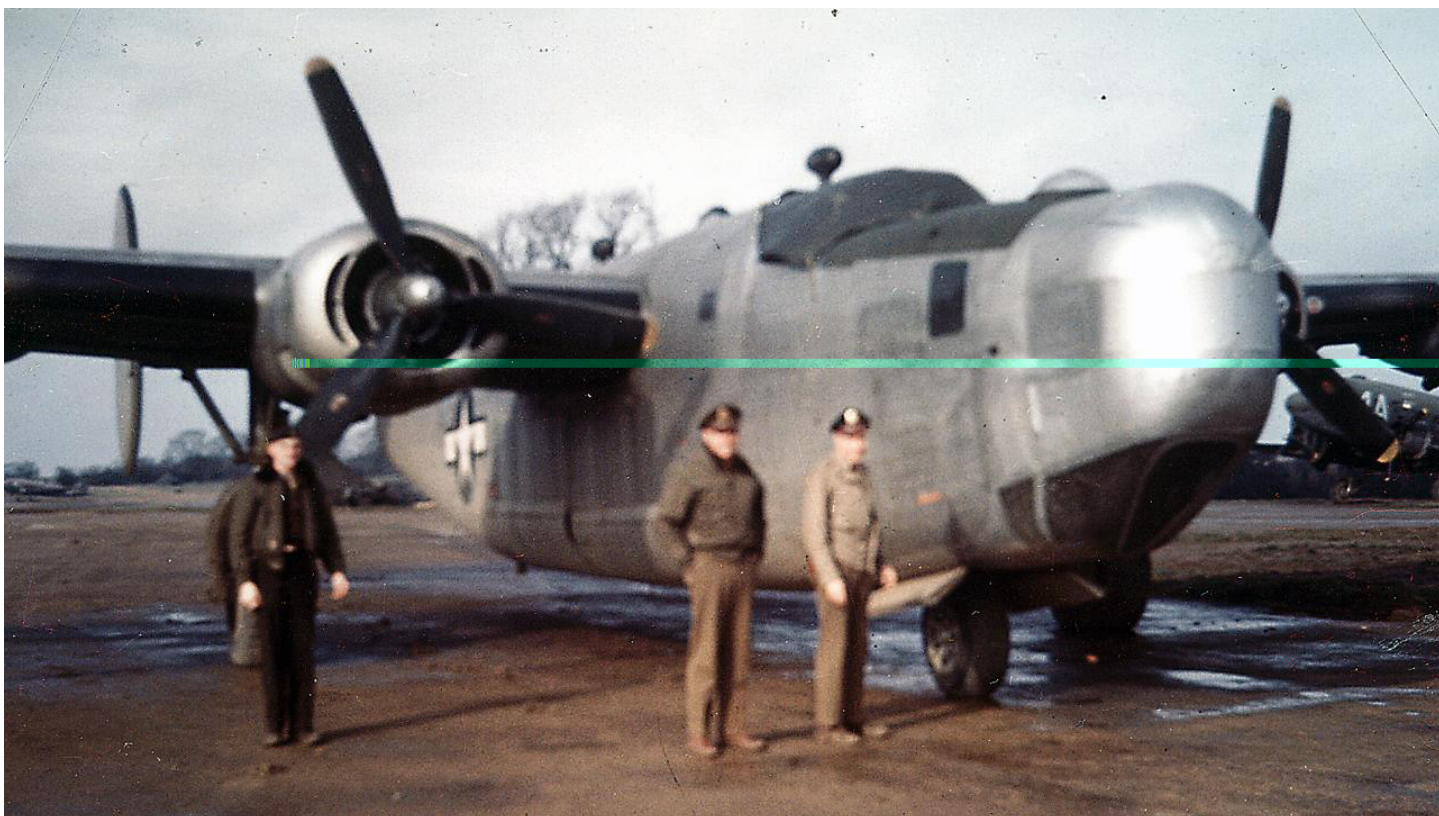
Actually, Mr. Ellstrom’s initial assignment wasn’t that bad – it was cushy, in fact. Being a talented musician, Ted was assigned to the 28th Division band, with which he toured with Bob Hope and Frances Langford!

But all great things end, and thus “The Crazy Swede” was sent to India and trained as a radio operator & navigator on “the heavies,” that is, the big bombers. As such, Mr. Ellstrom was trained to pilot the aircraft (though, oddly he never did.)

By that time the Japanese forces had blocked land travel from India to China, so there was only one way to resupply American forces in



**WE LEAVE NO
VETERAN BEHIND**



China – by air. Unfortunately, a challenge almost as bad as the Japanese faced the US fliers – the 16,000 ft peaks of the Himalayas, better known as “The Hump.”

Ted was to make this journey over The Hump sixty-nine times. Not dangerous enough? Ted’s aircraft was the Consolidated C-109, a B-24 bomber converted to carry fuel. Not just any fuel – 100 octane aircraft fuel. Unarmed. Unescorted by fighter aircraft. His greatest concern though was the return trip, with massive fuel tanks filled with nothing but fumes. He refers to this as “scary.” Naturally, the Japanese would attack the American fuel aircraft, rising from airfields in Burma. Though fired upon, Ted’s aircraft was never brought down. Sadly, 1,659 servicemen were killed flying The Hump.

Ted Ellstrom flew home from the war in 1946. Twice. As an airman aboard a C-54 transport aircraft, he shuttled injured US troops back to the continental US on both “returns.” With a sister in Penfield, NY, Ted settled in the Rochester area, eventually with a career as a psychologist. Ted also continued with public service, narrating his harrowing wartime experiences in a presentation titled “The Hump” to thousands at various regional educational events. Mr. Ellstrom has also accompanied veteran supporter Gary Sinise to New Orleans.

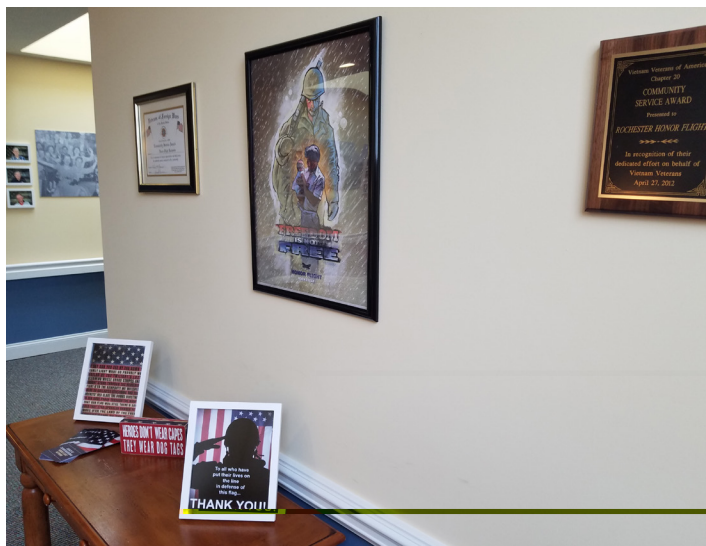
To thank Mr. Ellstrom for his service, Honor Flight Rochester flew Ted, accompanied by his daughter Heidi, at no cost to visit the WWII memorials in Washington D.C. The arrival in the Capital, says Mr. Ellstrom, was a “grand parade!” He was impressed at the effort by HFR, thanking the volunteers for “doing everything we asked”, and noting the “beautiful accommodations, everything was top notch!” He extends his thanks to the many sponsors of HFR, recognizing their contribution as “doing more than their part.”

Given his journey from young boy to bomber navigator, musical tours with Bob Hope, and sixty-nine round-trip flights over The Hump in a “flying bomb” it is accurate, but perhaps understated, when Mr. Ellstrom describes his career as “varied.” With that level of humility, one must wonder what that young Ted did to earn the moniker “Crazy Swede.” While we’re not going to ask, we at Honor Flight Rochester do sincerely offer our thanks to you, Ted Ellstrom, for your service, your sacrifice, and for permitting our community to honor you with a flight to the WWII memorials.

LEGACY AT CLOVER BLOSSOM - THANK YOU

Thank you Legacy at Clover Blossom for establishing a Veterans Hall.

This is a permanent display of veteran photos with HFR memorabilia set up early in 2020. It is located on their second floor. Due to Covid-19 this area is currently restricted to residents only.



WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

HFR's Facebook photo series began with the April 2020 flight suspension. It helps keep the fires burning until flights resume. So far eighty batches of pics are online. Our protocol is for the veteran to be together with their guardian in each pic. Please send new photos to Publicity @HonorFlightRochester.org.

Further, I thought you would be interested in some of the many comments received:

- My grandfather still talks about it with such love to this very day, we all cherish these pictures and HFR.
- Love my Dad's stories from his time at the Naval Academy.
- This trip was a much needed break from a hard year. Honor flight was the morale boost our entire family needed. I could never thank enough the HFR staff for the hard work they do to ensure a great trip and so many memories.
- Thank you for all you do for our veterans. Praying you can continue your missions soon.
- Her Honor Flight was certainly one of the highlights of her later years! She was 95 when we traveled! It remains a wonderful memory for all of us! Thank you for all that you do!
- The group that assisted were amazing and gave him an experience he will never forget. The picture of Dad and me at the Korean War Memorial is one of his favorites. It hangs on the wall and is the profile picture he has on Facebook.
- Thank you for doing this. It's so important to keep the spirit of HFR alive until the missions resume.
- Proud moment when Dad and I ran into a retired Captain of the USS Lake Champlain ship named after the original USS Lake Champlain decommissioned aircraft carrier. Dad was on the original ship and they were sharing stories.
- This pic was after walking the Korean Memorial wall where Dad touched almost every engraving along the wall, then a little guy about 9 years old comes up all on his own, shakes Dad's hand and thanks him for his service! Priceless!!
- We cannot thank the people of Honor Flight enough for the amazing time we had on M56. Everything about it was perfect. I know Honor Flight is all about the Veterans but I have to say it was a life changing event for me also. HFR truly went above and beyond and exceeded all expectations. I am so grateful for this opportunity to share this time with my Father and to be able to honor him and all the amazing veterans. Thank you so much HFR and all our veterans!!
- My Dad did NOT want the day to end. He refused to go to bed. He told me that sharing the Honor Flight trip with me had been one of the best days of his life. And I got to tell him that it had been one of my best days too. Thank you for giving my Dad his best day and a wonderful cherished memory for me.
- I was deeply moved by the respect and care the Honor Flight crew extended to our veterans and my Father. It was a magnificent experience and such a wonderful way to show our veterans how much their sacrifices mean to us and how thankful we are for their service.
- I want to thank you again for allowing me to be part of your honoring our veterans. It goes without saying that when their tour of duty was completed, they came back home and stepped right into their civilian lives to earn a living. No one was there to express our gratitude in a manner they so deserved. Honor Flight is an amazing way to show this and provides the opportunity for the veterans' children to be a part of extending that thank you, too.
- Dad was never one to consider himself a hero or celebrity. Family always came first to him! He was surprised, and moved to tears (as was I) by the greeting at the Rochester airport. Honor Flight gave dad an opportunity to reflect upon his service and see it as an important contribution to family and country.
- LOVE the idea of sharing pictures of my favorite veteran; particularly during times when, more than ever, we need something to smile about... something that brings us joy.
- I love this idea! I was lucky enough to take my grandfather on M21. This truly was a trip of a lifetime. I am a teacher and since that trip my students have written letters almost every year to veterans going on the Honor Flight. This is something obviously very near and dear to my heart so I am happy to share anything that might help you guys get more publicity on my social media!
- I had the pleasure to escort my Father to Washington, DC with the Honor Flight. My son who lives in DC and my daughters who live in Milwaukee surprised my Dad at the WWII Memorial. We all had a wonderful time honoring my Dad and all the other veterans! Thank you so much for providing this wonderful opportunity!
- Many times during our day in Washington, I was moved to tears of the respect and dignity shown to our treasured Veterans from other tourists and servicemen. This generation never felt that they were heroes, just doing what was needed to Save the World as young Americans.

The Wheelchair was not fast enough for WWII veteran Lois P (Army) M17 June 2011.



- I was blessed to attend as my father's guardian on M25 Honor Flight is a wonderful program and I just "gush" over it whenever I tell someone about it. I wish I'd captured some photos in the airports of the women in WWII era clothing kissing the veterans on the cheek and little children shaking their hands. They received a "Rock Star" treatment wherever they went! Mission #25 Honor Flight to Washington D.C is something I'll cherish forever.

New mission photos of veterans with their guardians may be sent to Publicity@HonorFlightRochester.org.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Real ID Effective October 1, 2021

Compliance required to pass through TSA checkpoints by all Veterans, Guardians, Flight Crew and Gate Side volunteers.

REAL ID



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Thank you Volunteers for your continued patience. This is greatly appreciated. Eventually we will resume flying again as soon as it is SAFE to do so. Just like last year HFR continues to monitor all the guidelines. I encourage you to be mission ready by possessing REAL ID which is a requirement of the Transportation Security Administration. Your old forms of ID will not be sufficient to get through TSA checkpoints.

Monroe County and New York State provide plenty of guidance. Additionally, there are a myriad of other entities with their own requirements which we must follow including the DC Park Police, CDC, Arlington Cemetery, Memorials, Southwest Airlines, Hilton Hotels, Eyre Bus Company, Airports (ROC and BWI) and Honor Flight Network. There may be more.

My promise to you is that HFR will be mission ready when all of the supporting organizations determine they are ready for our business. Please be patient.

Further I thought you would be interested in some highlights from 2020.

National Broadcast of Honor Flight Heroes Documentaries

This began as a fledgling relationship at Del Lago's Home & Garden Show. Due to rain and strong winds attendance was disappointing, however the HFR volunteers reached out to those few who weathered that storm. This connection led to the production of nationally broadcasted documentaries on Discovery's American Heroes Channel. Thank you due to Greg Foust and Event Volunteers including the Dolls. Featured Flown Veterans were "Hollywood" Harold Stryker and "Curly" Philip Voystock from M67.

Lawn Sign Program for 1000 Fly List Veterans

Initiated by Dave Timmons

Veterans Hall Established at Legacy Clover Blossom 2nd Floor

Selected photos and HFR memorabilia on permanent display

Honor Flight Rochester Facebook Photo Series

"Why We Do What We Do" photos with over eighty batches submitted

National Chairman Dave Nichols Stepped Down at End of 2020

Dave served for three and a half years as the Chairman/President of the Honor Flight Network, and even longer as a member of the National HFN Board of Directors. As a show of appreciation many hubs along with Rochester sent their challenge coins directly to Dave. The new national chairman is Bill Welser.

Stay safe,

Rich Stewart

