



Your Safety is Paramount

NEWSLETTER

Volume 11 • Issue 4 • December 2021

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VETERAN SALUTE ROGER HILL

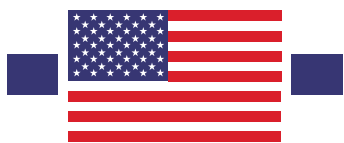
BY CHARLES DeROLLER

Roger Hill is a combat veteran of “The Forgotten War,” the war fought in Asia officially known as the Korean War. Not unlike the quiet that surrounds the Korean War, Roger isn’t quick to share his experiences, particularly the traumatic events. He’s proud of his service, and his musical talents, and particularly his support of Honor Flight Rochester. This is Roger’s story.

As a student at Eastman School of Music in 1951, 19 year-old Roger Hill wanted to serve his country, though was somewhat concerned about the risks of combat. Roger followed what certainly is a reasonable middle ground, and enlisted in the US Army, bound for the 8th Army band. But before the band received him Roger would journey through the hells of war.

As he tells it, Roger’s story starts like that of a typical GI in 1951. Boot camp, year of guard duty, convoys, and mop-ups. Nights in the mountains were 40 degrees below zero, with 50 below wind chill; wearing WWII issue clothing and suffering frostbite. The food, C rations date stamped to WWII, were less than appealing. But Roger says if you’re hungry enough, anything tastes good. Same complaints many vets voice!

Like the story of the Forgotten War, Roger’s story opens as one listens. He doesn’t share chronologically - the worst stories come last. As he relates his experiences to this author, 89 year-old Roger is choked up from recalling horrible memories and nightmares. I’m crying from pity for this 19 year-old kid; hell, I’m crying now putting his words to paper,



**WE LEAVE NO
VETERAN BEHIND**

minus the details. I'd like to write about Roger's life in the Army band, but instead Pfc Roger Hill has been in Korea only a few hours and is lying on the floor of a troop train, surrounded by the dead bodies of his comrades after being ambushed. Even after making it to the Army band in 1952, it wasn't over: Roger's truck was hit by artillery, with him trapped in the fire. His story isn't one for a Hollywood happy ending. But as Roger says, "Freedom isn't Free."

The shining light in Roger's story is Honor Flight Rochester. Like many vets, upon discharge Roger Hill got nothing. No thank you, no parade, no ceremonies. It wasn't until decades later during Roger's trip to Washington D.C. with Honor Flight Rochester Mission 35 that he finally received that recognition. "I finally got that Thank You," Roger says. The homecoming welcome at the airport he describes as "Mind-blowing, unreal. It was heartwarming" to be received by hundreds of people.

Roger's participation with Honor Flight didn't stop there. These days you'll find him at many events including homecomings, fundraisers, and the Purple Painted Lady Art Festival. He reports that HFR appreciates his contributions, telling him to "look pretty" since he's representing HFR and veterans. "I think the world of everyone at Honor Flight Rochester. I want to do for other vets what they did for me."

Fine words from an admirable man about a noble organization. Thanks to Roger Hill, those like him, and the many supporters and sponsors, we all strive to continue Roger's vision of honoring the veterans who served our country. Thank you, Roger, for your service to our country and your continued service to your Band of Brothers with Honor Flight Rochester.



REAL ID UPDATE

On April 27th the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that DHS is extending the Real ID enforcement date by 19 months, from October 1, 2021 to May 3, 2023, due to circumstances resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS!

MEET: TRACY WILLIAMS TRAVEL PLANNER

"My dad was a WWII Navy Veteran and had been asked in 2014 to carry the American flag in a Memorial Day parade while living in Cleveland, OH. I had driven out to walk along beside him and was approached by their local HF team to accompany him on a flight. Long story short, because our extended family all lived in Rochester, I became involved in our own Hub and I accompanied him, as his Guardian, on HFR Mission 44. I chose to volunteer because I couldn't imagine doing anything more worthwhile after I witnessed the comradery, genuine support and unique humbleness amongst those I accompanied. I'm reminded of our Veterans' sacrifices each and every time I share my time at an event. That and it gives me an opportunity to spread the word of how worthy an organization HFR is!"



After retiring from a lengthy career at Kodak, I was looking for a way to keep myself involved in the 'real world' and thought I could apply my 'Koda-skills' to HFR. Voila! I LOVE the position of Travel Planner; arranging the flights, bus transportation, hotel accommodations, Arlington visits and, of course, lunch. :-)

I lost my dad in March, 2017. When we came home from Mission 44 in the Fall of 2015, after deplaning and being reminded that the 'Welcome Home' ceremony was long overdue for many of the Veterans on our flight, the double doors at the airport opened to the estimated 2,000 strong crowd gathered, and it literally took my dad's breath away. He grabbed my right forearm and told me it was one of the few times in his entire life that he felt as though 'he mattered.' What that moment must've meant to him. My right forearm has the word Matter tattooed on it such that I am reminded EVERY single day to do things in my life that matter - to make my dad proud. Like being a part of Honor Flight Rochester."

MEET: BRUCE PHILPOTT MISSION STAFFING

"In 2012, I learned about Honor Flight Rochester in the newspaper. My dad was a World War II Army Air Corps veteran living at The Legacy in Victor—an Honor Flight sponsor. Some of his fellow residents had flown on an HFR Mission. I signed him up without his knowledge, and went on Mission 21 as my dad's guardian. He enjoyed it immensely and I was so impressed by the efficiency of the operation and the volunteer staff. I felt a need to volunteer to help other vets enjoy the same experience and signed up with HFR after returning from that flight."

I started volunteering at Welcome Home events, Mission departures, and eventually was asked if I had interest in working as a Mission flight crew member. I jumped at the opportunity and have been honored to fly on number of missions in various roles. This summer, I was offered the opportunity to be Mission Staffing Director, responsible for staffing Mission crews with our volunteers, and was honored to accept that new role."

I enjoy many aspects of volunteering with HFR. We have top shelf, caring and compassionate volunteers who truly enjoy what they do, regardless of what role they play in the organization. They are a joy to work with. I always like hearing the veterans' stories about their service experiences. And finally, I love the reactions of the veterans during the mission when they are applauded or thanked by service members or fellow citizens. I am grateful to be part of this outstanding organization and look forward to resuming our Mission flights as soon as safely possible."

My dad passed away in September 2020 at age 97. He was proud of his military service and always had fond memories of his Honor Flight Rochester experience."



Bruce Philpott and his father, the late Richard Philpott, April 21, 2012, HFR Mission 21.

MEET: MARY GAVIGAN EVENTS COORDINATOR

"I am very new to Honor Flight, just came on board in April of 2021. I have not been on a flight or volunteered before this time but I did volunteer at the Purple Painted Lady Festival and Elks BBQ this year. I recently retired from the Town of Parma where I was the Finance and the HR director for 20 years.

With this retirement, I told myself I would like to do something that is very important to me and give back.

I know this is too long of a story but we have forgotten about the older generation that did so much and they never asked for anything back. Through listening to a couple of veterans tell their story about the war it took me by surprise what they have lived through and I knew that I have found what I needed to do. They may think that what they have done is not much but I am very blessed to talk with each and every one of these veterans!

Fun fact - I am one of six daughters to a farmer and veteran!"



WE LOVE WHAT WE DO!

ROCHESTER ELKS LODGE #24 CHICKEN BBQ



ELVIS NIGHT



TAHOU CUP - UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER



PURPLE PAINTED LADY FESTIVAL



MISSION BBQ GRAND OPENING



Harold Stryker and Bud Long Mission BBQ Grand Opening

WWII Veterans "Hollywood" Harold Stryker (Okinawa) and Bud Long (D-Day) were treated to lunch as part of Mission BBQ restaurant grand opening. Later at "Hollywood" Harold's home, the photo at right, shows some recent exploits. Two episodes of the American Heroes Channel docu-series Honor Flight Heroes feature Harold.



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

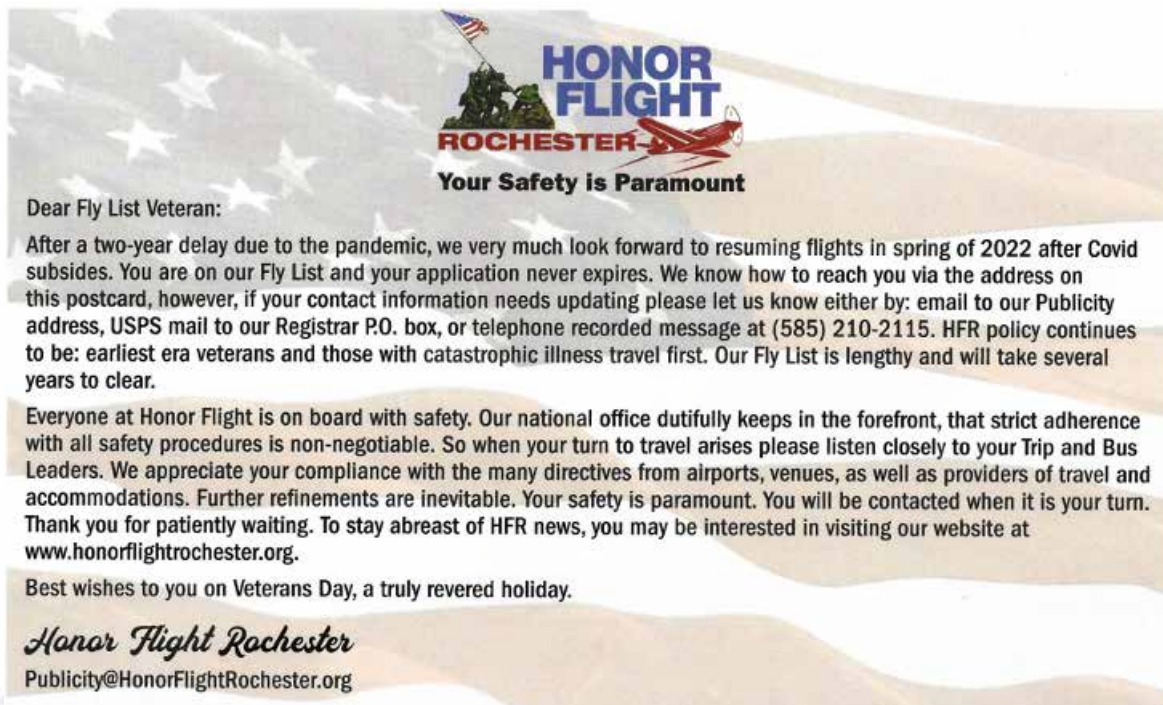
Dear Volunteers:

Season's greetings and thank you for keeping abreast of our curtailed activities during the pandemic. As you know HFR has a single purpose to take Veterans to their memorials in Washington, D.C. along with providing support to organizations/individuals that conduct fundraisers on our behalf. Yes, it is difficult that our Missions are on pause for the last two years and our Events Calendar significantly reduced. The safety of our veterans and volunteers is paramount.



I am looking forward to a much brighter and active year for Honor Flight Rochester. We have terrific plans. I anticipate to release an official announcement on flight status in late January based on what we will know at that time. Covid in Monroe County will be a consideration.

You may be interested in our Veterans Day postcard mailed to 1084 Fly List Veterans reminding them that they are not forgotten. Quite a few responded back with updates to their contact information.



This postcard has the most up-to-date information for spreading the word. Thank you to all in the HFR family for your many contributions of time and talent. And as always, keep in mind that Honor Flight Rochester Facebook is a convenient way to stay involved by registering your "Likes". I believe the coming year holds great promise.

Best holiday wishes,

Rich Stewart
President & CEO