



NEWSLETTER

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VETERAN'S SALUTE - BOB THOMPSON

BY CHARLES DeROLLER

Vietnam veteran Bob Thompson finally flew with Honor Flight Rochester to the memorials in Washington D.C. on Mission 74 in October 2022. Finally, because he took a very long time to get to that point.

But first, about U.S. Army Sergeant Thompson. Born into an Irish immigrant family, Bob Thompson was raised to be respectful and proud of his country. His father would accept no less, with the rule "Never disgrace the United States of America." And Bob never did. As an athlete at Wheatland-Chili High School, Bob earned a scholarship to a college in Boston following graduation in 1966. Mid-studies, Bob had to return to the Rochester area, so he transferred to Brockport Community College. But Bob had to wait a semester before enrollment - and that's when he was drafted. Bob's father - the Irish immigrant and American patriot - stopped him on the way to the airport and shocked Bob by saying "Don't do this, we will go to Canada." Bob responded, that no, he could do this. And he did. From Ft. Dix to Ft. Sill, then on to Vietnam. And Bob was so honored when he landed in Vietnam! There seemed to be a crowd, cheering to welcome him! Instead, they were cheering because they were leaving on that airplane.

That was February 1969. Trained in artillery, Bob's education factored into his move to artillery direction from a helicopter. Later, Bob served in Air Mobility, moving artillery by helicopter into combat zones. It was there, at LZ Sherry, that Bob was shot and earned his first Purple Heart. Bob's second Purple Heart event wasn't long after. Awakening in the hospital in Cam Ranh Bay, he had been hit by a mortar round which destroyed his knee cap. Bob had been in Vietnam for four months.

Back in the U.S. and undergoing a series of surgeries, Bob was delighted with a visit from the NY Mets, followed by a surprise bus ride to Game 5 of the World Series. Finally, in 1970, Bob was discharged. Walking with



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**WE LEAVE NO
VETERAN BEHIND**

a cane, Bob sought to fly home to see his parents, and Allegheny Airlines "made" him a seat in first class, where he met the CEO of Jell-O. Upon arrival, the CEO gave Bob a ride to his family home, with the parting words "You should have had a parade."

That takes us to Mission 74. Bob FINALLY got on an Honor Flight Rochester mission. But it wasn't because he just discovered Honor Flight Rochester, and it wasn't because he had to wait. You see, Vietnam veteran Bob Thompson had been a supporter of Honor Flight Rochester for more than a decade. He arranged events, sponsorship, and helped to raise over \$200,000 in donations. Bob didn't go on any of the previous 73 Honor Flight Rochester missions because he "thought others deserved it more."

Yes, that's right. The athlete, college student, draftee, twice wounded, Vietnam veteran, and Honor Flight Rochester supporter "thought others deserved it more." The Jello-O CEO was right: Bob surely had earned a parade. It took a while - both due to time and obstinance, but finally in October 2022 Bob Thompson got his WELCOME HOME! surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren.

Welcome home, Bob, from Honor Flight Rochester Mission 74!



ACCESS TO HFR MISSION & EVENT PHOTOS

Rochester Honor Flight Photo Webpage

To view Mission photos and photos from HFR events, navigate to the HFR homepage and click on the camera icon.

From there, you can view and download photos.

Sign up for our Newsletter

If you are not on the HFR Newsletter distribution list and would like to be, please send an email to: HFRnewsletter@gmail.com and let us know your email address. We will put you on our mailing list to receive our newsletter. You



can also find the newsletter on the Rochester Honor Flight News page <https://honorflightrochester.org/news/>.

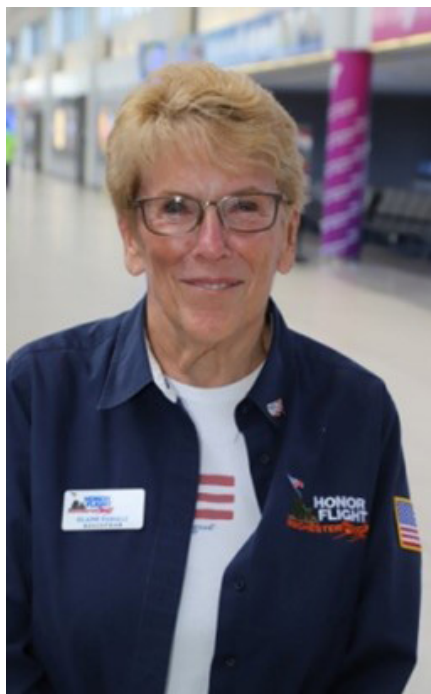
Honor Flight Facebook Page

Please also join us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HonorFlightRochester>. You can view current posts on the HFR Facebook page.

INTERVIEW WITH ELAINE FAHSELT

Meet Elaine Fahselt, the 2023 Woody Mench Honor Flight Rochester Volunteer of the Year!



The spotlight this issue shines on one of our longtime volunteers, Elaine Fahselt. Chances are you have met and talked with Elaine at Departure, Welcome Home or any number of fund raising events. She seems to be everywhere when it comes to Honor Flight Rochester!

Always warm, friendly, energetic with a smile on her face, Elaine

personifies Honor Flight Rochester. And just like Honor Flight Rochester, Elaine loves our wonderful veterans!

Over the years, Elaine has devoted a tremendous amount of time helping out in a variety of ways. From sorting mail, to overseeing donations, to sending out thank you notes, to being HFR's Registrar, to attending every imaginable event, Elaine has been an integral part of the HFR organization for more than a decade.

I had the pleasure of sitting down with Elaine a couple of weeks ago to learn more about what got her involved with Honor Flight Rochester.

Elaine, congratulations on being named the 2023 Woody Mench Honor Flight Rochester Volunteer of the Year.

What does this award mean to you?

I was blown away, what an honor! It caught me completely by surprise. There are so many deserving volunteers. I'm honored to be a part of Honor Flight Rochester.

How did you get involved with HFR?

I was the ticket coordinator for the LPGA tournament and a long time Honor Flight Rochester volunteer, Sally Sackett, encouraged me to volunteer and I did! That was in March of 2012. Like so many others, I was immediately hooked.

Do you have family members who are/were veterans or active military?

Yes my two brothers served.

- Ed Bishop was in the Marine Corp from 1964 to 1968. Achieved the rank of Captain. Ed began his service in the ROTC Program at the University of Louisville. Ed did one tour in Vietnam.
- Elwyn Bishop served in the Navy from 1964 to 1970; 2 years active duty and 4 years in the Reserves. He received an Honorable Discharge in 1970.

What is so special about HFR?

The people. What a great bunch of volunteers, so caring and passionate. It is a family that shares a common purpose of honoring veterans. And it is so much fun.

Have you flown on a mission and if so, in what capacity?

Yes I had the opportunity to fly as a solo guardian three times:

- MISSION 24 September 8-9, 2012
- MISSION 31 September 28-29, 2013
- MISSION 70 April 2-3, 2022

What was your favorite part of the Mission?

You learn so much about the veterans. I would make a point to go around during the trip to talk with as many veterans as I could. Their stories were absolutely amazing and in some cases very poignant. I'm sure I heard some things that the veteran hadn't really shared before.



(l-r) Rich Stewart - President & CEO, Elaine Fahselt, Marion Mench - Widow of Colonel Edwin E. (Woody) Mench, (back row) Peter Glennon, Chairman & Co-founder

What is your favorite HFR event or activity?

I love volunteering and I love the variety of events that Honor Flight has every year. I enjoy being a taxi service for veterans who need a ride to an event. I especially enjoy Welcome Home as I get to see the reaction of the veterans as the community pours out their appreciation. This never gets old!

Tell us something about yourself that people probably don't know.

My family impressed on me at an early age to be someone who helps others. My Mom and Dad lived that by example. They were always helping out in the community. They made quite an impression on me. And now, helping others is what I do and I love it!

What would you like to say to all the HFR volunteers out there?

Enjoy every minute of it. Have fun. And keep volunteering!

What would you like to say to all the veterans?

You veterans did so much for all of us, now we are doing something for you to say thank you!

Well said by a very deserving 2023 Woody Mench Volunteer of the year award winner!

Congratulations Elaine!



REAL ID UPDATE

The Secretary of Homeland Security announced that DHS extended the Real ID enforcement date to May 7, 2025, due to lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



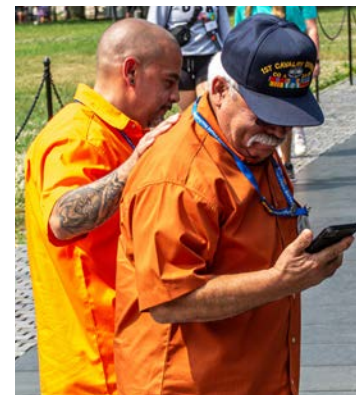
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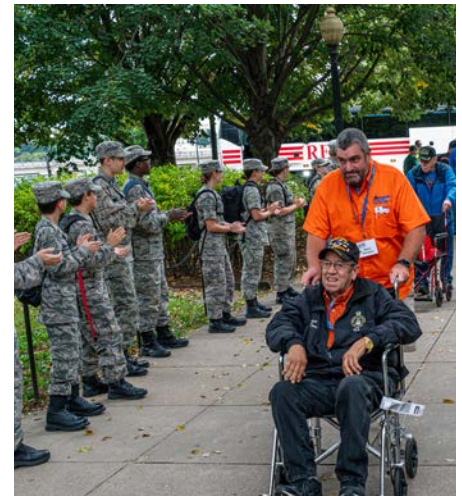
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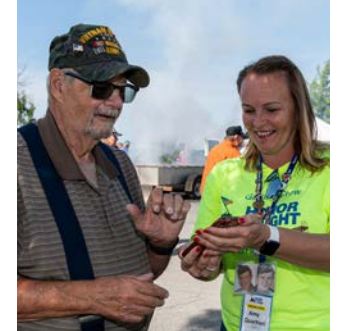


WE LOVE WHAT WE DO!

RED WINGS GAME - AUGUST 25, 2023



CANANDAIGUA RUNNINGS



ELIVS NIGHT - BARNARD EXEMPT



FAIRPORT CANAL DAYS



GREECE BRASSTACULAR



GREECE STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL



HFR VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION DINNER



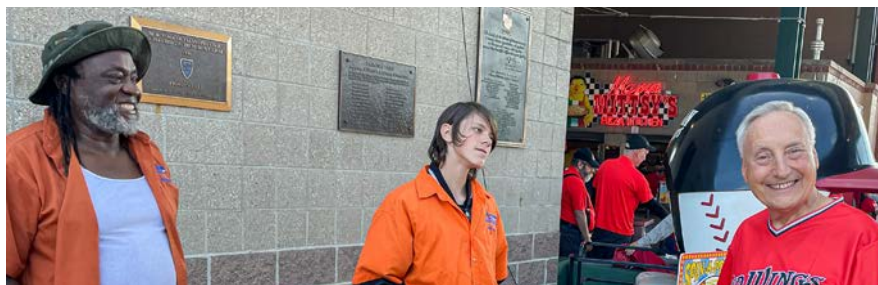
MICHAEL SLATTERY CHARITY BICYCLE RIDE



NAKED DOVE BREWERY



RED WINGS GAME - SEPTEMBER 16, 2023



SHOOTOUT FOR SOLDIERS



SKYCOASTERS TURKEY BASH



HONOR FLIGHT ROCHESTER FUNCTIONAL AREA DIRECTORY

The FAM Directory can also be found on our website under the Leadership heading at HonorFlightRochester.org.

Board Of Directors

Peter Glennon: Chairman, Co-Founder & Legal Counsel
Rich Stewart: President & CEO
Frank Vavrick: Treasurer

Functional Area Management

Events Coordinator: Mary Gavigan
Mission Operations Director: Eric Young **
Mission Staffing Director: Bruce Philpott
Purchasing Coordinator: Morrey Goldman
Registrar: Mary Ellen Brooks
Safety Coordinator: Amy Dickason
Secretary: Dave Timmons**
Travel Planner: Tracy Williams
Treasurer: Frank Vavrick **
President & CEO: Rich Stewart **
Volunteer Resource Committee Coordinator:
Randy Prader

Functional Areas (Alphabetical by Title)

Accounts Payables: Marianne Peckham
Advance Team/Mission Supplies and Lunch:
Bob Henry
Backpacks: Jean Kelly
Chaplain: Reverend George McKnight
Data Systems Support: George O’Gara
Departures: Elmer Brown, Lisa Larkins, Nicole Brown
Donations/Mail Coordinator: Tammy Roberts
Events Coordinator: Mary Gavigan
Facebook Administrator: Heather Henry
Flags of Our Heroes Admin: TBD
IT Database & System Coordinator: Karen Zilora
Living History: Cindy Rickett
Mission Operations Director: Eric Young **
Mission Staffing Director: Bruce Philpott
Mission Safety Equipment: Steve Reiter
Newsletter Editor: Alicia Stoklosa
Newsletter Distribution: Lee Begy
Newsletter Graphic Design: Jill Yanus
Newsletter Veteran Salute Writer: Chuck DeRoller
Name Tag Coordinator: Amy Lissow
Photography Coordinator: Frances McCabe
Photo Mission Books: Chris Reddy
President & CEO: Rich Stewart **
Purchasing Coordinator: Morrey Goldman

Quartermaster Merchandise: Sally Mustaca

Registrar: Mary Ellen Brooks

Safety Coordinator: Amy Dickason

Safety Coordinator Back-up: Bob Wesley

School Liaison/Mail Call: Toni Stevens-Oliver

School Mail Call Pickup Driver: Morrey Goldman

Secretary: Dave Timmons **

Speakers Bureau Coordinator: Steve Wendell

Survey Monkey: Colleen Shallenberger

Travel Planner: Tracy Williams

Treasurer: Frank Vavrick **

Volunteer Resource Committee Coordinator:

Randy Prader

Volunteer Resources Committee/Vol G Mail Account:

Elmer Brown, Randy Prader, Marie Wraight

VRC Committee Support: Elmer Brown

Volunteer Events Leader: Jean Kelly, Mary Beauchamp

Volunteer Orientation: Karen Zilora, Kevin Prinzing

Veteran Mailings:

Donna Prader, Steve Wendell, Randy Prader

Veteran Visits Book Program: Oksana Robinson

Veteran Visits/Book Delivery Members:

Steve Mumby, Tom Lee

Veteran Volunteer Liaison, Morrey Goldman

Veteran Calling Coordinator, Tracey Reiter

Veteran Safety Advisory Council:

Amy Dickason, Laura Johnson, Carole Ann Lee

Website Assistant: Cathy Kester

Welcome Home Community Celebration Liaison:

Cindy Baker

Welcome Home Coordinator: Pat Mason

Welcome Home Veteran Not Flying Coordinator:

Mary Beauchamp

Welcome Home Celebration Support for Dignitaries:

Marsha Lempert

Welcome Home Celebration Support Assistants:

Lee Begy, Heather Henry, Laura Habza, Tom McCarthy,

Janice Perri

Welcome Home Merchandise:

Sally Mustaca, Marianne Peckham

Wheelchairs: John Zink

** Denotes Officer

AUXILIARY SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

HF Dolls: Amy Mooney

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Dear Volunteers:

With each passing year veterans of WWII and Korean War eras are fewer in numbers. Yet, new stories continue to arise about the sacrifices made as well as lasting contributions that affect us today.

I really wish I could have met siblings Willis (d. 2014) and Barbara Ann (d. 2022). Willis served in the Army Air Corps and was a mid-westerner. His sister Barbara lived a quiet life in Rochester for decades. They were part of what has been called the greatest generation. (Willis kneeling front left in the crew photo.)

Recently HFR received a testamentary bequest distribution from the estate of Barbara Ann, the sister of Willis. This will help fund HFR missions. In her will she remembered her brother who served as a Technical Sergeant in the 7th Bomb Squadron that flew in Air Combat offensives over Southern France, Normandy, Northern France and the Rhineland. Willis Griffis received Silver and Bronze Battle Stars.

My information on Willis is limited but here is one personal anecdote from a letter he wrote nearly sixty years after WWII. Willis attended an airshow in Columbus called "The Last Round up" where he proudly



wore his jacket which on the backside was painted his bomber. Repeatedly, Willis posed for pictures by the admiring public who did not know him other than he was an elderly war hero. Per Willis, his greatest pleasure at the airshow was to meet the pilot of a P-51 Mustang. These planes flew aerial escorts for his bomber runs over Europe. Willis said, "I told him that if it was not for guys like him, I might not have lived." I believe that heartfelt thank you reveals a lot about Willis.

Though I never met Willis nor his sister Barbara Ann as both passed away I wanted to share this moving story with all our volunteers. Honor Flight Rochester is about making new friends and my newest friend was a friend of Barbara Ann.

If you know of someone who may be interested in making a bequest, please have them contact me at President@HonorFlightRochester.org.

I wish you a very healthy and happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Rich Stewart
President & CEO
Honor Flight Rochester

