

HONOR FLIGHT

ROCHESTER



NEWSLETTER

A Trip of a Lifetime

Volume 16 • Issue 2 • Summer 2026

VETERANS SALUTE - Larry Strassner



Senator Jeremy A. Cooney selected Greece resident Larry Strassner as his 2026 inductee to the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame recognizes veterans whose service extends far beyond their time in uniform. An induction ceremony was held in May.

“Each year, I have the privilege of inducting a local veteran into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame,” Cooney said in a social media post. “This year’s honoree, Larry ‘Gunny’ Strassner, is nothing short of exceptional. A longtime volunteer throughout Rochester, his service didn’t end with the Marine Corps. I’m humbled to help recognize Gunny for his unwavering dedication to our community and his lifelong commitment to service.”

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Veterans Salute – Larry Strassner *(Continued from page 1)*

Larry Strassner was born on May 22, 1947, in Rochester, New York. He graduated from Edison Tech High School in 1965 and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1966. He served on active duty until 1972 and continued his service in the United States Marine Corps Reserve until 1976, ultimately achieving the rank of E-7, Gunnery Sergeant. Following boot camp, advanced infantry training, and military schooling, Mr. Strassner was first stationed at MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina.

He later served as a Sergeant in Vietnam (Chu Lai) from December 1967 through March 1969 as an Avionics Electrician, maintaining fixed-wing aircraft, including the F4B Phantom II. During this time, Mr. Strassner was assigned to the 1st Marine Air Wing, Marine Air Group 13, VMFA-323 "Death Rattlers." He also flew several missions in the UH-1E "Huey" helicopter as a door gunner. In 1968, he was wounded when a 122mm rocket exploded in his hootch (living quarters).

Mr. Strassner earned numerous commendations, including the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with three devices, Vietnam Campaign Medal with device, Naval Achievement Medal with Combat "V," Purple Heart, Navy Unit Commendation, Combat Action Medal, Presidential Unit Citation Medal, Good Conduct Medal with three devices, Rifle Sharpshooter Badge, Pistol Expert Badge, New York State Conspicuous Service Star, New York State Medal for Merit with Silver Shield, and the New York State Vietnam War Commemorative Medal. He later returned stateside and was stationed at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, before being honorably released from active duty.

Professionally, Mr. Strassner built a distinguished 41-year career with General Motors and Delphi Corporation as a Manufacturing Engineering Supervisor. He furthered his education at the Rochester Institute of Technology, earning degrees in Mechanical Engineering in 1975 and Electrical Technology Engineering in 1985.

A dedicated volunteer, Mr. Strassner designed theatrical stage sets for the Greece Central School District and local theater groups for approximately 12 years, beginning in 2008. He has also served in leadership roles with American Legion Post 468, VFW Post 4658, and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 20. Since 2009, he has been a devoted Honor Flight Rochester volunteer and trip leader, reflecting his unwavering respect for fellow veterans. Mr. Strassner is married to Juliann and has three daughters, Christine, Terri and Rebecca.

[Excerpted from the Westside News](#)

Upcoming Events

September	
5	Punishers Pig Roast - 3:00—11:00 PM Buntsy's 2235 Empire Blvd, Webster, NY
10	BOMA Golf Tournament - 9:30am - 2:30pm The Links at Greystone 1400 Atlantic Ave. Walworth
12	Red Wings with Bruce - 6:00 pm—9:30 pm Red Wing Stadium
19	Honor Flight Mission 97 – September 19-20 Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport 1200 Brooks Ave
19	The Purple Painted Lady Festival - 8:00 am—5:00 pm Palmyra 880 Yellow Mills Road, Palmyra, NY
October	
3	Honor Flight Mission 98 – October 3-4 Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport 1200 Brooks Ave
24	Honor Flight Mission 99 – October 24-25 Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport 1200 Brooks Ave
November	
11	Veterans Day – Fleet Feet Race - 9:30 am – 12:00 pm Mendon Ponds Park Mendon, NY
11	Rochester Veterans Day Parade - 10:00 am – 5:00 pm Details TBD

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 [gallery icon in the top right corner](#). 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

MAIL BAG

To all of Honor Flight Rochester's hundreds of volunteers - THANK YOU! The 2026 HFR Flying Season is off to a fantastic start with Missions 94, 95, 96 and none of it would be possible without all of you. Thank you for your selflessness and dedication - here are just a few examples of "Why We Do What We Do."

21 May, 2026

Dear Honor Flight Volunteers,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to be part of Mission 95. I never in my wildest imaginations thought so many people would give so much time to celebrate with us. It was truly a humbling experience.

The all-women flight/trip was such a wonderful experience as I've always served with so many men as had all the other women veterans. I have included 2 letters. If you would address them and mail them, I would be very appreciative. Thank you again.

MAIL BAG (CONTINUED)

Dear Honor Flight Mission 95 Project Managers,

I would be remiss if I did not thank you all for the trip of a lifetime. I was privileged to be part of the first all-female Honor Flight from Rochester, New York. I went to the Home and Garden Show in March at the Convention Center and came upon the Honor Flight table. I spoke with Donna who encouraged me to apply. I went home and thought about it and after a few weeks decided to register. At the end of April, I received an email from Eric stating that due to someone dropping out I had been offered the spot for the all-female mission. I literally had about 2 weeks to prepare.

From the time we arrived until the end of the trip we were all treated like royalty. I was assigned to Group RED on Bus 1. I met so many wonderful women. I only wish I could have met everyone. Because I have Parkinson's, I had to use a wheelchair most of the time. I was assisted onto the plane by Laura and others and given front row seats. Melissa Martens the photographer, sat with me and my daughter from Rochester to Baltimore. I can't say enough good things about her. I told her I would adopt her. She was so great to me.

The trip was so well organized. We were informed of everything that was going to happen, we were never lacking for drinks or snacks. Of course, visiting all the memorials was the highlight of the trip obviously. From the World War II Memorial until the 911 Pentagon Memorial. Each one was more touching than the next. I especially loved the luncheon at the Military Women's Memorial. Receiving the beautiful awards was a total surprise but much appreciated. Little did we know when Stacy Babcock sat at our table for lunch that we were sitting with a hero. I will never forget her.

I loved the dinner at the end of the day, despite being dead tired. Hearing everyone's experiences over the day and at the dinner brought us all closer. It was great to feel appreciated. For me it brought a lot of closure that I had held in for 49 years.

However, the parade and welcome home ceremony had to be icing on the cake. I was brought to tears. It was spectacular. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect so many people.

Finally, a special shout out to Kim Gould. She is the heart and soul of Honor Flight. I want to thank Donna, our Team RED leader. Thank you to Rebecca Stott and Heather for getting me on and off the bus each time, Wanda, our bus driver, Kelly and Barb, and all the other crew members.

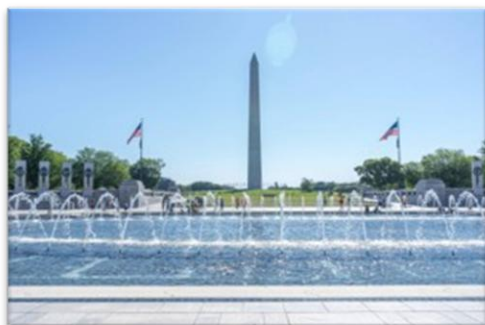
Love,

US Navy Nurse Corps, Retired

Mission 94 Gallery



Mission 95 Gallery



Mission 96 Gallery



2026 Rochester Lilac Festival



2026 Geneseo Air Show



2026 OPERATION STATS



3 Missions Completed/3 To Go

Mission 94: April 18-19, 2026

Mission 95: May 16-17, 2026

Mission 96: June 13-14, 2026

Mission 97: September 19-20, 2026

Mission 98: October 3-4, 2026

Mission 99: October 24-25, 2026

96
MISSIONS
COMPLETED

4939
VETERANS
FLOWN

REAL ID UPDATE

The Secretary of Homeland Security announced that the federal government began enforcing the Real ID requirements on May 7, 2025. Below are helpful tips for New York residents to note:

- New Yorkers with a valid enhanced driver's license do not need to obtain a Real ID to fly domestically or enter federal buildings or military bases.
- Real IDs must be obtained via in person appointments at a DMV location. Monroe County DMV locations include the below:
 - Greece - 152 Greece Ridge Center inside The Mall at Greece Ridge
 - Henrietta - 1225 Jefferson Road.
 - Rochester - 200 E. Main St. (downtown)
- You must bring:
 - Proof of identity (such as a driver's license or passport)
 - Social Security Information (Social Security number, card not required)
 - Bring a proof of date of birth to the DMV to obtain a Real ID compliant document.
 - Two different types of documentation proving New York state residence are also required (such as a utility bill, paycheck stub, bank statement or lease agreement).



HONOR FLIGHT ROCHESTER

FUNCTIONAL AREA DIRECTORY

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

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KIM GOULD President & CEO
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EVENTS COORDINATOR Jim Riter
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TREASURER Frank Vavrick **
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VOLUNTEER RESOURCE COMMITTEE COORDINATOR
Karen Zilora

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DEPARTURES Elmer Brown, Lisa Larkins, Nicole Brown
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IT COORDINATOR Tim Murphy
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NEWSLETTER VETERANS SALUTE WRITER
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SCHOOL MAIL CALL PICKUP DRIVER Morrey Goldman
SECRETARY Dave Timmons **
SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATOR Heather Carvill
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES LIAISON Christopher Baker
SPEAKERS BUREAU COORDINATOR Steve Wendell
SURVEY MONKEY Sharon Thomas
TRAVEL PLANNER Tracy Williams
TREASURER Frank Vavrick **
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VRC VOLUNTEER MAILBOX Donna Prader, Randy Prader
VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION Karen Zilora, Kevin Prinzing
VETERAN MAILINGS Donna Prader, Steve Wendell, Randy Prader
VETERAN VISITS/BOOK DELIVERY 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
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WELCOME HOME COORDINATOR Karen Darrow
WELCOME HOME COORDINATOR ASST Amy Mooney
WELCOME HOME SUPPORT SPECIALISTS Lee Begy, Heather Carvill, Tom McCarthy, Janice Perri, Becky Lombardo, Joy Piekunka, Lani Post, Mary Beauchamp, Jim Riter, Jenilee Visconte
WELCOME HOME VETERAN NOT FLYING COORDINATOR
Mary Beauchamp
WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION SUPPORT FOR
DIGNITARIES Marsha Lempert
WHEELCHAIRS John Zink

Auxiliary Support Organization

HF DOLLS Diana Zielinski

** Indicates an Officer

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Kim Gould, President

A Season of Milestones, Memories and Gratitude

Dear Volunteers,

As I reflect on the summer months, I am filled with gratitude for the countless hours our volunteers have devoted to preparing for the fall missions. While our veterans may be the heart of Honor Flight Rochester, it is the dedication, compassion, and commitment of our volunteers that make each journey possible.

We begin our fall season with Mission 97, September 19–20, welcoming 59 veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials built in their honor. For these veterans, this journey is about far more than a trip to our nation's capitol. It is an opportunity to reflect, remember, and finally receive the recognition and appreciation they so richly deserve.

Mission 98, October 2–4, will be a very special milestone for Honor Flight Rochester. For the first time, we will be working with Livingston County's Dwyer Program to bring an additional 21 veterans and their guardians to Washington, D.C., by bus. The bus will depart Rochester on Friday, October 2, joining our 59 veterans traveling by air on Saturday. This will bring the total number of veterans participating in Mission 98 to 80—the largest mission in Honor Flight Rochester's history.

On Sunday morning, the Dwyer Program bus will make its way back to Rochester International Airport in time for the Welcome Home Celebration, allowing these veterans to experience that unforgettable moment alongside their fellow travelers.

We are incredibly grateful to the Dwyer Program and to the many Honor Flight Rochester volunteers and crew members who have dedicated countless additional hours to planning, coordinating, and making this extraordinary mission possible. It truly takes a village to honor our heroes, and this mission is a beautiful example of what can happen when organizations and volunteers come together with a common purpose.

Mission 99 will bring our 2026 flying season to a close with 58 veterans making the journey. Among them will be our HFR Chaplain, Reverend George McKnight, who will carry with him the names of fallen heroes who never had the opportunity to take their own Honor Flight.

This is a deeply meaningful tradition. By carrying their names with us, we ensure that these veterans are remembered and honored as part of the journey. It also gives their families the opportunity to know that their loved one was not forgotten—that they were remembered, respected, and shown the highest regard by the Honor Flight Rochester family.

As we close out 2026, we will also celebrate an extraordinary milestone: **Honor Flight Rochester will have flown more than 5,000 veterans to Washington, D.C.** When we think about that number, it is easy to see it as simply a statistic. But behind every number is a veteran, a story, a family, a sacrifice, and a lifetime of service to our country.

None of this would be possible without all of you.

To our volunteers, guardians, sponsors, donors, community partners, and everyone who gives their time, talent, and resources to Honor Flight Rochester—**thank you**. Your continued support allows us to keep our promise to our veterans, **"We Leave No Veteran Behind."**

And as we look beyond 2026, we have an even greater milestone on the horizon - **Mission 100**.

What began in Rochester in 2008 as a dream to honor our veterans has grown into something far greater than any of us could have imagined. As we prepare for Mission 100 in 2027, I am reminded that this organization has never been about numbers. It has always been about people—and about making sure our veterans know that their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

I am incredibly proud to serve alongside each of you and deeply honored to be part of the Honor Flight Rochester family. Together, we will continue to fly, honor, remember, and thank our heroes.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Kim Gould
President & CEO
Honor Flight Rochester, Inc.