All They Did Was Save The World 1944

Forgotten No More 1953

Welcome Home 1974

In the July Newsletter we will resume listing the calendar with those dates of renewed activity of pertinence to the Villages Honor Flight.

The past 2 months have been difficult and trying however it now appears that we are starting the return to normalcy and the need for Volunteers will be ever present for the continued success of the Villages Honor Flight Organization.

The number of outstanding Veterans requesting to fly to our nations capital to see the memorials continues to grow.

Here is a video of the "Old Guard" explaining the duties that are required of those with the privilege of guarding the "Tomb of The Unknown Soldier". Click Here...

An 18-year-old just out of high school was trained to take pictures of damage done to German targets by B-17s. He flew in a British Spitfire fitted with extra fuel tanks where the guns were. In other words, he flew over Germany unarmed. This is probably one of the best WWII film clips out there. Stored for 61 years in two suitcases of 16mm home movies that were inherited by filmmaker William Lorton from his great uncle who served as a Flight Surgeon. Those suitcases contained 3 hours of war footage that included a compelling crash landing of a Spitfire in 1944.

Filmed in a 2005 interview with then 83-year-old pilot and seeing the expression on his face when he realizes it is him in the cockpit, is something you won't soon forget. At 18-years-old, he was all alone, behind enemy lines, with no guns, no escort, and he gladly did it. They just don't make them like that anymore. It was truly the greatest generation and we owe them so much.

American Spitfire Pilot in WWII...
VHF President's Update

I hope this article finds everyone healthy and looking forward to a promising future. We have all been through this crisis together and once we are past it, we will all be stronger from it. Adversity provides strength and determination. That is what America is about and just like all of you. I am proud to be an American.

I promised to keep everyone up to date on what the immediate future holds for Villages Honor Flight and long-term plans for 2020. There has been a process to determine what, when, and where Honor Flight Hubs resume business. The process begins with the National Honor Flight Network who schedule and coordinate Honor Flight trips to DC. Last week the board of directors met to discuss the crisis and when it will be ok to conduct Honor Flight missions. They determined there will be no Honor Flights through August. They will re-evaluate in September. Because our model for preparing a mission requires months to prepare, there is not enough time to properly prepare a mission. The National Network did open fund-raising activities and meetings effective May 31. They did mandate hubs conduct all activities within State guidelines for re-opening business. Florida is now in Phase 2 of the Governor’s plan to reopen the state.

At the present time, those rules stipulate that we cannot have meetings at the Recreational Centers.

Florida has (10) Honor Flight Hubs operating in the state. The Hub Presidents and Board members meet via teleconference to discuss business. All 10 hubs agree to follow the guidelines given by National and have canceled fall missions. Our priority is the safety of our veterans and volunteers. We do not want to expose anyone to the threat of this dangerous virus. All of us are in the category of high risk. We agreed to begin fund raising activities in June. The VHF board and management team will determine what fund-raising activities can be done safely and without violating state guidelines. Joe Hambricht has briefed the board on these new developments.

What does all this mean? We will have three DC Missions in the Spring of 2021, including the Tri-County Woman’s mission, and Flightless in June. We can conduct our biggest fund raiser which is the Golf Tournament in the fall. The Villages has already proven golfing can be done under social distancing guidelines. It will be up to our board/management team to determine what other fund-raising activities can take place within social distancing guidelines. We have some other ideas for both fund raising and keeping our volunteers engaged in safe but fun activities. More on that to come following the management meeting Thursday, May-21-2020.

I wish we could be doing what we all love doing, honoring our veterans, and providing them a special day of honor. That day will come. I want to thank everyone for all you have done to make this organization one of the most respected in the Villages. We could not do it without your support and help. Please keep safe and remain positive. We will get through this and remember. What does not kill you, makes you stronger.

God Bless America!

Rob Hempel
President
Villages Honor Flight Board Update

SOOO. By now you have already read Rob’s update on the status of the National organization and the Florida Hubs. When are we going to get Villages Honor Flight back in the air? Such a simple question; such a difficult answer. What has to happen before Villages Honor Flight puts our feet on the ground in D.C.? Following are some thoughts; many in disjointed sentences. These points will, however, give all of you some idea of the thought processes the Board of Directors and the Management Teams follow.

Obviously the National Board of Directors has to approve the resumption of flights. That, as Rob said, will not happen before 01 September. Then the CDC must relax the social distancing requirements. Just consider all the activities we have with our Veterans and guardians; guardian training, squad socials, preflight and on and on.

I can just imagine keeping a six-foot distance between the guardians and the Veterans on the bus both here and in D.C. Visualize the guardian at one window and the Veteran at the opposite window. That does not factor in any hearing issues. So much for keeping your Veteran within arm’s reach and interacting and building a relationship on the bus. All those years of training gone. By the way, we would require twice as many buses.

Moving on to the airplane. We could charter two planes instead of one to maintain the distancing. I suggested that to Wayne our Treasurer. His response was clear; he clutched his chest and dropped. I guess an extra plane is out of the question.

Now, just consider the number of interactions we have for planning and training. Given the number of people we have and the size of the facilities we need to accommodate these numbers, we are limited as to where we can have these meetings. We have no idea when The Villages will open the Recreation centers for meetings. We are all aware of the demand for meeting rooms in the Recreation Centers; scheduling must be done 12-15 months out. Even if the Recreation Centers open June 1, the rooms are already booked so we cannot just schedule a pre-flight for the following week. Don’t forget our partners at American Legion 347—they also don’t know when they will open.

Don’t forget all of the hugs and handshakes that occur from the initial meetings and everywhere we go. Even with the easing of the distancing regulations, we have to rethink that issue going ahead.

At some point in time after the National Organization permits missions to begin, after the social distancing rules are relaxed and facilities become available, The Villages Honor Flight (VHF) Board of Directors will make the decision when to resume our missions.
Villages Honor Flight Board Update

Now to the answers you are all waiting for. The answers are;

- The VHF BOD has decided to cancel the 16 September mission. First, and foremost, we cannot guarantee the safety of our people. Second, there are no facilities currently available. The pre-flight for our 16 September mission is scheduled for 16 August. And since National will not meet again until 08 July that would allow insufficient time to prepare for the flight even if they approve fall flights at that time.

- We will delay a decision on the 28 October mission until the National BOD meets on 08 July. If their decision is to reopen the flights, then the VHF BOD must decide what is best for our organization. If they decide to continue the moratorium on flights then it will be a moot point.

- We will continue to plan for the FHF on 07 November.

- In all cases, the safety issue is and will continue to be our number one priority.

This was and continues to be a difficult issue to address. I must thank the VHF BOD, Rob and the Management Team for all the thought and consideration they have given balancing our service to our Veterans with the safety of our Veterans.

Before I end this letter, I would like to thank Rob for interacting with the National Organization and the meetings with the Florida Hubs. There is a concern that after such a long period of inactivity, the organization may lose our momentum. Rob and the Management Team meet regularly and I am confident of their ongoing commitment to our organization. I implore all of our members to just look at this hiatus as a rest break and that we will be well rested when we restart our activities. Let’s make some lemonade with all of the lemons we have been given.

Knowing so many of you personally I am confident that when the buzzer goes off all of you will be rested and ready to carry on. We have not reached our level of success without your contributions. Thanks to all of you for your contributions and I personally look forward to seeing all of you again. The sooner, the better. Stay safe.

SOOO, as we have said many times, and even more so now, it’s all about the Vets. Let’s keep them safe.

Joe Hambright
Chairman
Villages Honor Flight Board of Directors
"Volunteer Spotlight"

VILLAGES HONOR FLIGHTS

GUARDIANS

I would like to say thank you to all the amazing Guardians who give so much of their time and themselves to help make Villages Honor Flight an amazing Hub. I truly believe that we have a group of Guardians which cannot be matched by any other Hub in the country and it is an honor for me to work with each and everyone of you to keep our Hub in the forefront of Honor Flights. While it is “all about the Vets”, without you guardians, we could not provide the Veterans with the opportunity to go on Missions and receive the honor which they so richly deserve.

We have not been able to do the Spring Missions this year, but I wanted to let you all know that we are thinking of you all and looking forward to when we will be able to once again meet at the American Legion and begin an amazing day spent with our incredible Veterans.
"Volunteer Spotlight"

I thought that sharing some photographs from prior missions with you would remind you of the joy we all experience when serving as a Guardian for an Honor Flight and perhaps bring back some great memories of some of your prior missions. This will also show those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to make the trip, some of the things you might experience while on a mission.
"Volunteer Spotlight"

Once again, THANK YOU for your continued support of Villages Honor Flights and I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the future.

Bob Beishir
Guardian Coordinator
Villages Honor Flights
Memorial Day Video Links

Video Link...

Video Link...

Video Link...
Club Coordinator’s Letter

Hello Villages Honor Flight!! Hello, hello?? You still there? Just because we are/have been out of sight, does not mean you are out of mind. Hence, this mid-month newsletter – to let you know we are thinking about all of the volunteers that make Villages Honor Flight the huge success it has been (and will continue to be)!!

We are glad that you have survived the virus situation so far. As things begin to reopen, of course our thoughts all turn to: when will we have meetings again? When will we have missions again? Will I ever see my Honor Flight friends again?

Well, I must tell you, we are all thinking the same things. I will also tell you that your Villages Honor Flight leadership is fully engaged with each other; from the Chairman of the Board to all of the Management Team. We are maintaining constant communications with Honor Flight National to make sure we get their most current guidance/direction. We’re monitoring the local (Florida/District/Villages) guidance as well. If you’ve been reading/listening to the local area updates, you know there’s not a lot of news we can impart, other than we just do not know right now when things can restart. Safety of you, our volunteers, and of course the veterans is paramount. As soon as decisions are made, rest assured you will know. But until then, I thought I’d leave you with a little bit of background on military culture:

The reason the Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy bicker among themselves is because they don’t speak the same language. For instance, here’s what they do when told to secure a building:
The Army will post guards around the building.
The Navy will turn out the lights and lock all the doors.
The Marines will kill everybody inside and then set up headquarters.
The Air Force will take out a five-year lease with an option to buy at the end.

Lastly, I want to thank you for supporting our restaurant supporters over the last month by getting take-out on Wednesday’s. They really appreciated it!!

Stay safe.

Al Arnold
Villages Honor Flight Club Coordinator
VHFCoodinator@villageshonorflight.org
VP Admin Corner

If we all remember, in the past The Lone Ranger, The Cisco Kid, Batman, they all wore mask's everything turned out fine for them. The future of Villages Honor Flight Team will fly again bigger and better because of the group of people that make it happen.

We may have to wait a while, but keep in touch with your Vets so they know that they are not forgotten. Please keep thinking of ways to raise funds as our cost (Insurance, Storage, Office supplies, Web site) continue even when we don't fly.

Thanks for the past help and what you will do in the future.

Peter Tetrault
VP Admin

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Fundraising & Marketing

We want to thank all of you who either purchased take-out/ate inside at Havana country Club on May 6th or Outback Steakhouse May 13th.

These restaurants have supported Villages Honor flight in the past and all the proceeds went back to the restaurants to help them through this difficult time.

Keep City Fire, Johnny Rockets, Havana, Outback and Cody's (when they open up) in mind, when thinking about restaurant food. They do appreciate our support.

Duane Roemmich
Coordinator Fundraising & Marketing

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Honoring our Veterans dispite the Coronavirus Pandemic Crisis Activities

News Video...
The Candy Man

This past Saturday, May 16th was a very special day for Lawrence Bailey. He celebrated his 94th birthday.

Known as “the Candy Man” at our monthly reunion luncheon. Lawrence loves getting birthday cards and talks about how he got over 90 cards for his 90th Birthday when his church community asked Members to remember him.

I am hoping you would spread the word to some of the Honor Flight volunteers who participate at the luncheon. Ask them to send a belated Birthday card to my sweet veteran. He misses our monthly date.

Due to the virus, I can’t hug him but hope getting some birthday wishes from people involved with Honor Flight luncheon will bring smiles to his face.

God Bless, Marilyn Gagen.
VHF Volunteer

Lawrence Bailey
DOB. 5-16-1926
Wilbur’s Web

By: Wilbur Webb

WHY DOES EMAIL HAVE TO BE SO HARD?

A strange title but relevant in our world today. The majority of us started years ago with email much like today we use social media and video calls, to stay in touch with loved ones.

Just as there are predators in the physical world there are predators in the virtual world. In the physical world we use senses like sight, hearing and our ‘gut’ feeling to alert us.

In the virtual world much of our senses have been numbed. Our senses are manipulated by color combinations, the type of font and many other factors. In the virtual world a new set of senses have to be developed to help us identify the virtual predators.

For example, how can I better identify if an email really came from the person who’s name is in the ‘From’ field? How can I protect myself from having my virtual senses numbed?

There are no magic pills or solutions. Many people have an aversion to being proactive when they use their computer for fear if I touch something new I’ll break it. If you’re willing I’m open to sharing some tips with you in future issues of the new VHF Mid-Monthly publication.

Please email newsletter@villageshonorflight.org if you are interested in this topic.