



Honor Flight DFW
Honoring those who served

Honor Flight DFW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to honor America's veterans living in the North Texas area for their service and sacrifices. The all-volunteer group travels veterans to Washington, D.C., for a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid trip to reflect at their memorial and to share that moment with the only people who could possibly understand – other veterans.

Priority is currently given to veterans who served in World War II. The time to thank these veterans is quickly running out, with existing WWII veterans well into their 90s, and the average age of a veteran on the Honor Flight DFW waiting list at 92 years old. The time is short, and the mission is big.

As of the fall of 2015, Honor Flight DFW has traveled twenty-seven flights to Washington, D.C., with more planned. The two-day trip begins with a celebratory send-off, including a presentation of the colors, and volunteers cheering and waving flags. The men and women who comprise the veteran group wear their signature blue Honor Flight DFW jackets, shirts and hats, often with their war medals pinned to them. They board a commercial jet and head to D.C. for a two-day trip they will talk about for the rest of their lives.

It's a hero's welcome when the group arrives in D.C. as Honor Flight and USO volunteers, local active duty military and airport bystanders get involved in the action of welcoming the veterans to our nation's capitol.

The first stop on the journey is the WWII Memorial, which opened in 2004 when the youngest of the WWII veterans were in their late seventies. The World War II Memorial honors the 16 million who served in the armed forces of the U.S., the more than 400,000 who died, and all who supported the war effort from home. The tour continues to the Korean, Vietnam, and Lincoln memorials.

The veterans are honored that evening in Washington with a Heroes' Banquet. In addition to the HFDFW veterans, guests to the banquet include an honor guard that presents the colors, active military service personnel and guest speakers. Then it's lights out and time to rest for a busy second day of touring.

The second day in Washington begins with a leisurely morning of breakfast and exchanging old war stories.

The next stop for the veterans is Arlington National Cemetery to witness the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Oftentimes, HFDFW is granted the honor of participating in the Wreath Laying Ceremony, four Honor Flight DFW veterans lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Next is a visit to the graveside of the America's most decorated WWII soldier, fellow Texan Audie Murphy.

The veterans tour the, the Marine Corps War Memorial (best known as "Iwo Jima"), the Air Force Memorial and the FDR National Memorial. If there is inclement weather, the veterans tour the National Air and Space Museum, Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, where the Enola Gay is on display.

The veterans receive a heroes' welcome on their return home.

A few months after the trip, the Honor Flight DFW experience is celebrated with a reunion, where veterans are given mementos of their journey.

Dedication to Safety

The number one priority of HFDFW is the safety of the veteran. Planning for a flight begins many months in advance, and diligence is paid during the journey to make any changes necessary to ensure safety and comfort.

Medical volunteers make a call to each veteran prior to the trip to identify those with special needs and to ensure that their needs will be met throughout the journey.

Each veteran is assigned a "guardian," a volunteer who pays his/her own way to D.C. for the honor and privilege of assisting the veterans while on the flight. Guardians receive training to help them prepare for the logistics, precautions and challenges of traveling with this unique group.

The medical team that travels with Honor Flight DFW consists of a diversified staff of physicians, respiratory therapists, nurses and other clinicians who are available day or night and offer a great deal of comfort to the veterans, families, and guardians.

How you can Help

Donations are needed

Honor Flight of DFW is an all-volunteer organization with every donation going directly toward the group's goal of taking veterans to Washington, D.C. The cost is approximately \$1,000 per veteran, which pays their plane fare, hotel accommodations, chartered bus fare, meals, uniforms, souvenir videos, and a reunion event after their return.

Veterans are not permitted to pay for anything themselves. Honor Flight DFW has a fundraising network comprised of schools, volunteers, charitable individuals and companies in the North Texas area who hope to, in some small way, repay the immeasurable debt we owe these brave men and women for our freedom and for our country.

More help is needed. Honor Flight DFW is asking the community's assistance to honor these deserving veterans before it's too late.

Welcome Home Celebration

When Honor Flight DFW veterans are welcomed home at the airport by hundreds of cheering supporters, family members, friends, and volunteers waving flags to the sound of bagpipes and drums, they are overwhelmed.

They carry in their hands letters received during "Mail Call" on the plane home from D.C. that are from friends, family, local school children, volunteers, and other well-wishers who want to simply say "thank you." Tears stream down many of their time-worn faces as they look upon a sea of people expressing their thanks.

Honor Flight DFW is in need of funding the number of veterans who get to make the trip is solely dependent upon funding. More funds mean more veterans make the trip.

Volunteers

Volunteer opportunities are abundant. Guardians are needed for each trip, and volunteers are needed to assist with fundraising efforts and writing letters to the WWII veterans for "Mail Call" on the journey back to DFW.

With their age and an increasingly complex metropolitan area, many don't feel comfortable driving, so volunteers are also needed to drive veterans to the airport and to reunions, fundraising events, celebrations and more.

Honor Flight DFW is also asking the community's help in identifying local veterans who would like to make the trip. Veteran applications can be downloaded from the web site at: www.HonorFlightDFW.org.

More information about how to donate, how to submit veterans' names, and how to get involved can be found on the Honor Flight DFW website at www.HonorFlightDFW.org.

The Future

In the future, Honor Flight Network will also pay tribute to America's heroes who served during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, followed by veterans of more current wars. They, too, have given so much, and it's time we show them that their efforts are not forgotten. They deserve it as a small token of appreciation for giving so much.

For many of these heroes, this is the first real expression of gratitude they have received. They laid their lives on the line for our country, our freedom, and for the lives we enjoy today. Many of them say, "I thought no one remembered."

Honor Flight DFW asks that we show them we remember and that we are grateful. One volunteer said it best –

"We can't all be heroes. Some of us have to stand on the curb and clap as they walk by." – Will Rogers

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