

HONOR FLIGHT DFW ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**HONORING
THOSE WHO SERVED**

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HONOR FLIGHT DFW MISSION

Honor Flight DFW is dedicated to honoring our country's veterans for the sacrifices they have made to keep our nation safe by providing them with an all expense paid overnight trip to visit the memorials in Washington, D.C., those memorials which symbolize the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of these American heroes.



2021

RETURN TO TRAVEL



As Honor Flight DFW (HFDFW) waited on the sidelines to travel, many things have changed. Each of us has experienced changes, losses, and new realities in our lives.

One thing that has not changed is the desire of veterans to visit the memorials built as a tribute to the service they gave to this great nation. We currently have 275 veterans on the waiting list.

Honor Flight DFW has safely taken 2,300 veterans on their Honor Flight journey. The safe travel of the veterans and those who travel with them is our number one priority.

We have toured in the heat and humidity of D.C., in rainstorms, on day 2 of a government shutdown, and surprisingly, snow on the ground.

We had never experienced traveling in a pandemic.

We are happy to report that all veterans, guardians, and support team returned to Dallas healthy and fulfilled with no reports of COVID transmission.

DFW

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Returning to the mission of traveling was necessary and with a bit of urgency as time was running out for some veterans to make the trip.

The logistics of traveling a large group with medical and physical challenges in a pandemic was undoubtedly going to be more complicated; unforeseen issues and traveling modifications became the new norm.

Our medical team has been most helpful in guiding us through the understanding of COVID-19 and how it relates to the safe travel of veterans. Their expertise enhanced our ability to ready the veterans, support team, and volunteers returning to safe travel.

The team continuously monitored COVID-19 guidelines, best practices for traveling older adults, and other indicators related to the incidence and proliferation of COVID in the DFW and Washington, D.C. areas.



TRIP #44 AND TRIP #45 MANIFESTS

HFDFW Trip #44

Most veterans on Trip #44 had been waiting patiently for nearly two years. Regretfully, their trip had to be postponed twice due to COVID concerns.

12 WWII ~ Four Centurions: two born in 1920, one born in 1921, one born in 1918

19 Korean

9 Vietnam

HFDFW Trip #45

Trip #45 carried two WWII veterans (both 100 years old) and Vietnam War era veterans who had been on the HFDFW waiting list since 2017.



MEASURE TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION OF COVID

- HFDFW COVID policies were instituted.
- Veterans, guardians, and staff performed hand cleansing prior to entering the buses and after public encounters.
- Wheelchairs were sanitized after each stop.
- Veterans, guardians, and staff were provided personal hand sanitizers, masks, and wipes.
- HFDFW staff carried extra hand sanitation gels, sprays, wipes, and face masks with them at all times.
- Mask requirements, during transportation and venues, were explained at Guardian Training and Pre-Flight Briefing.
- Additional educational training sessions regarding hygiene procedures were held for guardians and support staff.
- Hygiene procedures were covered with veterans at the Pre-Flight Briefing
- Medical team placed two calls, if not more, to the veterans prior to the trip. Additionally, they were available to answer the guardians' questions and concerns.
- COVID screening was performed before pre-flight briefing and at the airport.



IMPACT OF THE HFDWF JOURNEY

WORDS OF THE VETERANS

"I must tell you that for the first time since my tour in Vietnam 68-69 and my return back, I truly felt welcomed home and honored for my service. I spent extra time by the Vietnam Wall, remembering my time in-country, and it seems like not very long ago, although it has been over 53 years ago. I still find it hard to believe we lost so many Americans in this war—also all of our other wars that we have lost *our men and women. We shall never forget their bravery & sacrifice for our country, as they are indeed our heroes.*

This trip meant so much to me. And I thank you, the staff at Honor Flight DFW, and of course, all the donors who made this possible." **Mr. C. USMC Trip #45**

"I can not thank you enough! What an outstanding salute! I will never forget it. You and your staff did an OUTSTANDING JOB! I can not thank you enough! With that said, need some help? As you know I am somewhat physically challenged. Giving that, I believe there must be some ways for me to help."

Mr. S. USAF Trip #45

"My guardian asked me during the return flight what I enjoyed the most. I told him that my favorite sight was the capital mall. But what I found the very best was the honors at the airports. I was in tears."

Mr.M. USN Trip #45

MORE THOUGHTS FROM VETERANS

"I have been searching in vain to find words to adequately express my gratitude to, Honor Flight DFW. I was truly amazed at the professionalism and dedication of your staff and the flawless execution of the program from start to finish. Every thing was first class and especially the Guardians. All were gracious, polite, and attentive to our needs. I truly was honored more than at any other time in my life, except when my lovely wife said "I do" forty four years ago. Every Memorial we visited brought back memories, good and bad, that had lied dormant for so long. We remembered again why we did it. Thank you and your staff and volunteers again for a very wonderful thing you did for us. God Bless You All"

Mr. H. USAF Trip #45

"It was an amazing feat of organization and attention to detail as the men ranging up to 103 years of age were escorted to the national monuments erected to the service of our country of our armed forces."

Mr. Mc. USMC Trip #44

Thank you and please pass on to all the volunteers my gratitude for all your sacrificial help-care-concern- and protection."

Mr. P. USAF Trip #45



THOUGHTS FROM THE FAMILY

"I have no words to express how appreciative I am for Honor Flight DFW. Amazing people who are loving, selfless, and giving of everything you have. We did not have a need, the entire time, that wasn't met with a gracious spirit. My dad is on cloud nine, and I would imagine every other veteran feels the same. My prayer is that you all know how truly special you are, and the difference you are making goes way beyond the veterans. You are touching the lives of the veterans' families and every person who loves our great nation. I am overwhelmed with joy. Thank you so much for a wonderful trip that my dad and I will never forget." **Johnny, Father's Guardian Trip #45**

"It was very special to me to be apart of this experience with Dad! He loved it! From the airport to home he could not stop talking about his visit to this war monuments, his new veteran friends and how you guys made this special for him! Honor Flight DFW's passion for what you do is appreciated and your battalion is second to none! Thank you for fulfilling my Dad's Bucket List." **Ken, Father's Guardian Trip #45**

"It was a very special time for BOTH of us. My dad talked more than he has in YEARS!! He wasn't ready to go to bed at 1:00 when we got home! He wanted to read the rest of his letters!!! I had to call it 'quits!' I was pooped! Thank you ALL so much for an INDESCRIBABLE AMAZING time!!!"



VOLUNTEER GUARDIAN REFLECTIONS

“His story was very touching and I know he has looked forward to this trip for over 4 years. What a blessing it was that I was able to be a part of it for him. When he got his mail call and he read the letter from me, he leaned over and kissed me on the forehead.

Bridgett, Volunteer Guardian Trip #45

“It really was my privilege and absolute pleasure. I just did a lot of listening. He is an interesting man. Thank you for allowing me to go and experience a once in a life-time event. You and the staff are doing a special thing and you guys are so great a it. How much you care shows. I appreciate you all.” **Joey, Volunteer Guardian Trip #45**

“It was a great honor for me to be in the presence of and to serve our national heroes during the trip. Whether by enlistment or by being drafted, the veterans that I encountered, including Mr. Smith, were extremely proud of their military service for our great country. The memorials in Washington, D.C., provided a sense of purpose and reward for their sacrifice.” **Troy, Volunteer Guardian Trip #44**



FINANCIAL REPORT

The HFDFW mission is far from completion. Currently, we have over 275 veterans on our waiting list.

Gratefully, the community continues to donate to ensure that the mission of HFDFW continues for the veterans who have served our country. On behalf of the veterans, we thank you.

One of the most touching donations comes from veterans and their families who ask for donations in memory of a veteran who has passed. We have had an unprecedented number of these sweet donations these past two years. To those families, please know your HFDFW family is thinking of you and your loved ones. Our prayers are that your precious memories give you comfort and peace.

The 2020 HFDFW Annual Golf Classic and North Texas Day of Giving raised funds for two trips.

In 2020 we saw increased expenses due to COVID, inflation, and supply shortages. The cost of traveling a veteran to D.C. was approximate \$1,275 - \$1,300.

Honor Flight DFW remains an all-volunteer organization with no paid employees.



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT
OF
HONOR FLIGHT
DFW

FUNDRAISING IN 2022

The Tenth Annual HFDFW Golf Classic will be at Cowboy's Golf Club on March 28, 2022. Last year's golf event was a huge success and sold out a month before the date. We are expecting another sold-out and successful event. If you need an idea for a Christmas gift, how about a round of golf at a premier course surrounded by true patriots?

<https://app.eventcaddy.com/events/honor-flight-dfw-10th-annual-golf-classic>

Historically, the bulk of our donations have been contributed by individuals, veterans' families, veterans' organizations, and our primary events of the golf tournament and North Texas Giving Day. In 2022 and beyond, we look forward to remaining close to our existing donors while cultivating new relationships in the DFW business community, allowing us to broaden our presence and ensure those on our waiting list get to experience "a trip of a lifetime."

Honor Flight DFW will travel four times in 2022. Two in the spring and two in the fall.



VOLUNTEERS

“AT THE END OF THE DAY IT’S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE OR EVEN WHAT YOU’VE ACCOMPLISHED... IT’S ABOUT WHO YOU’VE LIFTED UP. WHO YOU’VE MADE BETTER. IT’S ABOUT WHAT YOU’VE GIVEN BACK.” – DENZEL WASHINGTON

The mission of HFDFW could not be accomplished without the efforts of volunteers. HFDFW volunteers are dedicated to the mission of honoring veterans. Whether they write letters for Mail Call, collect goodies for the ‘snack bags,’ post-trip cleaning and servicing the wheelchairs, serving as a Guardian, clapping, and cheering the veterans at their Welcome Home Celebration, they are always there to assist.

Many volunteers have faithfully volunteered for over six years, some for more than ten years. HFDFW is an all-volunteer (no paid employees) 501(c)(3) organization.

This year HFDFW volunteered over 6,000 hours of their time and talents.



SUPPORT TEAM

The HFDFW support team on Trip #44 and #45 will forever share a special bond of successfully traveling aged warriors to see their memorials after a two-year postponement and in a less than desirable travel environment.

Without YOU, these trips would not have been possible.

It was not business as usual for Trip #44 and #45. Traveling a vulnerable population during a pandemic was going to be demanding.

Alterations to our routine procedures, added workloads, and ever-changing rules and regulations complicated our efforts. Yet you approached each challenge with a can-do attitude that was reassuring to the veterans and guardians.

I marveled at your attention to detail, determination, enthusiasm, energy, and passion for making this trip possible for the veterans. We knew that we had to be the best we could be, and you did not disappoint. Excellent teamwork.

It was beautiful watching each of you give your undivided attention and respect to the veterans on what many veterans call "a trip of a lifetime." Mission Accomplish!



FRIENDS OF HFDFW

- We wish each donor could see the veterans' faces and feel the veterans' emotions that they experience on their 36 Hours of Honor. Each donation, large or small, makes a difference in the lives of the veterans and their families. Thank you.
- The United Air Force Band is OUTSTANDING! For eight years they have been performing for HFDFW veterans. Whether it be the Airmen of Note, the Singing Sergeants or Max Impact, each performance is designed specifically for the veterans on the trip. From Glen Miller to CCR the music takes the veterans to a time of their youth.
- Highland Oaks Church of Christ donates the space to HFDFW Pre Flight Briefings. We are grateful for their generosity and attention to HFDFW by employee Dora Fuentes .
- Southwest Airlines provides substantial cost savings and is very accommodating to the needs of the veterans during their flights. In 2021, HFDFW received complimentary Southwest E-Pass tickets for the veterans.



FRIENDS OF HFDFW

- The relationships with Love Field (City of Dallas), TSA, Southwest Airlines, and the food vendors are solid. HFDFW will continue to use S.W. Airlines and Love Field food vendors in 2022. A special thank you to Al Madrid (Southwest Airline Dallas Love Field Manager); his attention to detail is phenomenal, and we appreciate your professional and caring demeanor.
- A special shout out to our friends on the ground in D.C. Keith Foster (USA Coach) has safely and efficiently driven HFDFW for twelve years; his love of the veterans is evident with each trip. He is a true friend of HFDFW. Awais J Butt, aka "Ace" (Arby's), has delivered lunch meals and water to HFDFW for twelve years. All Ace needs to know is how many meals are required, and it's always never a worry. He is excellent in accessing the weather and delivering needed water for the veterans; hydration is critical in the warm, humid weather in D.C. Thank you, Ace, for your attention to detail and for caring for HFDFW.
- The association with Gateway Crystal City Marriott remains strong, and we will continue to use them for our lodging needs in 2022.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022 LOOKING AHEAD

HFDFW Board of Directors

It has been my honor to serve alongside the HFDFW Board of Directors in 2021.

It's been a challenge to serve a mission that has been in limbo with no clear timeline for the resumption of the mission. I am proud of the work we have done to keep the mission alive and successfully return to the mission of what we do best, honoring veterans. Good job, my friends.

I am very proud of the dedication that each of you brings to the mission of HFDFW. I thank you for all of the veterans' lives that you have touched with your work for HFDFW. YOU make a difference.

Looking Forward to 2022

Plans are well underway to travel four times in 2022. We learned a lot with Trips 44 and 45 and feel assured that our practices in 2021 will enhance our ability to continue traveling veterans safely.

Traveling with the veterans this fall and again seeing the healing, fellowship, closure, and satisfaction experienced on an Honor Flight journey emphasized the need to focus on raising funds so that all veterans who apply for HFDFW will have the opportunity to see their memorials.

Respectfully,
Melaine 'Tudy' Giordano MS, RN
President Honor Flight DFW
12-12-21

