



Villages Honor Flight

Serving Lake, Sumter, Marion,
Citrus and Hernando Counties

April 2014

OPERATIONS

2014 flight dates have been set as 27-April, 25-Jun and 4-Sept (Nov date is pending).

The second pre-flight meeting for the 50 vets and guardians on the 27-April flight was held 13-Apr'14. Pre-flight meetings are held to "Dot the I's and cross the Tee's", designed to address all the situations that may be encountered on flight day, so everyone has a safe and memorable mission experience. In between the two pre-flight meetings the squads of vets and guardians meet in a social setting so they can bond as a team.

Departure and return for the flight will be at the American Legion Post 347 as in prior flights.

Notification of the manifest for vets and guardians on the 25-Jun'14 flight is underway. The first pre-flight meeting date for this group is 18-May'14.

HOW CAN I HELP???????

The preponderance of veterans from any service does not receive a welcome home. They generally arrive home individually, stowed their gear and go about picking up their civilian life...no bands, no celebration, no one to thank them. Villages Honor Flight rectifies that shortcoming by providing our returning veterans with a gala celebration and a welcoming "THANK YOU...JOB WELL DONE". Everyone is welcome to this free event, to wave a flag, cheer when they get off the bus and shake their hand and say "THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID". On 27-April'14, with music and entertainment starting at 9:30, the welcome home ceremony begins, at American Legion Post 347, CR 466 and Rolling Acres Road, Lady Lake. Come out and be part of it...bring a flag, bring a chair, bring a friend...rain or shine...don't miss it...they have earned it and deserve it!

The next Villages Honor Flight Club meeting is 12:30pm, 12-May'14 at Colony Cottage Recreation Center in The Villages. Attendance is open to anyone who wishes to support our mission. Guardians, past and future, are encouraged to attend.

WHO IS HONOR FLIGHT?

The questions were recently asked "Who runs Villages Honor Flight" and "where does the funding to send the vets to DC come from". Both are valid questions and over the next several months we'll run a series of articles about Villages Honor Flight...who it is, why we do what we do, who decides how we function and where the money comes from. First, some background information.

WWII ended in 1945 but the memorial to honor those who won that conflict was not dedicated until 2004. By then many who fought the war had already passed and those surviving were in advanced years and unable, for many reasons, to get to "their memorial". A group of 6 individuals flew 12 WWII vets, in private planes to DC and toured the memorial. The vets were humbled by the experience and adulations they received for their service, something that had not happened previously; the 6 organizers were likewise motivated to provide this experience to as many vets as possible. From that experience grew the concept of an "Honor Flight", and the concept of local citizens providing a similar experience to veterans in their local area, through "hubs" was created. Currently there are 122 independent Honor Flight hubs, servicing 45 states; since 2004 over 122,000 veterans have been honored on a flight. Each hub is individually organized, self-funded and operates generally in a specific geographic area. Villages Honor Flight was started in 2011 and currently operates in 5 Florida counties: Lake, Sumter, Marion, Citrus and Hernando. We flew 76 vets on 3 flights to DC in 2012 and 175 vets on 7 flights in 2013. Plans are in 2014 we will fly 4 flights, expanded to 50 vets per flight for a total of 200 vets. The mission of all Honor Flight hubs is the same: *"Transport America's veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit those memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifices."*

Next month, "The structure of Villages Honor Flight".

A **Speakers Bureau** representative is available to make a presentation about Honor Flight to clubs, community or veteran groups, church groups or similar organizations. Call 352-432-1382 to arrange a presentation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

22-Nov'14 Villages Honor Flight Golf Tournament

This fun event is our major fundraising undertaking of the year. Save the date. Registration and sponsorship opportunities will be available next month.

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