



**VILLAGES HONOR  
FLIGHT  
NEWSLETTER  
July, 2016**

[www.VillagesHonorFlight.org](http://www.VillagesHonorFlight.org)

Serving Lake, Marion, Sumter, Citrus &  
Hernando Counties

**NEXT CLUB MEETING.** The Villages Honor Flight Club will meet on Monday, 11-July-2016 at 12:30 P.M. at the Colony Cottage Recreation Center in The Villages, FL (We always meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, so mark your calendars in advance). You will have the opportunity to sign up for any number of volunteer activities, so be sure to bring your calendars to the meeting.

**UPCOMING DATES & EVENTS.**

- 8-July, CPR class, La Hacienda Rec. Center, 1pm
- 11-July, VHF Club monthly meeting, 12:30pm, Colony Cottage Rec. Center
- 24-July, M28 Pre-Flight #1, Colony Cottage, 12:30pm
- 8-Aug., VHF Club monthly meeting, 12:30pm, Colony Cottage
- 12-Aug., CPR class, La Hacienda, 1pm
- 20-Aug., Spring Reunion, Colony Cottage (details later)
- 21-Aug., M28 Pre-Flight #2, Colony Cottage 12:30pm
- 3-Sept., M29 Flightless Pre-Flight, 12:30pm, Colony Cottage
- 7-Sept., M28 Flight to D.C.: Homecoming greeters needed
- 9-Sept., CPR class, La Hacienda, 1pm
- 12-Sept., VHF Club monthly meeting, 12:30pm, Colony Cottage

--24-Sept., M29 Flightless Mission, Amer. Legion & Colony Cottage

--25-Sept., M31 Pre-Flight #1, 12:30pm, Colony Cottage

--1-Oct., Annual Golf Scramble, Spruce Creek CC, all day

--10-Oct., VHF Club monthly meeting, 12:30pm, Colony Cottage

--14-Oct., CPR class, La Hacienda, 1pm

--15-Oct., Volunteer Appreciation at Wildwood Comm. Center, details to follow

--23-Oct., M31 Pre-Flight #2, 12:30pm., Colony Cottage

--2-Nov., M31 Flight to D.C., Homecoming greeters needed

--10-Nov., Doo Wop Concert, Wildwood Com. Center, 6:30pm (story this issue)

--11-Nov., CPR class at 1pm, La Hacienda

**VETERAN'S HISTORY PROJECT FOUNDER -- A BIG HIT AT JUNE MEETING.**

Benjamin Mack-Jackson, a 14-year-old middle school student from Clermont, was the featured speaker at last month's VHF Club meeting. He gave an overview of his project, which involves interviewing and preserving the memories of WW2 veterans. Ben had an impressive slide presentation, as well as a display of the beginning of his travelling collection of WW2 memorabilia. He received a standing ovation from the large audience of VHF volunteers, and he referred them to his web site, [www.WW2VeteransHistoryProject.com](http://www.WW2VeteransHistoryProject.com), for further details and for the means to make contributions to the project via the "Go-Fund-Me" tab.

**DOO WOP CONCERT FUNDRAISER SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER.**

Busy volunteer Marilyn Gagen announced that this concert, by "Forever Young", will be held 10-Nov., 2016 at the Wildwood

Community Center, beginning at 6:30pm. The group features music from the 50's and 60's and dancing is encouraged. Snacks and light desserts will be provided and you may BYOB, with ice and glasses also provided. Tickets will cost \$15.00 each, and tables for six may be reserved. You can purchase tickets from Marilyn via mail by sending your checks to 309 Emmalee Place, The Villages, FL 32162. You may also reach her at 352-753-2603, 352-552-6468 or [mgagen@me.com](mailto:mgagen@me.com). How about buying a bunch of tickets and then re-selling them to friends and neighbors? How about inviting a veteran to attend as your guest?

**GUARDIAN'S CORNER.** If you have not filled out an application to be a guardian on a flight to Washington, D.C., we urge you to do so. Simply go to [www.VillagesHonorFlight.org](http://www.VillagesHonorFlight.org) and click on the "Applications" tab on the left of the home page, then select the appropriate application. Mail the completed application to: Villages Honor Flight, P.O. Box 490, Lady Lake, FL 32158-0490. Please write "APPLICATION" on the lower left corner of the envelope. Once assigned to a flight you will have about six weeks to get to know your veteran prior to the flight. We hope to see new friendships formed, along with honoring our veterans with a trip to see their memorials.

We continue to have some WW2 veterans flying with us, as well as Korean War and Viet Nam veterans. Qualifications to be a Guardian include being under the age of 76 and health good enough to push a wheelchair with a veteran aboard all day long if necessary. If you would like to honor a veteran who served his country when called upon, please consider flying with us.

If you are at least 18 years old (no upper age limit), come join us as a Guardian on a Flightless Honor Flight. That's right, we never leave the ground!! Many of our veterans cannot fly for medical reasons, or simply do not wish to fly. So, we take those honored veterans on a *virtual tour* of Washington, D.C. to see their memorials, and more. Once again, it's all about forging new

friendships and honoring our veterans. You can find the *Flightless Guardian* application on our web site. We hope to see you on a future flight—real or virtual. (Submitted by Guardian Coordinator, Janet Myers.)

### **"JESSE DILKS" HONOR FLIGHT ANNOUNCED.**

Mission #28 will fly on 7-Sept.-2016 and has been designated the "*Jesse Dilks Flight*". It is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> "named" flight in our history, the first one being the "Bob Kitt Memorial Flight", which was a memorial tribute to the late Bob Kitt, a retired Navy Captain and a long time Villages Honor Flight volunteer. When an individual, club or group contributes \$15,000 or more to Villages Honor Flight, they are given the opportunity to "name" a flight.

The Mickey's Fanatics Club has been a long-time supporter, and they have contributed more than \$20,000. They desired to name the flight the "*Jesse Dilks Flight*" to honor another of our long-time VHF volunteers. Jesse started as a volunteer as a "Red Hat", parking cars at our events, helping with wheelchairs, etc. He set up tables, acted as a table host, directed traffic, did fundraising on the Squares on Market Night and has attended just about every event Villages Honor Flight has ever had. He sells raffle tickets, works at the golf tournament and probably does more than any other volunteer we have.

Jesse did all of these things for more than three years before he was finally assigned to a flight to Washington, D.C. as an honored veteran. *Oh, I guess we failed to mention that Jesse is a WW2 veteran himself!* He joined the Army in March, 1943 and completed basic training near Salt Lake City, followed by Aircraft Mechanic School in Nebraska. After some other assignments, he flew to Anguar, Palau in the South Pacific and worked as a B-24 bomber mechanic in the 867<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, 494<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The Squadron's mission was to bomb the Philippines in preparation for the ground troops to invade. After 8 mos., the squadron moved to Okinawa and bombed the Japanese homeland until the

war ended. Jesse was discharged from the Army Air Corps at Ft. Dix., NJ in January, 1948.

After his own flight to DC, Jesse felt he was fully capable of acting as a Guardian to other veterans, but was politely turned down for that job. He has, however, served as a Guardian on no less than three (3) "Flightless" honor flights and will no doubt continue to do more of those. Jesse is now 92-years-young and stays in shape with regular workouts at the MVP Fitness Center in Spanish Springs.

Our thanks go to Mickey's Fanatics for their continuing financial support, and for them choosing to honor Jesse Dilks on the upcoming 7-Sept. flight. Most of our thanks, however, go to Jesse himself. He's an honored Veteran, a tireless volunteer, and simply "*one heck of a man*". (Debbie Winters and Chris Lipp contributed to this article.)

**VETERAN'S CORNER.** Veteran Coordinator Sally Byrnes reports that M28, which flies on 7 Sept., is filled with 35 vets from WW2, Korea and Vietnam. M29, which will fly on 24 Sept, so far has 12 veterans scheduled with more being added each day. New applications have slowed considerably.

#### **WW2 HISTORY CLUB ANNOUNCES NEW**

**ORLEANS TOUR.** Don Goldstein and MHA Tours have put together a nice 3-day, 2-night trip to New Orleans to visit the National WWII Museum. The trip date is 28-30 Sep., 2016. Target price is \$990 double occupancy and \$1,280 single occupancy. Price includes all transportation, hotel, most meals and all entrance fees. For more details, go to <http://www.ww2hc.org/trips/2016/NO/2016.neworleans.01htm>. (Editor's Note: I've been to this wonderful museum and it's absolutely a top-notch, 5-star place to visit.)

#### **SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.**

During June, the following Bronze-Level donations (\$1,000 to \$2,499) were received:

--Eagle Ridge Golf Club --Plaza Cadillac

#### **VHF SCORES A 1<sup>ST</sup> WITH LEXINGTON PARK**

**ASSISTED LIVING "FLIGHTLESS" MISSION.** On June 23<sup>rd</sup> we mounted a successful "Flightless Honor Flight" right on-site at the Lexington Park Assisted Living facility in Lady Lake, the first time one was held somewhere other than at the Colony Cottage Recreation Center (one was held at a prison last October, also). Lexington park management asked us to do so, as they had a group of 15 veterans who deserved the honor, but were unable to participate in a regular "flightless" mission. Although no similar off-site missions are planned, it's entirely possible that this "road show" concept will be expanded to other facilities.

- **VILLAGES HONOR FLIGHT**
- **P.O. Box 490**
- **Lady Lake, FL 32158-0490**

[www.VillagesHonorFlight.org](http://www.VillagesHonorFlight.org)

**352-432-1382**

Comments or suggestions may be sent to Newsletter Editor, Harry Miller, at [harryelsucio@earthlink.net](mailto:harryelsucio@earthlink.net), 352-259-9417

**PS: PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS!**