



## *Voiture 1379 Communiqué for July 2021*

I have received the 2022 membership cards so we are now collecting 2022 membership year dues now. Remember that dues are now \$25.

All PUFL members are fined \$5 – just because

### **Honor Flights**

#### **Update 14: Set to Restart Trips for WWII, Korean War Vets to Nation's Capital**

More than a year after the pandemic forced the Honor Flight Network to halt trips to Washington, D.C., the group is ready to once again fly veterans to the nation's capital to visit memorials and share their stories with fellow vets. The organization announced it will resume full operations 16 AUG. Participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or provide negative test results taken within 72 hours of departure, according to Honor Flight spokeswoman Carol Harlow.

With no trips taking place, Honor Flight had to get creative over the last year to honor veterans across the country through their local chapters. Athletes, journalists, actors and even World War II veteran and former Sen. Bob Dole issued video messages of support through what the organization calls "Operation Reassurance" to vets who were awaiting their turn to fly to D.C. but were instead stuck at home. Honor Flight began drive-by celebration parades for veterans' birthdays; hosted drive-through "salute to veterans" events; and even sponsored a skydiving outing for a vet who turned 100 years old earlier this year.

For Military Appreciation Month this past May, T-Mobile and Helium, a virtual human performance channel, partnered to issue virtual reality goggles and headsets so vets could tour each war memorial and the National Mall from the comfort of their own homes. "It's been kind of a continuous effort throughout the country to try to do something, to continue to say, "Thank you," said David Smith, chairman of Honor Flight's board of directors, in a recent interview. The Honor Flight Network has more than 125 independent hubs across the country.

"We're working with all the hubs to make sure they understand what the guidelines are," said Smith, who founded the San Diego, California, chapter in 2010. Participants also include "guardians," who travel with veterans to make sure they get safely from place to place. Local hubs have been asked not to take any flights on their own for health and safety reasons. As the program restarts, the organization predicts demand from vets will be higher than before because of the long delay. In 2020, only one flight from St. Louis made it to D.C. in March for a three-day trip before the country began shutting down. During 2019, 22,764 veterans and 18,072 guardians made the trip, with another 42,355 on the waitlist. The majority of them were Vietnam War vets, according to statistics provided by the organization. World War II vets are usually bumped to the top of the travel list, Smith said. However, they tend to make up 20% or less of each Honor Flight. In 2019, fewer than 2,000 WWII vets made it the trip, compared to 6,135 Korean War vets and 12,880 Vietnam vets. Trips can take anywhere from five to 200 vets at a time. "That population is shrinking, [and] our effort has always been to honor our most senior veterans," Smith said. One of the longstanding struggles has been to find eligible veterans, he added. The program currently serves veterans from the WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War eras, and terminally ill vets who served in any conflict. "All our hubs are chomping at the bit to get up and get flying," Smith said, "but one of our biggest issues is ... letting more people know about our flight mission and to find veterans." Even as group organizers try to find more WWII vets to bring along, Smith said COVID-19 has given Honor Flight a new perspective. "Safety is always No. 1," he said. "If we're going to honor somebody, we want it to be safe." [Source: Mil.com | Oriana Pawlyk | June 25, 2021 ++]

Our Promenades are the fourth Wednesday of the month.

This month's Promenade will be on July 28<sup>th</sup> at Post 61 Kansas City, MO with dinner at 18:00 HRS and the Promenade will begin at 19:00 HRS.

**Thank you for your service to Our Great Nation and the 40et8 through Voiture 1379. If we all work together we can and do make a difference.**

**Robert C. Emery, Correspondant Locale, Voiture 1379**

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