

Sept. 13, 2013

Attention: Mike Thompson
Co-Founder

Mike, would you please give this \$100.00 Personal Money Order to the people involved in the financial part of your organization. I know this contribution is only a token amount, but feel honored to give something back.

I was on the May 13, 2013 Honor Flight. I was totally proud and Honored to be on the flight. It was so well organized by so many people. A special THANKS For sending the beautiful colored picture of the entire group at the World War II memorial. And the personal picture with just me on it. (OVER)

Enclosed is a News Bulletin testimonial I wrote shortly after the flight. I sent this letter to all the 28 people that sent cards and letters for MAIL CALL.

I have one problem. I'm not sure if the statement on page 3 is accurate. I asked one of the persons on board where we are during mail call. He said 20,000 ft. above Ohio. Sounded good so I wrote it as fact. However, I should have asked the pilot or plane crew for this information. So just wanted to alert you that this statement may not be true.

Thanks for the wonderful Experience. It will live in my heart forever. Sincerely,

James Van Duser
7410 Meadowlark Ln
Wisconsin Rapids, WI

NEWS BULLETIN

“Never Forgotten Honor Flight” to Washington D.C.

May 12th and 13th, 2013

The event was sponsored and made operational by the Board of Directors and various committees of the Wausau Chapter of the Honor Flight Network (A nationwide organization).

I found out about this flight from several local friends who had already taken it. They were very impressed and really enjoyed the well organized event. I was given the address and phone numbers to call to apply for a future Veteran’s Honor Flight and one year later I was accepted to join the May 13th flight. The rest is history.

The story begins on Sunday May 12th when we arrived at the Howard Johnson Hotel at 2:00 P.M. You meet your personal guardian and the other veteran who will be your companion for the entire trip. The personal guardian watches over the two veterans and keeps track of them at all times and places. There were 101 veterans and 50 personal guardians on this Honor Flight, plus staff, committee members, news media people and even medical personnel. None of the expenses for this entire event are from tax payer funds. All are from financial donations, free materials, and each personal guardian donates

considerable amounts of financial assistance besides looking out for 2 veterans each.

Sunday evening, May 12th was a huge event, with a wonderful full course dinner and an excellent program including music, speeches, color guards, testimonials, etc. Each veteran could bring his spouse, child or friend to the dinner. Unfortunately Arlene was unable to attend. Then we retired to the hotel rooms for a good nights rest. The Howard Johnson Hotel management provided a room for two nights for the veteran and his spouse and picked up the tab for this also.

Monday, May 13th began with a wake-up call at 4:00 A.M. At 4:20 we loaded the school buses to take all the vets to the Central Wisconsin Regional Airport. We went thru security, boarded the Boeing 737 aircraft and off we went into the wild blue yonder climbing high into the sun. On board were 21 veterans from the Wisconsin Rapids, Nekoosa, Port Edwards area. All veterans were dressed alike and were given a yellow polo shirt, yellow jacket, and navy blue cap, 35 mm one-time use camera, fanny pack, and a carry on bag.

We arrived at Reagan International Airport and a large fire truck welcomed us with a huge baptism of water over the entire airplane. We departed to the memorials on large modern motor coaches. We had specific time slots to visit and each of the memorials. The motor coach driver also gave us a

history lesson on each of the memorials while in transit. The following memorials we visited were with our “boots on the ground”: The World War 11 Memorial, Navy Memorial, Korean Memorial, Vietnam Wall, Lincoln Memorial, Air Force Memorial, Pentagon/911 Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Changing of the Guard Ceremony, Tomb of The Unknown Soldier, and Iwo Jima Memorial Sculpture. We departed Reagan Airport at 8:45 P.M. At 20,000 feet elevation on board the plane, somewhere over the state of Ohio, we had “MAIL CALL”. Everyone got a packet of mail and a USPS Care Package box. I got a total of 28 letters, cards or post cards from friends and relatives including letters from Middle School Children. We landed in the dark at CWA and then the big surprise happened. The airport was full of people of all ages. Welcome Home Signs, music, salutes, noise, handshakes, school kids, American Legion people, Veterans of Foreign Wars people, family, friends, and the list goes on. They wanted to shake hands, smile, touch us, even some gave us a kiss. This was overwhelming. They gave us old veterans a Welcome Home like we had never experienced before. The airport was so full of people I couldn't even find my buddy (Bud Wagner) from Wisconsin Rapids. We returned to the Howard Johnson Hotel, very tired after a long very memorable day, in the same school buses and the honeymoon was over.

I am so proud to be an American. The patriotism of people in the Central and North Wisconsin area just blew me away. They appreciate the sacrifice of Military Service men and women, who serve to keep us safe.

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.