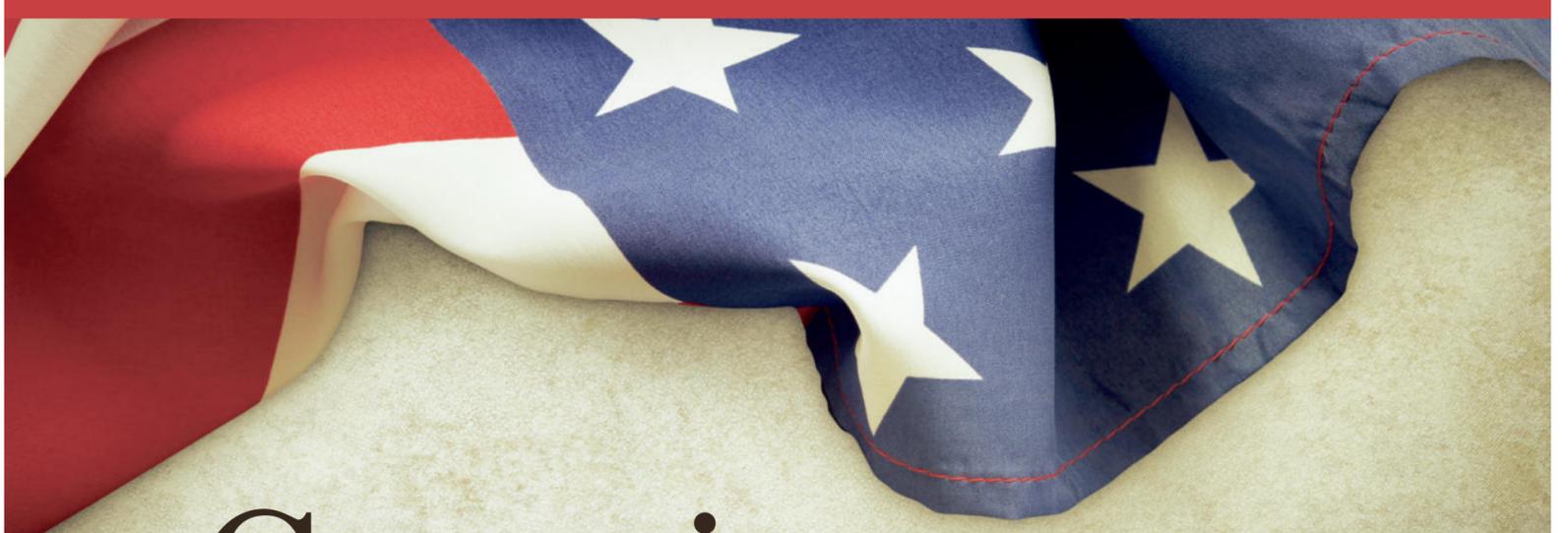




# 30 DAYS OF HONOR ★ *A Salute to Local Vets*



## Covering the globe

### Navy veteran Robert Koth patrolled Atlantic, Pacific during World War II

JOY MARQUARDT  
FOR GANNETT CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEDIA

**T**OMAHAWK — Robert A. Koth of Tomahawk participated in the second Never Forgotten Honor Flight to fly out of Central Wisconsin Airport in October 2010. He was scheduled for the first Honor Flight, but a stroke kept him grounded just before takeoff.

A patrol pilot with the U.S. Navy during World War II, Koth was discharged in 1945 and re-entered the military to spend a total of 20 years in service.

"I did enjoy my time in the military," he said. "I met a ton of wonderful people."

A Tomahawk native, Koth attended St. Mary's Catholic School and graduated from Tomahawk High School in 1940. He received pre-flight training at St. Mary's Academy in northern California and later completed flight school in Texas.

**About Robert A. Koth**

**Age:** 92  
**Residence:** Tomahawk  
**Conflict involved in:** World War II  
**Military branch:** United States Navy  
**Years in service:** Entered in the early 40's, discharged 1945. Re-entered the military and served 20 years in the U.S. Navy.

**Question: What did you do in the service? What was your job and where did you do it?**

**Answer:** I was a Navy pilot and flew planes throughout the Atlantic and the Pacific. I did pre-flight training at St. Mary's in California and attended flight school in Corpus Christi and other cities in Texas. We didn't have a ship base. We always landed in the water and they sent a boat out to get us. I never knew where I was going to be. I flew everywhere. One day you were over the Panama Canal and over Europe the next day.

**Q: What is your most enduring memory of your time in the service?**

**A:** The long patrols. We patrolled the Atlantic and the Pacific. It seemed like we were in the sky forever. I don't regret it a bit. The Navy has been very good to me.

**Q: What do you most want people to know about the conflict in which you served?**

**A:** That we won. If we hadn't gotten together and organized we probably wouldn't have. When we started we didn't have a military, it was all volunteers. The war got us moving.

**Q: Tell us about your life after the service and how your time in the military influenced what you have done since.**

**A:** I married my wife, Rosemarie, after I got out of the service. We met in high school. I worked for myself all my life. I was self-employed. I was in insurance and real estate. I had Koth Realty in Tomahawk. The military did help me become more of a boss for myself. It gave me the ability to do it.

**Q: What did Honor Flight mean to you?**

**A:** It meant they recognized what we did, which was very nice. I can't say enough good things about the co-founders of Honor Flight. It was a lot of work for them to put it all together.



T'XER ZHON KHA/GANNETT CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEDIA

A photo of Robert Koth, at left in back row, with his squadron.



T'XER ZHON KHA/GANNETT CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEDIA

World War II veteran Robert Koth lives in Tomahawk.



**A flight to never forget**

The Central Wisconsin chapter of Never Forgotten Honor Flight celebrates its fifth anniversary this spring. Since April 2010, the Honor Flight program has taken 1,828 veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam and 1,106 guardians from Central Wisconsin Airport to Washington, D.C., to view the memorials built in honor of their service.

30 Days of Honor is a project of Gannett Central Wisconsin Media to profile veterans who have taken an Honor Flight, or are scheduled, and to encourage more veterans to do so. Profiles will appear each day April 26 through Memorial Day.

Veterans may apply for a free Honor Flight (or loved ones may apply for them) by filling out an application. The only qualification for a veteran to take an Honor Flight is to have served in any branch of the U.S. military during the periods of World War II, the Korean War or Vietnam War. Veterans do not have to have been in combat. The applications and more information are available at <http://www.neverforgottenhonorflight.org>

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