

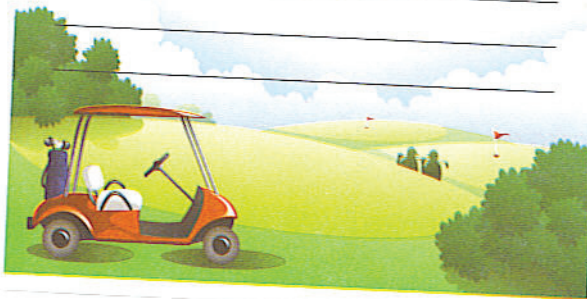


Mr. Robert Guenther  
Hi Jim!

I WROTE THIS  
ARTICLE FOR THE  
RENAISSANCE  
ASSISTED LIVING  
PLACE FOR THEIR  
MONTHLY NEWS  
LETTER.

I THOUGHT YOU  
MAY BE INTERESTED  
TO READ IT.

Bob Guenther



## *Never Forgotten Honor Flight*

Many of you have seen it on TV and read about and viewed newspaper pictures of the Never Forgotten Honor Flight that took place on Monday October 4, 2010. I was honored and privileged to be one of the 103 WW11 veterans selected for this second Never Forgotten Honor Flight to fly out of CWA airport for Washington DC to visit the WW11 Memorial and others that I will mention later. (Wausau serves 19 northern Wisconsin counties). On Sunday at 4:30 pm the day before our Honor flight we were treated to a wonderful pre-flight dinner and great entertainment at Howard Johnsons where we met our guardians (there was one guardian for every two WW11 veterans) and received shirt, jacket, baseball cap, throwaway camera and case and a carry-on bag.

We had to be at the airport at 5am to receive boarding passes and name tags and pass through the security checkpoint. Prior to leaving the airport at 7am and just after the plane left the boarding area we were saluted with water cannons from the airport fire truck spraying our 737 jet, what a thrill that was. During the flight we were served breakfast, fruit juice and plenty of coffee.

---

We arrived at Washington DC Dulles airport at approximately 9:50am where we disembarked and were greeted by 50-60 Honor Flight volunteers from the local Washington DC area who made sure we never got lost. Our first stop was the Iwo Jima Memorial and was especially important to me because like those very young men I was a proud US Marine. (I flew as a tail gunner on a PBJ (twin engine B 25 medium bomber), with Squadron 433, third Marine Air Wing in the Soloman-Bismark of the South Pacific). Departing Iwo Jima Memorial we were served delicious box lunches on one of three motor coaches, very new with large viewing windows. At all Memorials we left the motor coaches to inspect firsthand the writings, pictures, etc.

On our way to the WW11 Memorial we drove by the Capitol, Navy Memorial and White House to name a few of the many sights in Washington DC. The WW11 Memorial was truly the highlight of the trip because we were all WW11 veterans. The Memorial celebrates a generation of Americans who emerged from the depression to fight and win the most devastating war in world history. The World War 11 Memorial honors the 16 million who served in uniform, of whom over 400,000 gave their lives. This memorial to the WW11 Veterans took way too long to be memorialized, but thankfully not too late to view by thousands of WW11 veterans and others. We were fortunate to go for many of us would never have gotten to see this Memorial if not for the many hundreds of volunteers who donated their services to make this trip possible and for the thousands of dollars given by individuals and businesses to make this all possible.



The next stop was the Korean, Vietnam, and Lincoln Memorials. The Korean and Vietnam Memorials were very impressive and a wonderful tribute to the men and women who served in these two conflicts and to the women who served in all of these conflicts, the Memorials of which we visited and were to visit.

Our next stop was the Arlington Cemetery; impressive it makes you feel sad when you think of all the Military personal buried there as well as presidents and other dignitaries. We watched the changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at 5pm which was very impressive. Like all memorials and sites so much more could be said of them, but there's no room here.

The last stop, visiting the Air Force Memorial was very impressive because it showed three arches curving skyward, the two on the outside curving upward and outward and the middle going straight up 270 feet depicting three jets flying level in formation and then shooting skyward. The Air Corp usually does this at all air shows. After leaving here for the airport we drove past the Pentagon. We were again treated to box dinners which were very good; we had no time to stop at restaurants to eat.

---

This was truly a never-to-be-forgotten trip and packed into one day. We left Dulles Airport about 9pm (not before getting goodbyes from many, many people and receiving a water cannon salute from the fire department).

On the way home we were greeted with mail call and all veterans received many, many letters from family, friends, relatives, school children and others. Arriving at CWA airport we received a truly unexpected surprise, there were hundreds of people from little children to Grandma and Grandpa's and all those in between, waving flags, singing, bands playing, honor guards from the American Legion, VFW, US Marine Color Guard and others. This was truly a humbling experience, probably one of the greatest experiences of a life time packed into one truly remarkable day. Never in my life have I ever experienced such a perfect organized function and there were no glitches and all done by volunteers. My hat goes off to the directors and all those involved for giving us such a wonderful salute. A special thanks to Mike Thompson and Jim Campbell who head this fine organization for without their leadership this flight would not have been possible.

Bob Guenther

PS: I am sure had you asked my grandchildren about this flight they would have said "awesome". And I agree it was awesome!