

Dear friend of the Never Forgotten Honor Flight,

Last month we started a recap of how the Never Forgotten Honor Flight got off the ground (pun intended), with a description from our co-founder and long-time president, Mike Thompson. He told us of how he was exposed to the concept by his brother in Iowa and how they flew with their father's casket flag to participate in a ceremony to honor their dad, who didn't live to see the memorial built in honor of WWII veterans like him. The trip was so impactful that Mike repeatedly broke down in tears when telling Margie about it on the ride back to Wisconsin.

Let's pick up where we left off with Mike's story:

When I got home, I checked on nearby HFs in Wisconsin and found that the closest one was about 2 1/2 hours away. That's when I decided to write a letter to the newspaper editor about my experience on this program called Honor Flight. I indicated that we were losing more than 1,000 WWII vets per day, so "if you are a son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandchild, or a patriotic American who would like to start or be a part of a central Wisconsin Honor Flight, call this number xxx-xxx-xxxx. I would be honored to assist."

I received a few calls and emails from friends about the nice article in the paper, but when asked if they wanted to start an Honor Flight, they all replied that they were too busy. I understood, but couldn't let it go. I called HF Network, the national Honor Flight office, to find out how I could start a Hub and surprisingly they said that there was someone else in my area who was checking on an HF startup. It was Jim Campbell, an acquaintance of mine. I called Jim to arrange to meet him at the Relocation Bar for a beer and a fish fry so that we could discuss starting a local HF Hub.

I brought my HF pictures, pre-flight dinner program, itinerary, and stories from my Siouxland HF veterans and before our fish fry got in front of us, we were both in tears. Jim and I were "all in" to create a local HF, so we scratched out a budget of around \$80,000, decided we'd need to put together a 10-12 person Board of Directors, recruit 100 WWII veterans, find 50 guardians and 40 volunteers, and knowing that we had a time sensitive mission, fly on April 27, 2010 (five months away). Oh, and sell it all to a central Wisconsin audience that had never heard of the Honor Flight.

So without a nickel or a name we incorporated the 77th HF in the country on November 11, 2009, Veterans Day, under the name of "Never Forgotten Honor Flight," and off we went. Jim and I spent hundreds of hours recruiting, creating databases for veterans, guardians, and volunteers, raising money by presenting our program to civic organizations, local businesses, foundations, schools, and individuals.

14 years later, we have flown 46 missions with 4,399 honored WWII, Korea, and Vietnam veterans.

Thanks for all you do to make it possible. Here's a look at our scoreboard:

Veterans flown				Waiting list			
WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Total	WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Total
1,045	1,247	2,107	4,399	0	13	765	778

For the heroes,



Ken Moberg

President

Never Forgotten Honor Flight

