

...EVEN DECADES LATER...”



“Too many men and women go to war. Too many of them don’t come back. Let us never forget them. Even decades later...”

US Air Force Vietnam Veteran Richard “Dick” Harlan served from 1970-1976. He was stationed in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia from 1972-73 as a Forward Air Controller, flying OV-10’s. On our last Honor Flight, he was overcome with emotion as he remembered those who didn’t make it home.



We are grateful to him for allowing us to share his picture.

FROM THE BOARD

As we end our 2023 flying season and head into the new year, we want to extend a most heart-felt THANK YOU to everyone who has supported us throughout the years. We are especially grateful for all of our Veterans who have flown with us since 2009. In addition, our missions and other events are completely dependent on our passionate volunteers. Whether it's giving time or donating money, we cannot operate without them. Everything you give Honor Flight Bluegrass goes toward serving Veterans.

As we look forward to our 2024 flying season, we'll continue serving Veterans and working to keep their stories and history alive. We had the privilege of Brooke Prater and Jessica Farley from WHAS11 travel with us on both of our 2023 flights. They took the memories they captured and created an amazing documentary that showcases what Honor Flight is all about. You can access this documentary on the media section of our honorflightbluegrass.org website.

We are in full gear in planning for our 2024 flying season and the first flight is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21st. As our WWII and Korean War Veterans are 90 years old and older, we want to make sure we get them on the first flight of the year. We are asking all of you to help us find these men and women in Kentucky and southern Indiana who served our country during these two wars and help them get their applications completed for the May 21st flight.

Again, we want to thank all who have assisted us in 2023, and we hope we have your continued support in the new year! Please follow our social media platforms and share all of our posts to get the word out. And, check out our website for all the ways you can help on our volunteer application page.

"While we can never do enough to show gratitude to our nation's defenders, we can always do a little more." — Gary Sinise





Save The Date

May 21, 2024



2023 FLIGHTS

As we close our 15th year of flying, we are grateful for all the fantastic memories and times shared with our Veterans and volunteers.





BACK TO SCHOOL

Yes, our main mission is to fly WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, but sometimes we have the opportunity to take it a few steps further in the classrooms. We've been able to continue relationships with many of our Veterans after the flight through several events, such as this one. Stephanie Lay, HFB Board member and history teacher at Christian Academy, coordinated their middle school assembly in September, and these students had the opportunity to meet and hear from 98-year-old World War II veterans, Lee Smith and Herb Raderer. What an opportunity to keep history alive!



BOURBON STRONG

On September 27th, we partnered with Give270 for our first Bourbon Strong 50-4-50 Raffle. With only 3,000 tickets to be sold, we raffled off 50 bourbon prizes, and we were pleasantly surprised with an additional \$10,000 donation from the Veterans United Foundation! A big shout-out to Give270 for managing this raffle and supporting our mission! To everyone who shared and promoted this raffle, thank you! We salute you all!



VETERAN'S DAY PARADE

We were so excited that one of our own HFB Alumni, retired Army Captain and Vietnam Veteran Marj Graves, served as the Grand Marshal of this year's Veterans Day Parade! The Kentucky Veterans Parade and Celebration was held on November 11th in downtown Louisville. Marj got to ride in the convoy with Korean War and Navy Veteran Alfred Triplett. Honor Flight Ambassador John Shircliff was also on hand to show his support.



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We celebrated several milestone birthdays this year: WWII Army Veteran Albert Wess celebrated his 100th birthday in April, WWII Navy Veteran Paul Jones celebrated his 101st birthday in October, WWII US Army Staff Sergeant Earl Gausepohl celebrated his 100th birthday in November, and WWII Navy Veteran Jimmy Wren celebrated his 100th birthday in December. We are proud of our Honor Flight Bluegrass Alumni, we salute you all and are grateful for your service to our country!



Happy
Birthday
to
our
Heroes!



Cheers to their
100+
years!



PEARL HARBOR DAY

Honor Flight Bluegrass and KILROY "Club" Chapter MVPA honored our WWII Veterans on Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7th. The United States lost 2,403 service members and civilians during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. In addition, 1,178 people were injured in the attack, which permanently sank two U.S. Navy battleships, the USS Arizona and the USS Utah, and destroyed 188 aircraft. We honor their sacrifice and all the members of the Greatest Generation who secured our freedom in WWII.





A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

Yesterday, Wednesday May 17, I had the distinct privilege of being a participating Veteran in the Honor Flight Bluegrass trip to Washington D.C. I just wanted to personally thank everyone involved in the planning and execution of the trip. It was such a flawlessly handled itinerary. If anything didn't go as planned it wasn't noticed.

Everything was perfect from the air flights, places visited, the bus trips around D.C., the food, and certainly but not least, the guardian that was provided for me. My guardian was Cynthia Hilyerd. She was great. I found out her father had paid her way and my deepest gratitude to him for his generosity. I told Cynthia soon after we met that it was only after 911, over 30 years, before anyone had thanked me for my service. She could not thank me enough. By the end of the day as we disembarked from the plane I told her, she was special, the trip was special, and she made me feel special.

I am a Veteran that returned from Southeast Asia in late 1969. No one ever welcomed me home when I returned outside of my immediate family. I remember walking through the San Francisco airport in uniform and getting stares and weird looks from barefooted shirtless hippies. Needless to say, when we entered the waiting area at the Standiford airport and were greeted by what appeared to be thousands of people with the welcoming committee, I was blown away. I can not begin to tell you the number of people that spoke to me and said, "Welcome home." I responded and told them it was over 50 years and it was the first time anyone said that. It was humbling and awesome at the same time.

On my way home from the airport it made me think that perhaps that is the way it will be when one gets to heaven. All the people whose lives we've touched will be there waiting for us, cheering us on and thanking us for what we did for them. I know I will be in the crowd when anyone involved in the Honor Flight shows up and comes walking in.

Again, I can not say thank you enough and really can not put into words how much I appreciate having been a part of all of this. I know there must be individuals and corporate sponsors that must contribute to all of this. Please pass on my thanks and gratitude.

Thanks for a great day and a wonderful memory,

--Mark L.

Your Gift

Makes it possible for OUR VETERANS
to visit their memorials in Washington, D.C.

www.honorflightbluegrass.org

Every service member, regardless of age, branch,
or duty station deserves a thank you
for their service to our country.

Our Mission

Our sole mission is to fly our heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit their respective memorials and reflect upon their service, sacrifices, and memories.

Every service member deserves a first-class THANK YOU and WELCOME HOME in the grandest style ever. Honor Flight Bluegrass honors our heroes and recognizes their sacrifice. It is with extreme pride, unwavering gratitude, and utmost respect that we are currently able to provide this service to World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans.

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