

News from the Front Lines

VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF ND/MN

November 2024

Double the Veterans, Double the Fun



Veterans on the Bravo Flight help with the Great Garrison Flag retreat at Fort McHenry on day one of the trip.

With a waiting list of approximately 850 deserving Veterans, we knew changes had to be made to our flight schedule. In a typical year, we'd see to it that about 200 Veterans made their trip. At that rate, our waiting list would become insurmountable. So rather than taking two flights (or three as we've previously done) in a calendar year, this time we

decided to fly two planes at roughly the same time, doubling the amount of heroes we could seat at once.

In total, 215 of the Red River Valley's Veterans crisscrossed our Nation's Capital for three days earlier this fall. Half the group (named Alpha) left in the first plane one hour before the other half (known as Bravo). We joined together on Sunday night for a full-group banquet, though would traverse the city as two independent groups.

Throughout the tours, eight busloads of Veterans were treated to private viewings of our nation's most important documents at the National Archives, given time to heal and mourn at the three war memorials commemorating events of which our heroes were part (World War II, Korean, and Vietnam), time to peruse the

newest facility — the Military Women's Memorial, viewing the monuments and complementing museums attached to the four branches of our military (Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force), exploration of the Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorials and viewing the Washington from across the Reflecting Pond, and touring Fort McHenry.

Veterans enjoyed social time both evenings at the hotel, as well as an expertly catered pair of banquets, topped off with musical entertainment. Politicians representing both the North Dakotans and Minnesotans in our crew stopped by to express their gratitude for the service of our honorees.

All in all, it was an incredible weekend and a wonderful way to close out the 2024 travel year. The memories made and experiences had will last a lifetime for everyone involved.

Special points of interest:

- VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF ND/MN WAS FOUNDED IN 2015
- SINCE ITS CREATION, APPROXIMATELY 2,300 VETERANS OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY AREA HAVE BEEN FLOWN TO WASHINGTON, DC
- HONOR FLIGHTS ARE ALWAYS EXPENSE-FREE FOR OUR VETERANS

Get to Know One of Our Flight Veterans

It isn't often anymore when one of our flight Veterans can claim military service during the WWII era. This past September, we were treated to one of the Greatest Generation's best, Motor Machinist's Mate Third Class, Alton "Fritz" Frethem.

Frethem joined the US Navy

in May 1945. He left Fosston, MN and would ultimately head west to the Pacific Ocean. While in the Navy, Frethem would be responsible for making sea water potable while aboard the USS Telamon. He said he enjoyed his time in service and was happy to (cont'd on next page)



US Navy Radio-Motor Machinist's Mate Third Class Alton "Fritz" Frethem of Fosston, MN served in the US Navy.

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(cont'd from page 1) have a job that he liked.

Making his trip with Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN was a very special experience for Alton. He acknowledged that President Franklin D. Roosevelt passed away the day he took his military entrance physical ... seeing his memorial was very touching, knowing that he had lived through the entirety of his presidency as a child.

As a former Navyman, it was also very touching to him when four uniformed, active duty sailors stopped him while touring to thank him for



Four active duty sailors stopped to pay their respects while at the US Navy Memorial

his service and to partake in camaraderie of their shared Naval experience.

When asked what his favorite part of the trip was, Alton quickly and easily stated that it was viewing the Lincoln Memorial. "I always

admired President Lincoln," he said, "and seeing the large inscriptions of his words on the interior of the memorial was very special for me. He was truly a great man, ol' Honest Abe."

Frethem's daughter, Sue, escorted him on his Honor Flight. She was impressed by how friendly and gracious everyone was ... from the support staff that accompanied the Veterans, to the



He attempted to shake FDR's hand ... but the gesture was not readily returned

send-off committee at Hector International Airport in Fargo, to the strangers we would see while out and about. But what really got her was when the

entire room full of comrades gave her dad a standing ovation at dinner our final night together. "It brought tears to my eyes seeing how respectful of my dad everyone was!" Visiting Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar even sought him out specifically to shake his hand and share her gratitude for his



Frethem gives two thumbs up while touring the World War II Memorial

service to our nation.

Upon returning, 15 people from Frethem's family were on hand to welcome him home. He was awed by the posters and cheering fans, and the live band at his re-entry to civilian life — something he said was very memorable to and a real exciting thing to experience.

We are so thrilled to have shuttled Alton on his deserved



Alton's family and adoring fans celebrate his arrival back home at the Fargo homecoming

"THIS WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS OVERWHELMING IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE. I LOVED IT!"
- ALTON "FRITZ" FRETHEM

Speck's Bar Helps Bring Home the Bacon



DeAnn Wilka, Speck's Bar Manager, puts on a great Meat Raffle every Monday — check it out!

The folks at Speck's Bar have really shown up for our community's Veterans.

Since late March 2023, Speck's Bar in Fargo has been hosting weekly meat raffles for their patrons. Each Monday night, bargoers eagerly trade in their \$1.00 bills for a chance at beef bundles, pork packages, poultry parcels, fish fixes, and more!

Jeff Thoemke, Volunteer, has been working with DeAnn Wilka, Speck's Bar Manager, and her crew on their meat raffles. The two report that to date, over \$24,000 has been raised at these protein-packed events! He says, "The grassroots efforts of the Speck's Bar group have been inspiring to see — they're a great team who loves their Veterans."

DeAnn is so proud of the

Speck's staff and customers, claiming, "Seeing what we've done as a team is so encouraging. Our efforts have far exceeded any expectations, and I'm thrilled to know all the good we've done through this fun event."

If you'd like to try your hand at winning dinner for your household, stop on down to Speck's at 5:30pm on Mondays!

Meet a Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN Volunteer

No one is busier in his retirement than Dave Rice, Director. Since retiring from civilian work in 2008, he's filled his time volunteering for nearly every military group possible.

Dave has been working on Honor Flights in the greater Fargo-Moorhead area since 2007 (before our current group). He's captained many buses on our trips and worked countless fundraisers.

Additionally, he has membership with the Fargo VFW (Post 762, state, regional, and national level), Harwood American Legion (Post 297, state, regional, and national level), Forty & Eight, Fargo National Cemetery Honor Guard, AMVETS, Navy League, VVA, DAV, and the Dept. of Vet-

erans Affairs. Dave conducts over 130 Military Funeral Honors and and flag education programs to a couple thousand youths yearly.

While in the Navy, Dave began his active duty service at just 17-years-old. He spent three+ years aboard the USS Oklahoma City (CLG-5) conducting Naval Gun-fire Support missions off the coast of Vietnam and being homeported in Japan sailing between Vietnam and Japan. Upon his return, he'd spend the next 37 years in the Navy Reserve while attending classes at NDSU on the GI Bill earning his bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural economics, eventually working for NDSU for over 30 years. In the Reserves, he earned several

awards and promotions. He retired from military life in 2011 as a Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8) with 42 years of service to our country.

He says, "I came home from Vietnam alive while 58,000 of my brothers and sisters didn't. I am so grateful for the service of our military and want to continue to honor them."

Dave is a father of two, Katie and Chad. He is also a very proud grandfather to two girls. He has been lucky to love two wonderful women his lifetime, Rita, who passed in



David Rice
Director

2005, and his bride of 16 years, Donna.

"IT'S FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR OUR TROOPS, VETERANS, YOUTH, AND PATRIOTISM. GO NAVY!"

-DAVE RICE, DIRECTOR

Big Help Comes in Small Packages



Larkin (4) raised enough selling friendship bracelets to fund nine wheelchairs!

In our last newsletter we asked for help funding more wheelchairs, due to our scheduled double flights. The need to increase the number of chairs in our fleet was great ... and urgent.

A whirlwind effort commenced. Folks got right to work making sure our heroes would have the transportation needed to successfully complete their touring.

While we're happy to report that all wheelchairs were fully funded, we're especially proud of our youngest supporters. Three children all under the age of 11 did what they could with what they had and between the three of them managed to purchase 22 chairs! We are so proud of these kiddos and their giving hearts!



Together, Anna (8) and Brooklyn (11) funded 13 wheelchairs selling lemonade and bracelets!

Purse Bingo Has Fun in the Bag



Many lucky ladies showing off their new handbags after winning a Purse Bingo game

Twice per year the handbag aficionados come out to try their luck at winning one of 15 designer purses in this fun and frenzied event!

Purse Bingo attendees are encouraged to participate in the wine pull and silent auc-

tion for some extra fun.

To date, Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN has brought in over \$70,000 from this semi-annual event — enough to fully fund 44 Veterans' trips!

Our next Purse Bingo, scheduled for November 9, 2024, sold out in less than 24-hours ... so if you'd like to join us at

future sessions, don't delay your ticket purchase. Purse Bingo typically happens in May and November of each year and is announced on our Facebook Page.

Jolinda Michels, Volunteer, says, "Purse Bingo shows us that all demographic groups are excited about helping fund our Veterans' trips."

Know Before You Go — Basic Health Tips while Flying

Air travel may be something you don't do regularly. As such, we've compiled a short list of some basic health tips to keep your body safe for our three-day trip. As always, if you have any health concerns or questions, please speak with your doctor and consult with our President Jane Matecjek (who is also an RN) at 701.238.7749.

- Wear compression socks to promote good circulation while seated
- Eat a healthy breakfast and drink plenty of fluids the morning of our flight
- If you're tired, take a nap — we've got three busy days ahead
- Dress comfortably
- Wiggle your toes and legs often while in flight
- Similarly, wiggle your fingers and periodically raise your arms
- Ask for help stowing your duffle bag overhead
- Keep medications and rescue prescriptions close in case of emergency



Bravo Flight Veterans, Volunteers, and Escorts keep the blood flowing during a group exercise mid-flight

Make Plans to Join Us at the Fargo Force Game!



Fargo Force players don patriotic jerseys during our night game

We are thrilled to be selected again for a featured Jersey Night at the Fargo Force hockey game!

Gather up your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers for a super fun night at Scheel's Arena.

At the Saturday, November 16 game, players for the Force will be wearing special patriotic Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN jerseys sponsored by American Crystal Sugar. Bid on the player's jersey you like best after the game ... and when you have the highest bid, you keep it!

Additionally, we'll have other fun events happening throughout the game: representation during the puck drop, a spe-

cial silent auction, extra contests and prizes, branded giveaways, and more!



Volunteers Aubrey Ketterling and Denise Anderson take care of the silent auction

Our volunteer team looks forward to this event every year — what's not to love about hockey and supporting our troops, after all?

Tickets are available on the Force website now!

FARGOFORCE.COM

We are so grateful to the Force for their continuous support. We hope you can join us for an incredible day out at the rink!

We're Part of the Greater Good



Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN is one of the 128 hubs around the country who work together to celebrate America's Veterans by inviting them to share in a period of honor

at our nation's memorials in Washington, DC. We share the vision with all hubs that we can be a nation where all our Veterans experience the honor, gratitude, and community support they deserve.

Honor Flight began in 2004 when Earl Morse, a private pilot, physician's assistant, and retired Air Force Captain from Ohio, realized that many of

the folks who the World War II Memorial was built for would likely never see it. He flew two Veterans to Washington, DC on his own dime and thus a dream began.

The first Veterans from the Red River Valley were flown to our nation's capital in 2007, thanks in large part to Tracy Briggs, Fargo Forum Writer, and the committee she formed.

In 2015, Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN (name changed in 2018) fired up the planes and continued the mission of showing our country's heroes the gratitude they deserve.

We have no intent of slowing down until all deserving Veterans of the Red River Valley have made their Honor Flight.

Financial Support Welcomed Via the FM Area Foundation Caring Catalog



It started with a name, a little money, and some very big plans.

The FM Area Foundation's history goes back to 1960 when a visionary group of community-minded leaders came together to create a community trust to support charitable, educational, and cultural purposes in Cass County, North Dakota, and Clay County, Minnesota. A well-known Fargo attorney, Art Cupler, led the effort to create the community trust.

The purpose of the FM Area Foundation is to be a reservoir in which citizens, whether of large or small means, can make lasting contributions for the betterment of the community in which they earn their livelihood and a facility

for carrying out the wishes of the donors interested in public and private philanthropy in the Fargo-Moorhead metro area.

Throughout the years, families, individuals, nonprofits and businesses have created, and contributed to more than 400 charitable funds — many of them permanent funds — to help create the community we all want to live in.

Today, the foundation manages over \$100 million in assets and has granted more than \$80 million to create stronger, more vibrant communities.

One of the three initiatives of the FM Area Foundation is the Caring Catalog.



Your tax-deductible donations allow more Veterans to experience the healing and camaraderie of an Honor Flight

The Caring Catalog is an online giving platform that aims to help connect community members with local nonprofits during the most generous time of the year — the holiday season.

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/B5FA7SSF](https://tinyurl.com/B5FA7SSF)

We are thrilled to have been chosen as one of the 25 featured 501(c)(3) charities for the 2024 Caring Catalog!

From December 2-13, 2024, generous donors are invited to use either the QR Code or web address shown on this page to shop the catalog of charities and easily give their tax-deductible donation to one or more programs.

We value and are thankful for your continued financial support of Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN. Your contributions make dreams come true.



Insider Trip Secrets — We Can Help at The Wall

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is an incredibly emotional experience. Viewing it can truly take your breath away.

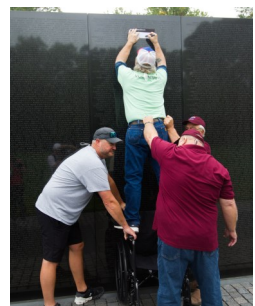
Sometimes, viewers can become so overcome with emotion that it becomes hard to process all the names and panels and directions ... and it's easy to give up looking.

Fortunately, we have learned what works best and have stationed our volunteers at

The Wall with name-finding phone apps, special graphite sticks and slips of paper for making rubbings of names, and can provide the manpower necessary to access names on the very top and very bottom of the tallest and smallest panels. Our professional photographers are also ready to capture a perfect image of any name(s) you would like.

All you need to be prepared with is a fallen GI's proper name and hometown/state. We can then help locate the individual's name on the specific panel and get your memento made.

We want your experience viewing this solemn piece of history to be hassle-free so you can spend the time you need in reverence.



Kurtis Andersen, Volunteer, assists a Veteran with making a name rubbing from the very top of a panel of The Wall



The Real ID
deadline is coming up!
Make sure you have
yours before May 7,
2025!

[HTTPS://WWW.DHS.GOV/REAL-ID](https://www.dhs.gov/real-id)

VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF ND/MN

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Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN is a non-profit organization created solely to honor America's Red River Valley Veterans for their sacrifice to our grateful nation. We are accepting applications from WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans. Applications can be found on our website. Flights occur in the spring and fall of each year, pending adequate fundraising.

We are a 100% volunteer, 501(c)(3) charity.

Join Us at Future Events!

Every Monday (no holidays) in
2024-25 — 5:30pm Meat Raffle
at Speck's Bar in Fargo, ND

November 1 — All month Round
Up Your Tab at Icedwind Brewery
in Mapleton, ND

November 1 — 7:00pm Haunted
House at The Crypt at Jacob's
Manor in Leonard, ND

November 6 — 5:30pm Meat
Raffle at Wild Rice Bar & Grill in
Wild Rice, ND



*Purse Bingo is
the MOST fun!*

November 9
— 1:00pm Oh
Deer! Purse
Bingo at TAK
Music Venue in
Dilworth, MN

November 16
— 6:05pm
Fargo Force
Jersey Night
at Scheel's
Arena in Far-
go, ND

November 20 — 5:30pm Meat
Raffle at Wild Rice Bar & Grill in
Wild Rice, ND

December 4 & 18 — 5:30pm
Meat Raffle at Wild Rice Bar &
Grill in Wild Rice, ND

December 29 — Time TBD Stars
& Stripes Take the Ice at The
Lights in West Fargo, ND

January 12 — 8:00am Waffle
and Sausage Feed at American
Legion Post 21 in Moorhead, MN

January 15 — 5:30pm Meat
Raffle at Wild Rice Bar & Grill in
Wild Rice, ND



*Winning bidders take home a
game-worn hockey jersey!*



*Give one of our Meat Raffles a try
— winners go home with dinner!*

January 25 — 6:00pm Bingo at
The Silver Spike Bar & Grill in
Dilworth, MN

January 26 — 12:00pm Hot Dish
Contest at American Legion Post
21 in Moorhead, MN

January 29 — 5:30pm Meat
Raffle at Wild Rice
Bar & Grill in Wild
Rice, ND

February 1 & 2 — All Day
Frostival at American Legion Post
21 in Moorhead, MN

February 12 — 5:30pm Meat
Raffle at Wild Rice Bar & Grill in
Wild Rice, ND

February 13 — All day Giving
Hearts Day at American Legion
Post 21 in Moorhead, MN

March 22 — 11:00am Chili
Cook Off at Wild Rice Bar &
Grill in Wild Rice, ND

Are you, a group you
belong to, or your
business interested
in hosting a fundrais-
er? Visit our website
to learn more!

VETERANSHONORFLIGHTOFNDMN.ORG/
THIRD-PARTY-APPLICATION