

Cedar Valley Honor Flight Story



“THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!”

The Birth of a National Network

When the World War II Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C. on May 29, 2004, it quickly became a topic of conversation for retired Air Force Captain and physician's assistant, Earl Morse, and his patients. Morse had been hired by the Department of Veterans Affairs six years prior to work in a small health clinic in Springfield, Ohio, and was eager to learn if the members of the Greatest Generation he served were planning to travel to the nation's capital to visit the memorial built specifically to honor them. Over time, it became clear to him that, for most of the veterans, now living in their 80's, such a trip was not physically or financially possible.

Undeterred, Morse, who was also a private pilot and member of one of the largest aero clubs located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, conceived a plan to take matters into his own hands. In December 2004, he asked two of his veteran patients if they would be willing to make the trip to Washington, D.C. if Morse personally flew them, free of charge. The response he got from both, tears followed by eager acceptance, confirmed his belief that there were many veterans who, like them, would feel the same way.

In January 2005, Morse took the idea to his aero club, describing a volunteer program consisting of two requirements. The first, a free trip for the veterans, meant that pilots would pay the cost of the aircraft rental (up to \$1,200 for the day). The second was the stipulation that the pilots would also personally escort the veterans around the nation's capital to complete the experience. Following his presentation, eleven pilots immediately expressed their desire to participate.

Four months later, in May 2005, six small planes and 12 veterans landed in Manassas, Virginia, before boarding vans that transported the group to the World War II Memorial. Word of this incredible experience soon spread. With so many veterans wanting to participate, commercial aircraft were used to transport up to 40 veterans at a time, many of them in wheelchairs. By the end of 2005, 137 World War II veterans had made the trip to Washington, D.C..

A growing waiting list and an urgent desire to serve an aging population of seniors before they died saw an increase of veterans served in 2006. By that time, news of the volunteer effort was spreading across the nation and a network of community leaders who shared



a mission and vision of what the Honor Flight program could be was coming together.

In Hendersonville, North Carolina, Jeff Miller was the first to organize and obtain the necessary funding to do what was considered impossible; fly an entire commercial jet filled with World War II veterans and their guardians to Washington, D.C.. It was also during this time that Morse and Miller combined their efforts, co-founding the Honor Flight Network. By the end of 2006, nearly 900 World War II veterans had visited their memorial in Washington, D.C., courtesy of this life-changing program.

By the end of 2022, the Honor Flight Network had expanded to include more than 130 hubs located across 45 states, adding Korean and Vietnam War era veterans to their service mission. Because of the efforts of thousands of dedicated volunteers, more than 270,000 United States veterans have received grateful thanks for their service by way of an unforgettable experience in Washington, D.C..

Creating a Hub in Waterloo, Iowa

In Eastern Iowa, a similar story began with a simple conversation in 2010 between Black Hawk County Supervisor, Craig White, and local media mogul, Jim Coloff, about potential projects that could benefit the military veterans in and around the Waterloo-Cedar Falls community.

Coloff, who owns a dozen Iowa radio stations and is well known for his charitable work giving back to the communities he serves, was looking to develop a project for area veterans. Who better to call than the man affectionately known as “White,” an army veteran with countless family members who have proudly served their country for generations in the various branches of the United States military? As the men met sporadically for coffee to brainstorm ideas over the next few months, their early conversations did not generate any particular course of action. It wasn't until White read about an Honor Flight experience in the *Waterloo Courier* originating out of nearby Cedar Rapids, that the idea to serve local veterans in the same capacity began to take hold.

An informational meeting to learn more about the Cedar Rapids Honor Flight operation was soon set. Joining White for the meeting was fellow Black Hawk County Supervisor, Frank Magsamen, who had expressed an interest in helping with any project that might benefit local veterans. Magsamen brought with him a lifetime of service devoted to the local fire department, rising through the ranks to become Fire Chief in 1994, before ultimately serving as the Emergency Management Director for Black Hawk County.

Following the meeting, the two supervisors immediately recognized the Honor Flight experience as a good cause but were taken aback by



the amount of money needed to make it work. Each flight came with a price tag in excess of \$100,000.

"The amount of money was the thing that scared me because I'd never been involved with anything to raise that kind of money," White recalled.

"When I left Cedar Rapids, I thought what a responsibility it is to take 80-90 World War II veterans and coordinate to get an airplane here. I was pretty much overwhelmed about it," Magsamen added.

Uncertain how they could proceed in the face of such a massive fund-raising campaign, fate would intervene by way of a lost phone number. In an effort to reach him, White's Cedar Rapids Honor Flight contact instead called *Waterloo Courier* reporter, Pat Kinney, when he discovered he had misplaced White's phone number. As any good reporter will do, Kinney began asking questions about possible Honor Flights taking off from Waterloo. After White responded that additional planning was needed before he could say much about it, the next day he was surprised to see a report in the *Courier* about the effort underway for Waterloo to host an Honor Flight. With this "announcement" going public, there would be no turning back now.

While White may have initially thought the *Courier's* story to be premature, it served the purpose of reinvigorating efforts to find the money to make the dream of making Waterloo, Iowa an Honor Flight hub into a reality. Unbeknownst to White and Magsamen, that same story had gotten others in the community to begin thinking similar thoughts.

A Remarkable Gift Pays it Forward

Burk "Skeet" Miehe is the founder of American Pattern and CNC Works, Inc., a company that serves production pattern tooling needs for agricultural and industrial businesses. His father was a Marine who had served in the Korean War, a member of the "Frozen Chosen," so named for an extended battle fought during the worst blizzard in a century at the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. His wife, Julie, also shares a special military connection, as her father was a U.S. Navy pilot.

Burk has known Craig White for many years, dating back to their time playing softball together in the 1980s. When White paid him a visit to seek support from his business, he was aware of the outreach effort the fledgling Honor Flight hub was making.

"He had gone around to some other business leaders and was trying to raise some money and they weren't having a lot of luck," he recalled.

As the two began to discuss the Honor Flight program, little did Craig White know he was about to receive a gift that would more than jump-start his fund-raising campaign.

"When Des Moines, Mason City and Cedar Rapids [have Honor Flights, and here's Waterloo [without one]... I just felt, yeah, we've got to do something to help. There's a lot of veterans in this area," Miehe said.

White looked on as Miehe got out his checkbook, started the dollar amount with the number one, then proceeded to add five zeroes after it. With a single stroke of Burk's pen, the Miehes had funded the entire cost of Cedar Valley Honor Flight's inaugural trip to Washington, D.C..

"I think they were shocked," Miehe said when asked about the response he got.

"We [the business] had a very good 2009 and 2010. And this was 2011. And I felt, why not? Why not pay it back?"



The Cedar Valley Honor Flight logo proudly shares its name with American Legion Post 730 in Waterloo, Iowa: Sullivan-Hartogh-Davis. These three names represent the ultimate sacrifice seven Waterloo natives made in the service of their nation.



The five Sullivan brothers- George (age 27), Frank (25), Joe (23), Matt (22) and Al (19) enlisted in the United States Navy on January 3, 1942, during World War II, following the death of their sister's boyfriend, who was killed while serving on the *USS Arizona* during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. While siblings were not typically allowed to serve together during wartime, the Sullivans requested and received permission from the Secretary of the Navy to do so. Assigned to the *USS Juneau*, all five were killed when their ship was struck by a Japanese submarine's torpedo on November 13, 1942, and sank near the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific Ocean.



Nearly twenty-seven years later, Marine Lance Corporal David Michael Hartogh was killed just three days after his 19th birthday on September 7, 1969 in the Quang Nam Province of South Vietnam.

A seventh Waterloo serviceman, Marine Private First Class David Lee Davis, was killed less than two months after his 19th birthday on March 20, 1969, as part of Operation Purple Martin, a multi-battalion search and clear operation in the Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam.



These seven men, whose names are honored by American Legion Post 730 and Cedar Valley Honor Flight, share important legacies that, to this day, remain in the hearts and minds of the Waterloo community. Their service and sacrifice remind future generations that our nation remains free because of their patriotism and acts of selflessness.

“Certainly, the Miehé’s donation got the community looking at doing the flights out of Waterloo. He got the flights going,” Magsamen acknowledged, recalling how the impact of such a tremendous gift encouraged other businesses and the community at large to follow suit.

Building a Team

With the knowledge that at least one flight was now possible, there was still much work to be done to build the new Waterloo Honor Flight hub from the ground up. White and Magsamen knew they needed help from a number of volunteers to help make their vision of Cedar Valley Honor Flight a reality. What to do first?

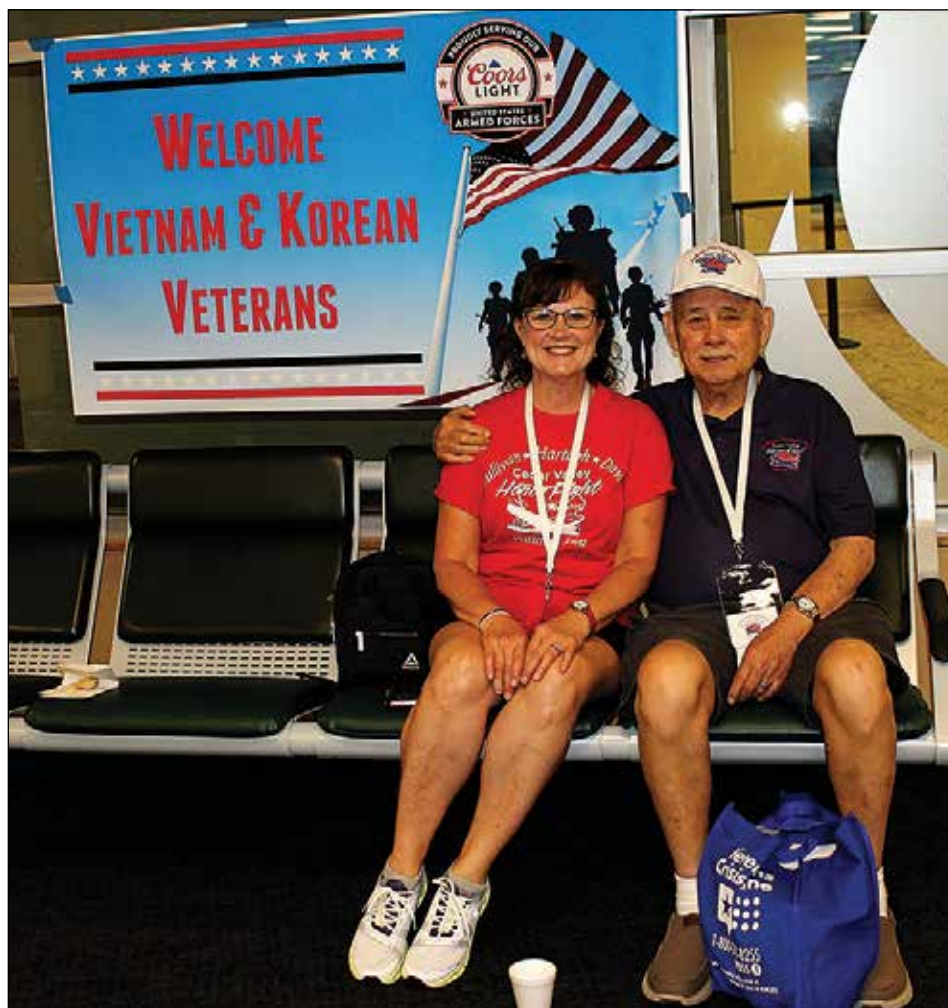
“A bunch of paperwork,” White said with a chuckle.

And who got the unenviable task of completing the documentation for the organization to obtain its necessary nonprofit status?

“I think Frank filled out most of it,” he added.

“At that time, you could be a 501(c)(3) through the National Honor Flight, so that’s how we got our initial start,” Magsamen explained.

To solicit volunteer support, a meeting at the local United Auto Workers 838 hall was scheduled and promoted by the *Waterloo Courier* in a news article that described some of the desired skills and abilities that were being sought. A number of individuals who would become key contributors in the Cedar Valley Honor Flight organization took notice, and soon, the roster of board members began to take shape.



Among them was Janet Liming, who, despite already having a full-time job, shared a passion for the veteran community, having a father who had served as a medic in the army and a son who served in the Marine Corps.

“I had seen in the news that they were looking for people to serve on the board to assist. So I went to the meeting, and I had sent an e-mail to Craig that said these are my qualifications and I would love to do this. I became the first administrator [for Cedar Valley Honor Flight] and what that involved was quite a bit more than I ever imagined. But I never, ever say it wasn’t one of the best things in the world. It was the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done in my life,” she said.

Lee Bedore, following a 37 year career working in all aspects of the John Deere foundry, machining and assembly, spoke with fellow Deere retiree Craig White about the effort to establish an Honor Flight hub in Waterloo. Bedore, who was the Chair of Community Services at UAW Local 838 for nearly 30 years, had been active serving the community on a number of different boards for years.

“It’s just another way to give back to Waterloo and it’s time to help out. I’m very appreciative of the vets,” he said of his interest in the project. “I talked to Craig and they needed a place to meet. The Union hall seemed to work out. [It’s been] a great place to have our meetings at,” he added.

Also, stepping up to volunteer for the first Honor Flight was David Grimm, a 33 year veteran of the United States armed forces, having served in both the Marine Corps and Army. His first role as parking attendant at pre-flight meetings and the airport soon morphed into other logistical tasks for the organization.

“I used to drive down to Cedar Rapids and pick up wheelchairs from [Eastern Iowa] Honor Flight, bring them up here. I would take them back down afterwards,” he said.

Sue Gress was a volunteer and publisher of two cookbooks for Iowa’s Bravest, an organization that supports Iowa servicemen and women while they are deployed overseas, when she learned about Waterloo’s effort to establish an Honor Flight hub. Following the example set by her parents, who proudly served their country in the U.S. Army, Sue had

Thank You for Your Service



On early support for Cedar Valley Honor Flight:

“I just felt we’ve got to do something to help. There’s a lot of veterans in this area. And I felt, why not? Why not pay it back?”

~Burk Miehé, Business Owner

four brothers who served in various branches of the military, as well as a son in the Marine Corps. Thanks to her calligraphy skills, a touch of elegance was added to the table place cards used at pre-flight meetings and the lanyards worn on Honor Flight trips. Like so many other Cedar Valley Honor Flight veterans, she's pitched in wherever needed, be it making phone calls, helping serve meals or checking veterans in at the airport

"I wanted to give back to the veterans. I just felt that was so important," she said.

Before serving Cedar Valley Honor Flight, Ed McFarland served his country a total of eight years in the U.S. Army and National Guard. His interest in the organization was sparked after being a guardian on the first flight in May 2011.

"I just felt as a younger vet that it would be an honor to be able to go out to D.C. with these older vets and get to hear some of their stories. And then, when I got back, it meant a lot to me to be able to go out there. I told Craig White if they ever needed help to let me know," McFarland recalled.

Soon, he was put to work helping prepare for the pre-flight meetings before joining the board and getting involved with fund-raising work.

From the very beginning, Cedar Valley Honor Flight also received support from another key business partner, the local Hy-Vee grocery stores. With the assistance of Niki Rinaldi, who served on the Cedar Valley Honor Flight Board for several years, Hy-Vee has provided an immense amount of support in the form of meals for every veteran and guardian attending pre-flight meetings (29 and counting by the end

Thank You for Your Service



On why he volunteered for Cedar Valley Honor Flight:

"I belong to just about every military organization there is. As a veteran myself, I saw how we were treated. I thought it was a great thing to pay it forward and pay it back. I'm happy to do it and it's an honor to do it."

~David Grimm, Honor Flight Organizer



of 2023). They also sponsored donuts, fruit and coffee at the Waterloo Regional Airport on the mornings of each flight. Early flights also featured a Hy-Vee "goody bag" for veterans, each containing snacks and a disposable camera loaded with film that the grocery store chain processed for free.

Starting from Scratch

With volunteers ready and willing to work, procedures needed to be developed to streamline the process of selecting and transporting veterans to Washington, D.C.. With no personal experience to draw upon, the small but eager Cedar Valley Honor Flight Board consulted with another area Honor Flight hub, Eastern Iowa Honor Flight, which serves veterans in nearby Cedar Rapids.

"I met with a gal named Mary in Cedar Rapids who was an administrator. She showed me all the paperwork [Cedar Rapids used] and gave me a rundown of everything that had to be done. So I came home and created our own paperwork," Janet Liming recalled.

Teresa Schmitz, another volunteer who made an early commitment to Cedar Valley Honor Flight, also found the consultation in Cedar Rapids to be very helpful.

"We learned how important it was to look through the files [and check] the medical needs of our guys," she said, emphasizing the special care that was taken for World War II veterans, most of whom were in their 80s and 90s.

Forms that had to be adapted for the Waterloo hub included applications for veterans and guardians to complete. An all-important medical information sheet was needed so that any prescribed medications or other special medical needs, such as oxygen, could be reported and accounted for. A covenant not

to sue form was also adapted for use with veterans and guardians flying out of Waterloo.

Early flights, which featured veterans of World War II and the Korean War, posed unique challenges.

"I think the World War II veterans, hardly any of them had been to see any of the memorials. So, for them, this was huge. Plus, a lot of them probably had never been on a plane. But as far as health-wise, it was more challenging with the World War II veterans because of their age, the amount of oxygen needed and medications," said longtime volunteer, Barb O'Rourke.

With applications available at a number of locations in and around Waterloo, as well as online, the response from World War II and Korean War veterans to the early Cedar Valley Honor Flights was very strong.

"At that time, we were getting so many applications that we had to be really, really careful [to record] the date that we received them," O'Rourke said, because veterans receiving their confirmation card paid close attention to the confirmed date their application was received.

Once applications have been submitted, a follow-up phone call is needed to confirm eligibility, that the veteran is available to go on the scheduled flight date and to determine if any special accommodations are needed. Over the years, these calls have been made by a number of volunteers, including Janet Liming, Linda Bergmann, Sue Gress, Barb O'Rourke, Teresa Schmitz and Janet Schupbach.

"We have to get [the veteran's] information, birthdate and everything else like that so it will match up with the manifest," Schupbach stated, referencing the importance of accuracy, as the plane's manifest must match each individual's



identification on the day of the flight in order for them to travel with the group.

Bergman, who has served as flight administrator for nearly 25 flights, said the phone calls also serve as an opportunity for veterans to get excited about the upcoming trip.

"We always try to get excited for them. [I'll say] 'Hi, this is Linda with Honor Flight and this is your lucky day. I'm calling to see if you want to go with us.'"

Janet Liming recalled a time when the call she placed was answered by a woman whose tone soon changed when she learned who was calling.

"[When] I said this is Janet with the Honor Flight, her tone totally changed. She's yelling for her husband, 'Dear, dear! Come to the phone! It's the Honor Flight.'"

During that call, veterans are also asked if they have someone in mind who will serve as their guardian. Guardians are considered essential for the success of the Honor Flight mission, as they help ensure that every veteran has a safe and memorable experience. Depending on a veteran's needs, a guardian may be assigned to assist more than one veteran making the trip. Though Honor Flights provide veterans with a free trip to Washington, D.C., each guardian must pay for the privilege to travel. For Cedar Valley Honor Flight guardians, that cost could be \$600 or more.

With each Cedar Valley Honor Flight, organizers plan their manifest with the number of 165 passengers in mind. That represents the maximum number of veterans, guardians,

media members and support personnel, such as doctors, nurses and emergency medical technicians, that the airplane can accommodate. Organizers must be ever vigilant of that number as they confirm veteran eligibility and make guardian assignments, for things can change very quickly.

"People will call and say, 'Oh I guess we can't go.' So we pull them out and get somebody else in there. So it's constant troubleshooting," Linda Bergmann noted. "I remember it was probably the third time I took a flight. I called Barb [O'Rourke] and I said, 'I'm gonna get fired. I've got five too many people on the flight. She said, 'It'll be fine. You'll see, somebody will cancel.' The next day, a veteran and his guardian couldn't go. So that knocked it down to three. Then one of my three medical people couldn't go," she recalled.

The situation resolved itself because Cedar Valley Honor Flight tries to assign at least two people to "standby" status, making them available for travel in the event of a last minute cancellation.

"I try to get a veteran and guardian [available for standby] so that if a group cancels, you can slide them right in. Most of them are very willing to do that," Bergmann said, explaining that it is rare when people who are at the airport as a standby do not get to make the trip that day.

While selecting and preparing 165 people to safely spend a day in the nation's capital is a monumental task, it is only part of the Honor Flight equation. There are travel plans that must be made. Decisions regarding the

Honor Flight date must be made. A contract for the airline providing the charter service must be completed. Likewise, once the plane is on the ground, three charter buses must be ready to provide ground transportation. While in Washington, D.C., lunch and dinner service must be provided for a party of 165 people.

Fortunately for Honor Flight hubs, the national organization offers assistance with these travel arrangements. Still, there must be someone locally to confirm those arrangements are in place before the plane lifts off the ground. Looking back, Frank Magsamen, the person his fellow board members credit for initially making it happen, admitted that work that once seemed overwhelming eventually became manageable:

"Just kind of piece by piece, it came together. We figured out how to do the charters out there- everything, [including] the buses and the meals," he said.

"We've done 29 flights [as of 2023]. The first ones were most difficult, but each flight you have to make sure you've got everything lined up beforehand. The applications come in and you review them. Then [there is] all the phone calls to all the veterans and guardians. It all has to fall into place and there has to be somebody there to check and double-check that we've got this done," Frank Magsamen said, summarizing the process.

Ask the leaders of Cedar Valley Honor Flight what makes the organization successful and you'll hear very similar responses.

"Everybody had a job. You didn't have to tell them twice or ask them if it was done because it was just done," Janet Liming recalled.

"You know, the committee's really good at what they do. They make sure that what needs to be done gets done," Magsamen said.

"It's the good board members that we have. They just do a good job and get it done," Craig White added.

"I don't do this alone. My team, they're the best!" Linda Bergmann affirmed.

And to a person, the many volunteers who have invested thousands of hours working on behalf of Cedar Valley Honor Flight remain as committed to the mission today as they were in 2011, with Bergmann summing it up best:

"I'll continue this as long as there's interest [from the veterans and community] and money in the bank!"

SIMPLY PUT

Reprinted from the May 25, 2011, edition of *The Progress Review*.

By Michael Whittlesey

For each of us, there are days that are so memorable they become etched in our minds forever. Your wedding day, the birth of your child, the loss of a loved one, perhaps the events of September 11, 2001, are examples of days that you may recall with remarkable clarity, as if they just happened yesterday. Last week, one such day was added to my list, as I had the good fortune to accompany 91 World War II veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit the World War II Memorial.

As a member of the media, my primary role was to record the events of the day and share the story of the Waterloo Honor Flight with our readers. And what a day it was, one filled with very powerful images.

Two distinct generations, one powerful message of thanks.

Three buses carrying the veterans of the Waterloo Honor Flight and their guardians made several stops during the day, visiting six distinct points of interest. At each of these locations, young teenagers could be seen,



spontaneously stepping away from their own tour group to stop and shake hands with a veteran, thanking them for their service. At first, their advances took some of the veterans by surprise. As the day progressed and the young people kept coming at every stop along the tour, the expressions of gratitude became mutual responses from young and old alike. Anyone who has spent time with teenagers knows they are typically focused on the events of the here and now in their own lives. That these young people hailing from several different states would willingly step away from their classmates to thank a stranger some 75 years older was nothing less than remarkable.

Strong hands.

After the students set such a great example on how to thank a veteran, the veterans' guardians decided to do the same at the Iwo Jima Memorial, the final stop of the day. As I waited in the long line to shake

Thank You for Your Service



On student respect for veterans:

“One particular time I was out there, this whole class [of students], they had so much respect for these veterans. They all came up and thanked them and shook their hands.”

~Janet Schupbach, Honor Flight Organizer

each veteran's hand, I reminded myself to take it easy when grasping the hands of folks who were probably tired after a long day in the nation's capital. Well, someone forgot to tell these veterans they were supposed to be tired. Handshake after handshake was firm and strong, like the grip of a proud American. As well they should be.

As we pause on Memorial Day to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom, we see the Honor Flight program as a special way to thank and remember those who went to war for our nation over a half century ago. As we thank them, let us also remember the men and women who have worked so hard to make the Waterloo Honor Flights a reality. For it's the ability of a diverse group of individuals working together for a common cause that makes our nation truly great. And to all those who helped make the trips to Washington, D.C. a day our Waterloo area veterans will never forget, we say, “Thank you for YOUR service.”



WORKING FOR HUGS - Patsy DuPre, a member of the Honor Flight Ground Crew and bus tour guide, had a simple explanation for the Washington D.C. area volunteers' commitment to hospitality. “We work for hugs,” she said. By the end of the day, she was well compensated.



FUND-RAISING

In 2011, the challenge of raising \$100,000 to fund one Honor Flight seemed daunting. There can be no denying that the check from Burk and Julie Miehle that year to pay for an entire flight served as an impetus for the Waterloo community to respond accordingly and honor its veterans. 2011 saw Cedar Valley Honor Flight actually sponsor three flights to Washington, D.C. How did the other flights get funded?

With excitement building to send Cedar Valley area World War II veterans on a trip of a lifetime, members of the community opened their hearts and their checkbooks. Soon, donations of \$50 and \$100 were rolling in. Additional fund-raising events, such as spaghetti suppers, pancake breakfasts and other events sponsored by community organizations helped spread the word and fund Cedar Valley Honor Flight's mission, making it possible for some 300 veterans to see their memorials by the end of 2011.

As the organization brainstormed ideas for a major fund-raiser, the concept of something like a USO Show emerged as a natural fit, as the United Service Organizations have a long and proud history of providing entertainment overseas for America's troops. To explore the possibility further, Frank Magsamen made a call to Barry Remington, an Army veteran who served in Vietnam and has served in multiple leadership positions with AMVETS Post 49 in Cedar Falls.

"I got a call from Frank because our



NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE - John Deere's strong support for the Waterloo community was evident in Washington, D.C. on May 6, 2014, as the company sponsored the entire cost of a Cedar Valley Honor Flight, including the hats worn by veterans that day.

AMVETS Post had just put on a variety show and they were searching for people who had done something like that before," Remington recalled.

From that humble beginning, Cedar Valley Honor Flight enlisted the talents of Bill Quibell and his wife Juanita, who assembled a cast of local talent to perform a variety of musical numbers and skits. Packaged with a catered meal, along with a 50-50 raffle and live and silent auctions that featured goods and services donated by area businesses, the annual Variety Show is well-attended and

by far the organization's biggest fund-raiser of the year.

"We've had really good support," said Ed McFarland, noting that the response to letters sent out by his wife's team resulted in several large donations from the community in 2022.

In May 2014, a second Honor Flight was completely funded by another major business entity in the Cedar Valley, John Deere.

And with Cedar Valley Honor Flight's expansion into additional Eastern Iowa counties in recent years, support for veterans remains very strong in the state of Iowa.

Thank You for Your Service



On community support for Honor Flights:

"When we contact businesses for donations, everybody is willing to donate to the Honor Flight. I've never had anybody say they wouldn't donate something for the cause. All the support we've received from the community has been great."

~Barb O'Rourke, Honor Flight Organizer



COMMUNITY DONATIONS - Over the course of thirteen years, a number of check passing photos have been taken for the benefit of Cedar Valley Honor Flight. This one took place on August 13, 2019, as Kendall Lewis presented a check for \$6,800 to Ed McFarland, Craig White and Frank Magsamen, while thanking his fellow members of the Midwest Grease Kings Car Club for their generosity and support of Cedar Valley Honor Flight during their annual car show that year.



VARIETY SHOW - A large part of Cedar Valley Honor Flight's ability to raise more than \$3 million over a 13 year period of time can be attributed to its annual Variety Show, which features entertainment provided by local artists and celebrities. Above, show creator Bill Quibell (left) performs a number with retired Major General and former Attorney General of Iowa, Evan "Curly" Hultman.



PRE-FLIGHT MEETING

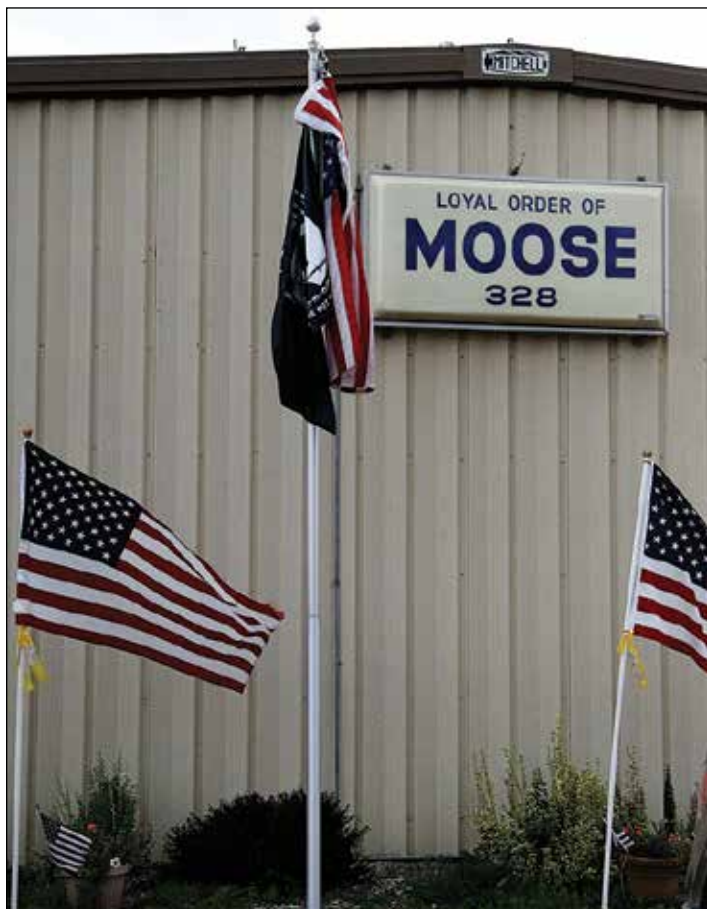
Once veterans and their guardians have been identified for an upcoming Cedar Valley Honor Flight, preparation for an orientation meeting begins in earnest. The meeting is designed to provide everything veterans and guardians need to know about the upcoming trip and comes with several perks. In addition to a meal catered by Hy-Vee, shirts and hats for the upcoming trip are distributed to all the participants, who are also treated to a presentation of the "Table of Honor," which pays tribute to American prisoners of war and those missing in action.

The "meat" of the pre-flight meeting, though, focuses on the important details that will ensure everyone stays safe while having a good experience. As the leader of the group, Linda Bergmann's message to her travelling companions tries to convey important reminders that must be followed with a little humor.

"I try to keep it light-hearted. When I first get up there I'll say, 'How many of you have I talked to on the phone? How many of your wives have I had to talk to in order to get you to do what I want you to do?' I just tell them we're gonna have a great time. All you have to remember is just mind me. Do what I tell you and we'll be just fine. You know, by then they know when they have to be there, what they can and can't bring, and stuff like that. [They need to know] what to expect at the airport because we have to load 165 people, and that's not easy. Stay together. Don't stay too long [at a venue] because we have to keep on schedule," she said.



CEDAR VALLEY HONOR FLIGHT - Above: The "voice" of Cedar Valley Honor Flight, Craig White. Below: Cedar Valley Honor Flight co-founder Frank Magsamen at the podium during a pre-flight meeting.



PRE-FLIGHT MEETINGS - Thanks to the generosity of the Moose Lodge (left) and UAW Local 838, Cedar Valley Honor Flight has enjoyed excellent facilities to conduct pre-flight meetings, where often the ROTC from local schools (right) will conduct the Presentation of Colors as those present recite the Pledge of Allegiance.



TABLE OF HONOR - David Grimm and Randy Miller (right) offer a toast to the prisoners of war and missing in action as part of the Table of Honor presentation at a Cedar Valley Honor Flight pre-flight meeting.



