

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CENTRAL ILLINOIS HONOR FLIGHT FLIES WORLD WAR II VETERANS TO WASHINGTON DC

Effingham, IL 03.01.09 As the ranks of America's World War II Veterans continue to shrink at the rate of 1,100 per day, so does our chance to honor these heroes, these members of "The Greatest Generation."

Central Illinois Honor Flight aims to address that oversight by offering free flights to the World War II Memorial erected to commemorate the sacrifices of these brave individuals in Washington, DC. **The inaugural flight, scheduled for April 22, will fly 30 World War II veterans from the Central Illinois area for a day of remembrance.** More flights will be scheduled throughout the year.

"Standing at the memorial, I was overwhelmed by memories of my time during the war and all of the brothers I lost," said Alva Shipman of Bourbonnais, IL, who flew to Washington with another Honor Flight chapter. "This was one of the most moving days of my life. Thank You."

"Many of the veterans tell us they have waited their entire lives to feel this recognition and appreciation for the sacrifices they have made, and they are so grateful for the opportunity to honor their fellow soldiers who did not come home," said Don Niehart, Central Illinois Honor Flight President and spokesperson for the group. "It is a day of tribute. Each salute, thank you and each small kindness will be remembered by these men and women for the rest of their lives."

Arriving at Lambert Airport to the cheers and applause of the Central Illinois Honor Flight Honor Guard, the veterans (accompanied by Central Illinois Honor Flight guardians to ensure their safety during the trip) will fly to Washington Reagan International Airport in Washington DC, where a chartered bus will take the group to the memorial. After a day of remembrance, the veterans and their guardians return by chartered bus to DCA for a return to St. Louis's Lambert, where they will be greeted by the USO before boarding buses back to Effingham.

The goal of Central Illinois Honor Flight, a not-for-profit organization, is to provide a memorable experience for each veteran. In general, the ratio of veterans to guardians in the Effingham program is 3-to-2. The cost of flying each veteran to the memorial is currently \$400 which includes airfare, local transportation and meals. Guardians cover their own expenses.

Central Illinois Honor Flight is the newest chapter of the national Honor Flight Network. Priority is given to World War II veterans and terminally-ill Korean War and Vietnam War veterans. Central Illinois Honor Flight serves central Illinois.

You can support Central Illinois Honor Flight in several ways:

- **CONTRIBUTE.** Use a credit or debit card or PayPal account on our website or send a check, payable to Central Illinois Honor Flight, to 712 E. Jefferson, Effingham, IL 62401. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. An Honor Roll of donors who contribute at least \$400 is being developed for the website.
- **VOLUNTEER.** Serve as a guardian or honor guard member or as an organizer.
- **TALK.** Spread the word that this service is available to local veterans. Tell your friends, relatives, local officials, local press about it. **Most of all, tell a veteran!**

Want to know more? Our website centralillinoishonorflight.org features information about our program, a list of frequently asked questions, and information about the officers and board members of Central Illinois Honor Flight, and an application to the program. For more information, call 217.254.2986 or visit our website.