

Honor Flight # 42 – Reflections from a Vet

Recently, St. Mark's member George Noggle and his son Tony were among the applicants chosen to join other vets on Northeast Indiana's Honor Flight # 42 to Washington DC . When asked what stood out about the day, George remarked on how well organized the day was. They took care of everything; the event moved along like a well-oiled machine. The 80 + Veterans plus their Guardians were to be at the National Guard Air Base in Ft. Wayne before sunrise. They were served breakfast and given an idea what to expect during the day. WOWO's Pat Miller spoke to the group, wishing them well on their journey. Buses transferred the group over to the airport where they boarded an American Airlines commercial jet. Well-wishers and military were on hand to send them on their way.

The flight left Fort Wayne around 7:30 am and landed at Ronald Reagan Airport in Washington DC an hour later. Four buses were on hand to ferry the group to visit the WWII Memorial, Korean, Vietnam, and Lincoln Memorials. They enjoyed a box lunch at the FDR Memorial; then taken to the Arlington National Cemetery for the *Changing of the Guards* ceremony and *the Laying of the Wreath* at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Lastly they visited the Marine and the Air Force Memorials and enjoyed an outdoor supper before heading back to the airport. The return flight got them back to Fort Wayne around 9 pm. They were greeted by a band playing patriotic music as well as over 1000 people with welcome signs and handshakes.

George joined the navy in 1959; making him a "Cold War" vet. He sailed on the USS Boston and USS Springfield, both heavy cruisers outfitted with guided missiles. He was aboard the Boston in a second ring of ships ready to attack at the Bay of Pigs when that mission was aborted. They didn't know until afterwards how close they had come to combat. George got to "see the world" when his ship sailed the Mediterranean. They docked all over the Mediterranean basin. While on the USS Springfield, the ship was cast in "We Joined the Navy", a British movie, and "The Longest Day".

George's son Tony served in the Army. Although both are veterans, Tony was George's "Guardian" on this trip. Side note – Spouses are not eligible to be a Guardian; Guardians must be at least one generation younger and must attend an orientation meeting before the flight. Wheelchairs are provided for all veterans, whether they normally use one or not. There were times when it was nice to have the option of sitting down for a rest while touring the memorials plus having your chair propelled by a guardian.

Another take away from the trip George mentioned was the sincere thanks they were given by every passerby. There were no demonstrations or protests. He said he shook more hands that day than he had in his entire life. He also mentioned talking with an Iowan veteran that was part of a different Honor Flight. Turns out they both served in the Navy at the same time. A chance encounter that proved very special.

George recommends the Honor Flights to every veteran that is able to travel. As stated earlier, they provide wheelchairs for all and they have lifts on all the buses. Everything is free for the veteran. The guardian only pays around \$400 for their plane ticket. Everything else is furnished through donations. Vets and guardians receive a t-shirt. All vets received an embroidered ball cap that named their era of service. Visit the NE Indiana Honor Flight chapter at their website: <https://www.hfnei.org> for more information on registering and to view more pictures. There are also chapters in Ohio that fly out of Dayton, Columbus, Toledo and Cleveland.

Pictures below:



WOWO's Pat Miller addressed the crowd during breakfast

The group walked under the American Flag tribute on their way to board the airplane



Veterans were given a military send off

The plane was decorated !





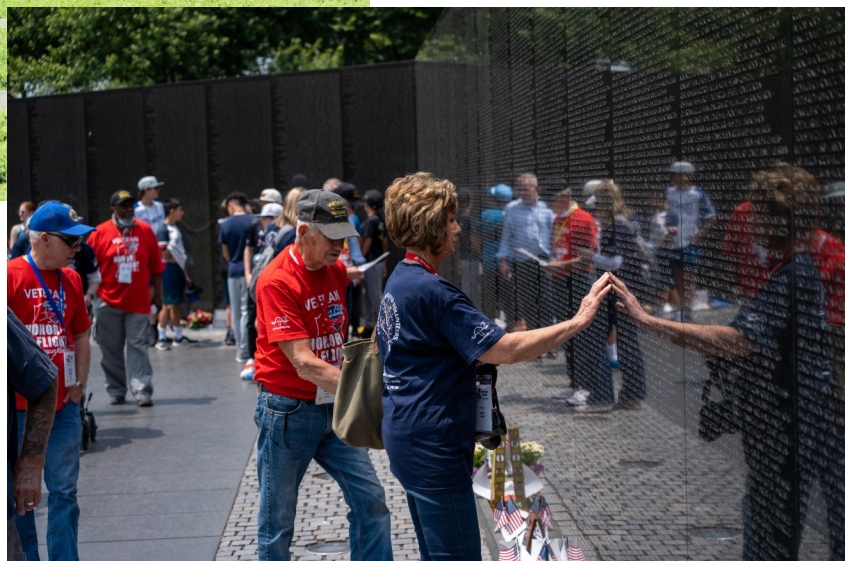
Group photo at the
World War 2 Memorial



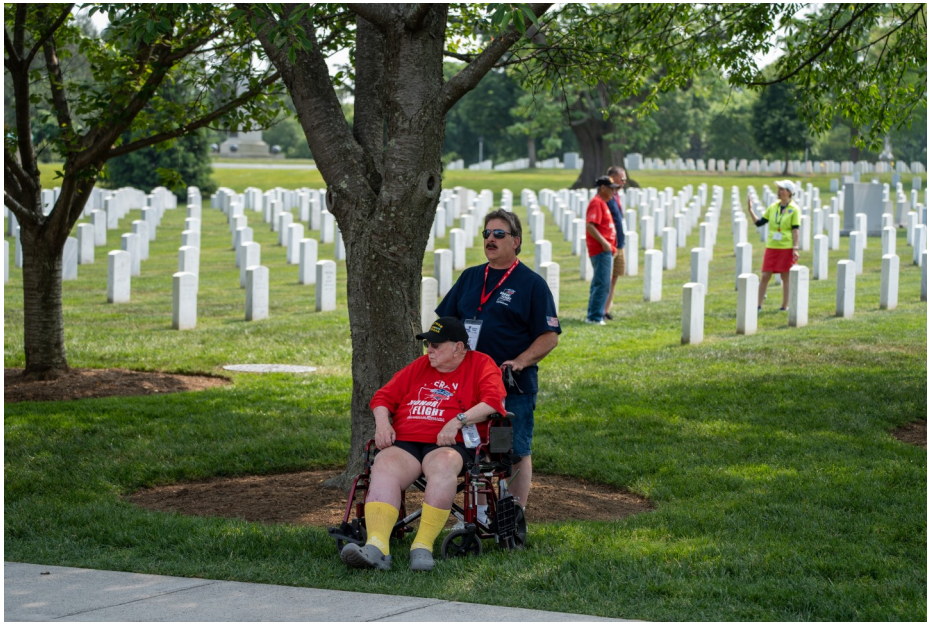
George in front of the Ohio Column at the WWII Memorial



Korean Memorial



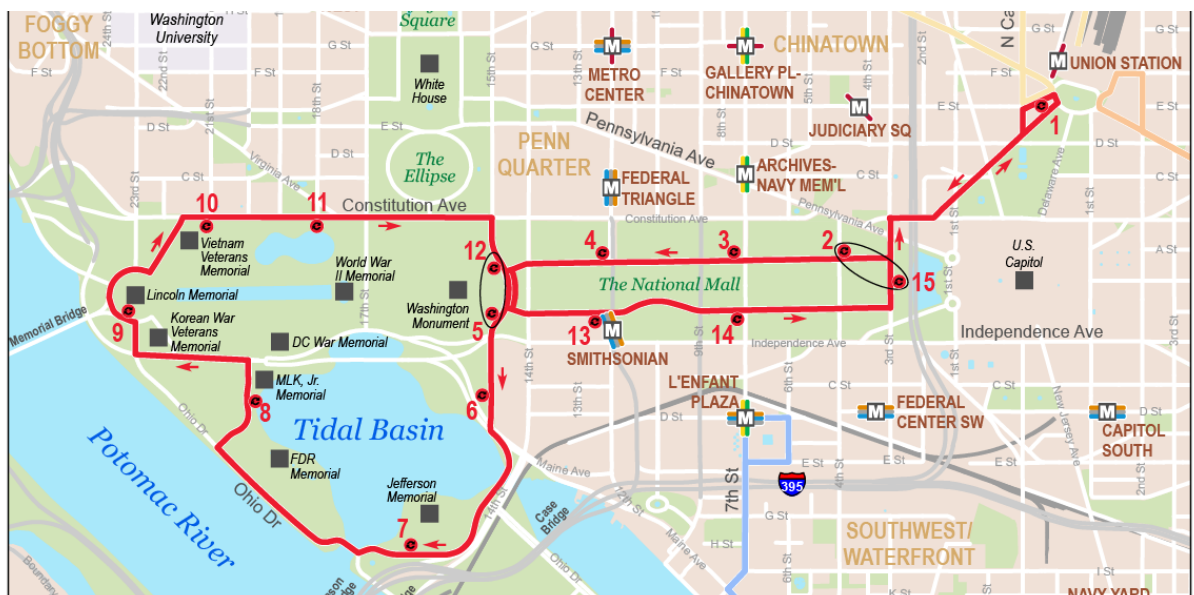
Vietnam Wall Memorial



Arlington National Cemetery and
the Laying of the Wreath at the
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



Map of the Memorials and Monuments





Coming Home
Tony & George
Ronald Reagan Airport

Each vet received an envelope packed with cards from area students.



Just one example of the
welcome they received



Welcoming band at the Fort Wayne Airport





George wearing his special "uniform"



George's envelope of Thank You Cards



Recognition of Service Certificate



George & Tony