

Three Flights to Take Wing in 2024



Veterans Donald Teegarden of Enderlin, ND and Bernard Elsener of Valley City, ND enjoying their time touring our nation's capital

For years, Vietnam Veterans had been patiently waiting to join our list of Veterans on deck to make the trip to Washington, DC aboard one of our Honor Flights. We knew their day would come ... yet we also knew we needed to allow our most seasoned Veterans, those who served during WWII and the Korean War, the option to go before travel

for them became too difficult.

We were elated when our list of WWII and Korean War Veterans was to the point where we could open it to those who served during the Vietnam War era. However, you know how the saying goes, "If you want to hear God laugh, make plans." Sure enough, as soon as we opened the waiting list the COVID-19 pandemic hit, grounding all flights for two years.

We continued to accept new applications knowing it'd be tough to catch up while we watched the list balloon to over 700 deserving folks waiting to fly. But we were committed to making sure that one way or another, we'd get all our Vietnam friends on their planes.

Last November, we announced that while we are

again flying twice the following year, we are making a BIG change!

As has been typical, we will be flying to our nation's capital in the spring and the fall. However, for our fall flight in September, we are chartering not one but TWO planes at the SAME time.

This is something brand new for our organization and we know we're up for the challenge. Our Board of Directors and volunteers have worked out the major details and are ready for action.

By year's end 2024, we plan to fly an additional 300 Veterans to DC, bringing our running total to 2,800+!

We are actively fundraising to make our heroes' dreams a reality. If you are in a position to support us financially, we would love to talk more with you and see you at our events!

Get to Know One of Our Flight Veterans

In 1967, Gary Page had finished two years of college at Bemidji State University when funds were running short. He picked up a job for a bit, which prevented him from registering for fall semester, and the draft board quickly caught up with him.

On his 24th birthday, he

found himself on a plane bound for Vietnam after finishing basic training, AIT, and jump school.

The US Army's newest infantryman's time in the service was fraught with danger, tragedy, heroism, and plenty of things he'd much rather forget. (cont'd on page 2)



US Army SGT Gary Page served for two years with both the 101st Airborne and 25th Infantry.

Special points of interest:

- VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF ND/MN WAS FOUNDED IN 2015
- SINCE ITS CREATION, APPROXIMATELY 1,983 VETERANS OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY AREA HAVE BEEN FLOWN TO WASHINGTON, DC
- HONOR FLIGHTS ARE ALWAYS EXPENSE-FREE FOR OUR VETERANS

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The very day Gary landed in Vietnam, his combat experience began. The enemy held the road from Saigon to Phuoc Vinh, the base camp for the 3/187. He and his fellow comrades were put up in barracks for the night, only to be rocked away by 122mm rockets. In less than 24-hours in-country, he'd already witnessed six of his fellow soldiers' deaths ... two of whom were on their way home.



Sharing a tough moment with Diane Moderow, Secretary, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Just weeks later, Gary's unit was moved up to the central highlands to support the 4th Infantry to a place called Hill 990, a very steep hill full of shell and bomb craters, as well as human remains.

While there, Gary and another soldier were tasked with burying the remains in the bomb craters but the enemy spotted them, opening up another round of bombardment. They hid amongst the dead, though were faced with staying put and most

certainly meeting their maker, or climbing uphill and hoping for better. Though both were injured on their ascent, they ultimately made it off the hill and into the 6th Convalescent Center hospital. He'd been in-country for exactly one month.

Six weeks later, he was back with the 3/187 in the jungle. For the next 27 days, 26 contained enemy contact. Shortly thereafter, while operating in a very dangerous

area, Gary was working with his commander to get a student loan deferment form signed. When CPT Colley was returning to the front, he walked only 50 meters away and detonated a land mine, losing his legs and left arm.

Barely a month later, a large fight ensued, costing Gary's battalion 42 souls. Two weeks later, four more perished. The wounded outnumbered the dead 3-to-1. Everyone seemed to be banged up. Before month's end, 53 of the roughly 400 soldiers in the battalion had been killed in action ... and still, they were tasked with fighting on.

Gary was finally released from combat on May 2, 1969. One week later, his former unit was sent up Hamburger Hill, where they were torn apart again.

Since his service and the combat horrors he saw, Gary states he's

been treated well by the VA. He was able to benefit from the GI Bill and has attended many reunions with those who remain from his unit ... even CPT Colley attended them until Agent Orange finally claimed him a couple years ago.

Books have been written about the people and experiences Gary's units saw while in Vietnam — both he has described as accurate.

And while he is thoroughly appreciative of his experience on his Honor Flight, seeing the names of his buddies on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was altogether too much to bear. He says, "Most people who know me would say



Overcome with grief, Gary found many, many names of comrades on The Wall

I'm hard enough to ride a spotted pony to a BBQ and walk home ... but The Wall was too much. All I could think of was, 'those men should be bouncing grandchildren on their knees right now, not lying in graves.'"

"ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS, 'THOSE MEN SHOULD BE BOUNCING GRANDCHILDREN ON THEIR KNEES RIGHT NOW, NOT LYING IN GRAVES.'" -GARY PAGE

Hankinson Holiday Bingo Sleighs!



Santa and Mrs. Claus make an appearance at the Hankinson Holiday Bingo event

In December 2023, the Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN volunteers once again descended on the scene in Hankinson, ND to host Holiday Bingo.

Supporters were treated to a delicious Swedish Meatball dinner, exciting silent auction, festive social hour, and a 12-pack of thrilling bingo games.

Bingo prizes ranged from beautiful Minnesota Vikings cornhole boards, to designer fashion handbags, to custom-built patio coolers.

Attendees had a wonderful time, even getting to meet and pose for photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus!

Between ticket sales, silent auction purchases, and extra bin-

go card purchases, a total of \$10,125 was raised toward getting our deserving Veterans on their Honor Flights.

We are so grateful for the city of Hankinson for their hospitality, gratitude, and involvement with our Holiday Bingo event.

We hope to see you all again real soon!

Meet a Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN Volunteer

Meet Lori Ishaug, Vice President of the Veterans Honor Flight of ND/MN. She began her involvement in 2015 when she worked as a volunteer after her Veteran father, DeLyle Ishaug — a 35-year career Happy Hooligan, had taken his Honor Flight to Washington, DC. Not long after, she was elevated to the Board of Directors.

The Ishaug family holds military service in high regard, having Veterans in every generation dating back to WWI. Lori also serves as the 2nd Vice President of the Moorhead American Legion Post 21 Auxiliary and is a life member of the AMVETS Auxiliary. Serving

those who have served us is in her DNA. She proudly states that every Veteran needs a Will Rogers to clap as they go by and she's thrilled to fulfill that role.

A lifelong resident of Moorhead, MN, Lori has worked at various high profile businesses in the Red River Valley, recently retiring from the DMV in Clay County and preparing for her wedding with her fiancée, Brad.

One of Lori's main roles is to oversee the fundraising committee. She loves finding out-of-the-box ways to raise money for our trips and meeting all kinds of new supporters.

Earning a challenge coin from a Veteran on her first flight as a bus captain has been a true highlight of Lori's time with our group. She admits she made lots of mistakes and was truly learning as she went, but that Veteran sensed her heart was in the right place and honored what he saw in her. She will never forget that very emotional moment.



Lori Ishaug,
Vice President

"IT'S SO REWARDING MEETING OUR PRECIOUS VETERANS, HEARING THEIR STORIES, AND GETTING A HUG."

-LORI ISHAUG, VICE PRESIDENT

Local Business Covers our Veterans ... Literally!

For many years, American Crystal Sugar has seen to it that the Veterans aboard our Honor Flights never go cold. That's because through their generosity, each of our heroes has been gifted a beautiful coat, complete with fleece lining and our logo emblazoned on it. Many of our previous flight Veterans have remarked at how special it was to receive such a

jacket. They are truly touched by this gesture time and time again.

The commitment American Crystal Sugar has shown to covering our Veterans is incredible. Since the beginning of their contribution, approximately 1,400 veterans have received a coat on their behalf ... to the tune of approximately a \$150,000 donation.

We recognize that a donation this large may not be within range for everyone. Nonetheless, if you have fundraising ideas or possibilities, we'd love to chat more.

Please join us in thanking American Crystal Sugar for the dedication they have shown our Veterans for so many years. We are all blessed to be cloaked in your kindness.



Veterans receive a beautiful coat free of charge, gifted by American Crystal Sugar

Make Plans to Join Us for Potato Dumplings and Norwegian Baked Goods



Stock photo of Norwegian rosette cookies, Johnathunder on Wikipedia

We have a very unique fundraiser on the horizon and we hope we can count on all of our fans for support — it's a Potato Dumpling dinner and Norwegian Baked Goods Sale!

Scott Moen, Manager of American Legion Post 21 in Moorhead, and his family lead the charge in preparing an unbelievable amount of potato dumplings, ham, and scalloped

potatoes. The public is invited to join us for this delicious meal for a free will donation.

Additionally, we intend to have a silent auction and a bake sale featuring Norwegian cookies and other baked goods.

If you've got a great family recipe for krumkake,

rosettes, spritz, or other fun goodies and feel up to donating some for our bake sale, we certainly won't turn you away. If you prefer to purchase cookies, come early! They will sell out.

This exciting fundraiser will take place at the Moorhead American Legion on April 28, 2024 from 11:00am — 3:00pm. See you there!

Save the Date for Giving Hearts Day — February 8, 2024

Giving Hearts Day began in the Fargo-Moorhead area in 2008 as a simple and unique concept — leverage the love around Valentine’s Day to persuade potential donors to give to their favorite charities en masse.



of Vietnam Veterans, whose turn to fly with us became a reality.

In a surprise to no one, travel costs have risen significantly and bringing a load of 100+ deserving Veterans and support staff is no small feat.

It worked! Giving Hearts Day has become one of the most successful and longest-running giving days in the country,

“IN 2023, WE RAISED ENOUGH ON GIVING HEARTS DAY TO FULLY FUND 86 VETERANS’ TRIPS TO WASHINGTON, DC. THIS YEAR, WE’D LOVE TO FILL A WHOLE PLANE!”
-LUANN MCDONALD, DIRECTOR

Each of our Honor Flights ends up costing around \$267,000, the majority of which is required to be pre-paid.

Thankfully, through the generosity of our dedicated fans, we’ve been able to make 14 of these special trips over the years, earning every seat on the planes through events like spaghetti suppers, silent auctions, and bake sales.

Giving Hearts Day has allowed us to fund-raise at a much faster pace than ever. It’s so wonderful, considering we currently have over 700 Veterans on our waiting list, with more applications arriving regularly.

Through the support of the American Legion Post 21 in Moorhead, KFGO radio in Fargo-Moorhead, and the

most dedicated group of volunteers one could ever hope to find, we’ve turned Giving Hearts Day into a real cause for celebration for our organization.

Early in the morning on February 8, KFGO and our crew will be set up at the American Legion where we will field donation inquiries, write

thank-you notes in real time for donations, and work the phones. We do this as a team, just like everything we put our minds (and hearts!) into. We’ll have doughnuts and coffee in the morning, cookies in the afternoon, and some other fun events up our

sleeves to spend the day with those of you wishing to support us in person.

If you can’t make it to the American Legion on February 8, we welcome any and all monetary support from wherever you may be.

Donations can be made at our unique charity website using either the QR code pictured here, or at the following web address: <https://app.givingheartsday.org/#/charity/963>

Checks can be mailed direct-

ly to our mailing address; PO Box 644, West Fargo, ND 58078. They must be dated 2/8/24 and have Giving Hearts Day in the memo line in order for our group to receive credit for your generosity on Giving Hearts Day.

Champion of our Giving Hearts Day initiative, Director LuAnn McDonald, has been our liaison since our involvement began with Giving Hearts Day. She says, “Giving Hearts Day has been our largest single-day fundraiser to date. It’s a great opportunity to help us make a difference in our heroes’ lives by sending them to Washington, DC to see their memorials and to say thank you to them for their courage and sacrifice.”

Once again, we are so grateful ... from the bottom of our big, swollen hearts ... for your generosity. Together, we’ll give our deserving heroes the trip of a lifetime!



JJ and Amy broadcast live on KFGO from the American Legion during a previous Giving Hearts Day

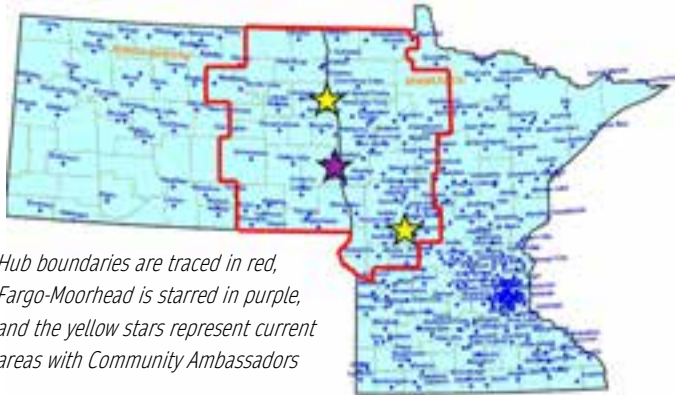


Dave Rice, Director, hard at work during the Giving Hearts Day campaign



Scan our QR code to visit our unique donation page for Giving Hearts Day or find us online at <https://app.givingheartsday.org/#/charity/963>

How You Can Help — Community Ambassadors Needed



Hub boundaries are traced in red, Fargo-Moorhead is starred in purple, and the yellow stars represent current areas with Community Ambassadors

Since our inception, several raving fans have developed throughout our large hub, outside the Fargo-Moorhead metro area. All have different experiences,

though their enthusiasm and end goals are the same: help Veterans discover their opportunity to fly with us to Washington DC and do what it takes to get more of

them on our planes.

Small groups of dedicated and determined volunteers in Grand Forks, ND and Alexandria, MN are getting out in their communities and essentially rallying the troops while raising funds.

Betty and Don Roberts of Grand Forks and Judy and Kevin Mahoney in Alexandria have been leading the charge, working like crazy to build even more raving fans in their communities, connect with their local Veterans, and raise

those ever-important dollars.

As you can gauge from this graphic, our hub covers thousands of square miles. While our organization is agile and committed, we would love to have more Community Ambassadors join us in some of the more distant locations. The more we grow and fundraise, the quicker we can get our Veterans on their trips, after all!

If you live within our hub and are interested in starting a Community Ambassadorship in your town, please reach out to Lori Ishaug at 701.361.6972.

Insider Trip Secrets — The National Archives

Washington, DC holds many interesting secrets. Some well-known, others ... not so much. What follows are insider tidbits about a favorite stop on our journey, The National Archives Museum.

At the Archives, our Veterans are treated to a private viewing of American documents; the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and more. At times,

the curators have brought out special items just for us.

Since our Veterans deserve such reverence, our group is welcomed in the museum one hour before the public.

The National Archives' security level is just one notch lower than that of the White House.

No flash photography is allowed in the Rotunda for the

Charters of Freedom, the lights are kept dim to protect the ink from fading on the parchment of our nation's critical original writings, and the climate is regulated to keep those fragile documents from further eroding.

Finally, there are at least nine eagles hidden in the Rotunda — be sure to look for them on your next visit!



Army Veteran, Rick Windjue, of Devil's Lake, ND inspects one of our country's many original founding documents at the National Archives

Know Before You Go — Packing Liquids for the Flight

[HTTPS://WWW.TSA.GOV/TRAVEL/SECURITY-SCREENING/LIQUIDS-RULE](https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/liquids-rule)

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has stringent guidelines regarding liquids in your carry-on luggage.

The beautiful hotel we stay at provides shampoo, conditioner, lotion and soap in all sleeping rooms. Other items you may want to pack are toothpaste, deodorant, shaving cream, or hair products if you use them. However, they each need to be in containers no larger than 3.4oz. All liquid and gel containers

must fit in a clear, quart-sized baggie in your carry-on bag.

There are a few exceptions to the TSA liquid rules, which can be found at the link highlighted in this article. Please familiarize yourself with their policies ahead of your trip so there are no surprises on travel days. There may be additional allowances for prescribed liquid medications.

Flying can be confusing and at times stressful. We hope to make each trip the easiest, most carefree experience for all our Veteran heroes. If you have any travel-specific questions, please contact your Bus Captain.

We all have several of these flights under our belts and can talk you through various scenarios or questions you may have.



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!



Twice yearly our Purse Bingo events are a fan-favorite

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

Every-other Wednesday, February 7 through May 29 — 5:30pm Meat Raffle at Wild Rice Bar & Grill in Wild Rice, ND

Every-other Thursday, February 8 through April 4 — All-day dinner and motorcycle raffle at Texas Roadhouse in Grand Forks, ND

February 8 — All-day Giving Hearts Day, gathering held at the American Legion Post 21 in Moorhead, MN



The highest bidder on each Fargo Force hockey player's jersey keeps it at Honor Flight Night

March 6-10 — All-day 87th Annual North Dakota Winter Show at the Event Center in Valley City, ND

March 23 — 11:00am Chili Feed, silent auction, and bake sale at Wild Rice Bar & Grill in Wild Rice, ND

March 27 — All-day Impact Day on KVLV TV and at KVLV Station Headquarters in Fargo, ND

April 6 — 1:00pm Spring Fling Purse Bingo at TAK Music Venue in Dilworth, MN

April 6-7 — All-day Toppers Car Show at Veterans Memorial Arena in West Fargo, ND

April 28 — 11:00am Potato Dumpling Feed and Norwegian Bake Sale at American Legion Post 21 in Moorhead, MN



A lucky winner at our meat raffle

May 4 — 4:00pm Dinner and live music at VFW Post 5252 in Pelican Rapids, MN



Beautiful floral arrangements at the fundraisers in Alexandria

May 11-12 — All-day Spring Flower Sale at Lake Country Meats in Alexandria, MN

May 21 — 7:00pm Honor Flight Homecoming at Hector International Airport in Fargo, ND