

January 27, 2024



Re: May 7 Veterans Honor Flight - Flight 012 - STANDBY

Dear Standby Veteran:

We have placed you on a **standby list** for a seat on the next mission of Veterans Honor Flight of Southern Illinois, taking off May 7, 2024 from Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois. In the event that we have any cancellations from veterans who have confirmed seats on this flight, you will be selected to fly according to your place on the standby list. To be on the standby list, you must complete the medical evaluation, just as all of the other confirmed veterans. If you are not selected to fly in May, your seat will be guaranteed on the next flight taking off in the fall of 2024. If you are unable to be on the standby list, please notify our office at 618-942-3930.

Please sign and return the Consolidated Veteran Agreement to us **on April 20, 2024 when you come in for your medical evaluation.**

The following details and essential information are provided to you in the event that you are selected to fly on the May 7 flight:

Flight/Airport Info

- Meeting at Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois at **4:45 a.m. on May 7.**
- Returning to Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois at approximately 8:30 p.m. that same day.

Trip Info

- Our trip will be a very long day emotionally and physically. Please prepare for this as best you can, by consulting with your physician, if appropriate, and using the following general guidelines.
- **SPECIAL ALERT** ... It may be beneficial to obtain the weather conditions for the Washington DC area prior to our flight. With conditions similar to those we find in Southern Illinois, the weather will change daily and your dress may be affected. Please check the weather for May 7 and be prepared if it could be cool and rainy.
- You will be provided a Veterans Honor Flight shirt, jacket and hat. We ask that you wear those for the trip. Again, please check the weather forecast as to whether you'll need anything heavier than the shirt and light jacket provided.
- Be well rested before the trip – not just the night before, but for several days beforehand.
- Be well hydrated for several days ahead of the trip. Drink plenty of water. We will provide bottled water throughout the trip. Restroom facilities will be everywhere we are on this trip. The airports, aircraft, buses, and memorials will all have restrooms for your use. Please do not let the notion that there may not be restroom facilities stop you from drinking either prior to or during the trip. Again, restrooms will be everywhere you are throughout the day.

- Try to exercise a bit before the trip – consult your physician first and consider a walking program that may increase your endurance – whatever you do, begin slowly and gradually increase time and distance – and make sure you talk to your doctor first!!!
- Bring all your medications – clearly marked – and include two (2) days - worth, in case of travel delays; there will be a cooler available throughout the day for insulin.
- Wheelchairs will be provided; you may bring your own cane but we ask that you do not bring your own wheelchair or walker. Our wheelchairs can be used as walkers, if you desire.
- Wear COMFORTABLE walking shoes – do not get new shoes.
- If you have a camera, please bring it along; make sure you have batteries that will last all day.
- All meals and drinks will be provided. You will not need money for anything that day. We will cover all expenses.
- Remember to check your keys and pockets for prohibited items – like pocket knives, etc.
- PLEASE remember to bring your picture ID for transportation on the airline (your driver's license or other government issued ID is required). You will not be able to travel without it!
- Additional trip information is included in the attached Flight Day Instructions.

Emotional Trip

- As much as you're able, please prepare yourself for the emotional highs and lows that this day may bring.
 - o You should expect to feel intense emotion of all sorts: pride, fear, guilt, sadness, joy, anger, etc. You may already be experiencing this. It is NORMAL and EXPECTED. These feelings will most certainly intensify the day of the trip. If possible – and it feels right to you – talk about your memories and feelings throughout the day; talk to your fellow veterans and guardians, if you like. You might want to bring a hand-held recorder so that you can share your feelings and impressions with your family and friends when you return.
 - o If at any time during our travel day you are overwhelmed by emotion or start to suffer any physical symptoms from stress – tight chest, trouble breathing – immediately notify your guardian or Honor Flight attendees. This type of reaction is understandable.

We will host a drive-thru at Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to noon. Please drive up under the front curb canopy and remain in your car. You will be given a bag with all of your flight supplies and we will give final flight instructions. If you are unable to pick up your supplies on this day or if you will be staying at a Marion hotel the night before the flight, please notify us so that we can make other arrangements to get these things to you prior to the flight. **If you DO NOT have a confirmed seat on the flight, by May 3, there is no need to pick up any items at the airport. If you are selected for the flight after this date, we will make arrangements to get you your items.**

We are very excited about this trip and looking forward to experiencing the memorials through your eyes. **If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact us at (618) 942-3930.**

The Veterans Honor Flight of Southern Illinois Board of Directors