

# The Honor Flight Network

**Alabama Laureate Alpha, Huntsville** helped to give the gift of a lifetime to many WWII veterans, by participating in the Honor Flight Network program. The network was conceived by Earl Morse, a physician's assistant and Retired Air Force Captain. Earl wanted to honor the veterans he had taken care of for the past 27 years. He found when talking to the veterans that most of them had never been able to view the memorial that salutes them. When all WWII vets who wish have visited the memorials, the Honor Flight Network will then concentrate their efforts on our Korean War and Vietnam veterans, honoring them similarly.

Members met at the Huntsville International airport to fill the 125 red, white and blue travel bags for the veterans with items donated by businesses in the community. These 125 veterans are World War II veterans, who were selected for the September 13th, 2008 "Honor Flight", their one day chartered flight to the nation's capital to see the memorial built in their honor.

Member Angie Yates served as a "Guardian", which meant she was at the airport bright and early for departure. "From the moment the veterans are in their hands until the point they are returned to their loved ones in the evening, guardians were asked to treat these heroes as if they were family and ensure that every veteran has a safe, memorable and rewarding experience," says Angie.

A band playing patriotic tunes greeted the veterans as they landed at Reagan National Airport in Washington D.C. In addition to seeing the World War II Memorial, 6 chartered buses carried them to see such sights as the Korean Memorial, the Iwo Jima War Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, and the Women's Memorial.

The remaining chapter members and some husbands returned to the airport that evening for dinner before welcom-



ing our veteran's home after a full day of sightseeing in our nation's capital. Their flight landed around 8:15 p.m. A bagpiper played and led the group in as they made their way down the lined concourse filled with family and friends. The walkway was lined with people in red, white and blue shirts, children holding "Thank You" signs, and family members carrying signs reading "Welcome Home Pop". There were veterans walking, veterans in wheelchairs, veterans who were so overcome by emotions that they were crying. Most were carrying their red, white and blue bags that we stuffed for each one. The event was covered by a local TV station and the next day several people mentioned they had seen the event on the late news.

All donations to our federal, nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization are tax deductible. Contributors should consult their tax advisor concerning the financial benefits of making such a donation.

**Laureate Alpha** members found their experience working with the honor flight in this way to be very rewarding. They plan to make this worthy cause a continued chapter service project in the future.

