



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2014

No. 69

Senate

WELCOMING OUR VETERANS AND THE WEST VIRGINIA NORTH-CENTRAL HONOR FLIGHT TO THE NATION'S CAPITOL

M. President, I am filled with so much pride every time our military veterans visit our nation's capital and have the opportunity to stand before the memorials built to honor them.

This weekend, 93 veterans from North Central West Virginia, escorted by 55 guardians, will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to see the memorials that commemorate their sacrifice and valor. This will mark the very first Honor Flight from North Central West Virginia – which is my hometown region of the Mountain State.

50 World War II veterans, 42 Korean War veterans and one terminally ill Vietnam War veteran will fly from the small town of Clarksburg, West Virginia to Reagan National Airport. And before they lift off on a truly memorable and moving day, I look forward to greeting our vets bright and early at the local airport to wish them a safe trip to our nation's Capitol. I also will express my deepest gratitude to these special men who helped keep America free and made the world a safer place for liberty-loving people across our country and beyond our borders.

Upon their arrival, 30 active duty Sailors from the National Naval Medical Center and eight Marines from the USS West Virginia submarine will accompany the Honor Flight entourage during their daylong adventure.

These heroic West Virginians will travel to Washington to visit the World War II, Vietnam, Korean, FDR, Air Force, and Iwo Jima Memorials as well attend a ceremony at Arlington Cemetery.

And while their step has slowed, their spirit is keen, their pride is undiminished, and their patriotism is immeasurable.

No matter the war, no matter the rank, no matter

the duty, every one of these 93 veterans answered America's call and served our great country with the utmost valor. In our time of need, they stepped forward and said, "I'll do it – I'll protect this country."

This trip to our nation's Capitol is just one way to say thank you.

But the West Virginia's North Central community has much more planned to show their gratitude for these devoted and courageous veterans. Upon the Honor Flight's return Saturday evening, hundreds of West Virginians will welcome home our returning vets, including National Guardsmen, Civil Air Patrol volunteers, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and our famous West Virginia University Mountaineer, Mike Garcia.

In addition, more than 155 band members from the Busy Bee Band and Honeybees of East Fairmont High School will perform a medley of patriotic songs, led by their band director and former-Marine, T.J. Bean.

M. President, I want to express my gratitude to my hometown community for their tireless efforts to make this Honor Flight a reality. I especially thank Butch Phillips and all the people who have been instrumental in planning and fulfilling this truly special experience for our 93 West Virginia veterans.

This generation of Americans was united by a common purpose and by common values – duty, honor, courage, service, integrity, love of family and country. And their triumph over oppression will be forever remembered.

Let us remember that these Honor Flights show tribute to all who have served this great country, so may God bless the United States of America and all the men and women who keep us free.