

## An inspirational journey

---



By courtesy photo

**William Krause (left) and brother Gayle Krause take an inspirational trip to the WWII Memorial.**

### ADVERTISEMENT

By Robin Nixon  
El Dorado Times  
Thu Oct 29, 2009, 09:10 AM CDT

---

El Dorado, Kan. -

On Tuesday, Oct. 6 Gayle, William, Matthew and Laurin Krause met in Peabody to begin an inspirational journey to Washington D.C.

Gayle, Matthew and Laurin gathered in Peabody to pickup William, resident of a nursing home and veteran.

"He is confined to a wheel chair and requires a great deal of care," said Gayle. The four traveled to Wichita and spent the night in a motel near the airport waiting for their flight at 5:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

From there, the group arrived in Baltimore at around 11 a.m. and a bus shuttled them to a welcoming banquet.

"It was a sea of red," said Krause.

Veterans donned red for the occasion and printed on the front was, "Kansas Central Prairie Honor Flight" with "If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read this in English, thank a World War II Veteran before it is too late."

"Wednesday was a giant of a day," said Gayle . Breakfast at 6 a.m. and on the buses at 7:15 a.m. with the first stop at the WWII Memorial where the group met Congressman Jerry Moran.

"We spent about two hours there and were greeted by Elizabeth Dole before we left," said Gayle. Then the group traveled to the Korean Monument, the Lincoln Monument, The Vietnam Wall and the Women's Vietnam Monument.

"One thing that I pondered during the morning was the number of our group in wheel chairs," Gayle remembered.

Approximately 150 people were on the tour and over half were veterans, with some guardians caring for two veterans.

"Of those," said Gayle, "eighty to 85 veterans at least half required wheel chairs. All but my brother Bill could walk but only for short distances, very short for some."

After viewing the Wall, the Krauses had lunch on the bus and traveled to their next destination, the Air and Space Museum.

The group also visited the Iwo Jima Memorial and passed the Jefferson Memorial, the Air Force Monument and the Pentagon.

"I thought the Iwo Jima Memorial caused more emotion among the veterans than any other stop, but the WWII Memorial was very impressive," Gayle said.

The grave of the unknown soldier was the next stop on the tour and the group watched "the changing of the guard."

After the lowering of the flag at dusk, the group went back to the WWII Memorial.

"As darkness settled in we had a 'laying-of-a-wreath' ceremony," explained Gayle. "It was very inspiration for the close of a beautiful day."

The Central Prairie Honor Flights program has flown more than 19,000 veteran to see the memorial and various other memorials in Washington.

The Honor Flight was conceived by Earl Morse, P.A. at the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic, Springfield, Ohio, in 2004.

Morse was surprised and shocked to learn that most of the patients he treated had never seen the memorials dedicated to their bravery and service.

He surveyed the veterans and many expressed a strong interest in seeing the memorials.

Morse was a retired Air Force captain and a private pilot and his father was Vietnam veteran, spurring him forward to rent a plane and take two veterans to see the memorial at no cost to them.

Morse eventually shared his idea with his flying club and 11 members jumped at the chance.

The first trip was on May 21, 2005 with six airplanes shuttling 12 veterans.

Morse eventually founded the Honor Flight Network, which now has hubs in 30 states.

Those interested in learning more about the Honor Flight program can contact Central Prairie Honor Flights, 1817 16th Street Great Bend, KS 67530 or call 620-792-6224.

Loading commenting interface...