

# THE CHANUTE TRIBUNE

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## Guardians walk through history with WWII vets

**Stu Butcher**

Tribune Editor

The World War II veterans weren't the only ones who got a lot out of the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C.

"It was absolutely a great trip," said Larry Gates, committee chair for the American Legion Riders, some who served as guardians on the trip Monday through Wednesday of last week.

"The weather was great. I am so very proud of the American Legion Riders and their role as guardians on this flight. The veterans had a great time and were all very tired. I did not hear any of the guardians complain. In fact, they were all honored to be there for the veterans."

A couple of the veterans received 24/7 care by two guardians.

"Those veterans would not have been able to go if it were not for those two gentlemen," Gates said.

"They are special people to have done what they did."

Gates noted that the Chanute ALR also helped veterans from other Kansas groups there.

"They were not selfish, they were there for all the WWII veterans."

I believe everyone of them would pay the \$500 to be a guardian, and do it again. It was most definitely an honorable, and humbling experience for all of us. We slept, we ate, we laughed, we listened, we talked and we cried with our WWII heroes."

Gates said the trip was not without a few hiccups.

"We learn from our mistakes and will do better the next trip," he said.

He had a problem with Dulles Airport, noting security was way too strict on the WWII heroes.

"The airport was not real friendly in getting six vets in wheelchairs through. I complained, it did not do any good."

Despite the age of the travelers, there was only one health issue.

"One gentleman was taken to the hospital and stayed overnight Tuesday night and was able to catch a later flight Wednesday," Gates said. "We got him home that night."

### **The itinerary**

#### **Monday**

Group flew into Dulles and Baltimore

Banquet was held for the veterans

#### **Tuesday**

Went to WWII Memorial, Holocaust Museum, Air and Space Museum, Korean, Vietnam, Lincoln Memorials, drove past the Pentagon, Navy and Air Force Memorials, went to the Iwo Jima Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery. Returned to the WWII Memorial at dusk for a ceremony honoring the vets.



Estil Gibson, WWII veteran, and Greg Pollock, guardian, take a break at the Arlington National Cemetery.

**Photo by  
Dave Williams**