

NEW WINDSOR

Local vets join in the Honor Flight

Hello New Windsor. In a previous column I mentioned my disapproval of the professional athletes who have been taking a knee during the National Anthem. These multi-millionaires say it is not about disrespecting our country or the Veterans that have fought for our freedom. But it is my opinion that no matter what they say that they are doing they are disrespecting the United States, our Veterans past and present, and our flag. And after this past weekend I feel stronger than ever about this!

I had the absolute pleasure of volunteering to help with the Hudson Valley Honor Flight Mission #18. The Hudson Valley Honor Flight is a not for profit organization that honors

American Veterans by flying them to Washington DC to visit the Veterans Memorials at no cost to them. Most all of the previous missions were mostly World War II Veterans and terminally ill veterans from other wars, they have now begun to transport veterans from the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Mission #18 which took place on Saturday November 4 out of Stewart International Airport had a record 86 veterans take this trip with 10 World War II, 72 Korean War, and four Vietnam War Veterans.

They met at the Vails Gate Shoprite to check-in and then took four Leprechaun Coach Buses in a caravan led by a police escort and 35+ motorcycles to Stewart Airport where they were honored in a terrific ceremony. Some walked with canes, others were pushed in wheelchairs. All had one thing in common, they fought for their country, for the freedom that many seem to take for granted.

After the ceremony they loaded on the airplane and flew to Washington DC to tour the World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War Memorials, Arlington Cemetery, and had a sit down



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Bill Welyczko who fought in the Vietnam War participated in the recent Hudson Valley Honor Flight.

dinner. They then flew back to Stewart Airport where they were greeted by a cheering crowd welcoming them home. Many of these heroes experienced this welcome home for the first time not getting it coming home from war. I overheard one of the Korean War Veterans going on the trip say "when I got back from the Korean War someone said to me you were away? Yeah I was gone for four years!"

The Korean War is often called the forgotten war. But it surely is not forgotten by those who fought there. The Vietnam War is another War that the soldiers didn't get welcomed home. Many came home to protesters at the airport. One of those Veterans who came home to protesters and who was on Mission #18 was Bill Welyczko who fought in the Vietnam War. Bill was a member of the US Army as a Squad Leader. Bill was awarded three Purple Hearts having been wounded in battle on three separate occasions, one in January, one in February, and one in April all in 1967. Nicknamed "the Human Magnet" two of his Purple Hearts were earned when he was wounded when vehicles he was driving in hit land mines, and for the third he was shot. Bill considers himself

lucky that he came home standing up while many others weren't so lucky. And many years later guys like Bill Welyczko are still paying the price for serving as he was diagnosed in 2014 with lung cancer that was caused by Agent Orange the chemical used by the United States Military to clear the jungle vegetation.

The cost of each flight for the Hudson Valley Honor Flight is \$70,000- \$100,000. And they do four flights a year. Because of the rise in the cost of the flights they may have to cut out one of the flights unless they can get more sponsors on board. Their main sponsor is Shoprite Supermarkets who just presented the Honor Flight with a check for \$185,000 which was raised as part of their 2017 Veterans Campaign. I was so honored to help with this amazing event and though I already had such a strong love for the United States of America, witnessing this amazing event and seeing these Veterans tearing up as they were welcomed with such joy and thanked for their service it made me love our country even more. I have not served in the military but I surely respect and honor those that have.

As Will Rogers once said "We can't all be heroes. Some of us have to stand on

Community Events

THURSDAY

Senior Activities. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Marasco Center, Union Ave., New Windsor.
Bring lunch or snacks. 565-7750.

FRIDAY

Marasco Art. Advanced, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.; Beginners, 1 - 3 p.m. Marasco Center, Union Ave., New Windsor. 565-7750.

TUESDAY

Optimist Club of New Windsor/ Cornwall 7 p.m. ABC Pizza Restaurant, Route 94 in New Windsor. 569-7083.

the curb and clap as they go by." Well I will definitely continue to be one of those that does that. And I urge all those professional athletes who are taking a knee, if you don't want to clap at least stand up!

The Town of New Windsor Holiday events are as follows. The annual Christmas Tree Lighting will be held on Friday December 1 at 6 p.m. and the Hanukkah Menorah Lighting is on Wednesday December 13 at 5 p.m. Both are at the New Windsor Town Hall Complex. There will be entertainment and refreshments at both.

The Senior Matinee movie is held every Tuesday at the Marasco Center at 11:30 a.m. The movie for Tuesday November 21 is "Dunkirk." In the early days of WWII, a number of civilian boats set out to rescue 400,000 British and Allied troops trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk, France, before they are decimated by Nazi forces.

For more information on the programs above or for all Town of New Windsor Recreation programs visit our website at nwrecisfun.com or call 565-7750.

Birthday shout outs this week go to **Derek Robertson** whose birthday is on November 15, to **Scott Alden** and **Jill Detz** whose birthdays are on November 17th, to **Anthony Romano** whose birthday is on November 19, to **Susan Stankiewicz**, and **Lu Ann Hinspeter** whose birthdays are on November 21st and to anyone else out there celebrating birthdays this week. Happy birthday!

If anyone has a birthday or other special event you want mentioned in my column, or have anything going on in New Windsor that you want the world to know about you can reach me at mveronesi@optimum.net or by calling 845-629-1260. Have a great week.