

Holyoke native, WWII vet takes Honor Flight to D.C.

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
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What has 70 wheels, 42 hands and infinite tales? An Honor Flight.

Former Holyoke native Lt. Nyle A. Chandler and his daughter Linda Chandler recently participated in an incredible opportunity available to veterans to enable them to see the monuments in Washington, D.C. that commemorate the sacrifice they made in serving the country.

Chandler joined 49 WWII, Korean and Vietnam vets on this whirlwind tour that brought back memories of valor and pride and many tears. The comment most heard from the vets as they were greeted over and over by spontaneous applause and standing salutes during their journey was, "I didn't think the people cared."



Holyoke native Nyle Chandler, in front, and his daughter Linda Chandler experience Washington, D.C. during the Honor Flight for WWII, Korean and Vietnam veterans.

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Started in 2004, the Honor Flight program, run solely by volunteers, funds veterans to be able to see the monuments commemorating the wars in which they fought.

Due to the age and frailty of some of the travelers, guardians accompany the vets along with helping hands from Scouts, American Legion and booster groups all across the nation that are supporting this incredible program. Chandler's daughter was one of the 21 guardians, accompanying her father.

This Honor Flight group was greeted at 4:30 a.m. Friday morning, April 26 at the Sacramento, Calif. airport by local military volunteers with flags and cheers.

Their Denver stopover found them surrounded by hundreds of fellow travelers and military who clapped and often stooped to say quietly, "Thank you." The USO in Denver was stellar, hosting lunch for the vets and serving as escorts through the terminal to ensure safety for all.

Arriving in Washington, D.C. at Dulles International, a two fire engine hose spray saluted the arriving plane, and more travelers and a military escort led them through a clapping terminal.

The Saturday morning tour of the monuments began with a military motorcycle escort from Dulles to the Air Force monument, approximately 20 freeway miles.

Attendance that day at the WWII memorial topped vet attendance ever, with over 500 servicemen and women walking through the columns commemorating this great world effort.

