Reverend George Lee McKnight is many things: US Navy veteran, expert welding instructor, PTSD sufferer, minister, sailor, Honor Flight Mission 69 veteran, and most recently, the first chaplain of Honor Flight Rochester!

His story is one of challenges. George served four tours of Vietnam with the US Navy. First on the USS Ticonderoga (Essex class, the last carriers with wood decks), where unbeknownst to George the fans circulating air in the sleeping quarters were circulating asbestos.

Later, George McKnight joined the crew of the USS Enterprise (the first nuclear carrier) as a shipfitter. His tasks included welding, soldering, tinsmithing, and ducting. Life was that of an ordinary sailor until Tuesday, January 14th 1969 when George awoke to the sound of explosions and General Quarters. Rushing on deck, George saw explosions, fire, and injured sailors everywhere. A senior officer instructed George to stand where he was, which was next to the aircraft elevator that was being used to move the deceased. The experience, George says, made him certain he was going to crack up; later in life it would continue to haunt him with PTSD, and guilt for the loss of his comrades.

Honorably discharged at E5 rank in 1969, George returned home to South Carolina, where he discovered that “white” and “colored” restrooms still existed. Even though in uniform, an auto dealership refused George access to the “white” restroom. George had experienced racism in the Navy, though not to the level he observed in his home state. He expected more respect for a four tour veteran.
In August 1969 George moved to Rochester, NY and took a job as a welder at Penn Central Railway, then later Rochester Gas & Electric, where he became a certified Nuclear Welder and CPR Instructor. In 1988 George took a position as Welding Instructor for Adult Education at Greece Olympia HS.

George McKnight is a man of great faith, and had persevered through many challenges. Funneling his trust in God, George planted a church in 2004, and began a ministry for nursing homes. He gathered food for his low income community, and serves on the Greece town board. Reverend George Lee McKnight is currently pastor of New Way CFC Church in Greece. Challenged by COVID, George moved his services to Zoom, and actually increased his audience!

In October 2019 George flew on Honor Flight Rochester Mission 69 to Washington, D.C., filled predominantly with Vietnam veterans. He describes the experience as “awesome, mind-blowing!” and said he was finally treated with the honor and respect he’d deserved all his life.

In Washington with HFR Mission 69, it was a steak that led George to his current position. Ready to dig into a big, juicy steak, George volunteered that he could not start the fabulous meal until it was blessed first. And with that, Reverend McKnight gave the first blessing for an Honor Flight Rochester event. With such a mutually beneficial opportunity available, on Memorial Day weekend 2021, Reverend George Lee McKnight accepted the position of Honor Flight Rochester chaplain.

As chaplain for HFR, George is available to teams, veterans, and “anyone”. He offers nondenominational counseling and spiritual assistance- from a man who’s been there, done that. We at Honor Flight Rochester look forward to Reverend McKnight’s blessing of the first post-COVID Mission 70.

Please join us in welcoming and thanking Reverend George Lee McKnight, chaplain, Honor Flight Rochester
JOIN US AT OUR M70
WELCOME HOME PARADE
SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

Everyone is welcome to attend our WH Parade but must follow mask requirements and stay a safe distance from those who traveled and the HFR volunteers. Admittance to the actual Welcome Home Ceremony in the International Room will be by invitation only due to capacity limitations.

All volunteers who are "inside the stanchions" must comply with our covid protocols; that is: they must provide proof of vaccination, sign a waiver release, answer covid related questions the day of welcome home, have their temperature taken and comply with all mask requirements. This includes crowd control, merchandise, arrival gate dignitaries, musicians, color guard, HF Dolls, etc. All volunteers will be required to check in before taking up their post.

These are the same protocols the Veterans, the Veteran's invited guests, Guardians and Flight Crew must also follow.

No one will be allowed to enter the controlled areas without having gone through the check in process and complied with the protocols. The safe and smooth completion of M70 is an important step leading to M71.
WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Thanks to all of our friends on Facebook!
Comments from Facebook Photo Series
“Why We Do What We Do”

Robert P - July 2021
Experienced Honor Flight with my father-in-law who served in the Navy during the Vietnam War. First Class operation through and through. Absolutely great experience for him and the entire family. Very proud and indebted of his service!

Racquel SG - July 2021
Can’t wait to see the sea of Orange again this fall!

Wendy HH - June 2021
You people continue to be amazing!

Lucrecia W - June 2021
Thank you for keeping our country and allies free. Thank you to the brewing company (No BS Brew Company).

Marcia GW - June 2021
Love this wonderful program.

Mike P - June 2021
Thank you all for your hard work as sending our Heroes to D.C. is the ultimate goal and glad all could help in doing that…

Cris S June - 2021
(Reactivation) is awesome news!! My Dad and I were due to go on #70 last spring when Covid started. He was a Korean War veteran and passed away June 2020. I have special memories of him of applying for and planning for the trip even though in had to be canceled. I’m excited for those able to go and will enjoy seeing the pictures posted in September.

William S - June 2021
Went on this with my Dad and will never forget it.

Joyce PS - June 2021
So glad to see the trips resume.

Jennifer R - June 2021
Can’t wait as a member of patriot guard can’t wait to welcome home our heroes.

Ruth G - June 2021
Alexander G, my husband, is still talking about the trip. It was one of the highlights in his life. He especially enjoyed sharing the experience with our son, Arunas as his guardian and travel companion. Thank you, Honor Flight for making the memorable trips for our veterans possible!

Jay M - March 2021
Proud of… my mom. Thank you Honor Flight for all do for the community and the veterans. A trip she will never forget.

Mary B - March 2021
What an honor that was for Joe. My Dad told me so many stories about his WWII service.

Jo N - March 2021
One of the greatest organization any vet could be part of… so many wonderful people and very good management. So happy to be a part of it and I will be happy when we can get back to running our flights again. Our list continues to grow so we have lots of work ahead of us.

Marcia GR - February 2021
Love groups of devoted volunteers. My trip was perfect thanks to this organization. Thank you all again.

Dawn LB - February 2021
My Dad loved the trip. Thank you for all you do to support these Veterans.

Bob H - February 2021
To share these very special moments with your child, best friend, gracious assigned guardian is a trip of a lifetime. Thank you Honor Flight for my trip of a lifetime.

Rhonda K - January 2021
What a great way to honor your dad… so happy the both of you got to share such a special time together!

Steve W - January 2021
I was on the Mission HFR Mission 21 April 2012 with my Dad!

REAL ID UPDATE

On April 27th the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that DHS is extending the Real ID enforcement date by 19 months, from October 1, 2021 to May 3, 2023, due to circumstances resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
EVENTS

September 18-19
Purple Painted Lady Art Festival
www.thepurplepaintedladyfestival.com

September 26
Elks Lodge #24 Chix BBQ

October 23
Elvis Nite at Barnard Rest

November 19
Skycoasters Turkey Bash
http://skycoasters.com/events.pdf

KRAUTER 5K/20K RACE

LAKESHORE COUNTRY CLUB ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

Mission Staffing Director
Bruce Philpott

Welcome Home Coordinator
Pat Mason

Volunteer Resource Committee (VRC) Coordinator
Randy Prader

Chaplain
Reverend George McKnight

Travel Planner
Tracy Williams

Events Coordinator
Mary Gavigan

Survey Monkey Administrator
Margaret Walsh

Registration Calling Committee (RCC) Leader
Mary Ellen Brooks

Photography Coordinator
Frances McCabe

Mission Photo Book Editor
Chris Reddy

Shutterfly Upload Assistants
Joe Charles & Stephen Benkovich

Interviews are still on-going for additional committee members and newsletter reporters.
Dear Volunteers:

With a heavy heart Honor Flight Rochester recognizes the profound loss of Jeffrey P. Gould, one of our Co-founders and Board member. Jeff passed away on August 4th. His Honor Flight journey began in 2008 the very day the D&C published an article that was the call for action to form a hub in Rochester. His enthusiasm for our cause was immediate as he and his wife Kim, also a Co-founder, were among the very first to volunteer. Their daunting task was to form the hub where the veteran flies for free and the community pays for it! Jeff and Kim traveled on the inaugural mission.

Back then no one would have guessed that thirteen years later our 70th mission will fly this fall. Jeff provided great service with humility to HFR and many fond memories to our flown veterans and volunteers alike. He was willing to do any job and whatever it took for our missions to get off the ground. Often Jeff with Kim would pitch in to make phone calls to fill flights. Jeff leaves his wife Kim and 3 children Jeffrey, Andrew and Sarah. Jeff’s spirit will continue flying with us.

*Our thoughts and prayers are with Kim and family. The memory of Jeff will be with us forever.*

Sincerely,

Rich Stewart
President & CEO