

Group sends vets to Washington

TRIP: Two World War II veterans from Webster went to the nation's capital to see a memorial, courtesy of an organization called Honor Flight Rochester.

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This past weekend, two Cherry Ridge residents and an employee of the senior living community were flown to Washington, D.C., to see the World War II memorial.

It was an emotional journey for the residents, Jim Dunn and Peter Schumacher, who both served in World War II. Dunn was a plane captain who served in the South Pacific, while Schumacher was a hospital technician in France.

They were among 106 people from the area to be flown to Washington by Honor Flight Rochester, an organization that provides free trips to memorials for veterans who might not have the funds or physical stamina to make the journey on their own.

"This is about soldiers going out shoulder to shoulder, sharing an experience," said Vince Hope of Honor Flight Rochester.

During the two-day trip, veterans and their escorts saw the new World War II Memorial, the Korean, Vietnam and Lincoln memorials, and the Marine Iwo Jima Memorial, as well as the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National

Cemetery.

Dunn and Schumacher were joined on the trip by Cherry Ridge volunteer coordinator Kate Zimmer.

"What was the most impressive part was the quality of the trip," Dunn said. "The people (who put it together) did a fantastic job; we really enjoyed it."

"It was a beautiful trip," Schumacher said. "There were so many veterans there. The most unusual experience was getting to meet former Sen. Bob Dole (at one of the memorials), who is also a veteran of World War II."

The mission of Honor Flight is to fly America's veterans to Washington to visit the memorials. Since very few World War II veterans

have the funds or physical stamina to make the trip on their own, Honor Flight provides free trips and all the arrangements. Dunn and Schumacher heard about the program through an Honor Flight presentation at Cherry Ridge earlier this year.

They returned to the Greater Rochester International Airport on Sunday and were the guests of honor at a welcome-home celebration with friends, family and children from St. Rita's School in Webster, who sponsored Dunn's trip through a fundraiser called "Sponsor a Vet."

"I was impressed (with the airport reception)," Dunn said. "There's no way to thank all of those kids who came out."

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