



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ort

## Western New York Warriors Flight Takes Off For D.C.

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Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today led two dozen local veterans in an inaugural Western New York Warriors Flight to Washington, D.C to visit several war memorials dedicated in their honor. Prior to take off, the American Legion Stephen Sikora Post 1322 held a special sendoff ceremony at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport for the 24 World War II and Korean War veterans on the Warriors Flight.

“This one-day trip allows members of the Greatest Generation, who are now in their 80s and 90s, and other generations of Americans who have served our country, to travel to the nation’s capital to see their monuments for the first time,” said **Senator Ortt**. “The World War II Memorial wasn’t completed until 2004, so sadly, many members of our Armed Forces who served in that era did not get to see this momentous monument. This WNY Warriors Flight is a way for us to honor our veterans and to show that we are forever grateful to them for selflessly putting on a uniform to protect our country. In a small way, we’re saying thank you to our nation’s heroes.”

The senior veterans were chaperoned by local volunteers as they traveled around the nation’s capital. The group visited the National WWII Memorial, Korean War Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Iwo Jima Memorial, the “Changing of the Guard” ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, among other notable sites. At the WWII and Korean War memorials, the group participated in an emotional wreath laying ceremony.

Congressman Chris Collins (NY-27) and Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-26) were both honored to have the opportunity to meet with the group during their time in D.C.

The trip concluded with a salute to the veterans from the Patriot Guard Riders as they welcomed them home at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

The WNY Warriors Flight was made possible with a \$20,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation, making the trip free for the veterans. Other partners included the Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce and Health Systems Services, which lent the vets wheelchairs. Senator Ortt wanted to thank the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, Transportation Security Administration and Southwest Airlines for their friendly cooperation.