



Bernadette Britz-Parker, Daytona State Foundation board member and committee member of Volusia Honor Air, served as chair of the pre-flight brunch on Sept. 11. "It was a wonderful event, we are so thrilled the college was willing to do it, to help us honor our vets," says Britz-Parker. She worked with the staff of Daytona State, veterans, their families and supporters from throughout the community to organize what was a stately and elegant event to honor veterans and their efforts during WWII. Resplendent in American flags, Daytona State Brass Ensemble and the Color Guard, with members of the Sheriff's Department standing at attention, Café 101 was military-ready for dress inspection. The brunch consisted of quiches, ham, pastries and other breakfast fare served in silver chafing dishes.

Norton Christeson, Assistant Chair of the School of Music, Entertainment and Art, performed an inspiring "Star-Spangled Banner" that resounded with patriotism, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The veterans also got to meet their assigned guardians who escort them the day of the flight to make sure their time in Washington is well spent. Molly Wiegand, of Ormond Beach, is the assigned guardian for her father, Ret. Army PFC David Alband, 85, and Ret. Marines Sgt. Willis Coates, 86. Wiegand says, "I am so excited to share this experience with all the vets, especially my dad and Willis (long time family friend)." The last flight for this year occurred on Sept. 25, and Alband says, "It was the best day ever." Volusia Honor Air will be departing again on May 14, 2011.

In the middle of the room, an empty table set for four, represented the lost soldiers of the four military branches. Each item in the setting represented a special meaning of remembrance to the soldiers who did not return home and for their families. The date of the event was no coincidence. White said a prayer to remember and honor WWII casualties, as well as the victims of September 11, 2001, so they would not be forgotten either.

After lunch, Roger Baumgartner, Chair of Volusia Honor Air 6, recognized former chairs, committee members and all those who play a key role in making the trip possible.

The founder and first chair of the Volusia Honor Air is real estate agent Bill Mancinick, who organized three Rotary clubs in Deland to facilitate the first flight. Event costs typically average \$65,000 to \$70,000 which is largely supported by guardian sponsorship, community participation of small businesses and corporations such as U.S. Air which coordinates the flights, enabling the veterans to take the trip at no charge.