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Group to help fund trip to D.C. for 2 WWII vets

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DAYTONA BEACH SHORES -- Two World War II veterans residing in the Shores will get to see the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., thanks to a spontaneous \$1,000 donation made to the Volusia Honor Air organization Tuesday night.

Council members voted 4-0, with Hank Smith absent, to give \$1,000 to the Volusia Honor Air organization, which pays to transport WWII veterans to see the memorial as a way of saying thanks for their sacrifice and service to their country.

"We are losing our World War II veterans at the rate of approximately 1,500 per day, and it is the Volusia Honor Air's goal to sponsor two flights per year, in May and in October. The Shores is the only city in Volusia County that has not had a veteran take the flight to see the memorial, which is my reason for being here, to get the word out," Bernadette Britz-Parker, chairman of the organization, told the council.

The Volusia Honor Air was formed by three Rotary Clubs in DeLand and has taken 314 World War II veterans thus far to see the memorial, which opened in 2004. The flights are provided free to the veterans and are paid for by donations to the organization. It costs \$500 per veteran to charter the flights biannually. The next flight will be in October.

Guardians also can sign up to take the flight with their veterans and have in the past, according to Britz-Parker.

All WWII vets in Volusia County are eligible to apply for the flights, which are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Information and applications can be obtained online at volusiahonorair.org.