

## **Virginia Lodges Combine to Support “America’s Heroes”**

During the weekend of June 3-6, 2011, Manassas Elks Lodge 2512 and Woodbridge Elks Lodge 2355 provided encouragement and support to twenty-five of “America’s Heroes” and their caregivers of The Forever Young, Senior Wish Organization of Collierville TN visit to the Nation’s Capital to see the War Memorials and other Monuments in and around the Washington DC area.

On Friday night Lodge members along with other local Veterans organizations met these Heroes at their hotel and visited for the evening. After welcoming these Veterans the Elks returned to Manassas Lodge to prepare the weekend’s bag lunches. On Saturday morning Gil Vale, North District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, Manassas Lodge 2512 and Barry Alderman, Past Exalted Ruler, Woodbridge Lodge 2355 delivered bag lunches consisting of sandwiches, drinks, fruit, cookies, snacks along with plenty of cold bottled water to drink. With volunteer help Woodbridge Lodge 2355 obtained wheelchairs and additional walkers for them to use during their visit. The Veterans spent the day visiting the World War II, Korean and Vietnam memorials in Washington DC.

Sunday’s breakfast saw Lodge members visiting, and hearing stories of their life’s journey. This year’s group included men and women veterans from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Again on Sunday the Lodges delivered bag lunches, snacks, fruit, water. As the Veterans departed for their visit to Arlington Cemetery the Elks began preparation for the weekends closing events. Upon their arrival at the National Museum of the Marine Corps the veterans departed the bus through an honor column from the Young Marine Regiment and were greeted by members of Woodbridge and Manassas Elks Lodges and Boy Scout Troop 1390.

The group reluctantly departed Washington DC on Monday tired, but satisfied in accomplishing their goal. Many of the veterans’ commented on the help and support the Lodges provided with comments ranging from “Everything was just perfect” to “We will never forget the way you honored us”. Lodge members were merely humbled and in awe of these “Living Legends” of our past.

Additional information about the Forever Young, Senior Wish Organization can be obtained on the web at [www.foreveryoungseniorwish.org](http://www.foreveryoungseniorwish.org).

## **Virginia Lodges Honor “America’s Heroes” during Flag Ritual**

Manassas Elks Lodge 2512 and Woodbridge Elks Lodge 2355 performed the time honored Elks Flag Ritual in an early celebration of Flag Day. Twenty-five of “America’s Heroes” from The Forever Young, Senior Wish Organization were in the DC area and

as Woodbridge Lodge 2355 Exalted Ruler, Mary Louise Mawn said “It only seemed fitting to perform this ritual early to include these hero’s from World War II, Korea and Vietnam.”

As the ritual opened with the singing of the National Anthem all activity on the grounds of the museum stopped and viewed the historic flags whipping in the breeze and the Young Marine Regiment at present arms. Emotions flowed to the surface as each flag from the Nation’s history was paraded by Boy Scout Troop 1390 and was lovingly placed into their base behind the station of the Exalted Ruler.

Many of the individuals, in attendance, commented that this opportunity to honor America seemed extra significant with the inclusion of both our past hero’s from World War II, Korea and Vietnam and the country’s future leaders from the Young Marines and Boy Scouts. Mark Horigan, Manassas Lodge 2512 Exalted Ruler stated “This is what Elk’s do: Honor our Veterans and help prepare the country’s young to be suitable replacements” and “what a better way to accomplish this than by including these organizations as part of this ritual here in front the National Museum of the Marine Corps”.

### **Virginia Lodges Honor “America’s Heroes” during Flag Retirement**

Manassas Elks Lodge 2512 and Woodbridge Elks Lodge 2355 performed the time honored Flag Retirement Ceremony. Twenty-five of “America’s Heroes” from The Forever Young, Senior Wish Organization were in the DC area and as Woodbridge Lodge 2355 Exalted Ruler, Mary Louise Mawn said “What a better way to honor these Veterans than by including them in the ceremony.”

As the ceremony opened activity on the grounds of the museum stopped and all gathered to observe. Emotions flowed as Esquire, Barry Alderman, PER, Woodbridge Lodge 2355 received the flags from each of the three stations and delivered them to “America’s Heroes”. When the Veterans passed the flags to members of Boy Scout Troop 1390, it felt as if their knowledge and patriotism was being passed to the next generation of America’s leaders.

Mark Horigan, Manassas Lodge 2512 Exalted Ruler commented “What a better way to honor the life of these flags than to include members of “The Greatest Generation” and Americas future in this ceremony.”

Since no fires are allowed on the grounds of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Boy Scout Troop 1390 will transport the flags to summer camp with them later this month for proper dismantling and disposal.



America's Heroes depart their bus and are honored by the Young Marine Regiment.



Americas Hero's observe Elks Flag Ritual as Mary Louse Mawn, Exalted Ruler Woodbridge Lodge 2355 and Chetta Horigan, Leading Knight (Acting Chaplain) Manassas Lodge 2512 participate.



Boy Scout Troop 1390 presents historic American Flags as Mary Louise Mawn, Exalted Ruler, Barry Alderman, Esquire and Sherri Stramel, Lecturing Knight Woodbridge Lodge 2355 and Mark Horigan, Loyal Knight (Exalted Ruler Manassas Lodge 2512) and Americas Hero's observe the Elks Flag Ritual.



Americas Hero's watch as Boy Scout Troop 1390 prepare to present the colors.





Americas Hero's (L-R) Hank Brukart, Marian McMellen and Bill O'Rok with Barry Alderman, Esquire, PER and Sherri Stramel, Lecturing Knight Woodbridge Lodge 2355 participate in the Flag Retirement Ceremony



Troop 1390 Scouts Andrew Beinen, Jeff Jack Dumoulin and Mason Notz receive the retired flags from America's Heroes Bill O'Rok, Marian McMillen and Hank Brukart.