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MEDIA RELEASE

April 8, 2025

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) Welcomes West Central Florida Veterans Honor Flight Welcome Home Reception—April 15th 8:00 PM

On Tuesday, April 15th, PIE's 50th Honor Flight with 77 Veterans will depart St. Pete-Clearwater Int'l Airport on an Allegiant charter for a day long visit to Washington D.C. and the war memorials. St. Pete-Clearwater Int'l Airport hosted its first Honor Flight for WWII Veterans in 2011. Originally, PIE was Pinellas Army Airfield, a base for training WWII fighter pilots. After the war, the land was returned to the county for use as a civil airfield in 1946.

This is the 52nd Honor Flight for the West Central Florida chapter. **The Veterans return to St. Pete-Clearwater at approximately 8:15 pm.** The Welcome Home celebration is open to the public and various groups, military, and government leaders will be at the airport to greet the veterans. Additional Honor Flight dates for 2025 are June 10, September 16, and October 21.

Our restaurant, *The District Pub*, will open from 5:00-8:00 PM before the Veterans arrive. The restaurant is in the pre-security area located on the 2nd floor between Ticketing A and B.

Free parking will be available to attend the welcome home event for guests parking in our Short or Long-term Parking Lot. The Gateway Expressway is now open and presents new options for those traveling to and from PIE.

Media trucks with identification may park in the Ground Transportation Lot adjacent to Baggage Claim or in the Service Delivery Lane for the Veterans arrival **with advance clearance only.**

Honor Flight® of West Central Florida President Tracy Luchtenberg states "Honor Flight of West Central Florida opens the 2025 season with Mission 52 on April 15th. We are honored to transport our heroes at no charge to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect on their memorials. We appreciate the partnership with Allegiant for the safe transportation of our treasured Veterans. A special thank you to the staff at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport for your graciousness in making the Welcome Home a wonderful celebration. We encourage you to wear your patriotic garb and join us in giving these Veterans an uplifting Welcome Home!"

Airport Director Tom Jewsbury states, "We are excited to host our 50th Honor Flight at PIE! It has been our honor to celebrate our Veterans and welcome the community. Please join us for this celebration to thank our Veterans."

For more information about the Honor Flight, CONTACT Honor Flight of West Central Florida at: info@honorflightwcf.org www.honorflightwcf.org Telephone: (727) 498-6079
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