

M&T Bank and Buffalo Bills Foundation Join Forces to Host Local Veterans on Visit to Washington, D.C. Memorials

50 veterans will travel from Buffalo to D.C. for April 14 Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight

BUFFALO, N.Y.—Fifty World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans are traveling from Buffalo, N.Y. to Washington, D.C. as part of a joint effort of M&T Bank and the Buffalo Bills Foundation to host a special Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight.

Thanks to generous charitable contributions from M&T and the Buffalo Bills Foundation, the veterans will visit the national memorials built to honor their courageous service and immense sacrifices. Escorted by eight volunteers from M&T Bank and Buffalo Bills offensive linemen Ryan Groy and Dion Dawkins, the group departed Saturday morning, April 14, from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport and will return late in the evening.

“Many of our employees are veterans themselves and know firsthand the sacrifices involved in military service,” said Doug Stevens, M&T Bank Senior Vice President and Manager of Credit Risk Oversight, who himself is a veteran, having served in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant and nuclear-trained officer. “It’s our privilege to help recognize those who have answered the call of duty to help defend our great nation, and we join the Buffalo Bills Foundation in expressing our sincere gratitude and appreciation for Western New York’s veterans.”

This opportunity for M&T to team up with the Buffalo Bills Foundation and honor veterans through Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight was facilitated by M&T’s Veterans Resource Group, which Stevens helps to lead. The Veterans Resource Group is an employee-driven initiative at M&T to provide support for local veterans and advocate for veterans’ workplace issues.

“Today we have the privilege of honoring a dedicated group of men and women,” said Gretchen Geitter, president of the Buffalo Bills Foundation. “We are extremely grateful for the sacrifice these veterans have made and hope that this small token of our appreciation will create a lasting memory that commemorates the service they have provided to our country.”

M&T, the Buffalo Bills Foundation and Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight have taken great strides to make it a truly memorable experience for the honored veterans. After meeting early Saturday morning at Leonard Post 6251, the veterans received a special police, fire and Patriot Guard Riders escort to the airport where they were welcomed by a 60-piece orchestra playing patriotic anthems. Veterans’ families, friends and local Honor Flight supporters were also there to send them off, and the community is invited to return to the airport to welcome the veterans back this evening at 10:15 p.m.

A number of buildings and attractions will also be lit red, white and blue the evening of April 14 in honor of the veteran’s return, including M&T Bank, The Electric Tower, City Hall, Peace Bridge, New Era Field and Niagara Falls.

“We are proud to have the Buffalo Bills Foundation and M&T Bank as sponsors for our 6th mission. Being a 100 percent volunteer organization, Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight is entirely financed by our fundraising efforts, private donations and, most importantly, sponsorships from the local business community. Each mission carries a cost of between \$45,000 and \$60,000, and without the support of the Buffalo Bills Foundation and M&T Bank we would not be able to get these 50 veterans to Washington D.C.,” said Michael Zimmer, Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight Board of Directors.

“Throughout the process of putting this flight together, the Buffalo Bills Foundation, M&T Bank and members of M&T’s Veterans Resource Group have become more than just sponsors—they became partners. Their dedication to this mission speaks volumes to how committed they are to our veterans, and we thank them for helping make sure Mission #6 will be a day these veterans will remember for the rest of their lives,” Zimmer added.

M&T Bank is the official bank of the Buffalo Bills. The longstanding partnership between the two organizations has included naming rights to the M&T Club and the M&T Family Zone at New Era Field, and exclusive rights to offer specially designed Bills check and debit cards.

About Buffalo Niagara/Honor Flight

Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight, Inc. is a regional hub of the National Honor Flight Network, an organization dedicated to providing veterans with honor and closure. Their mission is to fly WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans to Washington D.C. for a one-day, all expenses paid visit to their memorials that are dedicated to their service and sacrifice. Top priority is given to America’s most senior heroes – survivors of WWII and any veteran with a terminal illness who wishes to visit their memorial.

About Buffalo Bills Foundation

The Buffalo Bills Foundation is dedicated to supporting organizations that are committed to improving the quality of life in our region. The foundation actively works to facilitate philanthropic investment in our community, while supporting NFL and team charitable initiatives.

About M&T Bank

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, operates banking offices in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Trust-related services are provided by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank.

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Media Contact(s):

Julia Berchou
(716) 842-5385
jshanahan@mtb.com

Buffalo Bills Foundation:

Don Heins
716-855-4757
don.heins@psentertainment.com

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