

HonorAir Knoxville Announces Sunset of Program After Nearly Two Decades of Service to East Tennessee Veterans

For Immediate Release

Knoxville, TN — HonorAir Knoxville, the all-volunteer nonprofit organization that has spent nearly twenty years honoring America's veterans, announced today that it will sunset operations following its final scheduled flights in 2026.

Founded in 2007, HonorAir Knoxville was created with a simple but powerful mission: to take World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., allowing them to stand before the memorial built in their honor and experience the nation's gratitude firsthand. The mission later expanded to include Korean War veterans in 2011 and Vietnam War veterans in 2015. With its final flight, HonorAir Knoxville will have attempted to honor every WWII, Korean and Vietnam veteran who expressed a desire to make the journey.

Since inception, HonorAir Knoxville has conducted 38 in-person flights and three virtual flights, honoring more than 4,500 East Tennessee veterans. The program was supported entirely by volunteers and fueled by more than \$3.5 million in community donations, all of which went directly toward honoring veterans.

"Our Board of Directors and team believe the organization has fulfilled — and exceeded — the purpose for which HonorAir Knoxville was created, Eddie Mannis, President/Founder said. Sunsetting the program is not an ending born of loss, but one rooted in completion, gratitude, and deep respect for what this organization set out to do — and accomplished together."

Final Flights & Continued Outreach

HonorAir Knoxville is currently working on the April 8 2026 flight, As in the past, priority is placed on Veterans who had "boots on the ground." If the sunset announcement results in a significant increase in applications, the Board will thoughtfully evaluate whether an additional flight in 2026 is feasible, guided by the same mission-driven principles that have shaped the organization since its founding. Interested veterans can apply online at www.honorairknoxville.com.

Outreach efforts continue in partnership with local veterans' organizations, community leaders, and media outlets to ensure eligible veterans have every opportunity to participate before the program concludes.

Mission-Driven Conclusion

The decision to sunset the organization is not financially motivated. HonorAir Knoxville emphasized that it has remained financially strong throughout its history and that the conclusion of the program is entirely mission-driven.

Any remaining donated funds will be handled in accordance with legal requirements and donor intent, with full transparency and accountability.

Preserving the Legacy

Plans are under consideration for a final commemorative event to recognize the veterans, volunteers, donors, and community partners who made HonorAir Knoxville possible. Additionally, early conversations are underway regarding a documentary project to preserve the stories and legacy of the organization.

Reflecting on nearly two decades of service, HonorAir Knoxville expressed deep gratitude for the volunteers, supporters, and donors who made the mission possible.

"HonorAir Knoxville proved what is possible when a community comes together to say, simply and sincerely: thank you for your service."

Additional Quote from Eddie Mannis, President & Founder:

"This organization was built by ordinary people doing extraordinary things for our veterans. Watching this community come together for nearly two decades to say thank you has been one of the greatest honors of my life. While this chapter is closing, the impact will live on in every veteran we served and every heart we touched."

For more information, please visit our website at www.honorairknoxville.com or contact Eddie Mannis at 865-389-7701 or by email at eddie@eddiemannis.com