



SYNERGY

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Veteran's Airlift Command: Meeting the Aviation Needs of our Nations Newest Veterans

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Veteran's Airlift Command provides air transportation for medical and other compassionate purposes to wounded warriors, veterans, and their families through a national network of volunteer aircraft owners and pilots. The organization was founded by **Walter Fricke**, who knows first hand how important it is to have family nearby to provide support when recovering from a serious injury. Veteran's Airlift Command was established in July of 2006 and flew its first mission in November of 2006. Since that time, they have flown over 50 additional missions and respond to daily requests from Walter Reed Medical Center. The organization now has over 230 aircraft and 300 volunteer pilots available to transport veterans. The volunteer pilots and those who volunteer their aircraft donate their time and the cost of operating the aircraft, such as fuel and the cost of using an airport. This is estimated to cost the volunteers at least \$1000 a trip. Mr. Fricke states the response to donate time and aircraft has been overwhelming, "this is family to them." While OIF/OEF veterans and their families are given priority service, the organization will attempt to meet the travel needs of veterans from other conflicts as resources become available.

Veteran's Airlift Command recently provided a flight for a veteran's wife and children to fly from Arizona to Washington to see her husband, who was hospitalized at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. **Cathy Blanchard**, the social worker who arranged the service through Veteran's Airlift Command, stated using the service was "incredibly easy." She said it took little time to arrange and that a volunteer pilot had responded to the request while she was on the phone making the initial request for service. She also mentioned that the family was very pleased with the service and enjoyed the flight.



To Arrange a Flight through Veteran's Airlift Command contact:

USA Cares 1-866-784-8917 (due to the types of aircraft used, this resource is best for flights less than 500 miles, but attempts will be made to accommodate longer flights)

Information about Veteran's Airlift Command can be located at their website:

www.veteransairlift.org or by calling (952) 582-2911