Return to Normandy: American Airlines Brings D-Day Veterans to France for Historic Commemoration of World War II Invasion

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World’s largest airline honors Greatest Generation 75 years after beach landings

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The airline hosted many of them and their guests at a luncheon Sunday at the CR Smith Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. The event included a Color Guard flag presentation and a national anthem performance. After lunch, these esteemed members of the Greatest Generation traveled to Paris (CDG), where they were greeted with cheers, waving flags and a water cannon salute.

The CR Smith Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, hosted a luncheon for the D-Day veterans and their guests before they checked in for their journey to France.

“These veterans fought so bravely to give us the freedom to fly that we have today,” said Philippe Serafino, General Manager at CDG for American Airlines. “Our team members in Paris are always looking for ways — big and small — to express their infinite gratitude to the individuals who fought to liberate France and serve the Allied cause during the war.”
In Paris, the group, which includes two veterans who haven’t been back to Normandy since the days following June 6, 1944, will join their fellow soldiers, sailors and airmen to observe reenactments of the invasion and participate in ceremonies commemorating their bravery and service to the nation and the world.

“I feel this will be closure for me because I had turned down going a long time ago,” said Jack Gutman, a U.S. Navy corpsman first class on D-Day. “Having my son with me to experience what I went through and for him to see it in a different light and understand what I went through is so important to me.”

“I’m overwhelmed and speechless,” added Carl Felton, a U.S. Navy petty officer first class on D-Day. “I couldn’t be more excited and more humbled with all of the praise that has been heaped upon us.”

The flights and luncheon are part of a larger initiative American is supporting alongside Let Freedom Ring, a nonprofit organization founded by D-Day veteran George Ciampa, who is on the trip. Four American team members are also volunteering their personal time to accompany the D-Day veterans in support of that organization.

“After serving 27 years and multiple deployments, I have a small sense of sacrifice these World War II veterans gave to this country,” said ORD-based First Officer John Gorse, a retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force who is on the trip. “Their service truly saved the world from the darkest of days. I’m sure the feeling they felt on that day 75 years ago will come rushing back and there is no way to describe that terror. They survived so we could survive as a nation.”

Team members, customers, service members and airport employees at DFW welcomed and cheered the veterans as they boarded Flight 48 to Paris (CDG).

**AMERICAN AIRLINES IN FRANCE**

The longstanding relationship between France and the U.S. has allowed Paris to become one of American’s largest and longest-served international destinations. The airline began flights to Paris in April 1985 and now has nearly 200 team members in the country as it continues to grow its service to France. On June 7, American will launch a second daily flight between DFW and CDG that will operate daily until October on a Boeing 787-9.

**About American Airlines Group**

American Airlines and American Eagle offer an average of nearly 6,700 flights per day to nearly 350 destinations in more than 50 countries. American has hubs in Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Washington, D.C. American is a founding member of the oneworld® alliance, whose members serve more than 1,000 destinations with about 14,250 daily flights to over 150 countries. Shares of
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