**Patience**

I just got home from serving on the 19th Northern Colorado Honor Flight as a guardian for two of the 123 amazing veterans who traveled on this flight. If you are not aware of the Honor Flight organizations, they are a nationwide network whose universal mission “is to transport America’s Veterans to Washington, DC to visit those memorials dedicated to honor the service and sacrifices of themselves and their friends.”

The Northern Colorado ‘hub’ has flown over 2500 veterans on 19 flights, over the last 10 years. There are over 131 Honor Flight hubs across the United States helping to take our oldest veterans to the monuments starting with WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Purple Heart recipients.

It was honestly the most inspiring and humbling two days of my life and a lot of fun too. Having been born in 1965 and too young to understand the true impact of war and more importantly the impact of those early wars. The events of World War II truly threatened our very existence as a nation and Korea had been forgotten. My generation and later generations have no clue of the impact these wars had on those who survived.

As I sit here and ponder my topic this week, I can’t stop thinking about the flight and the six veterans that I spent the most time with the last two days. There is one word that keeps coming into my mind; patience.

Mostly, because I had to dig deep for patience within myself as I visited the monuments with these veterans and more importantly, because of the patience that these veterans have had to live with all these years. Not to mention their patience with me as I pushed their wheel chair and asked so many questions and constantly kept on them for hydration and comfort. I’m sure I was driving them crazy at times.

So, I looked up the definition; Patience (or forbearance) is the state of endurance under difficult circumstances such as: perseverance and/or the ability to wait in the face of delay; provocation without responding in negative annoyance/anger; or exhibiting forbearance when under strain, especially when faced with longer-term difficulties.

No wonder why I’ve had this word stuck in my head!

In today’s rush, rush world and the pressure of keeping time on the trip, I found myself wanting my veterans and others to hurry up. I would have to muster my patience not to swing them around to face me for a picture when they wanted to spend a few extra minutes looking at the etchings on the Korean Monument.

Whoa, wait a minute! This is their monument. This was their war. This is their honor flight. They have been waiting for over 60 years to have this moment to reflect on their years in the war. They have been patient with the world to remember and accept the ‘forgotten’ war and now’s their time to get that respect and I need to be patient.

Here I am, a child of the iPhone camera, of the hurry up generation, of the too busy to reflect on our past and I’m learning a lesson of a lifetime; watching, feeling and experiencing their emotional connections to what was their past and honestly what is my past.

Patience is everything. It affects us in everything we do. It’s part of us, when we choose to acknowledge it and respect it’s power. If we don’t have patience, then what do we have in so many aspects of our life?

“The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.” (Leo Tolstoy)

“The longer you wait for something, the more you appreciate it when you get it, because anything worth having is worth waiting for.”

“A moment of patience in a moment of anger saves you a hundred moments of regret.”

“Good things take time.”

“Patience with family is love, patience with others is respect. Patience with self is confidence and patience with God is faith.”

“Patience is a form of wisdom. It demonstrates that we understand and accept the fact that some things must unfold in their own time.”

“May I be a little more patient today than I was yesterday.”