

A North Carolina Elk is Selected to Represent Veterans at Normandy

Frank J. Perry, Sr., 98 years old, and an Elk from Winston Salem, NC has been selected by American Airlines to help represent the U.S. Veterans at the 80th Anniversary celebration of D-Day in Normandy, France this June.

American Airlines has selected 70 WWII veterans to attend the D-day commemoration this year, and Frank was chosen as one of those to attend, along with his grandson, acting as his escort. The veterans will start their journey with a kick-off dinner and departure parade in Fort Worth, TX, before flying to Paris for several days of events and sightseeing, and then on to Normandy, where they will visit key sites, concerts, and commemorative ceremonies. Their trip will culminate with a visit to the Normandy American cemetery, where so many U.S. service members from D-Day are buried.

Frank was a Staff Sergeant in the Army Air Forces in World War II and served in the 754th Bombardment Squadron as a turret gunner in the B-24 Liberator aircraft group. Based in Norwich, England, Frank, and the members of his crew flew combat missions into Germany during the Spring of 1945, attacking rail lines and other strategic targets prior to the war's end in Europe. After the war's end, Frank and his group returned to the United States for retraining in the B-29 Superfortress aircraft in preparation for movement to the Pacific theater. Prior to the completion of their transition, the war ended in the Pacific and group was disbanded.

After the war, Frank spent several years running various stations for Piedmont Airlines, eventually becoming a flight dispatcher, based in Winston Salem, N.C. Frank has been an Elk with the Winston Salem Elks Lodge #449, for over five decades, starting in 1968. He has served in a multitude of positions within the lodge and is a regular member at lodge meetings and social gatherings.