



Where devotion meets compassion.

Contact: Jason Sherman, 312-577-7650, jason@shermancm.com

World War II Veterans + Female Seniors (ages 83-97) to Soar Over Orange County in Vintage WWII Biplane April 7

Fullerton Municipal Airport event is first of its kind in O.C.

ORANGE COUNTY/FULLERTON – March 23, 2016 – 94-year-old U.S. Army WWII veteran (B-29 radio operator), **Vince Van Velzer**, along with four other senior veterans and three female seniors, ages 83 to 97, will each take flight in an open-cockpit, 1944 Boeing Stearman biplane at Fullerton Municipal Airport, Thursday, April 7. Two of the other veterans also served in WWII.

The flights are courtesy of [Ageless Aviation Dreams Foundation](#) (AADF), a non-profit organization founded in 2011 to honor U.S. military veterans living in long-term care facilities.

All eight “Dream Flyers” are community members of [Rowntree Gardens](#) Senior Living, in Stanton / central Orange County – which also celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

Van Velzer, a private pilot himself, and the other seven senior *Dream Flyers*, will strap on goggles and canvas helmets as they enjoy the ride of their lives in the same two-seater aircraft used for training military pilots during WWII.

“We, our senior flyers and their families are all thrilled to have this amazing opportunity,” stated Randy Brown, CEO of Rowntree Gardens. “We look forward to cheering them on from the ground!”

“Having been shot down by a rocket during WWII and held as a POW in Germany for 17 months, initially I wasn’t so sure about doing this,” recounted Dream Flyer **Colin Jones**, 94, who served in the 8th Army Air Forces’ 93rd Bomb Group. “But now that it is happening, I can’t wait for the day to arrive.” Jones lived in [Long Beach](#) prior to moving to Rowntree Gardens in 2015.

“I may be 97 years young, but I’m always up for an adventure,” proclaimed Dream Flyer **Sammye Vore**. A community member at Rowntree Gardens for the last 21 years, Vore was a missionary in Guatemala for 40 years as part of her many travels.

AADF’s collaboration with Rowntree Gardens marks the first Dream Fight in Orange County. To date, the foundation has provided free Dream Flights to more than 1,500 senior U.S. military veterans living in long-term care facilities.

The other five Rowntree Gardens’ senior Dream Flyers and background on each, include:

Ed Willems, 94, AMM2C (Aviation Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class – plane mechanic), U.S. Navy, World War II. Pilots would sometimes let Willems join them and fly the planes when they needed to do paperwork during flights. Previously a [Lodi](#), CA resident, his son lives in [Lakewood](#), CA.

Chuck Iverson, 83, Corporal, U.S. Army. Always wanting to fly, Iverson never had the chance to learn or go on flights during his time in the military.



Where devotion meets compassion.

Mac Laurence, 83, Lieutenant, U.S. Navy pilot stationed in California. After his service, he spent forty years working for Douglas Aircraft – who built the very planes he flew in the Navy. Originally from Rossmoor, CA, his daughter still lives there.

Mary Van Velzer, 88, a pilot herself and wife of Vince. She always wanted to fly as a child, but didn't get a chance. After raising her family, she took flying lessons and flew for over 30 years. She and Vince are originally from Huntington Beach and have children in Cucamonga, CA.

Ann Seufert, 89. She's curious and excited to be a Dream Flyer. Her husband was a commander of the Seabees for 25 years. She has children living in Cypress and Cerritos, CA.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND PHOTOS OF EACH
DREAM FLYER AVAILABLE.**

The Dream Flyers' family members will be watching the action starting at 9 a.m. on April 7 at Fullerton Municipal Airport located at **4011 W. Commonwealth Avenue, Fullerton, CA 92833**.

ABOUT ROWNTREE GARDENS

Rowntree Gardens, (<https://www.facebook.com/Rowntree-Gardens-where-devotion-meets-compassion-112434638823992/>) provides a full range of integrated, onsite services to meet the changing needs of community members as they age. As a Continuous Care Retirement Communities, the organization's living options include: independent living (Acacia Independent Living), assisted living (The Cedars Assisted Living), long- and short-term skilled nursing care (Elmwood Care Center), rehab services (New Leaf Rehab Agency) and memory care (Gardens Memory Care). Rowntree Gardens also offers in-home care through its Faithful Friends Home Care agency. The eight-acre campus features walking paths through landscaped gardens and open spaces, gazebos, outdoor kitchen and dining, courtyards, a putting green, shuffleboard courts, a fountain, and the spiritual comfort of an intimate and nondenominational Chapel.

Rowntree Gardens' Elmwood Care Center skilled nursing earned Medicare's highest 5-star rating and provides 24/7/365 licensed skilled nursing services. "U.S. News & World Report BEST Nursing Homes 2014" (based on Medicare data) gave Rowntree Gardens its highest rating of five stars. <http://health.usnews.com/best-nursing-homes/area/ca/rowntree-gardens-555718>

#