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Press Release

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Gilbane Building Company Uses Virtual Reality to Honor Veterans

Veterans unable to make the trip to memorial get unique opportunity to be there in a different way.

Milwaukee, WI – November 11, 2016 – Leading global construction and facilities-related services firm, Gilbane Building Company was recently involved in an effort with Honor Flight, a non-profit organization created to honor America’s veterans by transporting them to Washington, DC to visit and reflect at their memorials. Top priority is given to the senior veterans, World War II survivors, along with those other veterans who may be terminally ill. Gilbane’s Sr. Media Studio Manager, Lucas Richmond, and Virtual Design & Construction (VDC) Manager, Chad Knutson, along with Devon Rutkowski were recently involved in an effort with the local chapter of this organization in Wisconsin.



The idea for Gilbane to assist came about as a result of a personal experience of Lucas Richmond. His wife’s grandfather had participated in the Honor Flight program several years ago and it left a positive, lasting impression. As Lucas began to find out more, he came to realize that many of the men and women could not make the flight due to various health issues, or frailty from age. This spawned an idea to create a virtual experience so that these heroes could also experience the war memorials. Lucas connected with Chad Knutson, who is a veteran and is involved in various veteran charities including Fisher House and Camp Hometown Heroes. Lucas, Chad and Devon then connected with Karyn Roelke, Vice President of Public Relations of the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight Organization. The idea was a huge success.

On September 22, 2016, veterans representing World War II and the Korean War, representatives from Gilbane Building Company and other attendees gathered at North Hills Country Club in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin for the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight fundraising event and provided veterans with a truly unique virtual reality experience. The veterans were blown away with the experience. “After their experience, a lot of the responses were open jaws and in awe, some were almost in tears,” says Devon Rutkowski, Media Designer at Gilbane Building Company.

“Any opportunity for our frailest veterans to see their memorials without the physical strain of a flight to DC is an incredible and healing experience for them. As we look down the road toward another large group of veterans who have been waiting for their turn to take an Honor Flight, we will need to be creative to get that population an opportunity to see their memorials as well. We hope to utilize this technology going forward to bring healing and

closure to as many veterans as possible. Thank you Gilbane.” Karyn Roelke, Vice President of Public Relations, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight. As Gilbane moves forward with this effort, they hope to present it at the national convention and be able to assist veterans on a national level.

“At Gilbane, we are continually focused on building relationships, people and the community. The Milwaukee community is important to Gilbane; this is our community where we live and work. I’m proud of Gilbane’s commitment to bettering the lives of others and providing such a unique opportunity to our veterans.” Adam Jelen, Senior Vice President, Gilbane Building Company.

About Gilbane Building Company

Gilbane provides a full slate of construction and facilities-related services, from pre-construction planning and integrated consulting capabilities to comprehensive construction management, close-out and facility management services for clients across various markets. Founded in 1873 and still a privately held, family-owned company, Gilbane has more than 50 office locations around the world and is headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island.

For more information, visit www.gilbaneco.com.

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