

Attention Veterans – Families/Friends of Veterans



Honor Flight at Home. In Ohio. In Marion!

Honor Flight Columbus is excited to announce our fifth Honor Flight at Home in Marion to supplement our long standing mission of honoring our senior veterans by providing them with a no-cost trip to Washington, D.C. to visit their memorials. Our Honor Flight at Home program is designed to recognize and honor, in Marion, any veteran that served active duty from 1941 to 1975, who has not previously gone on an Honor Flight, and **cannot** travel to Washington.



This free program will be held: Saturday, June 8, 2024
Tri-Rivers Vocational School
Rt. 95, east of Marion. Across from Meijers

Check in starts at 1:00PM
Program is scheduled to run from 2:00 to 3:00PM.

Deadline for submitting applications is May 25, 2024. Send application to:
Honor Flight at Home
Veteran Application
Attn: Margie Saull, Event Coordinator
2406 Owens Road West
Prospect, OH 43342-9783

Questions? Call Margie at 740-360-8902 or email: saullgw4@yahoo.com
For family and friends, if you would like to donate towards the cost of this program (souvenirs for the honored veterans), please make check payable to Honor Flight Columbus and write "Marion Honor Flight at Home" on the memo line and then mail your check to Margie. Thank You!

Marines expect 'big year' for drone, ship and logistics testing

The Marine Corps' second in command expects a "big year" for the service's efforts at using aerial drones and maritime platforms to solve logistical challenges in the Pacific. Assistant Commandant Gen. Christopher Mahoney on Tuesday listed various logistics and other programs undergoing testing in 2024 in the Defense One "State of Defense" series. "Logistics will stop you in your tracks if you haven't thought it through, if you don't have a system that is strong and functioning," Mahoney said.

The Corps has been working with industry on medium and large tactical autonomous drones for aerial resupply and recently experimented with the autonomous low-profile vessel, a semi-submersible maritime drone. "We'll be testing all three of those this year, so big year for that," Mahoney said. The approaches are part of the Corps' larger effort to find ways to get supplies to far-flung troops across vast distances. The service will continue to use its legacy platforms but needs more maritime and aerial options for contested areas.

Part of Force Design 2030 concepts includes using multiple unmanned, cheap, disposable systems that won't risk pricey platforms and human pilots. For larger items, the Corps is working on a shore-to-shore connector program called the landing ship medium. The current ship being used for testing is the stern landing vessel, a modified commercial watercraft that allows users to offload and onload directly from the beach. "It is a shore-to-shore logistics connect to get heavy things that we can't put on airplanes or don't want to have a big ship coming in to bring, get it from Point A to Point B to move; maneuver it from Point B to a more advantageous position at Point C; and then sustain that position," Mahoney said.

Lt. Gen. Karsten Heckl, head of Combat Development and Integration, also spoke at the Tuesday event and noted that the stern landing vessel, the current platform being tested in the LSM program, and the autonomous low-profile vessel were used in the Army's Project Convergence Capstone event in late February on Camp Pendleton, California.

Project Convergence is an Army-led, joint and multinational experiment that seeks to integrate capabilities such as sensors, air and missile defense. Plans call for the LSM to be 200- to 400-foot long with 8,000 square feet of cargo space. The Marines are currently using a 254-foot commercial offshore supply vessel, the HOS Resolution SVL, refitted with a folding stern ramp for its LSM prototype. The low-profile vessel, or ALPV, is expected to have the capacity to deliver two Naval Strike Missiles for the Corps' anti-ship missile system to Marines. The design was inspired in part by narco-submarines used by drug traffickers to move illicit payloads clandestinely, Heckl said. Heckl said that a Marine cook was trained in under 30 days to program and deploy the low profile vessel for the exercise.

On the lighter side, the medium aerial drone, part of the Tactical Resupply Unmanned Systems, or TRUAS, are large quadcopter drones that currently could carry payloads of 150 pounds over about nine miles, Marine Corps Times reported. These fly autonomously, using preprogrammed waypoints for their flight pattern and itinerary. On the larger side, defense contractor Leidos announced a contract with the Marine Corps in 2023 to develop a helicopter-type drone with a double stack of rotors that could carry 600 pounds up to 100 nautical miles. Mahoney stressed the approach is "multi-model." "So, it's adding breadth and depth to your logistics last tactical mile, which in the case of the Pacific is the last tactical 500 miles," Mahoney said.



Search begins for wreckage of ace pilot Richard Bong's crashed plane

A Wisconsin museum is partnering with a historical preservation group in a search for the wreckage of World War II ace Richard Bong's plane in the South Pacific. The Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center in Superior and the nonprofit World War II historical preservation group Pacific Wrecks announced the search on Friday, Minnesota Public Radio reported.

Bong, who grew up in Poplar, is credited with shooting down 40 Japanese aircraft during World War II. He flew a Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter plane nicknamed "Marge" in honor of his girlfriend, Marjorie Vattendahl. Bong plastered a blow-up of Vattendahl's portrait on the nose of the plane, according to a Pacific Wrecks' summary of the plane's service.

Bong said at the time that Vattendahl "looks swell, and a hell of a lot better than these naked women painted on most of the airplanes," the Los Angeles Times reported in Vattendahl's 2003 obituary. Another pilot, Thomas Malone, was flying the plane in March 1944 over what is now known as Papua New Guinea when engine failure sent it into a spin. Malone bailed out before the plane crashed in the jungle.

Pacific Wrecks founder Justin Taylan will lead the search for the plane. He plans to leave for Papua New Guinea in May. He believes the search could take almost a month and cost about \$63,000 generated through donations. Taylan told Minnesota Public Radio that he's confident he'll find the wreckage since historical records provide an approximate location of the crash site. But he's not sure there will be enough left to conclusively identify it as Marge. "Hopefully we'll be able to find the ultimate proof, which will be a serial number from the airplane that says this airplane is Marge," Taylan said.

Bong shot down more planes than any other American pilot, earning celebrity status. Gen. Douglas MacArthur awarded him the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military's highest decoration, in 1944.

Bong married Vattendahl in 1945. He was assigned to duty as a test pilot in Burbank, California, after three combat tours in the South Pacific. He was killed on Aug. 6, 1945, when a P-80 jet fighter he was testing crashed. He died on the same day the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Vattendahl was 21 when Bong died. She went on to become a model and a magazine publisher in Los Angeles. She died in September 2003 in Superior.

A bridge connecting Superior and Duluth, Minnesota, is named for Bong.



Pictures of the Month



U.S. and South Korean soldiers build a joint bridge during a wet gap crossing exercise in South Korea, March 14, 2024 .



Marines prepare to taxi a KC-130J Super Hercules after the conclusion of Exercise Nordic Response 24 at Andenes, Norway, March 16, 2024. The exercise is designed to enhance military capabilities and allied cooperation in high-intensity warfighting scenarios under challenging Arctic conditions