

**REMARKS FOR ADMINISTRATOR BOLDEN**  
**FIRST FLIGHT SOCIETY**  
**109TH CELEBRATION OF POWERED FLIGHT -**  
**RECOGNIZING THE**  
**100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARINE CORPS AVIATION**

Dec. 17, 2012

Thank you for this special honor. I am so proud to be inducted into the Paul E. Garber First Flight Shrine. It's an honor to be recognized at a monument named for an aviation pioneer who has been responsible for so much of the history of my field being preserved. Thanks to Mr. Garber, the amazing flying machines that continually inspire new generations to take to the sky, or even to space, will be seen and appreciated for generations.

It's quite an honor to be in the company of Alan Shepard and John Glenn; Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins; the Tuskegee Airmen, Bruce McCandless, and so many others who have enlarged this shrine with their accomplishments and inspiration.

Ever since NASA got its roadmap forward with the NASA Authorization Act of 2010, we've been moving toward the missions of tomorrow and the capabilities we'll need to visit new places, launch cutting edge science missions, and help develop the next generation of aviation and space systems from which we'll all benefit.

A lot of that work will be with the help of people who gained valuable skills through their military service and I'm happy to honor that legacy today as we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Marine aviation.

NASA and the military have a long and storied history. Our earliest astronauts came from the military because we wanted that test pilot experience and the willingness to face dangerous situations.

Military veterans have been aboard NASA spacecraft from the first Mercury flight through wheels stop on the final space shuttle mission to crew aboard the International Space Station (ISS) today.

Marines among them include John Glenn, Apollo 13's Fred Haise, and Joe Acaba, recently returned from the Station.

Marines on staff at NASA right now include our head of the General Counsel's office, Mike Wholley and Terry Wilcutt, chief of our Safety and Mission Assurance Office. And of course, there are a lot of us former astronaut types who now run the space program from the front office and the control center instead of the launch pad. Many of these came from the U.S. Marine Corps and other branches of the service as well.

Before the President selected me to be head of NASA in 2009, I spent more than 34 years in the United States Marine Corps, starting as a second lieutenant and retiring as Major General. That included combat duty in Vietnam as a Naval Aviator and 14 years as a member of NASA's astronaut corps, where I flew four space shuttle missions.

My dual careers in the military and at NASA have been very complementary and have enabled me to enlarge my perspective and use a wide range of skills.

When I was flying combat missions over Vietnam, there were times when I didn't think I would come back – five of my squadron mates did not. That's just one of the many reasons that military service is like no other career in the world. Not every veteran has faced enemy fire, but they've all made sacrifices for our country and fulfilled a public duty that demands our highest respect.

Where once crossing the country by air was the big goal, now we seek to cross the great divide of space to distant planets and we'll do that, too.

NASA is building the next big rocket and the Orion multipurpose crew vehicle to take astronauts to deep space again. We're developing the technologies to reach new destinations like an asteroid and Mars. Many of our newest astronauts, who are also military aviators, have set their destinations as the International Space Station. The Station has been crewed nonstop for more than 12 years now, and is helping us understand human health issues for long duration missions.

Future test pilots are going to help us make air travel safer, cleaner, and more efficient. Our Aeronautics Mission Directorate right now is working on technologies and prototypes for the aircraft of tomorrow and technologies such as winglets to reduce fuel usage and design modifications for new aircraft that will help muffle the sound of sonic booms.

In concert with the FAA and agencies around the world, we're working to create a Next Generation of air transportation system (NextGen).

My journey, from Columbia, South Carolina, to space, to where I am today as the leader of NASA, has been inspired by examples of courage and dedication against long odds.

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to see first-hand the amazing effect the accomplishments and examples set by others can have on the lives of young people. As a young man, I knew that I had the drive and passion to succeed, and a lot of that came from seeing the examples of my father and uncles, who served in World War II. Later in my life, I would learn of the Montford Point Marines and Tuskegee Airmen, who were willing to fight for the right to defend this nation. Together, all of these brave men gave me a beacon to follow.

Their legacy is not measured in missions flown, nor enemies killed -- but in lives touched.

Marine aviators will always play an invaluable role in the ongoing accomplishments of our nation's aerospace programs -- and in the lives of the young men and women who are writing new chapters in aviation and space history today.

Right now, all those people I mentioned – today's aviators, the astronauts who come from the military, people trying to enable our nation to do greater things tomorrow – they're all contributing to one of the greatest civilian enterprises ever, our nation's space program – the envy of the world. We are the world's leader because of our boldness; because of the men and women who were willing to take risks and who continue to do so today. We lead because space flight is not easy nor will it ever be so; nor will landing a robot on another planet; nor will testing a new aircraft.

So, again, I am honored to be here today – to be considered among this pantheon that has pushed the envelope by soaring at greater speeds and greater heights than anyone has before.

I am awed and humbled to be honored among those brave souls who threw their hearts and lives into the balance to take us to the skies and into the heavens in new and expanded ways and in so doing have made this nation a better place for the trying.

May God continue to watch over U.S. Marine Corps Aviation and may he bless these United States of America!