

Iowa man brings Osprey to first Quad-City Air Show



MAY 09, 2015 4:15 PM • BY [BARB ICKES](#)

An Iowa native is among the members of a Marine Corps flight crew that is showing off the eye-grabbing Osprey tiltrotor aircraft that is making its first appearance at the Quad-City Air Show this weekend.

A minimum four-person crew is needed to fly the zippy hulks, which were developed after the failed Iran hostage rescue mission in 1980, according to crew chief Mark Mosholder. He

enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps after graduating from West Sioux High School in Hawarden, Iowa, in 1999.

"The aircraft was built by Boeing and Bell Helicopter," Mosholder said, using his well-trained outdoor voice to compete with the sound of other nearby aircraft. "We call it a plopter, because it's not really a plane and not really a helicopter. They run \$70 million to \$80 million to build."

The two Ospreys that were on display Saturday drew a crowd, largely because of their unique appearance, including twin tilting rotors over a cargo-like body.

"They're designed to carry personnel and materials, and one of the great features of it is its speed," Mosholder said. "It can achieve a top speed of 280 knots (more than 300 mph).

"I'm an avionics guy, so I'm like a backseat driver. When we're maneuvering, it's definitely a struggle at times. But I've never thrown up in this aircraft. Not once."

The Ospreys' specialty is its vertical takeoff and landing and its ability to perform short takeoffs. Following the failed Iran hostage rescue mission, U.S. military officials recognized the need for vertical takeoff at high speeds, particularly while carrying combat troops. The Osprey meets the highly sought after criteria, Mosholder said.

"It looks like a fat mosquito," 9-year-old Emily Dunn of St. Louis remarked as she looked up at the Osprey delivered by Mosholder's crew.

"No," Dunn's 12-year-old brother, Aiden, corrected. "It looks like a robber is holding a gun to it, and it's holding its arms up."

Despite its insect/victim appearance, the Osprey's potential is still being discovered by aviators like those in Mosholder's VMM 163 Squadron, based out of San Diego.

"We're just starting to scratch the surface of what this aircraft can do," he said. "It's called upon for military and humanitarian missions — anywhere somebody asks for help.

"We have about 12 aircraft in our squadron. We're attached to them; they're attached to us. Just like cars, each one has its own personality. We're always expanding the aircrafts' capability, and the training is constant."

Spectators began to arrive at the Davenport Municipal Airport at least an hour before the air show started Saturday. A threat of rain on Sunday, along with it being Mother's Day, brought out some aviation enthusiasts who typically wait until the Sunday of the annual air show, which normally is held later in the summer.

"I think this is our first Saturday," said Will Coin of Galesburg. "We thought about getting a hotel and staying in Moline, but we figured we'd just end up going back tomorrow morning, anyway. The weather's supposed to be lousy."

"We love the air show. In a couple years, our grandkids will be big enough to bring."

Air Show forecast

The 29th Quad-City Air Show is facing a weather threat for Sunday.

Although rainfall is not expected to reach the Quad-Cities until about 5 p.m. — an hour after the show ends — other conditions could create problems for spectators and aircraft.

"The best chance of rain is after the Air Show, but I think one issue is going to be our overall environment," National Weather Service meteorologist Alex Gibbs said. "It's looking like it will be misty and drizzly with low clouds, which won't be good."

"That's my main concern."

Sunday's high temperature should reach 74 degrees, and the chance for late afternoon showers and thunderstorms is 60 percent, turning to 80 percent in the evening.

Some of the rainfall is likely to be heavy, and the expected low Sunday night is 60 degrees.

IF YOU GO

When: Gates open at 8 a.m. Sunday. The main air show begins about noon and ends about 4 p.m. Gates close at 5 p.m.

Where: Davenport Municipal Airport, 9230 Harrison St.

More information: Go online to quadcityairshow.com.