

Veterans Honor Flight Appreciation Day June 1, 2019



The morning didn't seem to bode very well for launching rockets. At 7:30 AM, the weather radar was clear except for a small red area (not green or dark green or yellow or orange) right over Vernon Hills. It stopped by the time we left to go to the Libertyville Chevrolet Performance Center (LCPC) Open House, our first stop. Phil Klaesges (former NSCC member that re-joined last year) came up to me and asked if we were going to the rocket launch. I said yes and that he was welcome to follow us up there. We arrived at [Richard Bong Recreation Park](#) around 11:30 AM.



On the gravel road approaching the launch pad (about a 10-minute crawl at 7 mph), we saw a rocket pass overhead away from the launch site. A chase vehicle soon passed us to retrieve the rocket. After we parked, we found Jim Arquilla, Terry DiSilvio and Jim Benton who were already there. Sue Radder arrived later in the day. The area was already bustling with activities; Boy Scouts grilling burgers, raffles, rockets launching, a model rocket supplier with a 40'

RV towing a trailer full of rocket supplies and a lot of socializing.



Hard Hat with his son.

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See all [pictures](#).

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The facility was very impressive. Five launching pads were available across a span of around 500 feet. The hosts, [Tripoli Wisconsin Association](#) High Power Rocketry, had a P/A system with wireless speakers throughout the area. They would announce the rockets being launched. There were a wide variety of rockets that were launched that day. From smaller ones that would go up less than a hundred feet and land close by, to 6 foot plus models that would go up and

get lost in the clouds and were a challenge to find. Veterans that attended were able to launch their own rockets. One time, a father and son had a rocket *drag race* where both were lit at the same time. That was something to see. They both fired at the same time. One went faster in the beginning then the other one passed it on the way up.

The main attraction for the day was Bob Justus's 10-foot replica of an Honest John missile. Due to the weather conditions, Bob only activated the center motor, that limited the altitude to only one mile. On a clear day, the other four motors would have been activated, and it would have gone two miles high.



[Click here to view videos](#) from the day. Honest John launch begins around 00:48. Onboard video starts around 02:53.

Bob Justus with Honest John

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See all [pictures](#).

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I met one of the rocket launchers at the Visitor's Center on our way out. He lost his rocket on an island on the property. He was talking to one of the park rangers. The ranger said that she was going to be doing a bird count on the island the following Tuesday. She said that when she took her canoe to the island, she would retrieve his 3-foot rocket. The rocketeer had a GPS tracker on it so he knew exactly where she should look.



One of the veterans getting ready to launch his rocket.

The public is always welcome to view the rocket launches. Their club meets at [Richard Bong Recreation Park](#) once a month, from January through September. The next date is July 6th, 2019. Check their [web site](#) for the schedule. As a result of the raffles (and a generous private contribution), Lake County Honor Flight was presented with a check for \$500.00 from this event.



Actual Honest John missile and launcher

See all [pictures](#).