

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2026
Marana, AZ



Marana Regional Airport to Host U.S. Marine Memorial Service

Tom Tunks, Commandant of the Nighthawk-72 Marana Detachment #1344 Marine Corps League, announced today that there will be a Memorial Service at the Marana Regional Airport on Saturday, April 4, 2026 at 10:00AM to honor the 19 U.S. Marines that were tragically killed in an MV-22 Osprey Tilt rotor aircraft accident at the Airport on April 8, 2000.

The ceremony will include a special missing man formation flyover provided by the Scorpion Squadron of the West Coast Ravens Formation Team, Northwest Fire Pipe & Drums escorting the presentation of colors by Marine Corps Reserves Bulk Fuel Company Alpha; wreath laying by various organizations; rifle salute by Tucson Detachment 7 Marine Corps League with taps, and vocalist Kelley Marable.

The event is free and open to the public.

Additional Background Information

The MV-22 Osprey Tilt rotor aircraft was conducting a training mission in support of Operational Evaluation (OPEVAL) when it went down at the Marana Regional Airport in Marana, Arizona on April 8, 2000. During the mission, the crew and Marines conducted Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) exercises as part of the Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course, with Marines embarking and disembarking the aircraft. The mission was conducted at night utilizing night vision goggles and forward looking infrared radar to enhance night operational capability. This mishap aircraft was part of the Multiservice Operational Test Team, based at Patuxent River, Maryland, but was temporarily attached to Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron-1 at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona.

The 19 Marines Lost were as follows:

3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division

Sgt. Jose Alvarez, 28	Pfc. Gabriel C. Clevenger, 21	Pfc. Alfred Corona, 23
Lance Cpl. Jason T. Duke, 28.	Lance Cpl. Jesus Gonzalez Sanchez, 27	Lance Cpl. Seth G. Jones, 18
2nd Lt. Clayton J. Kennedy, 24	Lance Cpl. Jorge A. Morin, 21	Cpl. Adam C. Neely, 22 Pfc.
Kenneth O. Paddio, 23	Pfc. George P. Santos, 24	Lance Cpl. Keoki P. Santos, 24
Cpl. Can Soler, 21	Pvt. Adam L. Tatro, 19	

Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, Marine Air Control Group 38

Cpl. Eric J. Martinez, 21

Marine Helicopter Squadron 1

Maj. John A. Brow, 39

Maj. Brooks S. Gruber, 34

Cpl. Kelly S. Keith, 22

Marine Tilt-Rotor Training Squadron 204

Staff Sgt. William B. Nelson, 30

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