

The purpose of the Living History Program (LHP) "...is to educate the public about the basic weapons, tactics and uniforms used by both sides in a landing on a Pacific island during WWII." We perform shows approximately one weekend a month between March and November. We normally conduct one morning show and one afternoon show on both Saturday and Sunday of the designated weekends. The program lasts about 60 minutes with the first three-quarters of the time dedicated to a description and "show and tell" of the weapons, equipment and uniforms used by each side. The show concludes with a simulated beach landing on a Pacific Island by trained volunteers.

The program is called Living History because it is not a true reenactment. Safety is paramount. All movements on the ground are choreographed and rehearsed. All "explosions" are simulated with specially designed compressed gas devices and controlled from a booth that has complete observation of the performance area. The purpose of the P51's overflight was to add the aviation element to the show to increase the educational value.

The pilot, Cowden Ward, ran a charity that provided flights in his P51 to WW-II veterans, purple heart recipients and veterans with PTSD. He coordinated with the Living History Director to perform flyovers in support of the Living History program when the weather permitted, and he was available. He flew for the first time in support of the September 2017 shows. Since that time, he has supported nine of the approximately 38 shows. There was normally a veteran in the rear seat.

When discussing the flyover, the pilot and the Living History Director also discussed all pertinent Federal Aviation requirements, including the 1,000 feet minimum-safe altitude. Since the observers sat in a covered amphitheater, his flyover flight-path was in front of the amphitheater and over the performance area, normally west to east. The pilot would take off about 15 minutes before he was scheduled to make his first flyover. About one minute before the simulated island invasion, the Living History Director would radio him and give him the ok to make the first pass. The aircraft normally made 4-5 passes. His visual signal for the last pass was the firing of the flame thrower.