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Bill Reed's plane flies again in Iowa

by [Corey Munson](#) · October 11th, 2012



A replica of the plane flown by Marion native Bill Reed in the early 1940s as a Flying Tiger will take to the air again next week, suspended from the ceiling of the Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge in Johnston.

Installation of the full scale replica will take place Wednesday, Oct. 17, and open for visitors the very next day.

Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Officer Col. Greg Hapgood, who grew up in Marion, said Bill's nephew, Ed Reed, was a big part of the project as well.

"Ed Reed has been absolutely instrumental in bringing this project to fruition," Hapgood said. "Ed lives in Omaha but plans to be at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum for the aircraft's installation along with other family members."

The plane Reed famously flew as part of the First American Volunteer Group in 1941 and 42, was the Curtiss P-40B Tomahawk. He was part of a select group of fighter pilots working for the Chinese government in its efforts against the invading Japanese forces.

The Volunteer Group was nicknamed the Flying Tigers, in no small part thanks to the recognizable "shark face" painted on each plane.

After his service in China, Reed served as a pilot in the Pacific theater until his death in 1944, as he tried to bail out of his aircraft.

Mike Vogt, curator of the Gold Star Museum, said the plane is a great addition to the museum.

"It seems fitting to have it here given Iowa's involvement in the First American Volunteer Group," Vogt said.

He pointed out that everything in the Gold Medal Museum is connected to an Iowan's military service. Because of this, when the idea came to install a plane in the new section of the museum in 2009, the P-40B was a natural choice.

The Gold Star Museum is open and free to the public Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information on the museum or this display, call 515-252-4531.

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