

Boise man with terminal illness takes ride in Curtiss P-40 thanks to Wish Granters and Nampa's Warhawk Air Museum

By MIKE BUTTS

Pic 1:

Ed Thomas of Boise talks with pilot John-Curtiss Paul Friday before riding in a Curtiss P-40, a wish made possible by Idaho nonprofit Wish Granters, Inc.

Pic 2:

Ed Thomas' Final Flight

Two pix by Charlie Litchfield

On Friday, June 1, 2012 Ed Thomas, a former pilot diagnosed with Terminal Heart Disease, was granted his wish of flying in a World War II era aircraft. Local pilot John-Curtiss Paul took Thomas up in his Curtiss P-40 based out of the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa.

Airplanes have been part of Edgar Thomas's life for decades. Friday one of them became part of his dreams. Thomas, a 72-year-old Boise man with terminal congestive heart failure, flew in one of his favorite planes, a Curtiss P-40, at the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa. The former baggage handler and commercial pilot got choked up talking about how important it was for him to make his fantasy flight thanks to the Boise-based Wish Granters nonprofit organization. "You have no idea how happy it makes me to be able to do this," Thomas said.

The Boise man said doctors have told him his heart could "give out" any time. His wife hoped he could take a ride in a World War II aircraft to fulfill a final wish, and his daughter knew about rides sometimes available at the Warhawk Museum. Wish Granters, which grants wishes to adults 18 and older with terminal illnesses in Ada and Canyon counties, took it from there.

Thomas said he was elated when he found out he would be making the flight. "I've always been interested in historic aviation," Thomas said. He worked for Frontier Airlines for 23 years. He builds and flies model airplanes. While Thomas's favorite vintage airplane is the P-51 Mustang, he said the P-40 ranks a close second. "I just like the way they're built," Thomas said about the P-40. "I like the lines, that gracefulness of the way they look while they're in flight."

-<http://www.idahopress.com>