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World War II veterans back in the air at Sioux Gateway Airport



By [Matt Hoffmann](#)

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SIOUX CITY (KTIV) - A piece of history is soaring in the skies over Sioux City, and two World War veterans were able to be a part of it.

In their 90s, World War 2 Veterans Jim McDougall and Robert Patterson have no trouble climbing the ladder to the B-17 bomber parked on the Sioux Gateway Airport Tarmac.

The aircraft, a B-17, was almost scrapped as it came off the assembly line, at the end of World War II. But with a little TLC, the aircraft was kept in flying shape by the Commemorative Air Force, known as CAF.

The aircraft, named the "Texas Raiders," is selling tours and flights, in partnership with the Sioux Gateway Airport's 80th anniversary and the Mid America Museum of Aviation and Transportation.

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"Oh, I'm happy. I'm thrilled. Just being up there in the air. I still get a kick out of flying. But to see the joy and they experience up there," said Dan Ragan, the loadmaster for the flight.

KTIV's Matt Hoffmann was able to get a preview of the flight and was able to fly with a pair of WWII veterans. They were Jim McDougall and Robert Patterson, two veterans from the Pacific Theater in World War II. Patterson is a Siouxlander and both veterans were glad to get back in the air.

During the pre-flight briefing, those of us fortunate enough to attend are told it will be very loud during the flight and to wear ear protection. But McDougall and Patterson don't need to hear that, they both flew in military aircraft during World War II, and they know the drill.

"Favorite part of my service was coming home but yeah, I did a lot of things that year I got out. I got discharged. I got married. I started to college," said McDougall.

During the flight, passengers were able to move around. To see the radio pilot's seat, that's where our loadmaster sat during his time serving in the Korean War. ⓧ

The mid-section of the airplane, which has no windows, is just a strong breeze. And of course, the flight deck, where two pilots navigate strong winds in an attempt to keep the decades-old plane in the sky.

"It was rough and it was hot, just like you'd expect. You know they didn't build bombers for luxury, they built them to get to here and back and that's what they did," said Patterson.

McDougall served near Papua New Guinea, in the South Pacific flying a different type of bomber aircraft. Patterson flew a cargo plane near the Himalayan Mountains.

Both say they love aviation, but love that they're back on the ground even more. Especially because the first landing had to be aborted from a strong cross-wind. Thankfully, the second landing worked.

A tour of the B-17 starts at \$15 for adults and includes admission to the museum. While an airborne ride starts at \$495.

The event begins Tuesday, July 19, and runs through Sunday, July 24, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More details [can be found at this link](#).

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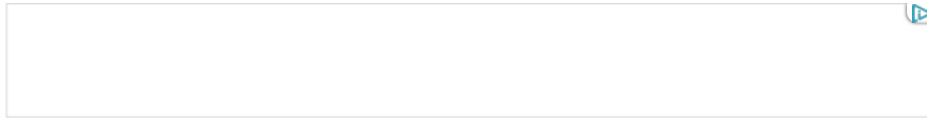
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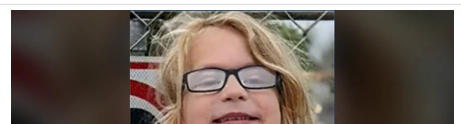
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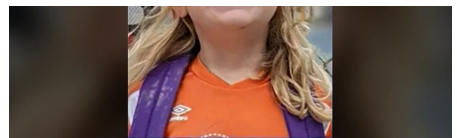
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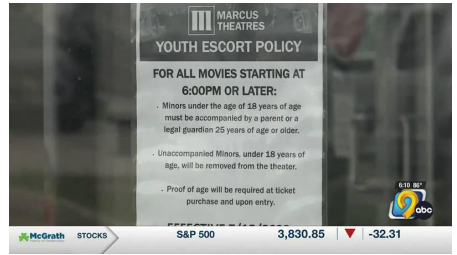




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