Air museum readies for Nampa opening

Warhawk planes used to make upcoming movie, "Pearl Harbor"

By David Woolsey
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NAMPA — With the Warhawk Air Museum's opening in a larger home and local ties to "Pearl Harbor," Memorial Day weekend will be an even bigger event for Canyon County veterans this year.

Two Curtiss P-40 fighters from the museum were used in producing the epic movie about the infamous attack on the U.S. base. It is set for release May 25.

The planes will be featured in the museum's new home and will be the central attraction for a reservations-only fund-raiser on May 27.

The Warhawk Air Museum originated in Caldwell in 1989 and was created by John and Sue Paul of Boise to house valuable artifacts. They broke ground at the Nampa Airport location last year and are ready to move in after they outgrew the Caldwell site. The new location will give the museum 20,000-square-feet, a big increase from the 7,200 in Caldwell.

"It is a living memorial to all veterans in this state," Sue Paul said. "It's going to be a great place."

Their World War II-era P-40s were shrink-wrapped with several other planes and shipped to Hawaii for the filming of "Pearl Harbor." The Pauls were there during the filming and watched their planes take flight to relive one of the century's most famous battles.

Materials are being moved to the Nampa museum building — including two planes towed overland on Friday — and Sue Paul said everything should be ready in time for the opening next week.

"The city of Nampa has done everything they can to assist us and has really welcomed us with open arms," she said.

In addition to five airplanes, the museum features a large collection of homefront memorabilia, uniforms, books and other materials. Its new home will also feature traveling NASA space exhibits, giving school groups a look at Space-Age aeronautics.

The museum will also house a gift shop, library, conference room, classroom and other features. Paul said there is also room to expand — a prospect that is very possible because the couple's collection grows continuously.

About the museum

The Warhawk Air Museum will host the grand opening of its new location from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 26 at 201 Municipal Drive at the Nampa Airport. It is off Airport Road, about a block east of Garrity Boulevard.

On May 27, the museum will hold a ticketed fund-raising event featuring an up-close look at two warplanes used in the movie "Pearl Harbor" and a special screening of the movie. Tickets cost $50 per person.

The museum will be open on Memorial Day from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Regular hours, starting May 29, are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

■ For information, call 454-2854.