



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES AN ADDITION TO ITS COLLECTION: THE RARE BELL P-39 AIRACOBRA

Tucson, AZ–Jun. 13, 2013. The Pima Air & Space Museum added a “recovered from the jungle” and now restored aircraft to its Pacific–theater WWII Hangar: the rare Bell P-39 Airacobra.

The P-39 was an unusual design when it appeared in 1937. Among its many unorthodox design features are the mounting of the engine behind the pilot, the use of an automobile-type door on the side of the cockpit, and tricycle landing gear. The Airacobra had good low-altitude performance, but suffered badly at high altitudes. Fortunately, the aircraft’s large, nose-mounted 37mm cannon made it a perfect ground attack aircraft. Large numbers of P-39s were exported to the Soviet Union where they were very popular in this role. The Airacobra was never popular in American or British service, but they still served in combat during the early stages of the war while more capable types were being designed and built. **Current Markings:** 110th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, New Guinea, 1944 (as found).

Service History

The exact service history for this aircraft, SERIAL NUMBER 42-18814, is unknown. It was recovered from Tadj, New Guinea in 1972 by the Military Aircraft Restoration Corporation along with several other aircraft. In 2004, it was placed on loan to the Pima Air & Space Museum for restoration and display.

Technical Specifications:

Wingspan: 34 ft

Length: 30 ft 2 in

Height: 12 ft 5 in

Weight: 8,300 lbs (loaded)

Maximum Speed: 385 miles per hour

Service Ceiling: 35,000 ft

Range: 650 miles

Engine: One Allison V-1710-85 12-cylinder engine with 1,200 horsepower

Crew: 1

ABOUT PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

The Pima Air & Space Museum is one of the largest aviation museums in the world, and the largest non-government funded aviation museum in the United States. The museum maintains a collection of more than 300 aircraft and spacecraft from around the globe and more than 125,000 artifacts. Exhibits at the museum include some of the world's greatest aviation heritage, including commercial, military and civil aviation. Among them are the SR-71 Blackbird (the world's fastest spy plane), a B-29 Superfortress (the WWII bomber that flew higher, farther and faster and carried more bombs) the world's smallest bi-plane (the Starr Bumble Bee) and a rare World War II German V-1 "buzz bomb." The museum has five large hangars totaling more than 177,000 indoor square feet—almost 4 football fields—of air/space craft, heroes' stories and scientific phenomena. In addition, the 390th Bombardment Group (Heavy) Memorial Museum is located on the museum grounds. Pima Air & Space maintains its own aircraft restoration center and offers exclusive tours of the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG), also known as the "Boneyard," on the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base grounds. Pima Air & Space Museum is located at 6000 E. Valencia Rd. in Tucson. More information about the museum can be found at www.pimaair.org, on Facebook (www.facebook.com/PimaAirAndSpace?fref=ts), or by calling 520 574-0462.

Note: The 390th Bombardment Group (Heavy) Memorial Museum is closed for reconstruction until further notice.

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Attachments:



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