



**BREAKING NEWS** 12 Dead, 59 injured in Colo. movie theater shooting

# Gunman shoots hole through Iowa crop-duster's plane

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Written by Ken Christian

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(NBC) -- Authorities are looking for a gunman who shot and struck a crop-duster as it flew over Montgomery County, Iowa.

Pilot John Thomas has flown 60 close air support missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, so he knows what it's like to be shot at while flying an airplane but the the veteran never thought he would face those same challenges after he started a crop dusting service and started flying over the heartland of America.

It brings back a lot of memories, but not the good kind.

Thomas thought he had seen the last of flying under fire after he left the Marine Corps, but the combat veteran says during a recent crop dusting job he was in the cross-hairs again.

"At first I was just stunned, and the more I thought about it the angrier I got because I think it was just a prank, but shooting live ammunition at an

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airplane? It could have hit a control cable or it could have hit me, there could have been a tragic result," he says.

While flying next to the river in Montgomery County, Iowa, Thomas heard an odd noise but finished the job.

On his post flight inspection he noticed a small bullet hole in his plane.

"This is a big deal. This is a very, very big deal, so if someone is out there thinking it is okay to shoot an airplane, it is a federal offense," he says.

John is back in the skies, but he is also keeping an eye on the ground.

So far the Montgomery County Sheriff, Iowa State Patrol, FBI, FAA, and Homeland Security are looking into the incident.

John Thomas, meanwhile, is offering \$1,000 for information that leads to an arrest and conviction in the case.

NBC

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