

UPDATE # 101 - “CITY OF SAVANNAH”
B-17 Restoration
July 14, 2011

It seems that with every Update we have sent out this summer there is some big event happening. For the 100th Update it was the arrival of the tail turret and Garcia Week III. Now the 101st Update is keeping with that trend.

On Wednesday, July 13, all the hard work done to get the “*City of Savannah*” radio room up and running came to fruition with our first official radio transmission. The people at the other end of the conversation were operating from the B-17G “*Miss Liberty*” at our sister 8th Air Force Museum, at Barksdale Air Force Base, in Louisiana.

One of the WWII era pieces of equipment that was used for this event was a BC-348 receiver that was rebuilt for the “*City of Savannah*” by one of our dedicated volunteers, Carroll Baker. An electrical engineer by trade, Carroll purchased the receiver on E-Bay – using his own funds – and spent twelve months totally reconditioning the 65 year old radio.



Carroll Baker with Radio Equipment

The important point to be made about this first broadcast was the amazing coordination that allowed the radio team, all three restoration crews, and Bruce Johnson – the Museum’s Chief of Operations - to work together, particularly in the last two weeks, to bring this project to completion.

The head of our radio team, Guy McDonald showed special initiative for this event when he arranged for members of Shreveport Amateur Radio Association (SARA), to participate in the event as the “*Miss Liberty*” radio operators. As it was 100+ degrees on the “*Miss Liberty*” hardstand on Wednesday afternoon the SARA team wisely set up a tent and operated under the nose of the B-17 and not in the super heated radio room.

Showing how technology has changed in 65 years, the SARA operators sent a text message to Guy saying that they were ready to receive his message. Guy received their text sitting in our radio compartment and then contacted them using the “*City of Savannah*” WWII radio equipment!



The “*Miss Liberty*” radio team awaiting Guy McDonald’s first official radio contact from the “*City of Savannah*”

At 4:05 PM on Wednesday Guy began his transmission, using our FCC approved call sign, WW2COS, by asking several HAM operators who were monitoring this special event to stop transmitting so that he could reach the “*Miss Liberty*” without interference. Contact was finally completed and the two stations exchanged congratulations as they established a unique and historic contact between the two B-17 restoration projects – and in the case of the “*City of Savannah*”- using mostly 1940’s era equipment.



Guy McDonald, wearing authentic WWII garb from the Museum archives, talking to his counterparts at Barksdale AFB.

There was plenty of media coverage for the event as all three of the major TV stations here in Savannah had crews at the Museum.

Later in the day Guy reported that all of the radio chatter had attracted another first – a call from an overseas station. Where was that caller from? Germany! How ironic is that? Guy McDonald spoke with Dieter Lorig (DK4XW) in Bilsdorf, Germany. Bilsdorf is a very small village (population 1,300) in Germany near the French and Luxembourg border (150KM from Frankfurt Airport).

You'll be hearing a great deal more about WW2COS and the plans that are evolving to have the Mighty Eighth/"City of Savannah" radio team involved in national events regarding WWII and other appropriate occasions.

On a less glamorous, but very important note – while the camera crews, visitors and volunteers were witnessing the events in the Combat Gallery there was more activity going on behind closed doors in the shop area. Once again our good friends from LMI Corporation, with Dave Pinegar running the show, made yet another major technical contribution to the project.

Under Dave's supervision the LMI metal shop "rolled" several pieces of new aluminum that will replace the decayed outer layer of our newly acquired tail turret. It is impossible to measure the continued contribution that LMI has made to our progress. A big "Thank You" is certainly called for in the near future.



Aluminum for the Tail Turret being prepared at LMI's Metal Shop

More activity is going on with regard to parts acquisitions and the project web site, so there is . . . *more to come!!!*