

UPDATE # 106 - “CITY OF SAVANNAH”
B-17 Restoration
September 15, 2011

After last week’s stand-down for the Labor Day weekend the *City of Savannah* project is now entering what will be a very busy fall season.

Upcoming events for the Fall season include: this weekend’s broadcast by our radio team from the “City of Savannah” on Saturday in commemoration of the United States Air Force’s 64th anniversary; a visit from the Experimental Aircraft Association B-17 “Aluminum Overcast” on October 27-29; a meeting of the several B-17 flying and static display organizations at the Museum on November 5th; and the Second Annual Flying Fortress 5K on November 12th.

Jim Grismer took a unique picture this week when he wanted to document to our sister project at Barksdale AFB the interior woodwork that the “*City of Savannah*” carpentry team has produced for the Barksdale B-17, “Yankee Doodle”. An identical set of interior woodwork is completed and standing by for installation in the “City of Savannah” after more interior work on the installation of crew position equipment is completed.



This addition of the Update has some interesting history to relate. First, kudos to our good friend Doug Birkey. Doug was able to locate the original tail turret from our B-17, aka, 44-83814. The turret was removed from “City of Savannah” before the Mighty Eighth was awarded the aircraft. It is now located in the US History Museum, see below:



Our original tail turret with what is apparently a “Rosie the Riveter” exhibit at the USHM

While reviewing the historical files of the late Dr. Walt Brown we found an interesting article from the Savannah Morning News dated December 3, 1944., The article concerns the ceremony naming of the B-17G, tail number 43-39049, as “The City of Savannah”. The article would be very difficult to read if scanned into this document, so we have taken some interesting narrative out of the article and placed it here for you. The headline reads: **FORTRESS WILL BE CHRISTENED TODAY / PUBLIC TO BE ADMITTED / “CITY OF SAVANNAH” BOND FUND OVERSUBSCRIBED**

The narrative begins: Ample transportation to Hunter Field for the ceremonies this afternoon when the Flying Fortress “The City of Savannah” will be christened will be provided by the Savannah Electric and Power Company.....Guests who go by private car will be admitted to the field through Gate #1 at the end of Montgomery Street..... Final arrangements for the affair were completed yesterday and a large number of Savannahians (sic) are expected to avail themselves of the opportunity of attending the ceremony and inspecting one of the Army Air Forces important installations.....

Due to the unexpected demand for tickets the ceremony today, Hunter Field officials have announced that those who have been unable to obtain tickets admitting them to the field will be permitted to enter the Montgomery Street gate upon presentation of a bond purchased during the Sixth War Loan.....

Lieutenant Ralph W. Kittle, of Ringold, Georgia, pilot of “The City of Savannah”, will be introduced to the guests and will in turn introduce the various members of the plane’s crew*following the ceremony*.... Lieutenant Kittle will taxi the giant Flying Fortress to the end of the runway. In full view of the spectators “The City of Savannah” will be lifted into the air and leave Hunter Field to join the thousands of other planes already in combat.

So began our story – 67 years ago.

More to come . . .