

UPDATE # 107 - "CITY OF SAVANNAH"
B-17 Restoration
September 23, 2011

There is a lot to report this week as the cooler days of September take over from the 115 days of temperatures over 90 degrees that Savannah has endured during the past few months. The first big event of the week was the arrival of the newly purchased cap and fairing for our chin turret. The parts arrived from Michigan on Monday thanks to the efforts of our good friend Gary Norville of American Aero Services. The two items were taken out of the crate, photographed, and numbered for the museum archives by Bill Burkel. After the administrative work was done they were returned to their crate and immediately put in storage, awaiting the installation of the chin turret.



Chin turret cap and fairing – front and rear. Photos by Bill Burkel

The subject of preparation for the installation of the chin turret was part of another major event this week. Our Wednesday night metal workers, along with Project Managers Jerry McLaughlin and Dave Talleur, sat down with Jim Moriarity from Gulfstream Corporation's production team to discuss reconfiguring the nose on our airplane. The center of the discussion was a book of drawings that our own John Finch had spent many hours assembling. The drawings were of the nose configuration for 1944 Boeing B-17G's.

It seems that during the nearly twenty years that the "*City of Savannah*" was in service with Kenting Aviation the lower portion of her nose was reconfigured from having to support a gun turret and a Nordon bomb site to support cameras used for mapping assignments. In order to re-install the turret and bomb site it will be necessary to build and install an original lower fuselage configuration, using the original drawings that can support the turret and bomb sight in the nose of the airplane. Crew Chief Bill Lienen, along with Jack Nielsen and John Finch, will be leading the installation team on this effort. The team will consist of the current Wednesday night crew members and a group of new volunteers from Gulfstream, led by Jim Moriarity.

The Gulfstream volunteers, and the equipment the company has made available for creating the required parts, will move our project several months ahead of what was anticipated would be an in-house effort of at least a year in length.

The most public event of the week was the radio team's first formal public broadcast event under our call sign, WW2COS. As you will remember, the radio team had their opening event several weeks ago when, after months of work, they contacted their counterparts at Barksdale AFB. That test of their equipment verified that the "*City of Savannah*" radio room is now fully operational. The event this week, the first of several that will commemorate dates related to our country's military heritage, honored the founding of the United States Air Force in 1947.

Guy McDonald, the man who makes all of this happen, reported: "We arrived at the museum around 0830 and connected our outdoor antenna and powered up the radio compartment. By 0930 we were communicating with other HAMs across the country. Throughout the day we had a total of 15 radio operators and 10 family members onsite. We managed to make over 70 contacts, mostly in the southeast, and up and down the east coast. Some states included GA, AL, FL, SC, NC, VA, KY, OH, TN. Everyone was very excited to learn about the B-17 restoration.

The amateur radio station and the WWII receiver (restored by Carroll Baker, aka WX4Y) performed extremely well. We had a great time explaining the project to museum visitors as well. We also set up a live video feed from inside the compartment and streamed across the Internet to my blog site."



Paul Pratt aka KI4MNR broadcasting from the "City of Savannah" aka WW2COS

The next radio event will be on November 11-12, honoring Veterans Day and supporting the Second Annual **Flying Fortress 5K Run**. We will provide everyone with instructions so that you will be able to watch and listen to the radio team live via the internet.

One last piece of news from last week involves a “well done” to another Gulfstream employee, Tim Steele. Tim is busy producing the many signs that need to be mounted inside and out on the “City of Savannah”. He made his first test delivery on Wednesday afternoon and discovered that his design of the signs that will be placed on the aircraft’s ammunition boxes worked out perfectly.

More to come . . .