

## ***UPDATE # 112 - "CITY OF SAVANNAH"***

### **B-17 Restoration December 16, 2011**

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The original *City of Savannah* - 1945

This is our final Update for 2011 – the transition year for the *City of Savannah* project when we progressed from preparation of the aircraft to restoration of the aircraft.

January 2011 began with the major coinciding events of Garcia Week II and the arrival of Dr. Harry Friedman with a car load of goodies for our project. Both Doc Friedman and Tommy Garcia attended our 2010 Second Annual Anniversary Dinner and made the point to us that twenty-four months previously we had been a group of rookies with a newly arrived B-17G. All we had going for us in 2009 was the beginning of an organization and a great deal of enthusiasm. The year 2011 would prove that we were ready for the challenge. Month by month here is how 2011 progressed:

**January** – Tommy Garcia made his second visit, Garcia Week II, donated more equipment, and steered our three crews into the opening steps of the restoration process. We also received the restored rudder of the aircraft from LM I Corporation and mounted it on the tail. It took five hours work by four volunteers to record all the gifts delivered by Tommy Garcia and Doc Friedman into the museum archives. As if we hadn't had enough New Year

gifts on board, Jim Grismer led his band of scroungers on their first trip to Tampa Florida and brought home a truck load of crew station equipment for the airplane. (All of which was paid for by the 2010 “Flying Fortress 5K” run – which was conceived, organized and supervised by Jane Harper.)



Mounting the newly refurbished rudder, thanks to LMI Corporation.

**February** – Dave Talleur took over as Assistant Project Manager after Richard Moscatiello moved to Atlanta. Dave and Richard produced a video depicting the move of our B-17, then referred to as 88-83814, from Virginia to Savannah. Paul Abare and Mike Callahan put together a superb display case that is used to present the video near the waist door of the airplane.

**March** – Research by Brenda Elmgren located “Kit” Kittle, the 1944 pilot of the original *City of Savannah*. Guy McDonald from the radio team announced that we had a functioning radio room!!!! The Saturday crew, under Rocky Rodriguez, put electricity into 83814 for the first time since 1984 and lit up the aircraft’s navigation lights.



**“Rocky and his Friends” pointing to 814’s first lights since 1984.**

**April** - The first All Hands meeting of 2011 was held beside the airplane and Jim’s Scroungers made another purchasing trip to Florida – also paid for by the 5K run.

**May** – After several months of discussions an agreement was reached with the Barksdale AFB museum for our craftsman to build the wooden interior materials, as well as the metal mounting shelves for the radio room, that are needed for their B-17, *Miss Liberty*. We received news this month that the last civilian owner of 83814, Mr. Arnold Kolb had passed away.

**June** – Tommy Garcia returned to Savannah for Garcia Week III. This trip he brought us a MAJOR acquisition, a tail turret for the *City of Savannah*. Badly in need of restoration the “new” turret was immediately mounted on an ingenious rotisserie like device designed by Gil Patrick and attacked by Jack Nilsen and John Finch.



Our “new” tail turret arriving, via Huston, from Alaska. Thanks to Tommy Garcia and Bruce Orriss



Gil Patrick's famous invention, designed to hold the tail turret during restoration

***July*** – was very busy month for the project. John Finch and Gil Patrick took a “fact finding” trip to Barksdale AFB to inspect *Miss Liberty*. Bill Burkel and Jeff Hoopes traveled to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to bring us a static ball turret case – which was immediately mounted on the airplane. (Museum Board Member, Bud Porter, a WWII ball turret gunner, immediately offered a donation to pay for the turret's machine guns.)



**Warren Ogelsby, Danny Harden, Gil Patrick and Jeff Hoopes with the ball turret cap**

Scott Whitcher presented us with an amazing set of ammunition boxes for the airplane that demonstrated his considerable carpentry talents. Carroll Baker, from our radio crew, aka the Coastal Area Radio Society, presented us with a completely rebuilt BC-348 radio receiver that he had purchased and rebuilt at his own expense. This was quite a bit of acquisition for our project, but even all of this activity was not the highlight of the month of July.



**Carroll Baker with the BC-348 receiver that he restored for the *City of Savannah* radio room.**

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, thanks to many hours of hard work and organization, Guy McDonald and the radio team broadcast for the first time from our radio room – using restored WWII equipment, including Carroll Baker’s receiver. The main contact of the broadcast was the Shreveport Amateur Radio Association (SARA), which had set up their station at the *Miss Liberty* site at Barksdale AFB. July was quite a month for the project!

**August** – saw another major acquisition for the project. After several months of discussion with Fred Bieser we purchased Fred’s fully operational B-17G chin turret. Fred brought the turret to Savannah and instructed our electrical team how to operate the turret. Plans are that the turret installed on the airplane during 2012. August also saw a visit to the project by Mr. Ron Saks, the President and CEO of LMI Corporation. LMI’s contributions, including the right cheek blister in 2009 and the refinishing of the control surfaces, including the rudder, in 2010-11 have been a major factor in our restoration. Dave Pinegar did a great job arranging this event.



**Rocky Rodriguez discusses the electrical system of the chin turret with its designer**

**September** – as the summer of 2011 ended a very busy Fall season kept all of the *City of Savannah* team busy. Tonnie Glick, our document organizational expert took another batch of historical documents, dating back to the 1940’s, and put together several well organized notebooks that will document our project very well, and be instrumental when the formal history of the project is put in book form in several years. Jim Argo returned from a European vacation to once again dip into the deep pockets of Gulfstream technology and spent several days inspecting the *City of Savannah* gas tanks. We also purchased a cap and fairing for the chin turret during September, and applauded as Guy McDonald and the CARS team did their second broadcast from our radio room – this time to celebrate the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United States Air Force.

**October** – The second All Hands Meeting of 2011 was held in order to prepare for the main event of the year, the national B-17 Co-Op meeting to be held at the Mighty Eighth Air Force museum on 5 November. At the end of the meeting there was a drawing for a free flight on the Yankee Air Museum's B-17G *Yankee Lady* that was traveling to Savannah for a WWII 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force reunion. The names of the five volunteers (excluding managers) with the most hours for 2011 were put in a hat and the winner was Gil Patrick. Gil and his son Justin are one of the several father/son combinations with our project. When the *Yankee Lady* arrived Gil was there for his scheduled ride and Justin stood by to take pictures. A very good friend of our project from the *Yankee Lady* is that project's Crew Chief, Norm Ellickson. Norm had heard that Gil had won the ride in our lottery, and when he realized that Justin was Gil's son he ran out to the plane with Justin, and put Justin on the airplane with his dad. Gil and Justin had a wonderful father/son experience, flying together in the B-17. All of the volunteers from the project were very grateful to Norm for his generosity.



Justin and Gil Patrick aboard the *Yankee Lady*

**November** – was the busiest, and perhaps the most important month of the three years the *City of Savannah* project has been in existence. The month started off with the visit of the national B-17 community leadership with their annual conference at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Dr. Harry Friedman presided, and our management team (Jerry McLaughlin, Jim Grismer and Dave Talleur) participated in the various meetings – including the first ever meeting of the static display projects. Special thanks need to be given to project members Richard Moscatiello, who came back into town for the event and coordinated the meetings and meals with the museum, and Bill Liening who coordinated moving the event participants around the museum on Friday and Saturday. The significance

of our project going from non-existence to hosting this meeting in three years is unprecedented. After the Co-Op participants left to return home things did not quiet down at the museum. Tommy Garcia stayed with us for Garcia Week IV. During this visit Tommy spent most of his time with the crew chiefs and managers developing a plan for the project designed to adjust to the more complex and technical aspects we will be facing in 2012. Tommy also worked with Tim Steele to mount the “stars and bars” national insignia that he had donated to the *City of Savannah*.



**WWII era national insignia donated to our project by Tommy Garcia and mounted by Tim Steel from Gulfstream Corporation**

The week following the Co-Op meeting all of our volunteers were asked to help support the Second Annual Flying Fortress 5K. This year Jane Harper outdid her 2010 performance with a larger core of sponsors and even higher profits for the project. Two project volunteers, Milt “Speed” Stompler and Richard “Crazy Legs” Moscatiello won trophies – Milt winning his age group to replicate his win in 2010. Further, as the Management Team watched from the sidelines two of their wives, Denise McLaughlin and Anne Grismer won their age groups. It was a great day.





**Milt Stompler and Richard Moscatiello, winners in the Second Annual Flying Fortress 5K**

So, that's it for 2011. We are now thirty-six months into the project, and there is *a great deal more to come . . .*