

UPDATE # 113 - "CITY OF SAVANNAH"
B-17 Restoration
January 24, 2012

This is our first Update of 2012, and there is a great deal to report. After our stand-down for most of December the volunteers hit the road running in January.



Bud Curry and Danny Harden began 2012 by working on the #2 engine

The big event so far in January was our third annual volunteer dinner, held at the museum on Saturday night, January 14th. Almost eighty people attended the dinner, including our favorite nose artist, Skip Shelton – along with his wife, Shirley, and two friends from their home town in South Carolina. Museum CEO Henry Skipper welcomed everyone and an invocation was presented by the Chief of our radio team, Guy McDonald. The dinner was catered by the wonderful folks from the “Miss Sophie” restaurant located in the museum. After everyone had finished their excellent dinner and desert our Project Manager, Jerry McLaughlin, presented a review of the events that took place during the last twelve months – including naming some names and events that were particularly noteworthy in 2011. Including:

- *The project has passed the 15,000 volunteer hour landmark.*
- *Since 2009 120 volunteers have worked with the project.*
 - o *There are currently 42 active volunteers.*
- *Major parts for three turrets were acquired during 2011.*

- *The Radio Team made their first broadcast on July 23th.*
- *The national B-17 Co-Op meeting took place at the Mighty- Eighth on November 5.*
- *The 2nd Annual Flying Fortress 5K was run on November 12.*

Jerry also noted that ten of the current volunteers were also on the original roster in January of 2009:

They are:

<i>Jim Argo</i>	<i>Bill Burkel</i>
<i>Marshall Brooks</i>	<i>Jim Grismer</i>
<i>Mort Glick</i>	<i>Bill Lienen</i>
<i>Jerry McLaughlin</i>	<i>Jack Nilsen</i>
<i>David Pinegar</i>	<i>Scott Witcher</i>

A plaque has been prepared - as it is every year – naming those volunteers who had contributed at least 100 hours in 2011.

They are:

<i>Bill Burkel *</i>	<i>Bud Currey</i>	<i>John Finch</i>	<i>Mort Glick*</i>
<i>Jim Grismer*</i>	<i>Danny Harden</i>	<i>Joel Hedgpeth</i>	<i>Jeff Hoopes</i>
<i>Greg Kindred</i>	<i>Bill Lienen*</i>	<i>J. McLaughlin*</i>	<i>R.Moscatiello</i>
<i>Jack Nilsen*</i>	<i>Gil Patrick</i>	<i>Justin Patrick</i>	<i>Dave Talleur</i>
<i>Scott Witcher*</i>			

*= original volunteer

Finally, several volunteers and museum personnel were mentioned as having made special contributions to the project:

Jeff Hoopes was named, for his many, many contributions during 2011.

Milt Stompler and Darrell Schwartz for their polishing work in 2011.

And from the Museum staff:

Bruce Johnson was thanked for his continued support since 2009, and *Jane Grismer* (aka Jane Harper), for all she has done for the project, including the Flying Fortress 5K Run in 2010 and 2011.

Bruce could not attend the dinner because he was home recovering, successfully, from recent surgery. Jane was present and received a plaque thanking her for her efforts.



Jane Grismer and Jerry McLaughlin

Another event that occurred this month was a visit from one of the most famous and respected aircraft restoration names in the United States, Bob Mikesh. Bob is the retired Senior Curator of the National Air and Space Museum Smithsonian Institution. He is also, by coincidence, the boyhood friend of one of our volunteers, Marshall Brooks. Bob was on a trip to Florida and stopped in Savannah to visit Marshall and check on our aircraft. It seems that Bob has a personal interest in 44-83814, also known as the *City of Savannah*, because he personally conducted the negotiations with 814's last civilian owner, Arnold Kolb, to trade 814 to the Smithsonian for two navy P2 bombers. Bob had some interesting comments to make regarding the airplane, such as, "Where are the nose piece and tail turret?" Our answer, of course, was "What nose piece and tail turret?" When Bob had last seen the aircraft it was sporting both of those the front and rear attachments.



Bob Mikesch and the Wednesday (Day) Crew.

L to Right: Joe Pritchard, Darrell Schwartz, Danny Harden, Milt Stompler, Bob Mikesch, Paul Abere, Marshall Brooks, Arlen Juergens, Jerry McLaughlin, Dick Gorman

Marshall gave Bob the full tour of the museum. They also spent time visiting with both the Wednesday Day and Night crews, as well as several hours in the archives. Marshall and Jerry had dinner with Bob and discussed the many notes that Bob had made during the day. Jerry commented that, "It isn't often that get to sit down with the guy who, literally, wrote the book on your job." Bob will be stopping in Savannah again when he returns to his Maryland home in several months. We look forward to his next visit.

One final note – the link below references a contact made by the Radio Team to a HAM radio operator in, of all places, Germany – an article about our project was published in a German magazine with our favorite picture of all of us and the airplane.

<http://k4gtm.blogspot.com/2012/01/b-17-ww2cos-special-event-article-in.html>

Immediate plans that you will be reading about in the next few weeks include the departure of the construction team, next week, to install wood and metal work in the B-17 *Lady Liberty* at Barksdale AFB, and details regarding a new corporate sponsor.

As you can see, there *is much more to come . . .*