

Update # 46 - "City of Savannah"

B-17 Restoration

March 5, 2010

There was a great deal of activity concerning the "City of Savannah" at the museum this week. One of the biggest events was the visit of the HAM radio operators who will be working on the "City's" radio compartment. Savannah's Coastal Amateur Radio Society (CARS) held their monthly meeting at the Mighty Eighth on Wednesday night. After completion of their club business, President Guy MacDonald introduced our "City of Savannah" Project Manager, Jerry McLaughlin to the group. Jerry welcomed the CARS members to the museum and explained the role that it is hoped the club can take in the restoration of the "City" – to include the goal of having the "City's" radio room become, once again, an active transmitting station.

After Jerry's remarks the 26 club members in attendance moved to the Combat Gallery where they were met by Wednesday (Night) Crew Chief Bill Leining. In preparation for the arrival of the CARS group Bill had prepared a ladder arrangement that allowed them to climb into the bomb bay of the "City" and view both the radio room and the cockpit. By the time the visitors had finished inspecting the aircraft there were many conversations going on between the club members and Bill's team.



Jerry McLaughlin with CARS members in the Combat Gallery

The enthusiasm of both groups was very high and it was obvious that much good work is going to evolve from the handshakes and conversation that took place around the aircraft. The club was also given a tour of the project's shop area and the work station prepared for them by Jim Grismer. It won't take long to get this portion of the project underway, as Guy and several members of the club will begin inspecting and testing our radio equipment next Wednesday.



Dr. Dik Daso

Last Friday, Dr. Dik Daso – Director, Model Aircraft, National Air and Space Museum - came to visit us at the Mighty Eighth. Dik was highly instrumental in the Mighty Eighth's acquisition of the "City of Savannah" and wanted to see how the aircraft was doing its new home.

It's been ten years since Dr. Daso has visited us here in Savannah. He commented on the major changes that have occurred since 2000. He was very pleased with the entire restoration progress and he stated that the same amount of progress would have taken 10 years elsewhere. All in all, he told the Museum Staff, that he was very impressed with the Mighty Eighth's entire collection and has committed to return to conduct research work.

Jim Grismer was at the center of another project turning point this week when we began to see the results of his recent recruitment drive. We are VERY glad to welcome aboard nine new volunteers, or as we are calling them, the Freshman Class of 2010. In no special order, the class includes: Mike Callahan, Jeff Hoopes, Tom Kurtz, Paul Abare and Arleu Jeurgens on the Wednesday (Day) Crew, and, Gregory Kindred, Chuck Spence, Richard Cormany and John Finch on the Wednesday (Night) Crew. Several additional members of the class of 2010 are expected to join the Friday and Saturday Crews.



LMI employees working on City of Savannah Control Services

David Pinegar, our hardworking volunteer from LMI Corporation, also updated us this week on several of his Corporation's support efforts on behalf of our project. The fabric covering of the aircraft's control surfaces is nearly completed. David reports that the work on the surfaces is being done by LMI employees who have volunteered to work on the project during their time off, and that in several cases it has become a family project as spouses and children of the volunteers have also become involved. Another of LMI's efforts, the production of the right nose blister is nearing completion.

We have to report yet another great idea from Wednesday (Day) Crew Chief Bill Berkel, who suggested that because we are now regularly getting help from various businesses in the Savannah area, that we prepare letters of appreciation with fabric from the original control surfaces of the "City" attached to the letters as Thank You gifts – similar to gifts given to all the active volunteers last January. Bill's idea was heartily received by museum management and will be implemented immediately.

Several folks have already called in to put their names on the list for the Thunder Over Michigan trip in August. You do not have to be an active volunteer to participate in the trip with our group – only a B-17 devotee – so if you receive this weekly update you are qualified to travel with us, and should feel free to join us at this historical event.

More to come.....