

Update # 48 - "City of Savannah"

B-17 Restoration

March 29, 2010

You probably noticed that you did not get an Update last week. We have to be honest – blame it on St. Patrick! Those of you not from our fair city probably do not realize that Savannah has the second largest St. Patrick's Day parade in the United States – that's right, bigger than Chicago, and even Boston. Only New York City is larger. It seems that a great many of our volunteers took the day off to participate in the festivities. JEB Harper can claim the honor of participating in the parade and bringing in his Saturday crew to work on the removal of the "City's" stubborn paint on the underside of the right wing tip. They were followed up by the day crew this Wednesday, which had its largest turnout since the start of the project. The accompanying picture shows several of them hard at work. Excellent progress was made, and the right wing is near completion. (Yes, we have said that before!!)



Wednesday Day Crew Working On The Right Wing Tip

Wednesday night was special for all of our project volunteers. Museum CEO Henry Skipper hosted an All Hands meeting for the active project volunteers behind the starboard wing of the "City of Savannah". A total of 28 volunteers were present for the meeting, and as they work on four different shifts, and seldom cross paths, each shift was introduced as a group to their fellow volunteers.

Pizza and drinks were served and a full agenda of subjects were addressed by Henry and Project Manager Jerry McLaughlin, to include a "state of the project" presentation that described plans through June of this year.



Jerry McLaughlin & Henry Skipper presenting to B-17 Restoration Crew

The main points of the presentation included that the project is financially sound and will be able to continue with the cleaning and painting of the aircraft, and that the past year has brought many good people from the nationwide B-17 community to Savannah to visit our aircraft and assist us in organizing the project.

On the subject of support for the project Henry made special mention of the efforts of LMI Corporation – by far our largest corporate sponsor – who have participated in multiple efforts, including refinishing the control surfaces and manufacturing of a brand new nose blister and navigator dome ring. He also mentioned that planning continues for several fund raising activities that will, hopefully, provide us with the ability to begin purchasing big ticket items, such as turrets, during 2011.

Henry also mentioned that museum management was very heartened by the recent visit of National Air and Space Museum senior executive Dik Daso (see update # 46) who was very impressed by the amount of work accomplished on the aircraft during the last fourteen months. Henry and Jerry also took questions from the group on a number of subjects as they emphasized that one purpose of the event was to insure that they want each volunteer to be fully up to date on all aspects of the project.

Following the question and answer session Jerry presented the Power Point program that he and Henry have been presenting to various groups throughout Savannah entitled “A Tale of Two Cities – of Savannah” (apologies to Charles Dickens) which tells the story of the original B-17 with the name “*City of Savannah*” that left Hunter Field on December 3, 1944, and the B-17 with that name that resides in the Combat Gallery of our museum today.

One special highlight of the evening was a brief report by Guy MacDonald on the work being done with the 1940's era radio equipment that came from the museum archives and aircraft spare parts box. Guy reports that the main aircraft radio transmitter/receiver has been tested and that six of the seven tubes are functioning. Guy and his fellow HAM operators hope to have the 65 year old radio functioning in the very near future.

The final event of the evening was the gathering of all the volunteers beneath the museum's PT-17 for a group photograph.



B-17 Restoration Crew

More to come...