

UPDATE # 89 - "CITY OF SAVANNAH"

B-17 Restoration

March 4, 2011

This week started off on a sad note with the passing of the man who is responsible for bringing B-17G 44-83814, now known as the "City of Savannah", to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Dr. Walt Brown had served on the Board of Directors of the Museum from its inception, and was CEO from December of 2006 until January of 2009.



Dr. Walt Brown being interviewed as the
"City of Savannah" arrives at the Mighty Eighth

All three of our crews were very busy this week. The Wednesday (Day) crew had several projects going at the same time. While various members were painting the cockpit seats and frames, the aircraft trim tabs were prepared for painting and Milt Stompler, the Chief of the newly formed polishing team, began experimenting with their new Nu-vite polishing materials.

After lunch the entire crew, including the "upstairs guys", assembled to help Museum staff clean out a large portion of the shop area in order to help fill up the Pooler land fill. Our guys had an ulterior motive, as now we will have more room to work on upcoming carpentry and metal projects. The Wednesday (Night) crew continued their work on the radio room and the flight control cables. They also stored the bomb bay doors in a secure area next to the shop.

The Saturday crew continued their work on the bomb bay and began working in the storage room to assemble the electrical control panels for the aircraft.

We have another bio this week of a volunteer who has been with us from the very beginning. Alberto “Rocky” Rodriguez is our Saturday Crew Chief. Rocky was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. After a 24 year career in the Air Force, he and his wife, Joe Ann (also a retired USAF veteran) retired to Savannah, in 1995, where Rocky began a second career as an instructor and Supervisor of Maintenance Training for Flight Safety International Corporation.

Rocky holds an Associate Degree in Avionics Technology and FAA Power Plant and Airframe Certificates. He and Joe Ann have three sons, a daughter and one granddaughter. Rocky’s motto is, “It’s a great challenge to be better than your opportunities”. We are very lucky to have Rocky on our team!!



Rocky Rodriguez in the cockpit
of the “City of Savannah”

This week we had some very good news on the historical side. Thanks to the detective work of Brenda Elmgren we were able to locate the son Lt. Ralph Kittle, the 1944 pilot of the original “*City of Savannah*”. Ralph Kittle, Jr., and his son, Ralph Kittle III, are already planning to visit the Mighty Eighth and tour the B-17 named after the bomber that their father and grandfather flew out of Hunter Field sixty-seven years ago.

More to come...