

Update # 62 -“City of Savannah”

B-17 Restoration

July 23, 2010

This week marks eighteen months that the B-17G 44 – 83814, also known as the “*City of Savannah*”, has resided in the Combat Gallery of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Perhaps because this was an anniversary week it was time for considerable good fortune to touch the project, and that seems to be the case.

Last week we reported that our good friend Tommy Garcia had located the plans and templates for the woodwork that is required for the interior of the “*City*”. Tommy assembled this material in 1989 for the movie *Memphis Belle*. This week our acquisition of those original plans and templates was finalized with the owner, and Tommy has scheduled a trip to Savannah to deliver this treasure trove of material, and his personal expertise, to help build all the wood work for the “*City*” during the week of August 16th. Tommy and Deputy Project Manager/Chief Carpenter Jim Grismer have been on the telephone talking details. The wood and hardware for the project are already on order.

How many volunteers does it take to mount a B-17 engine cowling?



In this case the answer is five (from out Saturday crew):

left to right: Mort Glick, Gil Patrick, Thomas Van Tilburg, Crew Chief Rocky Rodriguez, and Dave Urbanski.

The next big news item updates our previous report that we would be painting the interior of the aircraft using small spray cans because of the problem with overspray and environmental issues inside the museum if we used commercial painting methods. Volunteer Jim Argo, an employee of Gulfstream Corporation, decided that spray cans were much too low tech for our project and spoke with several senior managers in the Gulfstream service division about our problem. Thanks to Jim’s efforts a visit to the Gulfstream service facility here in

Savannah was arranged for museum CEO Henry Skipper and Volunteer Project Manager Jerry McLaughlin. Henry and Jerry met with several Gulfstream staff who paint the interior of aircraft using equipment that is both environmentally and technically state-of-the-art to the aircraft industry, and allows for zero overspray within controlled environments. The result of this visit is that Gulfstream will be loaning the paint spraying equipment to the museum to paint the interior of the “*City*” and two of the staff from the Gulfstream painting team found our project to be so interesting that they have volunteered to come to the museum with the equipment and donate their time to do the painting.

All of this unexpected good fortune has resulted in the need for our project schedule to be totally and quickly revamped. In order to avoid confusion, and to allow for proper preparation for the upcoming carpentry and painting projects, a two week stand down has been called on all work being done on the airplane, with the exception of the sheet metal work the Wednesday (Night) crew is doing on the nose of the aircraft.

The necessary materials for the two projects are now being purchased. Jim Grismer is organizing a special carpentry crew and additional research is underway to determine the best paint to use now that we have the luxury of professional equipment and expertise to apply the paint to the airplane.

There is A LOT going on this week, and there is more to come...