

## UPDATE # 72 - "CITY OF SAVANNAH"

B-17 Restoration

October 1, 2010

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The seemingly endless month of September, 2010, is finally over for the "*City of Savannah*" project – and a lot has been accomplished. This week's two part event was the moving of the "*City*" to its final resting place in the Combat Gallery, and the lifting of the main landing gear off the ground for the final time. When all was done, the B-17G that started life in Long Beach, California, as tail number 44-83814 in May of 1945, was moved to its final location and placed on permanent support stanchions by a crew from American Aero Services, of New Smyrna Beach, Florida.



AAS employee John Miller and Danny Harden, Wednesday Crew Chief on the "**City of Savannah**", working the jack to lower "**City**" onto the stanchions that will support the aircraft on the floor of the Mighty Eighth's Combat Gallery.

This final move of the "*City*" has been planned and postponed for various reasons since November of 2009. Now, it is finally completed!



The four American Aero Services employees who traveled to Savannah to place our aircraft in its final location in the Museum. L to R: Whitney Coyle, John Miller, Bill Strawn and Kris Moore.

The AAS crew, led by Whitney Coyle, arrived at the Museum at 10:00 AM after a rain filled drive from New Smyrna Beach with a truck load of equipment that was needed for moving and lifting the “City”. Our good neighbors, the JCB equipment company, immediately sent over a fork lift, and the aircraft jacks were lifted off of the AAS truck and brought into the Museum.



American Aero Services crew and "**City of Savannah**" volunteers stand beneath the aircraft when the job was done.

The final location of the aircraft was still under consideration while the jacks were being placed beneath the B-17. Whitney walked through the Combat Gallery with Museum CEO Henry Skipper, Project Managers Jerry McLaughlin and Jim Grismer and the Museum’s Facility Maintenance Manager, Bruce Johnson, discussing the issues involved with the move, including future plans for Museum exhibits and the limited space between the “City’s” wings and the gallery walls. All of these factors had to be taken into consideration before the exact determination for the final location of the aircraft was decided upon.

With the “City” now resting on moving dollies, Whitney placed observers at each wing tip and the tail of the aircraft. He then arranged the Museum’s volunteers in position to provide the muscle to actually move the aircraft on its first of two moves - forward. His first command of, “1-2-3, push!” resulted in no movement – which scared a few observers! The second time he gave the push order things began to work, and the aircraft moved forward for several feet before he ordered a stop. This process was repeated until the final forward location was reached.

The next move was to change the direction of the aircraft. Again, observers were placed on the wingtips and the tail, and utilizing the tail wheel and a good old fashioned crow bar, the “City” was pointed in the proper direction – but not before several cries of “STOP” were

heard from the wing tip observers. As mentioned previously, there is not a lot of room between the wing tips and the walls of the gallery.



Project Managers Jerry McLaughlin and Jim Grismer (a/k/a “Barney & Fred”) supervising the repositioning of the “**City of Savannah**”

The final assignment of the AAS crew was to place the “*City*” on steel stanchions that they had fabricated as permanent supports for the aircraft. Special thanks go to our project’s parts specialist, Bill Burkel, who solved a problem with how the stanchions fit the main landing gear fittings. Bill was able to quickly obtain pads from one of his mysterious nearby suppliers, and the aircraft lowered perfectly on to the stanchions.

For those who would like to view the preparation of lifting the plane onto the stanchions, which will permanently support the airplane, you can view the video in YouTube at the following link (*credit: Mike Callahan*):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNuslowT2Hg>

Another major portion of the project is complete!

Next week our favorite Gulfstream painters, Tony Hall and Frank Quirk, will return to continue their work, moving forward through the radio room, bomb bay and upper cockpit.

*As always, there is more to come . . .*