

# Update 110

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It's been several weeks since the last update. Sorry for the delay, but there was just too much going on to take time out and report on events as they were happening.

The first big event – perhaps the biggest in the young life of our project – was the B-17 Co-Op meeting that was hosted by the museum on Saturday, November 5. The Co-Op is a loose confederation of all the B-17 organizations in the United States – including both flying and static display projects. We considered it an honor to host the annual meeting in only the third year of our operation. As a prelude to the Saturday meetings, many of the participants showed up a day early to attend a VIP tour of the Gulfstream Corporation production facilities. The tour was sanctioned, and led, by Gulfstream Vice President, and Mighty Eighth Board Member, Bill Shira. Our project communications officer, newly retired from Gulfstream, Dick Gorman, managed the visit from our side. The tour was a major success, and everyone got a good look at the resource pool that provides so much of the expertise that keeps the “City of Savannah” project moving. The early arriving Co-Op members spent Friday afternoon touring the museum and, of course, the “City of Savannah”. Friday evening our project managers hosted an arrival social for all the Co-Op members at the hotel. Many new friendships were started at this gathering – and for the long term Co-Op members, long time friendships were renewed.

Saturday morning began with a continental breakfast and a general meeting at the museum. Each B-17 organization spoke about their current issues. The most significant report was that of Don Brooks of the “Liberty Bell” Foundation. Don gave a very detailed description of the events that resulted in the loss of the “Liberty Bell” to an on-board fire several months ago.

After lunch the group divided into two groups. The “City of Savannah” was proud to host the first ever static display group meeting. Three organizations were represented at this meeting, “City of Savannah”, the Barksdale AFB representative, Terry Snook, represented the Barksdale B-17, “Miss Liberty” and Dick Jackson representing a group that is reconstituting itself in the state of Washington. The one concrete result that came out of our meeting was the goal of recruiting at least five more static displays to attend the 2012 Co-Op meeting. The main subjects of discussion in the meeting held by the flying B-17's were FAA issues related to War Birds, and the never ending problem of parts acquisition.

After completion of the afternoon meetings everyone gathered in the shop and talked about their favorite subject – B-17s. Many of the “City of Savannah” volunteers attended this event and there was a great deal of learning that went on as our “new guys” talked to B-17 folks who have been working on the bombers for decades.

The final event of the weekend was a dinner catered by the wonderful team from the “Miss Sophie” restaurant in the museum. The bar was open, the food was excellent, and a fine time was had by all.

Special thanks have to go out to Richard Moscatiello, Bill Leining and Jeff Hoopes who put in a great deal of extra hours over the weekend to make our job as hosts a success.

After our guests left on Sunday morning we all took a twenty-four hour breather, and then started all over again on Monday morning, with the start of Garcia Week IV – as our good friend Tommy Garcia remained behind to spend the week with us. Tommy’s fourth visit was spent more in a planning mode rather than hands-on as has been his role in the past. Monday was spent working with Project Manager Jerry McLaughlin on a big picture twelve month plan for the project. Tuesday was spent with Assistant Project Manager Dave Talleur taking the big picture plan and sequencing the sub-projects discussed on Monday. On Wednesday Tommy worked with both the day and night crews, as well as with Tim Steele. Tim is doing a wonderful job preparing the required signage for the exterior of the airplane, and Tommy was able to supply Tim with accurate Boeing plans for the remainder of his work.

Tommy spent Thursday working with Crew Chief Jeff Hoopes on nose to tail issues concerning the airplane and the new plans for the 2012 schedule. The customary final night dinner was held before Tommy left for Texas on Friday morning. It is impossible to measure the value of Tommy’s contributions to our project, in donated equipment, advice and contacts throughout the B-17 community. Garcia Week V is scheduled for early April, when plans call for Tommy supervising preservation work on our engines.

All of the previously mentioned activity, you would think, would be enough for the “City of Savannah” volunteers over a ten day period. But, as we say, there was much “more to come”.

While Tommy was departing for Texas on Friday morning, our Radio Crew, led by Guy McDonald, was assembling at the museum for a two day event in honor of Veterans Day and the Second Annual Flying Fortress 5K. Guy had assembled a total of 15 operators from the Coastal Area Radio Society (CARS) to broadcast from the radio room of the “City of Savannah” in support of the events on Friday and Saturday. The Friday broadcasts ran into some difficulty with the electrical system of the “City” – but true to form, the Radio Crew overcame the problem and the broadcasts continued all day.



Guy McDonald in the radio operator's chair of the "City of Savannah".

Saturday morning at 7:00 AM the radio team was setting up again, as was the support team for our second annual Flying Fortress 5K.



Several hundred runners arrived at the museum to begin the race at 8:30 AM. Many of the runners were "City of Savannah" volunteers or family members. The radio team now ran a second operation as they broadcast from the airplane and provided communications around the race course under the supervision of Steve Jonas.

Pre-race favorites, "Speed" Stompler and "Crazylegs" Moscatiello, brought home trophies in their age groups. Project Managers Jerry McLaughlin and Jim Grismer cheered from the sidelines as their wives, Denise and Ann, as both brought home first place trophies in their age groups.



**“City of Savannah” volunteers and 5K medal winners, Milt Stompler and Richard Moscatiello.**

A major thank you has to go out to the Mighty Eighth’s Jane Harper who put in many, many hours organizing this event, the only fund raiser that supports the “City of Savannah” project. Jane and WTOC newscaster Mike Manhattan gave out the awards to the winners. After the awards ceremony all of the racers and guests were given free admittance to the museum combat gallery to view the “City of Savannah” and discuss the project with our volunteers.



After the awards ceremony the "City of Savannah" volunteers, including the trophy winners, gathered in front of the museum for a final picture. Somehow, the most important person – organizer Jane Harper -- was not present for the picture. Hats off for Jane, where ever she was!

It's been a very busy month, but there is still more to come . . .