

Update # 52 - "City of Savannah"

B-17 Restoration

May 6, 2010

LIGHTS...CAMERA...ACTION... Our "City of Savannah" B-17 put her best dress on and smiled for the cameras this past Saturday during the media event to commemorate Brigadier General Jeffrey Phillips' first shift as Saturday Crew volunteer and the completion of Project Phase I. The day went very well with work on the engine cowlings and nacelle covers being completed by volunteers from the Saturday Crew and Wednesday Crew members Danny Harden and Jeff Hoopes. WTOC News and Savannah Morning News reporters interviewed General Phillips about his involvement with the project as well as Project Manager Jerry McLaughlin and volunteers Alberto "Rocky" Rodriguez and Dave Urbanski. General Phillips will be spending every other Saturday working on the project and has stated that, "on Saturdays here I'm not The General, I'm just Jeff." Well Jeff has become a welcome member of the team and a good and productive time was had by all. We would also like to thank Bill Cathcart, Mighty Eighth Chairman of the Board, for coming out to spend some time with the crew, the General, and his WTOC colleagues.

STAY TUNED... Our next media event will be the Armed Forces Day Celebration and CARS B-17 Radio Team demonstration on Saturday, May 15th. The Saturday Crew, including General Phillips, will be working on the interior fuselage preparation for anti-corrosion treatment and painting. What a great day to experience working 1945 B-17 Radios and Warbird Restoration all in one place, only at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

"NOW HEAR THIS...PHASE I IS COMPLETE...PROCEED TO PHASE II..." We have successfully completed Phase I of the project: removal of preservative coatings and materials applied to the aircraft by the National Air and Space Museum in 1984, as well as, 30 years of operational debris residue that had accumulated on/in the aircraft. We were tasked with the arresting of any surface corrosion found on the aluminum skin and airframe, and the removal of all crew stations, cockpit instrumentation, and bomb bay equipment. We have also meticulously cataloged all parts and equipment that have been removed from the aircraft as well as all B-17 artifacts found in the Mighty Eighth Museum archives. Now, firmly in Phase II, we have begun comparing our list of B-17G parts and equipment, which we already possess, with a B-17G Master Parts List which we received from, our good friend and long time B-17 restorer, Bruce Orriss. With the comparison of these lists we are making a shopping and wish list of all the equipment to be procured over the next two years. This is a major step in beginning to re-equip the aircraft with her operational equipment as would have been found on the original "City" when she left for England in 1944. All crews have now moved inside the fuselage to begin the anti-corrosion preparation of the interior for painting. Once the fuselage is painted this summer we will be ready to begin re-installing flooring, mounts and equipment for the 10 crew stations and cockpit. These are just a few of the exciting sub-projects that we will be tackling in Phase II of the "City of Savannah" B-17G Restoration Project. Stay tuned for more progress as the weeks go by, we're just getting our momentum going now.

Once again, we would like to thank LMI our biggest Corporate Sponsors. This time it was Dave Pinegar and his team at LMI that donated and rolled the metal that was used to replace damage during the trip from Virginia. A special thanks, also, to Jack Nilsen for his hard work in installing the new metal.

More to Come...



Jack Nilsen hard at work riveting the new skin panels under the nose



Volunteer John Finch checking new aluminum sheeting under the cockpit floor

Update # 53 -“City of Savannah”

B-17 Restoration

May 24, 2010

What an exciting two weeks it has been... since our last Update. The “*City of Savannah*” restoration team has completed a great deal of work on the airplane, and the project has made several major appearances in the local media.

Work continues on the interior of the aircraft with all four crews applying paint stripper throughout the fuselage with excellent results. Sixty years of paint, in many layers, and just old fashion dirt have been removed. Assistant Project Manager JEB Harper reports that he is confident that the interior work, including cleaning, anti-corrosion applications, and painting, will be completed by mid September.

JEB is also involved in another endeavor that will have major impact upon the “*City*” – he has been designated as the point of contact to work with Mr. Owen W. Hughs. Mr. Hughs is 91 years young and was assigned as a young soldier with artistic talents to paint nose art on 8th and 9th Air Force aircraft in England during WWII. Sixty-five years later he is still painting aircraft. He became aware of our project and contacted the Museum to volunteer his services painting the appropriate unique art on the “*City of Savannah*”. JEB has been in contact with Mr. Hughs and will be coordinating his traveling to Savannah this summer to apply his talents to our airplane. While Mr. Hughs and his wife are with us he also plans to address the Birthplace Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society on the subject of his almost 70 years as an aviation artist.

Those of you who live in the Savannah area will have noticed that our project has been noted recently on both WTOC-TV and in the *Savannah Morning News*. We are very grateful to Bill Cathcart from WTOC and Chuck Mobley from the newspaper for their efforts on our behalf. Several events garnered all of this attention; the first was the Armed Forces Day broadcast from beneath the wing of the “*City*” by the Coastal Amateur Radio Society (CARS) using WWII era equipment from the Museum archives. The second event took place this past Wednesday at the 70th Anniversary of the opening of Hunter Army Airfield. Thanks to the efforts of our own Saturday Crew member, General Jeff Phillips, one of the highlights of that celebration was the display of the Museum’s 1940

Ford fire truck, which served at Hunter during WWII. Museum CEO Henry Skipper and Marketing/Public Relations Manager Mandy Livingston represented the museum at this event. Deputy Project Manager Jim Grismer will be working with the fire fighters at Hunter and Fort Stewart to restore the truck to its 1940's configuration so that it can be part of the final "*City of Savannah*" story in our combat gallery.



**Coastal Amateur Radio Society working at the event
Lester Lamhut, Mark Bolton, Guy McDonald, Stephen D. Jonas**

Now that the work of preparing the outside of the aircraft for final painting is completed, and work on the interior is progressing quickly, the enthusiasm of the various teams working on the project is increasing. As part of that enthusiasm we are hoping that in the near future we will see some "outline" changes on the shape of the "*City*" fuselage - to include a top turret dome and a new nose piece.

More to come.....



Fire Truck at Hunter Army Airfield's 70th Anniversary Event

Update # 54 - "City of Savannah"

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May 28, 2010

There is more progress to report this week. Jim Argo has begun his special project of inspecting virtually the entire airframe of the "City of Savannah", rib by rib, in the preparation of his list of sites that will require special attention in the upcoming anti-corrosion program. All of the crews are working to complete the interior cleaning of the aircraft prior to the application of the anti-corrosion materials. The final step to complete Phase II of the restoration will be to paint the interior of the "City". A decision on the methodology for painting the interior – high tech, with a paint sprayer that Gulfstream Corporation would make available to the museum, or low tech with sponge brushes – will not be made until it can be determined if the paint sprayer can be used in the closed environment of the museum during working hours.

Good news from LMI Corporation. They will be delivering, on June 16th, the right nose blister and navigator's astrodome flange that they have manufactured from molds provided by Don Brooks, owner of the famous B-17 "Liberty Belle". LMI has been an ardent supporter of our project from the very first day that the "City" arrived in Savannah in January of 2009. Manufacturing of this original parts cost LMI "tens of thousands" of dollars. Museum CEO Henry Skipper will welcome the arrival of the new parts, along with local representative David Pinegar and senior LMI executives, to thank LMI for what the corporation has done, and continues to do for our project.

More to come.....



Wednesday crew members: Tom Kurtz, Danny Harden, Joe Pritchard, Mike Callahan