

# NATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

News From Around The World Supporting the Spirit Of Freedom

TO: FOUNDATION SUPPORTING MEMBERS, BERLIN AIRLIFT VETERANS, HISTORIANS, EDUCATORS AND PATRIOTS OF THE UNITED STATES, GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY

## REPLACEMENT C-54 PROGRESS MOVING FORWARD

*Despite Many Drawbacks, Project Forging Ahead*

It certainly is a pleasure to report amidst all the negative news throughout the land, we are making good progress inspecting, repairing, and learning about our C-54D, the replacement transport for our C-54E that was severely damaged on April 13, 2020. Our replacement C-54D is parked at the New Smyrna Beach Airport, Florida where a team of special patriots have assembled to undergo the responsible and serious process to inspect and repair in preparation for its first flight as our new "Flagship" also named the "Spirit of Freedom". The Federal Aviation Administration approved our formal Continuous Airworthiness Inspection Program on September 28, 2020 after being revised from our C-54E format to reflect the replacement C-54D systems and configuration.



**NOVEMBER 2020:** DOUGLAS C-54D 43-17228 BEING INSPECTED AT NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FL. TIM CHOPP REPLACING THE LEFT MAGNETO ON THE # 3 ENGINE WHILE JIM REUGER INSTALLS SPARKPLUGS ON THE # 4 ENGINE.

While both transports are basically the same, there are many differences. The inspection now in progress is our #3 Service Inspection which is a comprehensive total inspection of the entire C-54. Our replacement C-54D being an unknown transport to us, it is essential this inspection be performed in minute detail to insure it is ready and safe to fly.



**CHECKING THE #3 ENGINE IGNITION TIMING**

TIM CHOPP (TOP), CHECKS THE TIME-RITE INDICATOR INSTALLED IN THE # 1 CYLINDER WHILE JASON PENCE (MIDDLE) IS WATCHING FOR THE ENGINE TIMING MARK IN THE NOSE CASE WHILE ART NORTON (BOTTOM) ROTATES THE ENGINE BY THE PROPELLER.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all the special patriots who have taken their valuable time and expense to not only participate in the inspection process at New Smyrna Beach, Florida, but also the time and effort to remove airworthy parts from our damaged C-54E at Walterboro, South Carolina. Many drawbacks encountered by these special workers are: driving long distances to reach the C-54's (as much as 900 miles), the cost of travel, traveling from state to state during the Covid Pandemic, and having to quarantine after returning home. We sincerely appreciate your efforts.

Due to some extended rainy days and the Thanksgiving/Christmas Season, our target date to have the C-54D flying by the end of December, 2020, will most likely extend into January. We are trying our best, but we are also trying to be safe and sure.



## FUNDING SUPPORT GOING WELL

The goal for support funding was targeted at \$125,000 to prepare our C-54D for "mission ready status". This includes the inspection, new paint, insurance, improved interior displays, fuel, oil and travel expenses. It appears this figure remains very accurate. As of this writing, contributions received via our newsletter request have reached \$51,000 plus an additional \$19,887 received via the Internet and social media brings the total to \$ 70,887 to date.

Never in our long 26 year history operating our C-54 have we experienced this kind of response. We all want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our supporting members and contributors for your most kind and caring contributions to help get our replacement C-54 in the air as soon as possible to continue its mission as the "Spirit of Freedom" of %dHistory, Education, and Remembrance+about the great Berlin Airlift of 1948 and 1949. As soon as we get our C-54D airborne and fly out of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, the goal is to immediately fly to Mena, Arkansas to be painted in the 48th troop Carrier Squadron colors and install the new and improved Berlin Airlift museum/exhibits inside the fuselage. Hopefully this second round of requests will produce the needed balance of \$55,000. We want to publish in the next newsletter the names (except for those who want to remain anonymous) of all those patriots who made a contribution to help get our C-54D airworthy and airborne.



JASON PENCE ENTERING A DISCREPANCY ITEM ON THE INSPECTION DISCREPANCY SHEET. ALL DISCREPANCIES MUST BE CLEARED BEFORE THE INSPECTION IS COMPLETE



TIM CHOPP INSPECTING THE CARBURETOR OFF THE # 4 ENGINE WHILE JASON PENCE CHECKS OFF THE INSPECTION INSTRUCTIONS. JIM REUGER IS OBSERVING THE PROCEDURE. TIM MAKES THE DRIVE TO NEW SMYRNA BEACH FROM NEW JERSEY. JASON MAKES THE DRIVE FROM WOODSTOCK, VA, AND JIM MAKES THE DRIVE FROM TOLEDO, OHIO. THIS IS THE 4TH VISIT FOR ALL THREE MEN TO INSPECT AND REPAIR OUR REPLACEMENT C-54D.

## THANKS TO AMERICAN AERO SERVICES

We want to express our gratitude and thanks to Gary Norville, owner of American Aero Services at the New Smyrna Beach Airport who has most graciously allowed us to perform the inspection of our C-54D on his ramp as well as offer his equipment, tools, etc as a courtesy with no charge whatsoever. Gary and his professional staff of skilled and courteous technicians have made us feel welcomed in their world which has made this a most pleasant experience during our visits to work on our C-54. American Aero Services specializes in the ability to restore vintage warbirds of all types. Let us extend a sincere thank you to Gary and his professional staff for this wonderful experience which we will never forget. This was an unexpected and valuable gift.



May the holiday season fill your home with joy, your heart with love, and your life with laughter and we wish you a safe and healthy 2021. Happy Holidays!!



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The Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation is a non-profit, tax exempt corporation which meets the charitable requirements of Section 501 (3) (c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

While it is sad to see these photos taken at Walterboro, SC of our damaged C-54E showing the cockpit and interior being removed, the good news is these parts will live on in our replacement C-54. This means we are already benefiting from the decision to use our damaged C-54E for spare parts.



*"One of the best ways to overcome the sadness and loss of our beloved C-54E is to make the replacement C-54D a much better transport with a more superior on board museum/exhibit to continue our mission of history, education, and remembrance about the great Berlin Airlift of 1948 and 1949". This is our goal, turning lemons to lemonade.*

Dear Tim: Yes, you can count on me to help with the creation of the new and improved version of the Douglas C-54D "Spirit of Freedom". The goal is to be ready for missions again by Spring of 2021 pending the Covid restrictions will allow public Air Show gatherings.

Here is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help with the remaining \$55,000 of the initial request for \$125,000 for the initial C-54D airworthiness inspection, paint, interior display improvements, insurance, fuel, oil and travel expenses.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_



Note: The Berlin Airlift Historical Foundation is listed as a tax exempt charity as a 501(c)(3) charity by the IRS Revenue Code. ID # 22-3077587. Our web site is [www.spiritoffreedom.org](http://www.spiritoffreedom.org).

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