

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

DEMANDS/TIME/WEATHER: OUR ENEMIES THIS WINTER.

Without a doubt, in the 27 winters since the founding of the organization, 2014-2015 has been the toughest winter to meet the demands of keeping the operation together. Add the endless miserable Arctic weather to the regularly scheduled C-54 winter maintenance and inspection requirements, (now parked at the Smith Reynolds Airport, Winston Salem, North Carolina,) and throw in the C-97 (which remains parked in the damaged hangar in Brooklyn, New York,) and you can see that the required time, perseverance, and energy, to stay on track is enormous. I'm happy to say however, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel as we approach the waning winter weather.



NOSE HIGH ATTITUDE: THE C-54 NOSE WHEEL ABOUT 3 FEET OFF THE GROUND AS A RESULT OF THE SNOW WEIGHTED TAIL AFTER A STORM IN WINSTON SALEM NC.



THE HAZARDS OF NOT BEING IN A HANGAR FOR THE WINTER. THE "SPIRIT" SETTLES ON ITS TAIL SKID BY THE WEIGHT OF THE SNOW. NO DAMAGE WAS DONE AS A RESULT OF THIS.

Following our last 2014 highly successful event at Dare County Regional Airport in Manteo, North Carolina, the C-54 "Spirit of Freedom" was flown to the Smith Reynolds Airport, Winston Salem, NC on December 17th. This is where it would remain parked through the winter. While there, our C-54 would require that winter maintenance be performed as well as a # 3 Service Inspection that is required to be completed by March 31, 2015. Due to damage to the hangar facilities in Brooklyn caused by Hurricane Sandy, this is the 3rd winter without the ability to return to the Brooklyn hangar, creating heavy demands of time, travel, and personnel to perform maintenance and inspections away from home. Although difficult, we are meeting the challenge and getting the job done. We continue to search for a hangar facility where we can hangar our C-54 and C-97 during the winter months.

OUR #1 ENEMY: THE NEED FOR FUEL YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Once again we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place. During these difficult economic times, when negotiating with promoters for an event, one must be aware that asking for too much fuel will find you out of the event, so we try to ask for an amount of fuel that is reasonable. This works out well providing the events go on as planned. However when an event cancels and you were counting on that fuel, then everything falls apart. Unfortunately, we are in a similar situation this year and we find ourselves short of fuel to help get us started for the 2015 event season. We are 500 gallons short just to get to the Columbus, Georgia event and 800 gallons short to get back to North Carolina following the Flagler County Airport event on March 28 and 29.

See the enclosed insert pertaining to our fuel needs. Hopefully you can help us get started to what we hope is a great year.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE SMITH-REYNOLDS AIRPORT, WINSTON SALEM, NC

Due to the damage to the hangar in Brooklyn, New York, we have been forced to seek refuge for our C-54 during the winter months while we perform our annual # 3 Service Inspection. The search for the best of all worlds, an affordable hangar, has been difficult. Finding such a treasure has been eluding us for the past few years. In the meantime, we have been open for some kind of relief and found it at the Smith Reynolds Airport in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Winston Salem was the former home of Piedmont Airlines and has excellent facilities. The airport also has excellent people willing to help in any way they can to help keep our Douglas C-54 flying on its mission of history, education, and remembrance about the great Berlin Airlift of 1948 and 1949. Beginning last May, the C-54 stopped in to look at the facilities and meet the fine people operating the North Carolina Air and Auto Center, the local museum at the Smith Reynolds Airport. From that first meeting, the idea grew and by



Paul Ovnic, Tim Chopp, and David Shurtleff working on the #1 engine at Winston Salem. February, 2015



David Shurtleff and Steve Flippin working on the #3 engine of the C-54

November of 2014, it was approved by the Airport Commission of Forsyth County that we could park the C-54 for the winter to perform the inspection and at no charge for the space. In addition, we received permission to use a hangar to perform maintenance during days of bad weather. I'm happy to say this occurred only once during the course of the winter. It is also well to mention our Douglas C-54 was invited to participate in the Winston Salem Airshow last September which was a very successful event. We were thankful and honored to be there.

Although it is a 10 - 12 hour drive each way from New Jersey to Winston Salem, it was worth every mile to be there. We can't find the words to describe the enthusiasm and cooperation extended to us during our stay to ensure the C-54 was well tended to.

We want to say a sincere thank you to the following who helped make our stay a success:

- To all members of the Airport Commission of Forsyth County and Airport Director, Mark Davidson
- To the patriotic members of the Carolina Air and Auto Center and Director, Steve Flippin
- To Landmark Aviation and it's manager Bill Shoe, for use of their tug and maintenance stands.
- To Jared Boucher, Frank Ovnic, Paul Ovnic, Lee Baker, Dave Morse for their kind help with maintenance.
- To Kari Cavender and Harlan Cobert for their support with fire equipment on the C-54.
- To Clarence Lambe for his kind support for affordable lodging.

A special thanks to Steve Flippin and Dave Morse for providing what we needed and when we needed it.

This was a wonderful experience to be part of the Smith Reynolds Airport family and to watch an idea grow into reality. Hopefully our paths will cross again in the future. Thank you for the use of your airport and more importantly. thank you for caring.



The new oil cooler for the #2 engine. On this inspection, all four oil coolers were removed for overhaul and reinstalled. This was a big job and took a lot of time



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to you, our supporting members and contributors, we were able to make it through 2014 because of your kind and much appreciated support. Thanks to you, we were able to purchase the needed fuel to complete the new paint project for the C-54. I'm happy to report the C-54 did receive new paint in April of 2014 and made it's first appearance at the St. Louis Airshow looking like a new airplane, made possible because of you. A sincere thank you to everyone for your continued support. If you're able to continue the same kind of support in 2015, we can promise an outstanding and premiere year of progress.

FIRST EVENT FOR 2015:

CANDY DROP AT PINE MOUNTAIN and COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Technically, the first event will be the "Thunder in the Valley" event at Columbus, Georgia on March 21 and 22, however, due to the Columbus Airport having passenger airline service, the planned Candy Drop will be at the Pine Mountain Airport located 22 miles north of Columbus on Wednesday, March 18th. The Candy Drop will be to honor Airlift Veteran, Vernon Whitman, who flew as a R5D pilot for the US Navy transportation squadron VR-6. Following his Navy career, Vernon went on to fly many years for Delta Airlines retiring as a L1011 Captain. The Candy drop is special in that only the local schools have been invited to meet Vernon and to learn about the great Berlin with tours aboard the "Spirit of Freedom" to see the on board Berlin Airlift Museum and to take part in the Berlin Candy Drop. This should be a wonderful experience and also a sign that more people are becoming interested in our purpose and mission about the Great Berlin Airlift. Following the "Thunder in the Valley" event, the next event will be at the Flagler County Airport in Florida scheduled for March 28th and 29th. Keep checking our web site at www.spiritoffreedom.com for schedule updates.

Worth mentioning for history buffs. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that the Pine Mountain Airport is located only 11 miles from Warm Springs, Georgia. It was at Warm Springs, Georgia, where President Franklin D. Roosevelt spent time in the warm waters to help him deal with polio. In the small house he had constructed, which became known as the Little White House, it was there on April 12, 1945, he suffered a massive stroke while having his portrait painted and died in his bedroom several hours later.

DOUGLAS C-54 INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

Thanks to the efforts of Jason Capra and Angela Hudson, there were major interior display improvements completed in August and September of 2014.

These improvements were made to the overhead displays and included complete new historical displays with new longer lasting material and professional style construction. The display about the Candy Bomber, Gail Halvorsen, is new as well as the history of the C-54, a great display on the types of Candy Dropped to the Berlin Children, and many more. Twenty of the overhead displays were improved or completely redesigned. This is a great improvement to our educational purpose and mission. Two of the lower display cases were also changed. Time and circumstances prevented us from including photos of the changes in this report, however, we are working on a comprehensive newsletter/report that will include a full report and photos of each new display. We want to thank Jason and Angela for their valuable time to help improve our on board displays. Jason has been a valuable asset to the Foundation since he was 14 years old and has been a first officer on the C-54 for many years. Angela was evaluated and accepted as a candidate for a flight crewmember position and will join us in 2015. More details on this later.



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C-97 PROGRESS: ON THIRD BASE AND HEADING FOR HOME

Great news regarding the progress of the C-97! We are very happy to report that on December 27th, 2014, our very rare and beautiful Boeing C-97G, the "Angel of Deliverance", was rolled out of the hangar for the purpose of starting three of the four engines. Taking advantage of the rare 50 degree day on a Saturday, and knowing subfreezing temperatures were on the way, our maintenance team knew it was time to start engines #1, #2, and #4 and therefore made every effort to make that happen. The #3 engine was nearly ready to start but it was not having the propeller properly installed that prevented us from starting it at this time. The #3 propeller needs a special seal that we are waiting for which must be installed before starting.

Our maintenance team took great care to bring the engines back to life after sitting in the hangar since 2002. Hours were spent in the pre-oiling process which was accomplished per the engine maintenance procedures. Due to the critical cooling factors for the R-4360 engine, the cowlings were installed before starting. A safety brief was given to all the key personnel to insure everyone knew what to expect and what to do should something go wrong. Once all was ready, the big moment came. With no hesitation at all, engines #1, #2, and #4 started as though they had been running the day before. Oil pressures came right up within 5 seconds and after a 10 minute warm up, oil temperatures and cylinder head temperatures were also normal and stabilized. The engines were shut down after 15 minutes to inspect for leaks and to save the fuel for a much stronger run in April when the # 3 engine can also be started also.

Everyone can look forward to a future C-97 comprehensive newsletter report as we draw near to the big day when our C-97 will take to the air. We have received the formal letter from the good people at the National Park Service, Floyd Bennett Field, that the absolute last day to be out of the damaged hangar is April 10, 2015. We have been blessed to remain in the hangar for as long as we have. The good news is, it is more of a convenience to be out of the hangar at this time than in the hangar, in order to continue our engine runs and system checks.

Videos of the engine runs can be found online at these URLs

<http://www.spiritoffreedom.org/mpegs/>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlE82anu_Tw&noredirect=1
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2H6IA7YHM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcLFnOahOUo>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBoXA2CGkBk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOm4lIFwF0Y>

Below is a list of the remaining items to be performed on our C-97 before we can fly.

1. Run all engines until the on board fuel is depleted to perform a new re-weight of the aircraft.
2. Install the on board fire extinguishers
3. Have the aircraft weighed and a new weight and balance computed.
4. Have a Designated Airworthiness Representative inspect the aircraft and documents for the issuance of an Experimental Aircraft Airworthiness Certificate
5. Make arrangements to have fuel and oil delivered to Floyd Bennett Field.
6. Takeoff from Floyd Bennett Field to begin an approved Test Flight Program.

NOTE: In the future comprehensive C-97 newsletter report, there will be a request for financial support to help with item #5. After performing the new weight and balance procedure, the C-97 will be completely empty of fuel. It will take a minimum of 2000 gallons of fuel and 100 gallons of oil to safely depart Floyd Bennett Field.



The Mighty R-4360! **ABOVE:** Engine #4 is run after 12 years of inactivity. **BELOW:** #1 engine is also running. In all we ran #1, 2 and 4 engines and all seemed to run as if they were running the day before.

