

## **Volunteers to Mark Veteran's Day with Continued Restoration of World War II Boeing B-29 Superfortress in Wichita**

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"Doc" has come home again. It is not yet the gleaming, shiny B-29 Superfortress that Boeing workers proudly delivered in 1945 from the company's huge, then-new Wichita plant. And it is not yet ready for flight.

But the skies beckon, as hundreds of dedicated volunteers tenderly restore Doc, inch-by-inch, section-by-section, day-by-day - including Veterans Day - honoring an airplane that was a critical factor in the World War II Allied victory over Japan.

Eighty-year old Willis "Blackie" Rains, a wartime B-29 crewmember, has painstakingly recreated the original plywood navigator's station and other wood parts. Charles "CC" Briscoe (featured in Tom Brokaw's best-seller "The Greatest Generation") watched the first B-29 take off and is a regular volunteer. Former B-29 mechanic Mildred Jewell visited the project, remembering her work on the airplane's wing panels and - during the same period - when she had learned that her brother was killed in action in the Pacific.

Doc is one of nearly 1,644 World War II B-29 Superfortress bombers built by Kansans from 1943 to 1946. It was part of a nine-airplane squadron bearing the names of Walt Disney's Snow White characters, and dubbed "Doc." The historic bomber, rescued from a desert graveyard by U.S. Aviation Museum founder Tony Mazzolini, is believed to be the last B-29 anywhere that can be restored to flying condition. The project is a partnership effort between Boeing Wichita and the museum.

"Without Boeing's generosity and commitment, we could never have realized the work that is under way today," Mazzolini said. "And without the commitment of incredibly dedicated volunteers, the dream of completing this huge restoration would remain just that - a dream."

Hundreds of volunteers from all walks of life have donated thousands of hours since restoration officially began in May 2000.

Many are current and former Boeing employees, and a handful - like Briscoe - even helped build the bombers during the World War II. Others, however - including a piano repairman and a truck driver - had never been inside a Boeing plant. Equally important to the restoration are the in-kind contributions of parts, materials and expertise from vendors, businesses and aviation collectors throughout the country.

Boeing Wichita played a critical role in the production of the B-29. By the end of World War II, the plant had built nearly 65 percent of the total number of aircraft produced during the war, and earned five Army and Navy awards for production efficiency. At the height of production in 1944, 40,000 Boeing Wichita employees were rolling out nearly four B-29s every day.

Redelivery of Doc is planned for 2003 - the 100th anniversary of powered flight. Doc will then become a flying exhibit of American aviation history.

How you can help

In spite of the tremendous progress made over the last two years, there is a great deal of work to do before Doc returns to the skies. The largest task confronting the restoration is that of raising funds to rebuild Doc's large and powerful R-3350 engines. To volunteer, contact:

The United States Aviation Museum

Attention: Wayne M. Gomes  
B-29 Restoration Fund  
P.O. Box 2417  
Grand Junction, CO 81502

More information is available at <http://b-29.boeing.com/>

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