

JIMMY STEWART 310 UPDATE

by Bob Thomason, Editor

If you are like me, the story of the restoration of Jimmy Stewart's 310 warms your heart. For the complete history of this project see the article by TTCF member Chuck Jessen in the July 2015 issue of the Flyer. (Past magazine issues are archived on our online member Forum.)

The essential background is that Chuck, our group's unofficial historian for early 310s, located the 1961 310F owned by actor Jimmy Stewart. It was wasting away on a ramp in Texas. Chuck notified EAA Chapter 993 in Stewart's hometown of Indiana, PA, to see if they wanted to retrieve it and restore it. They did, so a group of them traveled to Texas to bring Stewart's 310 home in early 2015. Chapter volunteers have been working since then to get the airplane ready for display at the airport. Chapter President Harold Wood recently sent me the following update and pictures:

Bob, we have spent the summer rebuilding all of the fiberglass parts which were pretty well rotted out. It has been really challenging finding affordable parts. The tip tank lens pieces were going for \$900 each. I finally found some for \$125, but upon

receipt and inspection found the lens all crazed because of age. Also, one of the pieces had to be rebuilt as it had been cut off too short. A few hundred hours later, they are like new. We put red and green glass in rather than the original clear.

We exhibited the plane in June and have been building jigs to rotate the wings in the paint booth. We are moving them to a facility about 10 miles away, where they have a large enough paint booth to handle the parts. We will also paint the tip tanks and a few other pieces at the same time, as they are all beige color. The weather is beginning to get cool so the fuselage will not get painted until April.

We have a design for the pedestal completed by a professional engineer, but we have not reviewed it yet.

Ivan Stefanik, our best painter and volunteer, died several weeks ago after battling cancer for six years. He was the 58 years old, and one of the six to go get the plane in Texas last April. He has surely been missed. We knew it would not be easy, but we are making progress.

As far as I know at the moment the only items we are missing are a pitot tube, Cessna part #0813177-2, the tail light assembly on the stinger, p/n #0433006-2, and the retainer ring #0433006-12.

You'll be pleased to know that there have been quite a few Twin Cessnas that have stopped at the airport to check in on the project. They just stop in and ask where Jimmy Stewart's 310 is. In other cases, someone on the airplane mentions the project to a Twin Cessna pilot passing through. I probably should have been keeping a list, but know that people are hearing about it and are interested.

Harold and his team have made great progress on this amazing project. Some of the pictures that follow were sent after Harold's update above, so they show some of the completed painting.

As they near project completion, I'll be working with Harold and the airport to schedule a Twin Cessna Fly-In and Dedication. It will be a red letter day in Twin Cessna history.





Pictures on this page show the wings being transported to the paint shop and then painted. The fuselage will be painted this Spring. Above: EAA Chapter President, Harold Wood.



Left: Jimmy Stewart's 310F on display at the Indiana, PA, airport. It's already attracting crowds and it's not even finished yet! After this event, the airplane was disassembled and transported to the paint shop.

