

# MARAUDER

## UPDATE

**GREAT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE ON THE MAPS MARTIN B-26 / BY DAVE PAWSKI**  
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICK JOHNSON

It has been three-years since the last update on the progress of the MAPS (Military Aviation Preservation Society) Air Museum Martin B-26 Marauder *Charley's Jewel* in *Air Classics*. I am pleased to report much progress has been made during this time!

First, I wanted to share a very special event that occurred the weekend of 11/13 August 2017. As in many years past, we hosted the Collings Foundation fly-in consisting of the B-17, B-24, B-25, and the P-51. What really made this year special was having the Marauder outside to share the ramp with these magnificent birds!

On Friday morning, I actually went for a "ride" in the Marauder as we tugged her outside before the show. What an experience to hear panels flex and groan as her wheels rolled over the tarmac! She was staged next to the hangar and the tow bar was then removed. That is why she isn't a "static" restoration. Really, a non-flying airplane!

Later that day, the first Collings plane buzzed the hangar and it was the B-25. The Mitchell landed and taxied up, with the crackling of the exhaust stacks, right next to the Marauder! What a sight to have both medium types beside each other on the ramp after such a long time.

The TF-51D was next with growl of ally, the pair of heavies came in together — the B-24 and the B-17. The weather was marginal and some pop-up storms



**Bomb bay doors in place and open. Note the missing leading edge.**

threatened most of the day. So, we were thankful all planes made it in and only a little behind schedule.

Hosting all of these planes is the highlight of the year at MAPS. We always draw large crowds and most flights sell out, making it lucrative for Collings as well. We even pitch in and help when they have maintenance issues and assist with line crew, safety, crowd control, tour guides, and even as Flight Engineers!

The weather was perfect on both Saturday and Sunday. The Collings planes were busy giving flights and tours both days. During a break between flights, I invited several of the Collings pilots to sit inside the *Jewel* and take it all in. They were all



**A magnificent sight for all the volunteers — the Marauder on its gear and outside.**



**The Martin 250 turret provided by Carl Scholl of Aero Trader is seen under construction.**

impressed with the restoration. The seat was so comfortable; one pilot didn't want to leave.

The best story over the weekend was when one of my crew, Ray Hamlin, was inside the B-26 closing up for the night. All of a sudden he heard one radial engine cough to life, followed by a second. Then, the plane began to shudder. He had no idea what was going on. He looked up and saw the B-25 had started up for a ride and the prop wash was buffeting the *Jewel's* tail!

We heard nothing but great comments during the show and the milestone of having the four bombers on the tarmac together was really something. I hope to make it an annual event.

Here are some of the many highlights of the restoration team at MAPS over the last three-years:

**2014 B-26 REUNION:** One spe

**Even though a huge amount of work has been completed, there is still much to do.**

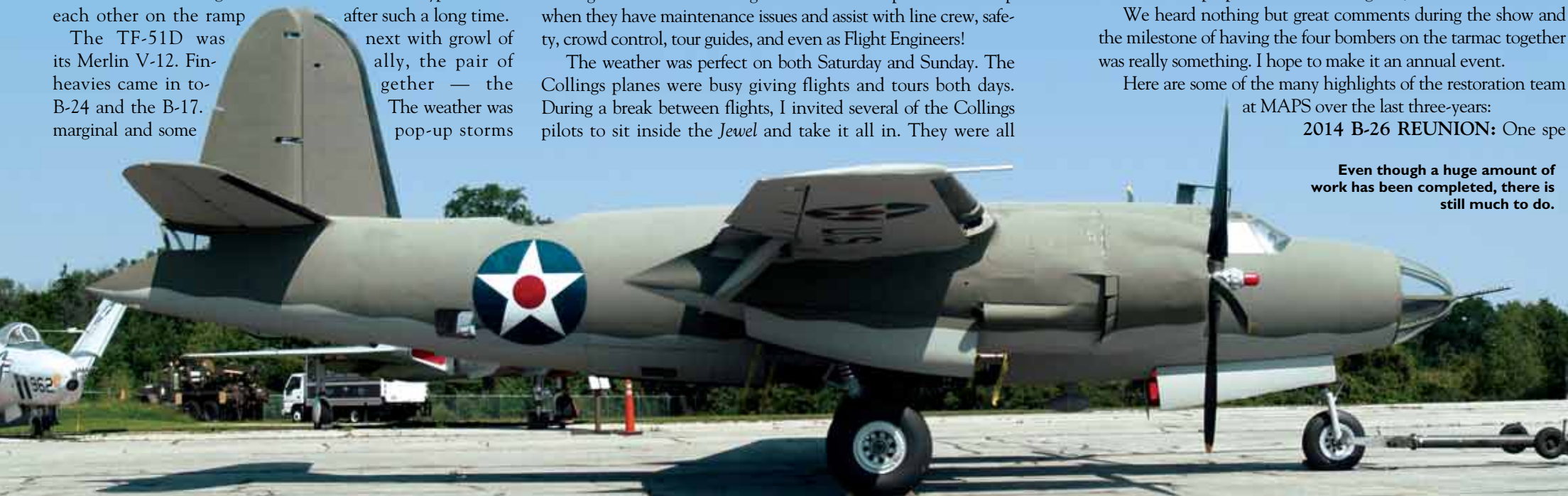
cial event was hosting the 2014 MHS (Marauder Historical Society) annual reunion. We were lucky to have 15 WWII flight and ground crew in attendance! The *Jewel* made the perfect backdrop for our banquet dinner.

Our keynote speaker was retired astronaut Tom Jones. Tom commented on his four Space Shuttle missions and an update on the B-26 *Flak Bait*, the first bomber to

complete 200 combat missions in WWII. *Flak Bait* is being cleaned, preserved, and assembled by a special team at the Smithsonian. She should be on display in several years and be the world's most authentic WWII aircraft.

**NOSE CONE:** One of the most asked questions is: "When will the nose cone be built?" Well, it's done! It was not feasible to produce it in the original two halves. Instead, we made it in eight equal sections of molded plexiglass. A support ring was made to mount to the fuselage. Ribs were fabricated to the original contours and riveted to the ring. This gave structure and support for the glass panels. A MAPS member runs a plastics shop and graciously provided the panels for only material cost. He has made all of the other windshield panels as well. After the panels were installed, the flat bomb sight panel was added.

We had a SNAFU when our Bofors gun was being pulled





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