

## Old Parts

There is a non-profit organization in southern Florida that has been operating since 1964. It provides flight services for people and cargo and mail for missionary workers in Haiti, Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas. Its name is Missionary Flights International (MFI, <https://www.missionaryflights.org>). Many of its workers are volunteers. It presently operates 2 DC-3 aircraft for most flights and a Cessna 310 for emergencies (911).



The very durable DC-3 aircraft date from the mid-1940s, with the military version named C-47. They can land on short, rough airfields. They originally had rotary piston engines. The MFI versions now have turboprop engines, generating more power on cheaper and more abundant jet aviation fuel. Anticipating a future need for another DC-3 aircraft, last year MFI acquired one from South Africa. It is now in a separate hanger. Its interior has been gutted and many exterior parts are being removed. Its wheels have been replaced by wooden blocks and a frame to hold up the aircraft.



View towards nose

View towards tail

In MFI's December newsletter was a request for volunteers to help with the refurbishing and restoration of this third aircraft, tail number N300MF. I was curious.

United Airlines sent me a notice that my frequent flier miles would expire at the end of January unless there was further activity on my account. I could have a nearly free

flight either to or from Florida. My Southwest Airlines account nearly had enough for a one-way flight. So I booked the flights for the later weeks of January and early February.

I have been an occasional financial contributor to MFI for several decades, since before they acquired their first turboprop conversion. Last year I read again their documentary book about relief flights after the 2010 Haiti earthquake. I also knew of their hurricane relief work this past Summer. MFI is a very trustworthy organization.

My supervisor, Brian Lites, correctly suspected that I would be good at organizing and documenting their

inventory of hardware parts. Most were bolts, screws, washers, nuts. Some were engine exhaust pipes and frame ribs. Some needed identifications. All needed input into a computer spread sheet with at least an approximate count of their quantities. That turned out to occupy most of my time with MFI.



Hardware parts



Instruments



Engine exhaust pipes



Aircraft frame ribs



Spreadsheet entry



Parts room shelves



N200MF landing after trip to Haiti.



N500MF being loaded with cargo.



Cargo waiting for first Cuba flight.



Room for incoming cargo sorting



Part of mail destined for the islands



The main MFI hangar at the Ft. Pierce airport in Florida.



One afternoon I was assigned to screw down the metal aisle panels in the working N500MF plane. I rejected about a dozen of the screws because of worn Philips heads, replacing them with new screws.



One sheet down, 3 more to do.

All done. Passenger seats on left, cargo right.

My final task was to start cleaning the emergency exit windows of the third DC-3. I finished dismantling the latching mechanism, then used the sand-blasting chamber to strip off the dirt and remaining paint. The cleaned parts turned bright metallic as

shown in the photo on the right. I did not finish cleaning the window frame before quitting time on my final Friday at MFI. But I enjoyed the process. At home I enjoy cleaning late Roman bronze coins under a microscope using needle points to carefully remove the corrosion and dirt. Cleaning the aircraft parts was much faster, but likely removed some of the metal surface. In trying to make the ancient coins readable I do not remove metal.



Emergency exit window before cleaning

Sand-blasting unit uses glass beads

Parts mostly cleaned

The working atmosphere at MFI is very pleasant. I was housed and fed with the family of the vice-president of MFI. On Monday morning the entire crew, both regular and volunteer workers, met together for a Bible study and group prayer for the first hour of the work day. The unity of purpose in serving various Christian missions reflected strongly in our interactions with each other during the weeks.

On Tuesday, January 30, I went to Orlando, Florida, to visit the Jesus Film Project headquarters. (<https://www.jesusfilm.org/>) I have sent monthly financial support to this group for several decades. I have gone on four foreign mission trips with them since 2002. Their main product is the Jesus Film, based on the Biblical account of Jesus by Luke. Since 1979 it has been translated into more than 1600 languages. They also have a Children's version, the Magdalena version, follow-up study films, and short discussion starter movies. I have often shown the Magdalena version to others using several different languages, as appropriate. At the headquarters they have three tours each day to explain the process of producing the Jesus Film in additional languages. The tours use an explanation that can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LovQhN5aWRI>. The purpose of my visit was to discuss a possible financial contribution towards the production of the



Magdalena movie about Jesus in the trade language of a particular small country.

Of course, in my free time I checked out several habitats for birds. My species count for the year, so far, increased from 35 for Colorado bird species to 50 additional species in Florida. I got better quality photos of many of them, now posted on my web site, and saw two species that were new to my lifetime list, bringing it to 1258 of the world's ten thousand species seen in the wild. So as usual, I will fill the remaining space with some of the bird photos, showing the glory of God's creation.

Dr. Ed Holroyd, 7 February 2018 for Florida trip of 22 January through 3 February.





Laughing Gull



Mottled Duck



Northern Mockingbird



Osprey



Ring-billed Gull



Palm Warbler



Red-bellied Woodpecker



Sharp-shinned Hawk



Sandhill Crane



White Ibis



Snowy Egret



Royal Tern



Ruddy Turnstone



Wood Stork



Bald Eagle



Fish Crow



Eastern Phoebe



Wood Stork

In the Ft. Pierce harbor I also saw three dolphins and one manatee, both aquatic mammals.



Alligator beside the pathway