



Case Study: Tourism/Non-Profit

Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum

Results

This project resulted in a completely new museum facility that enriches the cultural landscape of the Savannah, Georgia area and attracts new niche markets of tourists and scholars (military buffs, aviation aficionados, and WWII veterans and historians). Visitors to the museum often return, because the museum provides a unique central location of artifacts and other records that contain the history and experiences of pilots, bombardiers, and the support staff they relied upon to complete their missions. Savannah tourism has increased as a result of the museum development.

Situation

On January 28, 1942, fifty-three days after the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor, the Eighth Air Force was officially activated in the National Guard Armory on Bull Street in Savannah, Georgia.

In 1983 Major General Lewis E. Lyle, USAF Retired, a B-17 veteran of 70 combat missions during World War II, led a group of veterans in planning a museum. The Museum was intended to honor the men and women who helped defeat Nazi aggression by serving in or supporting the greatest air armada the world had ever seen--the Eighth Air Force. These individuals pledged themselves to honor the courage and commitment of more than 350,000 members of the Eighth Air Force. They sought to recognize the 26,000 members of the force who were killed in action and the 28,000 became prisoners of war.

Museum planners traveled throughout the United States and Europe visiting museums and talking with staff from these institutions. The very best elements of these facilities were then combined to create a dramatic 90,000 square foot museum complex.

Goals

The planners wanted to create a new museum that would:

- Educate people about the roles that the Eighth Air Force has played in the world since its inception
- Create a central repository for artifacts and information about the Eighth Air Force
- Provide a meeting area for reunions of veterans
- Serve as a fitting memorial to the valiant men and women who served in WWII and subsequent theatres of war

Strategy

The museum planners decided to hire an exhibit production company that had an excellent track record of success in completing museum projects on time, within budget, and of the highest possible quality.



Tactics

Michael Morrione served as the Project Manager. He was responsible for coordination of all design and production phases of this project, and he relocated from Atlanta to Savannah for the final three months of the project to supervise on-site construction of exhibits and displays.

He began by creating a model study and conceptual walk-through of the entire exhibit space. The architect used the approved final result of this process as the basis for construction documents. While the building was being constructed, the production team designed and built exhibits to occupy 45,000 square feet of exhibit space, selected appropriate photographs and incorporated them into narrative panels that explained the exhibits and tied them together thematically, and created a mission experience video that demonstrates the chaos of war during a bombing run over Europe during WWII.