

BRANIFF 747 WALL PANELS RESTORED - On Thursday, November 17, 2017, a set of six Boeing 747 panels, which were the same as the originals used in the interior on Braniff's first Boeing 747 were restored by Triumph Interiors. The vaunted aircraft refurbishment company donated their time to restore the panels for Braniff Airways Foundation.

In the spring of 2017, the Foundation began planning the 90th Anniversary events to celebrate the milestone birthday of Braniff Airways. Several key projects were identified that included recreating a portion of the First Class cabin of Braniff International's first Boeing 747, a series -127 registered as N601BN. The luxurious First Class cabin aboard 747 Braniff Place was dubbed the Blue Suite, because of the luxurious tones of blue that were used throughout the cabin. The Tourist Class cabins were also color-keyed to a specific color such as red, green and yellow, while the upstairs International Lounge retained its own unique look but without any specific single color way.

Once the specific 747 parts that would be needed were determined, a call to the Foundation's close friends at Logistic Air in Tucson, Arizona, was made at the end of March 2017, to begin procuring the scheduled parts. Six 747-100 wall panels featuring the unique lighted window trim were needed. Braniff's 747 featured overhead Passenger Service Units with lighting over each window, which were controlled from a switch on the armrest of each First Class seating unit. Logistic Air was able to find six panels from a former TWA Boeing 747-100 Jumbo Jet on April 7, 2017. At a later date, the matching DADO panels were also procured from the same jet.

The new panels were upholstered in a light beige color rather than Braniff's three shades of blue that were used on any single panel of two windows in N601BN. Soon, the six panels were enroute to the Foundation's headquarters in Dallas, Texas, aboard Plycon Van Lines, a shipper experienced in the movement of historical items. Once the panels arrived, they were dusted and then thoroughly cleaned. One of the panels was equipped with a magazine rack, which was retained. All six panels featured a 1/4 inch laminate trim line on the lower 1/4 of the panel, which was removed because Braniff's 747 did not use this trim item.

For the restoration of the panels, the Foundation contacted Triumph Interiors, on June 27, 2017. Triumph had donated their time to restore the Foundation's unique Braniff Jetway panels during the summer and fall of 2016. Triumph graciously agreed to restore the 747 panels and would again donate their time and labor. The Foundation would provide the necessary supplies for the restoration and deliver the panels to Triumph on July 7, 2017. Since the panels were not upholstered in the colors that matched Braniff's Blue Suite, it would be necessary to find replacement fabric or another suitable method to color the panels. Triumph suggested that the Foundation contact Schneller of Kent, Ohio, for assistance in color-matching the original Braniff wall colors and for finding the correct hair-cell textured fabric.

Schneller, an aircraft interior fabric and textile manufacturer, had supplied Braniff Airways, and Braniff, Inc., with their aircraft interior fabrics for decades. The original textile swatch books are housed in the archives of Braniff Flying Colors Collection, which contain the original Schneller products that were purchased by Braniff through the

years. However, only closeup photographic swatches were available for N601BN's colorful wall panels, which would require exact color matching to ensure that they were accurate. Boeing color codes were found for the three shades of blue that were used in the Blue Suite, which were then sent to Schneller along with the photographic swatches.

A special laboratory color-matching process was commenced. This process took approximately three weeks but the three colors were an exact match of the three blues Braniff originally selected, which included a gray-blue, purple-blue and dark blue. Each panel of two window units was painted in one of these colors and were then installed along the wall of the 747 in an alternating color fashion, which enhanced the dramatic beauty of the interior. Schneller donated the color matching but because of the cost of the aviation-grade wall laminate and their 40-yard minimum requirement for any color, it was decided to look for another source of fabric that could be matched to the three colors.

Several fabrics were reviewed but all were too thick to apply to the wall panels. Triumph Interiors suggested finding a suitable fabric paint that could be mixed to match each of the three colors. Triumph indicated that the results of using a fabric paint would have nearly the exact effect of changing out the material. A highly acclaimed leather and fabric paint was found and the three colors were matched. The paint, mixed by English Paints of Dallas, was expensive at \$140 per quart, which was \$420 for a quart of each color plus an additional \$130 for the low-gloss clear sealer that would be applied once the paint had cured sufficiently. The sealer would ensure that the fabric paint would not be altered by age and it would also protect against any scraping during handling.

The paint was delivered to Triumph Interiors and the restoration work began. One of the window shades was inoperable and a new track was created, which restored it to its correct operation. The rest of the windows and lighting worked as they should and did not require any additional restoration. Once the panels were cleaned and prepared, the first coats of paint were applied. A special base coat was applied first and then the color was sprayed. One quart of paint was used for two of the panels. Once the color was applied to all of the panels, Triumph requested that the Foundation send someone to review the color application and to make sure it was correct. Foundation Founder and President Ben Cass went to Triumph in October 2017 to review the work, which was found to be remarkable. The color match was perfect and the approval was given to begin spraying the low-gloss sealer coat.

In early November 2017, Triumph informed the Foundation that the work had been completed and the panels could be picked up at any time. On November 17, 2017, Mr. Cass drove the Foundation's Ford Expedition to get the panels, which were beautiful representations of the original N601BN wall panels. Triumph Interiors donated over \$10,000 USD of labor and time to restore the panels to their original Braniff Style. Braniff Airways Foundation cannot thank our great friends at Triumph Interiors enough not only for their generosity but for their expert craftsmanship that they use on our restoration projects.

While the six wall panels were now completed and the lower DADO panels with dark blue carpeting have been purchased, there are still parts that need to be found to

complete the cabin mockup. The overhead PSU panels and overhead bins are still needed along with one pair of the unique wraparound First Class dual seating units. Two pairs of seats are already owned by the Foundation, which are covered in the 1977 Argentine Leather in brown. Seat tracks to attach the seats to the floor have been procured but dark blue carpet will need to be found.

Braniff Airways Foundation
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