DOUG'S FRIDAY NIGHT OLDIES

OUR GREAT WHITE NORTH EDITOR DELVES INTO HIS EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF KODACHROMES. DOUG AND HIS FATHER HAVE BEEN TAKING AIRCRAFT PHOTOS SINCE THE 1930s.

IF READERS WOULD LIKE TO SHARE THEIR PHOTOS OR HAVE FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT DOUG AT *DFISHER@WARBIRDDEPOT.COM*

BY DOUG FISHER

As we have mentioned several times in recent issues, the Consolidated PBY Catalina series, once relatively plentiful, has taken a drastic decline over the past few years. This Catalina had been rotting for years in Puerto Rico but was purchased in 2013 by the Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Trust for about $20,000, thus saving the aircraft from a date with the scrapman. RAAF Base Rathmines was located on Lake Macquarie (saltwater) in New South Wales, Australia, and was a critical base during the dark, early days of the war. A wide variety of amphibians/flying boats operated from the base, including many Catalinas. After military service, the aircraft carried the civil registrations (oldest first) N10024, N96R, YV-P-EPX, VY-P-EPZ, YV-O-CFO-4, YV-56CP, YV-585CP, YV-485C, and N7238Z. The Cat was disassembled and shipped in five sections to Australia.

During the 1950s and 1960s, it seemed that wherever cargo/passengers had to be hauled, then there was a Curtiss C-46 Commando present to do the work. Then, Commando operating areas seemed to narrow to Alaska/Canada and Latin America. Today, there are just very few operating in the Great White North and that is about it. In Latin America, where it seemed the Commando had become the national bird, the hard-working fleet was simply worn out or crashed. In Norway, the Fred Olsen Lines operated a small fleet of Commandos and it was not uncommon to see the aircraft at Europe's major airports. Today that sight is, unfortunately, long gone.

Interesting view of a Cavalier Mustang 2000 wearing one of the company's gray, white, and black "executive" color schemes of the late 1960s. As can be seen, several areas of N6851D have been stripped but we do not know if this is from damage repair or if it was being prepped for new paint. Sold at one of the McClellan AFB Mustang auctions, P-51D-30-NA USAAF 44-74694 was originally registered N7720C to Ed Menke of Chicago on 15 October 1958. He sold the plane on 24 July 1960 and the new owner managed to flip the plane on its back at Pelston, Michigan, during May 1963. Sold soon after, the aircraft went through a couple of owners and was registered N16S on 24 August 1966. On 12 June 1957, the Mustang was purchased by Gerald Tyler and registered N6851D. Tyler was general manager for Cavalier. The plane went through the Cavalier conversion process and was deregistered on 27 March 1969 after being sold in Italy. The Mustang was ferried across the Atlantic and became I-BILL with Ditta Billi of Florence, Italy. It appears that the craft was sold to well-known Warbird pilot Ormond Haydon-Baille in 1977 but he exceeded his resume on 3 July 1977 when he crashed the plane during a display at Mainz, Germany, killing not only himself but a young passenger who had won a ride in the P-51.