THE FOLLOWING STORY IS TAKEN FROM A 30 AUGUST 1981 INTERVIEW WITH THE LATE TOM COLAHAN, CHIEF ENGINEER FOR DON McVICAR'S COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORT COMPANY, WORLDWIDE AVIATION AGENCIES AND SALES LIMITED, DORVAL AIRPORT, MONTREAL, QUEBEC

DOMINICAN MOSQUITO CAPER

BY NORMAN MALAYNEY

McVicar with one of his Mosquitoes.

During the late 1940s, the Dominican government managed to obtain surplus Royal Air Force Bristol Beaufighter and de Havilland Mosquito aircraft from England for the *Compania de Aviacion*. The fully armed aircraft were flown across the Atlantic Ocean via Montreal to Santo Domingo during 1947/1948.

Tom Colahan knew one of the ferry pilots from the war years and he stayed at Colahan's residence in Montreal. Colahan and Don McVicar learned the background history regarding the aircraft sale and Dominican Air Force requirements.

A government under dictator Rafael Trujillo ruled the island nation. Previously, the US government blocked the sale of surplus military aircraft and equipment to the dictator. But private agents acting as intermediaries managed to acquire and sell surplus RAF aircraft to the Trujillo regime (EDITOR'S NOTE: These "private agents" were usually the easiest way for dictators to obtain military supplies since the USA often refused to sell military supplies to such nation and this form of quasi-smuggling was quite effective).

In 1948, the Nationalist Government of China purchased all remaining surplus Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Mosquitoes. However, several examples remained in storage with No. 1 Equipment Depot (1 ED), RCAF Weston, Ontario. The records for No. 1 ED show the RCAF transferred all surplus Mosquitos to the War Assets Corporation (WAC) on 5 September 1947 for sale to China. Apparently, ten examples were to be retained for mainplane (wing) testing by the National Research Council (NRC) in Ottawa (the NRC also did this with numerous P-51D wings — as did the Swiss Air Force and this can be seen in the Winter issue of our companion magazine *Mustangs International*).

In 1950, Crumlin became RCAF London.

The twin-engine wooden aircraft were in storage at a satellite facility at RCAF Station Crumlin (in 1950 it became RCAF Station London), Crumlin Airport, London, Ontario.

By 3 October, de Havilland of Canada Limited ordered a halt to removal of wings and engines from the Crumlin Mosquitoes — awaiting clarification of the impending sale. Nothing further is noted in the records. A possible best-case scenario: It is presumed five Mosquitos had their wings removed and shipped to NRC, or these aircraft were sold to China. This left five Mosquito aircraft in storage at Crumlin Airport, later joined by a Mosquito instructional airframe from RCAF Station Trenton.

In 1951, McVicar was surprised to learn that Kenting Aviation Limited, Toronto, Ontario, had purchased two surplus ex-RCAF Mosquitoes. He sent Colahan to RCAF Station London at Crumlin Airport to investigate several Mosquito airframes reported in storage. At that location, he found three engineless examples with their propellers removed but laying nearby; two were stored in a hangar and one sat outside. All three were cocooned, in excellent condition and complete in every respect regarding avionics and instrumentation.

McVicar inquired by letter to the Dominican government if they had any interest in obtaining these Mosquitoes. They certainly did.

Don then contacted the Canadian Department of External Affairs seeking permission to export surplus RCAF aircraft to the Dominican Republic. External Affairs refused to allow the sale to proceed. McVicar raised the issue of England supplying surplus Beaufighters and Mosquitoes to the Dominicans. After further deliberation External Affairs waivered the embargo and allowed the sale of surplus aircraft to proceed.

According to the local *London Free Press* newspaper, "... six Mosquitoes remained stored cocooned at Crumlin Airport and kept in immaculate condition for an emer-

Finished in overall silver/aluminum dope, Dominican Air Force Mosquito 2106 presents a sad sight as it sits pranged in the snow at the Rutland Airport in Vermont during February 1952. The spinners and portions of the cowling had been removed so that the Merlins could be inspected. FAD 2106 was then jacked up and moved into a hangar for landing gear repair and an engine change. (Tom Colahan)

AS WE GOTO PRESS: As this issue was being prepared for the printer, author Norm Malayney discovered a bit of extra information that we wanted to include. Like us, Norm enjoys trolling through old newspapers and just before press, he found the following item in the 12 April 1952 edition of the *Greensboro Daily News,* North Carolina: "On 11 April Alvin Iba, a ferry pilot flying an English twin-engine Mosquito bomber from Canada to the West Indies, was glad to see the extended runway of the Danville Airport 10-miles away under his port wing. For just at that moment, one of the motors conked out. Iba feathered the blades, lost altitude, and made a safe landing with one engine. The cooling system defect was repaired and the pilot resumed his trip."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the type of detail we like to bring to readers of *Warbirds International* and I personally believe that few, if any, other magazines would go to the trouble. It takes a great researcher like Norm to find these minor facts and figures, but it all goes into the overall recording of aviation history.