

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

NORTH AMERICAN P51-D-25-NA MUSTANG
44-73415/RCAF 9289/US CIVIL N6526D/9133M
ACCESSION NUMBER: 1990/0692/A

- 11 Mar 44 Ordered under contract No.AC-2378. Built at the North American Aviation Factory at Inglewood. Manufacturers number 122-39874.
- 14 Mar 45 Accepted by USAAF.
- 14 Mar 45 Available for delivery.
- 15 Mar 45 Delivered; assigned to Air Transport Command for ferrying to Third Air Force.
- Departed Inglewood en route to Page Field, Fort Myers, FL, via Long Beach (15 Mar 45 - weather), Dallas (16 Mar 45) and Inglewood (17 Mar 45).
- 18 Mar 45 Arrived Page Field. The *Individual Aircraft Record Card* for 44-73415 does not indicate the unit to which this aircraft was allocated at this time; however, the *Army Air Force Installations Directory: Continental United States* states that Page Field was a Combat Crew Training Station (Fighter), III Fighter Command, Third Air Force as at 1 August 1945.
- 15 Nov 4? Transferred from 302 AAF Base Unit to No.4160 AAF Base Unit, Hobbs AFB, NM, San Antonio Air Material Area, Air Technical Service Command (subsequently Air Material Command).
- Transferred to 4121 AAF Base Unit, Kelly AFB, San Antonio Air Material Area, Air Material Command. Placed in storage.
- 13 Sep 50 Declared surplus to USAF. Delivered to Air Material Command, Glendale Field for storage.
- 08 Feb 51 Taken on charge with Royal Canadian Air Forces as s/n 9289.

The Royal Canadian Air Force Auxiliary Fighter Squadrons began operating P51-D Mustangs in 1947, arrangements having been made with the US Government to purchase via the US Foreign Liquidation Office 130 in all, delivered from June 1947. The final 43, including the RAFM aircraft, were delivered to the RCAF early in 1951. Serial numbers were allocated in two blocks, 9221-9300 inclusive having Packard Merlin V-1650-3 engines, (including 9289) and 9551-9600 having Packard Merlin V-1650-7 engines. The RCAF referred to the aircraft as the 'Tactical Fighter Mk.IV' and the Mustangs served until withdrawn by the end of 1956.

Mustang 9289 served with a tactical fighter unit, No.403 'City of Calgary' Sqn RCAF based at Calgary, Alberta, with the squadron codes PR, 403 Squadrons' aircraft wore the standard RCAF natural aluminium overall with white rudders, wing tips, elevators and spinners. On both sides of the fuselage just aft of the firewall position a 'Demon' emblem was placed, consisting of a red circle enclosing the head, which was also in red, the colour being a 'fire-engine' tone. Many aircraft carried the last three letters of the serial number as part of the fuselage code, i.e. PR-289 and underwing rocket rails. Photo of 9289 - Air Enthusiast May/June 2001 p.49.

- 22 Jun 51 Date officially posted to US Government Military Aid Program -NB after transfer to RCAF. Presumably a 'Paper' transaction.

- 21 Jul 58 Declared surplus minus engine, presumably after some 18 months in store after withdrawal of the Mustang by the RCAF. Sold to James H Defuria and Partners of Dewitt, New York, who purchased 71 of the 87 surplus RCAF P-51s bought by civilians c.1958-1961.

- 01 Jul 59 Noted parked beside the main highway at Conastota, New York along with 13 other ex-RCAF Mustangs - most markings had been scraped off these aircraft by this stage. (For these and other historical data on RCAF Mustangs see AAHS Journal Vol.14 No.4)

- 21 Mar 60 Sold to R Ferrer, New York.

- 15 Feb 62 Major damage at Richmond, Virginia.

- Dec 62 After repair, photographed at Phoenix - see AAHS 14 (4) p.252.

- Jan 66 To Frederick Wild, New York.

- Jan 66 Sold to Air Lease, Chicago for \$8,100.

- 10 Jan 66 Leased to Dr Frank Guzman.

- 28 Feb 68 Sold to Dr Guzman.

- 1969 Sold to Don Bateman, Panorama City, California.

- 17 Jun 69 Sold to Michael Couthes, California.

- 1969 To H Matteri, Florida.

- Early 77 To Dr William Veatch, Olympia, Washington.

- 19 Mar 77 Aircraft destroyed in major accident at Olympia Municipal Airport, Washington at 13.46 hours, when the engine failed whilst climbing out for a local flight. Unnamed Instructor pilot (not the owner) and passenger killed (the aircraft had presumably been converted to two-seat configuration at some stage since 1958).

- 1985-89 Rebuilt on behalf of Eagle Squadron Association by Kal Aero Services, California in an exchange deal with the MOD for ex- Bentley Priory Gate Guard Spitfire XV1 SL574. The Fuselage of N6526D was the basis of the rebuild, together with other parts from a former Indonesian Air Force P-51D, and was intended for display at the RAFM.

- 13 Feb 89 Arrived at RAF Lyneham from the US on a RAF Hercules aircraft.
- Mar 89 To RAF Halton for assembly and handover.
- 20 Apr 89 Official handover ceremony at RAF Halton. Photo: FlyPast June 1989; Aeroplane Monthly Jun 89 p.325.

The restoration work by Kal Aero was not of a sufficient standard, therefore largely voluntary work from No.1 SoTT Halton took place Jun 1989-Jun 1990 to bring the Mustang up to Museum exhibition standard. Work required included: Repair and correct fitting of engine cowlings; manufacture and fitting of engine carburettor air intake scoops and ducting; fitting of radio aerial; three skin repairs on fuselage; provision of gun port leading edges; correct fitting of all flying controls; complete respray (original restoration lacked even primer paint); provision of all hydraulic pipelines and components in undercarriage bays. (See 'Main Point' Oct 90.) Restoration began with dismantling of the aircraft in June 1989.

- 14 Jun 90 Having been restored for a second time, the completed Mustang was displayed at Halton's open day. Photo – Aircraft Illustrated March 1990 p.162.

The aircraft is painted in the markings of the 8th United States Army Air Force, 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter squadron at Leiston, Suffolk. This unit was the first Mustang Group assigned to the 8th Air Force. The individual aircraft markings are those of Flt Lt Cleland, RNZAF - one of the few Commonwealth pilots who did an exchange posting with the Americans. Since the aircraft was supplied by the Eagle Squadron Association it was thought appropriate if a scheme could be found which covered a posting in reverse.

- c.Mar 1991 Delivered to RAFM Hendon and displayed in Bomber Command Hall ever since. Photo as delivered – The Flying M February 1991 p.15.
- 14 Jul 03 By road to RAFM Cosford for continued display, as due to be replaced at Hendon by new Mustang donated by Bob Tullius, 'Donald Duck'. Photo displayed at Cosford – Flypast October 2003 p.10. Name 'Isabel III' painted on cowling. Photo – Flypast December 2003 p.45.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON

Sources: USAAF/USAF *Individual Aircraft Record Cards*, USAF Historical Research Agency; *Army Air Force Installations Directory: Continental United States*, Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Washington D, 1 August 1945, Robert Muller, *Air Force Base, Volume 1: Active Air Force Bases within the United States of America on 1 January 1974*, Research Division, Albert F Simpson Historical Research Center, department of the Air Force, 1982.