

# HOT DOG STAND LIBERATOR

DETAILED RESEARCH HAS UNCOVERED THE FACTS BEHIND A MOST UNUSUAL POST-WAR LIBERATOR. WE ALSO EXAMINE PALM SPRING AIR MUSEUM'S P-63 AND PRESENT INFORMATION ON OTHER "ROADSIDE" WARBIRDS

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The Springs Park Liberator, C-87 42-107257, served as a hot dog stand for years at the amusement park. The fuselage was the kitchen and new-build wings served as the roofs over screened-in eating and display areas. (Springs Close Family Archives)

Numerous surplus aircraft were put to some unusual uses in the years following World War II. There was the B-17G gas station in Milwaukie, south of Portland, Oregon (now under long-term restoration to fly); a BT-13 on a gas station in Caruthers, California (still there); and 20 miles to the north a Waco CG-4A glider sitting on top of a tire shop in Fresno that was removed and restored (now on display at the Silent Wings Museum in Lubbock, Texas). There was even a C-46A Commando, USAAF 41-12404, that was converted into a home in Rubidoux, California — and it is still there to this day (see "Casa de Commando," *Air Classics* July 2016). Certainly, one of the most unusual uses for a war-surplus Consolidated B-24 was the "Hot Dog Stand Liberator."

Fort Worth, Texas-built, Consolidated C-87 Liberator Express USAAF 42-107257, was a transport

version of the famous B-24 Liberator bomber. Gone were the bomb bays, bombardier's position, gunners and gun turrets, and in their place was a large side cargo door, an interior that could be configured to carry freight or up to 25 passengers. The former bombardier's compartment was used to transport mail and smaller packages.

Liberator Express 42-107257 was delivered on 23 May 1943, and was flown to Dallas, Texas, some five days later, on 28 May. The plane was headed overseas and on 8 June 1943 the Liberator Express departed the United States and was assigned to the India-China Wing of the Air Transport Command (ATC).

After service in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater, the Liberator Express returned to the United States, entering through the 1105th Base Unit (Foreign Transport Station, Caribbean

A most interesting photo of both aircraft. The nose of the P-63 has a panel with "A9" but this may be a replacement because of the different color of paint. However, it would indicate a training unit code and that leads to some confusion on the P-63's actual identity. It also appears that the .50-caliber machine guns are in place. (Springs Close Family Archives)