



SURPLUS EX-MILITARY AIRCRAFT LONG BEFORE THEY BECAME MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR RESTORATIONS

The North American FJ-4 Fury was the most attractive of all the Fury variants. It was also a heavily armed, potent, high-performance warplane that was a big step over earlier versions. Unfortunately, few FJ-4 Furies have survived and only one was operated in civilian use. That aircraft is FJ-4B BuNo 143575 and it had served with VA-192 — the Golden Dragons aboard USS *Bon Homme Richards*. Somehow, the plane did not get scrapped after storage at NAF Litchfield Park and it wound up at a small local airfield. Acquired by Flight Systems to join their collection of ex-military aircraft utilized for test work, the plane received the civilian registration of N9255 and then N400FS to keep with company registration policy. With Flight Systems, it was worked hard and could often be seen operating out of Mojave Airport with a variety of underwing loads. It was also utilized for Pershing missile profile testing and could be heard breaking the sound barrier over the field. It suffered a nose gear collapse landing at Mojave that wrecked the nose and this seemed to be the end of its flying career. Fortunately, with the help of *Air Classics*, a spare nose was found and the Fury is seen with that unit installed. By 1991, the plane had logged a very impressive 700 hours of test flying but after contracts ran out it was then parked and its condition went downhill. It must be remembered that these aircraft were viewed as working "tools" and when their utility, or profitability, ran out then they were simply parked. The FJ-4 was obtained by a wealthy individual and restored in its original markings but it was also belly-landed twice when the owner forgot to lower the gear. Acquired by Rod Lewis, the plane is now nearing the end of a lengthy restoration and Rod said, "It will be refinished in VA-192 markings and is going to be a real beauty. It will also be the only flying Fury and will serve as a memorial to the Navy and Marine pilots and squadrons that flew the type."



During WWII, we provided many of our Allies with large numbers of aircraft and one of those was Brazil. In order to train more pilots, that nation received 103 Fairchild PT-19 primary trainers and in order to get the trainers to Brazil in the quickest time possible, the decision was made to fly them from the factory at Hagerstown, Maryland, to Rio de Janeiro — a modest distance of 8000 miles. These flights took an average of 110 flight hours spread over 25 days. Amazingly, only one machine was lost — 1st Lt. Kenneth L. Mollineaux went down in the jungle in the northern state of Amapac during a severe storm. Also, Brazil received a license to build the type and 232 PT-19s were built by *Fabrlica do Galeao* at Galeao Air Base. After the war, some of these planes went on the Brazilian civil register including the colorful PP-GFT that was photographed at Sao Paulo on 6 April 1975.



The de Havilland Tiger Moth did not look out of place at Cole Palen's fabulous Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in New York. It certainly had a Great War appearance and the engine actually dates back to that time period. Over the years, Tigers have been extensively modified to appear as WWI aircraft for various aviation-themed films. N24SS was photographed wearing a civilian scheme but with Royal Canadian Air Force roundels and was apparently on a visit to the Aerodrome.