



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



Built as 44-34713, this Douglas A-26B-66-DL Invader served in Indochina with France's *Armee de l'Air* during the early 1950s. By 1955, it was stored at Clark Field in the Philippines prior to being put up for sale. Sold as N5538V, the aircraft was converted by On Mark as Marketeer N36BB *Coastal Luck IV* and finished in a very attractive yellow and white scheme. Fitted with upgraded R-2800s, paddle blade propellers, spinners, and speed rings, the plane was an exceptional performer. It was used in the film *Cash McCall* and in 1974 acquired by Mickey Rupp who applied this striking black color scheme as N26MR. It was then acquired by Don Whittington as N26WB. By 1988 it was with the Wayne County Sheriff Department in Detroit. It was then transferred to the National Warplane Museum in Geneseo, New York, and fitted with an eight-gun nose, which did not go well with the executive conversion. Today, the plane is in semi-derelict condition at Las Cruces, New Mexico.



By the time Stearman N64991 was photographed in the 1970s, the venerable Kaydet was fast disappearing from the agricultural scene as it was replaced by larger and more efficient turboprop aircraft. Built as PT-17 c/n 75-3496, it was transferred to the US Navy as N2S BuNo 30057. The registration for the Stearman was cancelled in 1977.

On the ramp and ready to go at Mojave Airport during 1977, Douglas A-26B-20-DL 41-39215 N142ER had been operated by Embry Riddle Institute of Daytona Beach, Florida, hence the ER in the registration. Originally sold surplus as N5292V, the aircraft was converted to a Marketeer by On Mark Engineering with the registration N4000M. As can be seen, the plane was fitted with long-range drop tanks and at this point it was one of several drug running Invaders owned by Milt Stollak. The condition of the plane went downhill and it was acquired by an aviation museum and on 17 March 1985 it was being ferried gear down to a restoration facility. The aircraft was in poor condition and little had been done to ready it for the ferry flight. The accessory section for the left P&W R-2800 developed a fire and this resulted in the loss of fuel to the engine. Then, the right engine quit due to water in the fuel. Neither propeller was feathered and, with the gear down, the Invader dropped out of the sky trailing flame from the left wing. After a hard impact at Lawton, Oklahoma, the three aboard managed to scramble to safety but the plane was virtually destroyed by fire. The NTSB found that there had been inadequate maintenance, poor pre-flight planning, and operation with known deficiencies in equipment. The wreck was combined with wreckage from several other Invaders and made into a poor likeness of a US Navy JD-1 and traded to the Navy Museum at Pensacola. At this time, there was a profitable business in trading poorly restored aircraft to military museums.