

FRIDAY NIGHT OLDIES



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SURPLUS MILITARY AIRCRAFT WERE SUBJECTED TO NUMEROUS MODIFICATIONS AND COLOR SCHEMES PRIOR TO BECOMING VALUED — AND EXPENSIVE — COLLECTOR ITEMS. IN THIS SEGMENT, WE PRESENT A VARIETY OF UNSUAL AND INTERESTING AIRCRAFT



P-51D-25-NA 44-73483 was another Mustang that sold at the USAF Mustang auction, going for the sum of \$917. It briefly received the civil registration N7714C and the new owner was Trans-Florida Aviation (to become Cavalier). Overhauled, the aircraft was given what became known as the "Cavaller-style" paint design in red, white, and black and the registration N351D. Put up for sale, it went through numerous owners and in 1964 was with Jack Shaver, who participated in the first-ever Reno Harold's Club Transcontinental Trophy Dash from St. Petersburg, Florida, to Reno. It wasn't exactly a dash — N351D took 9:12 hours at 261-mph to go the distance and came in fifth. By 1966, it was with race pilot Mike Loening but was heavily damaged in a crash at Eutawala, Alabama. The wreck was purchased by Cavalier and broken down for parts.



Arriving in Italy, the Mustang had its registration N6851D cancelled on 27 March 1969 and it became I-BILL with new owner Ditta Billi of Florence. At that time, the aircraft received a dramatic overall yellow paint scheme with black and red trim. The plane became a popular airshow item. In 1977, it appears the aircraft was purchased by well-known British Warbird pilot Ormand Haydon-Baillie. The ownership did not last long. On 3 July of that year, Haydon-Baillie took the aircraft aloft with a teenage passenger in the rear seat who had apparently won a ride as a prize at an airshow in Mainz, Germany. During the display, the Mustang, pilot, and passenger went straight into the ground. Haydon-Baillie, although British, had served in the RCAF and left that service with some bad memories. After his demise, his former RCAF squadron commander wrote that Haydon-Baillie "had started to believe his own resume." Brother Wensely Haydon-Baillie also had a love of fast boats and planes and seems to have taken over Ormand's collection. He owned a company that claimed to have a cure for herpes and investors poured in millions. It didn't and in 1998 he admitted to being \$20,000,000 in debt.



Interesting view of P-51D-30-NA USAAF 44-74694/N6851D on the Cavalier Aircraft ramp at Sarasota, Florida. This Mustang last saw service with the Wyoming and West Virginia Air National Guards before it was flown to McClellan AFB in Sacramento, California, and prepared for the USAF's massive P-51 auction. The aircraft received a bill of sale on 15 October 1958 along with the civil registration N7720C. As with the majority of aircraft sold at the auction, very little maintenance went into the new purchases and they were flown by pilots with varying skill levels. N7720C wound up on its back after a landing accident at Pelston, Michigan, during May 1963. Repaired, the aircraft went through numerous owners and in 1966 it was reregistered as N16S (with both these

registrations, the aircraft was poorly photographed). By 1968, it had become N6851D (one of the "customized" N numbers applied to Cavalier P-51s) and the registered owner was Gerald Tyler, general manager of Cavalier. The aircraft had received many Cavalier modifications, including the twelve-inch vertical fin cap and tinted canopy. The plane had been finished in an "executive" Cavalier scheme of gray, white, and black. In the photo, portions of the fuselage paint have been stripped while other panels have been zinc-chromated. Long-range fuel tanks are also added under the wing, which is painted white with red trim (possibly left over from its previous scheme). During December 1968, Tyler ferried the aircraft to Italy in a little-publicized flight.