

FRIDAY NIGHT OLDIES



BY DOUG FISHER

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

Back in Mexico, work became slim for the Mosquito and the hot and humid climate rapidly played havoc with the wooden construction. The aircraft was dragged to several locations at Mexico City Airport but its final resting place was near a hotel and it gained the nickname "Holiday Inn Mosquito." When *Air Classics* began its popular "Warbird Report" decades ago, the rotting aircraft was featured in several photographs. Interest in acquiring and restoring ex-WWII planes was just picking up and the photos caught the attention of Mike Meeker in Canada. With more enthusiasm than perhaps common sense, Meeker went to Mexico City and examined the remains. By now, the aircraft was in an area of extreme squalor but as soon as a "gringo" expressed interest in what was left, the remains suddenly assumed the value of a rare religious icon.



For many years, Whiteman Airpark held the mortal remains of a de Havilland Mosquito. Readers of this publication know the rare "Wooden Wonder" gradually rotted away until the final bits and pieces were saved and restored into a magnificent flying example by Avspecs in New Zealand. A less well-known fact is that Whiteman was briefly home to another Mosquito. Painted in a striking red and white scheme, Mosquito B. Mk. 35 N6867C was photographed in 1957 parked next to Hank Coffin's Flying Service hangar at the field. The aircraft was delivered to the USA from surplus Royal Air Force stocks as N9911F during 1956 in a transatlantic flight and a photo of the plane may be found in "Friday Night Oldies" March 2026. At that time, the white areas in this photograph were painted a light blue. There was a small market for surplus Mosquitos to be utilized in aerial mapping and the craft was originally acquired by Fotogrametric Engineers in Los Angeles. On 22 May 1956, it was registered to McIntyre & Quiros, another mapping company (and probably a derivation of the first), and flown to Mexico City where it began operating as XB-TOX. After a brief stint in Mexico, it returned to the USA where it was registered N6867C on 6 May 1957. What is a bit unusual is that the light blue areas were resprayed white. After a short time at Whiteman Airpark, the aircraft returned to Mexico where it resumed the registration XB-TOX.

A deal was eventually struck and Meeker and friends began to disassemble what was left of the once-elegant aircraft. The wooden structure literally fell apart as the men attempted to disassemble components. Besides the metal parts such as cowlings and spinners, there really wasn't much worth salvaging. What was taken went to British Columbia but an ambitious restoration plan using the remains of another airframe fell through. Bits and pieces went to other owners and some surviving components are now with the American Heritage Museum.

