

AZ Flyer News

Fall 2015

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▶ Annual renewal notices for 2016 aircraft registration will be sent mid-December.
- ▶ Has your mailing address or email address changed since last year?
- ▶ Are you receiving annual renewal notices via email? It's not too late to sign-up for email notifications.
- ▶ For changes contact the Aircraft Registration Unit at 602.712.6995 or email acreg@azdot.gov
- ▶ To avoid penalty and late fees, the payment must be received or postmarked by February 28.
- ▶ Avoid postage fees; pay on-line 24 hours a day by check, credit or debit card. It's easy, fast and secure: azdot.gov/aircraftregistration
- ▶ On or after March 1st, the late penalty is \$25.00 for the 1st month and \$5.00 each succeeding month of delinquency.



GENERAL MACARTHUR'S 'BATAAN' AIRPLANE TO FLY AGAIN



By: Debbie Meleshko

Some rare and historically significant aircraft reside in the State of Arizona at the Planes of Fame Air Museum 'Where Aviation History Lives' located at 755 Mustang Way, Valle Airport, Williams, Arizona.

One aircraft currently undergoing restoration at the Museum is a 1948 Lockheed VC-121A Constellation serial number 48-613.

Due to their long-range flying ability, the Constellations AKA 'Connies' were involved in the Berlin Airlift making constant Atlantic crossings delivering cargo and passengers to Europe.

At the conclusion of the Airlift the C121's were withdrawn from service and converted to be used as high-speed VIP transport for the U.S. Air force. The cargo interiors were removed, additional windows were added and weather radar fitted to the nose converting it to a VC-121A. In 1950, number '613' became the flying command post of General Douglas

MacArthur Supreme Commander Allied Powers during the Korean War. General MacArthur named number 613 the 'Bataan'.

The General flew many missions in the Bataan over Korean battlefields including his only meeting on Wake Island in 1950 with President Truman. April 16, 1951, MacArthur flew on the Bataan to Andrews AFB, Maryland where he was relieved of his command for making unauthorized political statements. The aircraft returned the General to San Francisco.

Aircraft number 613 was used to transport MacArthur's successors, Generals Ridgeway and Clark then assigned to the ranking Army General in the Pacific based at Hickam AFB in Hawaii. The aircraft was also used by newly elected President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard M. Nixon during inspection tours of Korea. Number 613 was retired from Air Force service along with the other C121A's in 1966 and sent to Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona and placed in storage.

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Many were stripped of military equipment and sold to civilian operators and used as bug-sprayers or to fight fires. Number 613 was assigned to NASA and the Apollo space program.

Re-designated as NASA 422, the airplane was fitted with banks of computers, tracking equipment and communications gear used to calibrate air and ground-based tracking and communications relay stations around the world. The aircraft was flown over the Caribbean and Pacific keeping in constant contact with orbiting spacecraft.

When the Apollo space program was cancelled in 1970, number 422 was sent to the Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, Alabama for public display.

In 1992, a new museum curator decided number 422 did not fit into his overall plans and prepared to scrap it. After 22 years of being displayed in the open the aircraft was acquired by Planes of Fame Air Museum owner Ed Maloney. Planes of Fame mechanics arrived and began work on the aircraft to prepare it for flight and after nine months the aircraft left Fort Rucker for its new home at the Planes of Fame Museum.

Currently the aircraft is undergoing restoration at the Planes of Fame Valle/Grand Canyon facility in Valle, Arizona.

The aircraft has been outfitted with an exact reproduction of the original VIP interior and is undergoing a full restoration to flying condition. Once completed the Bataan will fly to its new home at Lewis Air Legends of Texas

The restoration process is being filmed and will be featured in a future documentary.

A special thank you to the Planes of Fame Air Museum whose mission is preserving aviation history, inspiring interest in aviation, educating the public and honoring aviation pioneers and veterans.

For more information: planesoffame.org

Sources:

* Planes of Fame Air Museum www.planesoffame.org

* excerpts from article written by Robert "Bob" Burns, Ret.

NASA Test Coordinator/Simulations Director.

