



### C-54 FINAL FLIGHT COURTESY OF HURRICANE IRMA

Former Jet One Express C-54 Sky-master N406WA had been abandoned at San Juan International Airport since March 2012 after suffering a nose gear collapse. While the damage was relatively minor, the aircraft was not repaired and was parked in the weeds resulting in severe corrosion to the wings. It was only a matter of time before the veteran aircraft would be picked clean of useful components and scrapped, but she did take a short but dramatic final flight when Hurricane *Maria* struck Puerto Rico on 20 September. The aircraft wound up straddling a drainage canal at the airport. 1N406WA is probably the last surviving R-Wright 2600 powered Skymaster and it's a sad end to this iconic aircraft. •



Sad sight of N406WA after losing a battle with Hurricane *Irma*.

### C-47 DESTROYED BY HURRICANE IRMA

Former Lee County Mosquito Control District (LCMCD) C-47 N837M was totally destroyed by Hurricane *Irma* on 10 September, when the hurricane's winds picked up the aircraft and tossed it off airport property and into the front yard of a nearby house. The aircraft had been parked engineless at Buckingham Field in Fort Meyers for several years since being retired by LCMCD and is currently registered to the Wings of Dreams Museum in Keystone Heights.

When I visited LCMCD in January 2013, other than missing two engines, the aircraft was in good condition and it was hoped that it would be going to a museum. •



After retirement as a mosquito sprayer, C-47 N837M was tied down at Buckingham Field to await a new owner. (RMP)



TMF Aircraft C-117D N32TN after Hurricane *Irma*. (RMP)

Unrecognizable N837M after Hurricane *Irma*. (Drew McNicol)



### HARS SUPER CONNIE'S FIVE-MONTH OVERHAUL

It's hard to believe but 23-years have passed since Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) volunteers completed the 2.5-year restoration of Super Constellation VH-EAG at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. In September 1994, the aircraft was towed to Davis-Monthan AFB and then flown to Tucson International Airport, where it was painted in Qantas colors at the Lockheed Aeromod Center.

The former USAF C-121C Super Constellation made a successful trans-Pacific flight to Australia 15-months later and has been entertaining airshow crowds and museum visitors ever since. In early March, after attending the 2017 Australian International Airshow at Avalon Airport, the aircraft was flown to Douglas Aerospace in Wagga-Wagga for a bit of TLC.

VH-EAG arrived back at HARS home base in Albion Park, New South Wales, on 26 August after completion of the five-month makeover, which included scheduled maintenance and a complete repaint. Engine test runs



Super Connie VH-EAG was flown to Avalon Aerospace in Wagga-Wagga for painting and five-months of TLC. (HARS)

were performed on the 24th and 25th in anticipation of the 50-minute/200-mile flight from Wagga-Wagga to Albion Park.

The new color scheme correctly matches the appearance of Qantas Super Connies and corrects some of the minor errors that were present in the old paint scheme. The old girl looks stunning and hopefully she will remain active on the Australian airshow circuit for many years to come. Kudos to the folks at HARS for their efforts! •



Restoration of Lewis Air Legends' VC-121 48-613 *Bataan* is moving forward at Chino Airport. (Michael S. Prophet)

### JFK AIRPORT HOTEL PROJECT

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has struggled with how to best repurpose JFK's iconic TWA terminal since that airline ceased operations in 2001. Designed by famed architect Eero Saarinen and completed in 1962, the National Park Service listed the building on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Having avoided the fate of the equally iconic Pan Am terminal that was torn down in 2013, the empty terminal was allowed to stand while the powers-that-be pondered their options. The new Jet Blue terminal that was completed in October 2008 now surrounds it.

On 7 March, MRC Development presented their plan for converting the terminal into a hotel. The plan includes a Super Constellation that will be parked in front of the terminal and transformed into a restaurant and bar. The presentation gave no hint as to the identity of the Super Connie but the list of available airframes is pretty small and I'm guessing it might be L-1649A Starliner N8083H. This aircraft was one of the two Starliners once owned by Maurice Roundy and parked in front of his house at Auburn-Lewiston Airport in Maine. The other Starliner is N7316C and this aircraft is nearing the end of a comprehensive rebuild by *Lufthansa Technik*. N8083H has been parked outside the restoration hangar since 2008 and, while it has been used for spares and is not complete, it could be made externally complete and would make



Vintage postcard of the famed terminal.

an ideal candidate for the proposed restaurant/bar. (EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a really curious one and we have to wonder if this is a "sop" thrown out by developers to help justify redevelopment. In the harsh weather, one can only imagine how long it will be if the purported Constellation "installation" will be viewed as desirable before being scrapped.)

Having missed out on Jim Flannery's Constellation Restaurant in Penn-del, Pennsylvania, I definitely plan on having a drink at the bar once the project is completed. As to what Super Connie will be used for the project, only time will tell and I will report its identity as soon as I know. •



Jim Flannery's Connie Restaurant in Penn-del, Pennsylvania.



The iconic TWA terminal at JFK International is being turned into a hotel and current plans are to exhibit a restored Constellation at the facility, probably L-1649 Starliner N8083H. (RMP)