

Lockheed Constellation and Constellation Survivors



by Ralph M. Pettersen

The Historical Aircraft Restoration Society's (HARS) Super Constellation C-121C, c/n 4176, VH-EAG, landing at the Avalon Air Show on March 14, 2009. (Photo by Lachlan McDonald)

The Lockheed Constellation represented the ultimate refinement of piston-engine airliner design when the final aircraft rolled off the Lockheed assembly line in 1958. Fifty-two years later at least 50 of the 856 aircraft produced survive, with a handful still airworthy and many examples preserved in museums. This article provides an overview of surviving aircraft with a brief description of each aircraft's current status.

By the mid-1960's jet airliners had replaced most piston engine airliners on long-haul routes, including not only Constellations but also sizeable fleets of DC-6s and DC-7s. These redundant airliners flooded the used aircraft market and mass scrapplings resulted during the 1960s and 1970s in places like Kansas City, Mo., Lancaster, Calif., Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Much like the warbird movement, the historical value of these aircraft was eventually realized resulting in many being saved from extinction.

I've been interested in all propliners since working for Saturn Airways at John F Kennedy Airport (JFK) during the summer of 1967 as an apprentice mechanic. While Saturn flew DC-7C's across the Atlantic from its JFK base, it was the Lockheed Constellation that caught my eye that summer. Along with the military EC-121s being serviced at Lockheed Air Service's Hangar 7, there was still a fair number of Constellations operated in and out of JFK that summer by American Flyers, Capitol, Eastern, and even Flying Tiger. By the next summer, propliners had pretty much disappeared from

New York City airports marking the end of an era.

The Constellation Survivors Website, www.conniesurvivors.com was established in February 2004 and has been actively tracking "survivors" ever since. The information included in this article comes from a number of sources including Peter J. Marson's 2007 book *The Lockheed Constellation*, my own observations over the past 10 years and from the many reports received from visitors to the website. The article is organized starting with those aircraft that are airworthy, ranging to those that only exist in pieces and parts. Additional information or corrections you might have regarding the survivors is very much welcomed. Please forward this information to me via email at connieman@comcast.net

Airworthy and Regularly Flown

Of 856 Constellations and Super Constellations produced from 1942 to 1958, there are only two airworthy examples that are flown regularly. Both are former USAF military C-121C transports. Even more amazing is that they are one serial number apart with both coming very close to being scrapped before being "rescued" and restored by their respective organizations.

C-121C – c/n 4175, HB-RSC - The Super Constellation Flyers Association's (SCFA) Super Constellation HB-RSC is an active participant in the European airshow circuit and avid European enthusiasts ensure that it is most photographed

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The Breitling Super Connie rolls out after landing at the Hamburg Airport Days airshow in September 2007. (Photo by Rainer Spoddig)

Constellation of all time. After being retired by the USAF in April 1972 it was acquired by Aviation Specialties as N73544 in August 1972 in exchange for Boeing Stratoliner N19903, which is currently on display at the National Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport. While the aircraft was reportedly converted to a sprayer I have my doubts since it doesn't have the telltale chemical odor that is characteristic of all former sprayers. This aircraft kicked around Phoenix, Ariz., area for a number of years until being acquired by Benny Younesi in 1982. Benny ferried the aircraft to Chino, Calif., in March 1983 and then Camarillo in January 1984. Benny's initial plans for the aircraft never came to fruition and the aircraft sat at Camarillo slowly deteriorating until he formed the Constellation Historical Society in 1992. The aircraft was restored from 1992 thru 1994 and made her first airshow appearance at the NAS Point Mugu airshow in September 1994. She was known as the "Camarillo Connie" and was a regular on the west coast airshow circuit until 2001. SCFA entered into a "lease-purchase" agreement with Younesi in 2003 after abandoning the restoration of C-121G, N105CF, at Marana Regional Airport near Tucson, Arizona. The agreement stipulated five years of joint operation by SCFA/CHS after which SCFA could purchase the aircraft. The aircraft was made airworthy, Breitling sponsor titles applied to the exterior and she departed Camarillo for Switzerland on April 26, 2004, where she arrived safely 12 days later on May 8. Since that time she has appeared in airshows throughout Europe and providing rides to SCFA members and photo ops to countless appreciative fans. The aircraft was purchased outright by SCFA in April 2007 and re-registered HB-RSC shortly thereafter. Finding spare parts to keep this aeronautical dinosaur flying is a constant challenge and SCFA has stripped N105CF of her engines and most of her useful spares since abandoning the restoration in 2003. They also recently salvaged four R-3350 engines from a derelict DC-7C in Spain, two of which are reportedly going to the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) in Australia. HB-RSC will be grounded for the 2010 airshow season due to wing corrosion found in January 2010 during its annual inspection. SCFA expects to complete the repairs in 2010 and have the aircraft ready for the 2011 season.

C-121C - c/n 4176, VH-EAG – The Historical Aircraft Restoration Society's (HARS) Super Constellation had even a



The HARS Super Connie VH-EAG is a regular on the Australian airshow circuit and is seen landing at Wollongong, Australia. This aircraft was restored by HARS volunteers from 1992 to 1996 and arrived in Sydney, Australia, on February 3, 1996, after an 11-day flight from Tucson, Arizona. (Photo by Craig Murray)

closer brush with the scrap man than her Swiss sister. After being retired by the Pennsylvania Air National Guard in March 1997, the aircraft was ferried to Davis Monthan AFB in Tucson, Ariz., for storage. While in storage, a door or window was left open and the aircraft became a bird hotel complete with birds' nests, dead birds and a thick coating of bird guano. Although it was offered at auction in November 1983, August 1984 and February 1985 no acceptable bids were received due to the condition of the interior. The aircraft was acquired by the USAF Museum who traded it to the National Aeronautic and Space Museum (NASM) of Australia for a Bristol Beaufighter in November 1991. HARS teamed with NASM to restore the aircraft, a project which began in April 1992 when the aircraft was moved to the Pima Air and Space Museum. Four years later, the aircraft was re-registered VH-EAG and flown to Sydney, Australia, where she arrived safely on February 3, 1996. Ownership was formally transferred from NASM to HARS in February 1997 and VH-EAG is currently based at the organization's headquarters at Illawarra Regional Airport. Like SCFA, HARS is always on the lookout for parts to keep their flagship in the air and, over the years, have built up quite an inventory of serviceable parts. The aircraft is currently airworthy and active on the Australian airshow circuit.

Near-Airworthy

Three aircraft have either been flown in the recent past or near the end of restoration efforts. Since 9/11, governmental and organizational bureaucratic hurdles have grown exponentially as illustrated by the challenges experienced by both the Dutch Aviodrome and Yanks Air Museum.

VC-121A – c/n 2602, 48-610, N9463 – Dwight D. Eisenhower's first presidential aircraft "Columbine II." Restored by Mel Christler and Harry Oliver in 1989/90 at Ryan Field, Arizona. Made limited flights around the U.S. in 1990/91 and also flew to Scottsdale, Ariz., in October 1998, where it was offered at auction for \$1.5M. No acceptable offers were received and aircraft returned to Santa Fe, N.M., where it was stored until May 2003, when it was flown to Marana Regional Airport, Arizona. Advertised for sale May



President Eisenhower's first presidential aircraft, "Columbine II," is privately owned and currently stored in good condition at Marana Regional Airport near Tucson, Arizona. (Photo by the author)

2005 for \$3.2M with at least one buyer seriously interested in the aircraft. Since then, there have been a number of rumored sales of this aircraft and most recently the fabric covered rudder assemblies were restored by a local airframe repair shop. Having visited the aircraft a number of times during the past few years and talked to the crew that ferried her from Santa Fe in May 2005, I believe this aircraft could be made airworthy in a matter of a month or two. This historical aircraft deserves a better fate than sitting at a dusty airport in Arizona and I hope she will find a home at a museum in the near future. Currently owned by Harry Oliver and stored at Marana Regional Airport in good condition.

VC-121A – c/n 2604, N749NL – Acquired by the Dutch Aviodrome in early 2001 after being stored at Marana Regional Airport, Ariz., for seven years. Restoration began March 2001 and aircraft ferried to Schiphol Airport, Holland, in September 2002 where an extensive restoration was undertaken. Flown to the Aviodrome's facility at Lelystad in July 2004, when the #3 engine failed. A replacement engine has been installed, engines are regularly run and the enthusiast community thought that 2009 was the year that the Constellation would return to the air. In fact, she was tentatively scheduled to appear at least at one airshow during the summer of 2009. An aircrew was assembled and high speed taxi runs were successfully completed on May 19, 2009. The aircraft's first flight since July 2004 seemed imminent when the museum's board of directors nixed the flight. The aircraft has been moved inside for the winter and museum staff has been working to satisfy the



It was hoped that the Dutch Aviodrome's Constellation, N749NL, would be flying in 2009, but it was not to be. Aviodrome officials are hopeful that the aircraft will be back flying in 2010. (Photo by Terry Wall)

board's additional requirements. While everyone was disappointed by this setback, museum staff is still confident that the old girl will be flying in 2010.



Yanks Air Museum acquired EC-121T N548GF in December 2005 and spent considerable resources getting her ready for a ferry flight to Chino, California. Seen at Camarillo awaiting FAA approval of the ferry flight. (Photo by Terry Wall)

EC-121T – c/n 4363, 53-548, N548GF – Based at Camarillo, Calif., and flown on the west coast airshow circuit from 1995 to June 2000, when it was grounded due to outer wing panel corrosion. The Yanks Museum acquired the aircraft in December 2005 and assembled a crew to make her airworthy during the spring of 2006. Systems were checked, engines run and necessary repairs were made to the aircraft. The FAA declined to issue a ferry permit for the flight from Camarillo to Chino citing additional repairs that needed to be completed. These repairs were completed in 2007 and again the FAA declined to issue the ferry permit. The museum has been working with the FAA to satisfy paperwork requirements and during the summer of 2009 a crew of five museum employees cleaned up the airplane and made additional repairs. As of January 2010, the aircraft is still parked at Camarillo awaiting a ferry permit for the short flight to Chino.

Undergoing Restoration

Currently there are three restoration projects in progress, each with the goal of restoring the aircraft to an airworthy condition. These projects range from the multi-million dollar "good-as-new" Lufthansa Starliner project to the individual efforts of Gordon Cole to restore his unique Constellation. Both Gordon Cole and Lufthansa plan on having their aircraft participate in airshow events once the aircraft are restored.

L749A – c/n 2613, N1206 – One of two WV-1 aircraft built for the U.S. Navy in 1949 as EC-121 prototypes. After serving with the FAA and later as a training airframe with the Shilling Institute, Gordon Cole acquired the aircraft in 1985. Parked at Salina, Kans., since early 1967, Gordon restored the aircraft and attempted to fly it to Sherman, Tex., on November 8, 1992. Bad weather and a balky #1 engine conspired against him and the aircraft was forced to return to Salina on three engines where it has been parked ever since. Although Salina Airport authorities have been very supportive, development threatened the aircraft's long time parking spot in late 2008 and Gordon knew it was time to find a new home for the historic aircraft. The #1 engine was removed and work began

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Gordon Cole performed engine runs on #3 and #4 engines in July 2009 in his quest to get N1206 back flying again. The aircraft has been a resident of Salina, Kans., since the mid-1960s and Gordon is looking for a new home for this unique aircraft. (Photo by the author)

to get the replacement engine ready for installation and the other three engines operational. I had the pleasure of spending a few days working with Gordon, his son and Larry Bruzda in July 2009, when the #3 and #4 engines were successfully run. A number of organizations have expressed an interest in providing a new home for N1206 and I am hopeful 2010 will be the year she finally departs Salina for greener fields.

EC-121T – c/n 4335, 52-3417/N4257L – Retired by the USAF and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in March 1976. The aircraft was made airworthy and ferried to Helena College of Technology, Helena, Mont., in July 1981 as N4257L for use as a training airframe. The aircraft was declared excess to school's needs in late 2008 and a number of organizations and museums expressed interest in the aircraft. At the end of a somewhat convoluted process, the Evergreen Air and Space Museum of McMinnville, Ore., acquired it in May 2009. There are a number of options on how to transport the aircraft to McMinnville from Helena, including disassembling and trucking it, but the museum is currently undertaking the ambitious plan of making it airworthy for a one-time flight to Oregon. A team of Constellation experts evaluated the aircraft in July 2009 and found it to be in remarkably good condition after being exposed to the harsh Montana conditions for all these years. In September 2009, a museum crew spent two weeks cleaning up 28-plus years of bird droppings and nests from the aircraft. They also plugged the holes the birds had



The Evergreen Air and Space Museum acquired EC-121T 52-3417 in May 2009, and plan on flying it from Helena, Mont., to the museum in McMinnville, Oregon. This is quite an ambitious project for an airplane that hasn't flown since 1981! (Photo by Blair McAnally)

been using to gain access to the aircraft and gave the exterior of the aircraft a good cleaning. Restoration is scheduled to begin spring 2010 when the winter weather breaks.

L1649A – c/n 1018, N7316C – This former TWA aircraft was acquired by Maurice Roundy in May 1983 and was made airworthy for a ferry flight from Stewart Airport, N.Y., to Auburn-Lewiston Airport, Maine, which occurred on November 9, 1983. It had been stored in front of Maurice's airport house until acquired by Lufthansa in December 2007, along with Starliners N8083H and N974R. This aircraft is currently undergoing an extensive restoration by Lufthansa at Auburn-Lewiston Airport and, when completed, will



Starliner N7316C is being completely rebuilt by Lufthansa in what has to be the most ambitious Constellation restoration project of all times. The extent of the restoration is evident in this May 2009 photo taken at Auburn-Lewiston Airport, Maine. (Photo by the author)

essentially be a new aircraft. The airframe has been stripped of all removable components, which have been sent out for overhaul. Six R-3350 engines have been overhauled by Anderson Airmotive. The freight door conversions are being reversed and passenger doors have been acquired from South African Airways Museum L1649A ZS-DVJ. Reassembly of the aircraft is scheduled to go into high gear during spring of 2010 with project completion and first flight expected in 2011. Once the engines and systems have completed flight testing in the United States, the aircraft will be flown to Lufthansa's overhaul base in Hamburg, Germany, for installation of an authentic 1950's Lufthansa passenger interior. The current plan is to fly the aircraft worldwide to airshows and other aviation events. I look forward to seeing this aircraft back in the air in 2011! (Editor's note: a story on this restoration can be found in the *AAHS FLIGHTLINE* #168.)

Preserved and/or Displayed at Museums

Both military and civilian Constellations and Super Constellations have proven to be popular static display exhibits at museums and other public places around the world. While some aircraft were flown to museums directly after retirement, many others were survivors of the mass scrappings and needed extensive restoration before being put on display. Once considered essentially worthless, the historical value of these aircraft has finally been recognized and they are highly prized by their owners. Of the 32 total preserved/displayed aircraft, 17 are former military and 15 former civilian.



L049 N90831 is the sole remaining C-69. (Photo by the author)

C-69 – c/n 1970, N90831 – This aircraft is the only surviving C-69. Retired by Las Vegas Hacienda in 1970 and flown to Davis Monthan AFB for display at the Pima Air and Space Museum. She was restored in full TWA colors in 1977-80 by a group of TWA volunteers and is currently on display at Pima Air and Space Museum.



Forced to land at Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in 1961 while on a reported smuggling mission, this aircraft spent time at a small park in Santa Cruz in Aero Sur colors. (Photo by Michael S. Prophet)

L049 – c/n 2081, N2520B – Forced to land at Santa Cruz, Bolivia, July 1961 and impounded. Stored at airport until the early 1970s when it was moved four miles to a children's park, Parque Boris Banzer. Aircraft purchased by AeroSur in late 2002/early 2003 and painted in their color scheme.



It's hard to believe but this aircraft was in near derelict condition before being acquired and restored by the TAM Museum in Sao Carlos, Brazil. (Photo by Wesley Minuano)

L049 – c/n 2071, N86553 – Impounded September 1965 at PG Stroessner Airport, Asuncion, Paraguay. Stored at the airport in deteriorating condition from 1965 to 2000. Disassembled and transported to Sao Carlos, Brazil, in late 2000 for display at TAM's "Brazilian Wings of a Dream Museum." Restored 2001 to 2006 and currently on display at the museum in Panair do Brasil colors and false registration PP-PDD.



Used as a movie prop in 2006, the F-ZVMV was painted in quasi Air France colors on one side with the false registration "F-JAZ." The "France" portion of the title has been removed in this April 2008 photo. (Photo by Eric Pajaud)

L749A – c/n 2503, F-ZVMV – Flown to Musee de l'Air, Le Bourget Airport, in July 1975 after retirement as an engine test-bed. Currently stored at museum in quasi Air France colors.



This Constellation has been a fixture at Greenwood Lake Airport, New Jersey, since arriving in 1977. (Photo by Antti Hyvärinen)

L049 – c/n 2072, N9412H – Flown to Greenwood Lake Airport, West Milford, N.J., during the winter of 1976/77 for conversion to a restaurant, which operated for a short time in 1981. Airport and aircraft sold to the State of New Jersey in 2000. Aircraft recently received a new coat of paint and is currently stored at the airport.



N7777G on display at the Science Museum at Wroughton, England, in 1983, where she was restored in 1960's era TWA colors. (Photo by Ian Haskell)

L749A – c/n 2553, N7777G – Abandoned at Dublin, Ireland, in 1974. Disassembled and transported to the Science Museum at Wroughton, England, in July 1983, where it is currently on display in full TWA colors.

VC-121A – c/n 2601, HL4003 – Restored as the "MATS Connie" during 1991/92 and flown on the U.S. airshow circuit
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VC-121A flew for many years on the U.S. airshow circuit as the "MATS Connie." Bought by Pratt & Whitney in 2005 and donated to Korean Air, the aircraft was flown to South Korea in April 2005 and repainted in Air Korea colors with the false registration HL4003. Currently on static display at the airline's training facility on Jeju Island. (Photo by Shawn Dorsch)

until being sold to Pratt & Whitney in 2005 for donation to Korean Air. Ferried Marana Regional Airport, Tucson, Ariz., to Jeju Island, South Korea, April 2005 for static display at the airline's training facility. Currently stored in 1950's era Air Korea colors with false registration HL4003.



VC-121A 48-613 was Gen. Douglas MacArthur's personal aircraft "Bataan" during the Korean War. Acquired by the Planes of Fame Museum in 1993 and restored as "Bataan," she is currently on display at the museum's annex in Valle, Arizona. (Photo by the author)

VC-121A – c/n 2605, 48-613, N422NA – On display at U.S. Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker from 1970 to 1993 when it was sold to the Planes of Fame Museum. Made airworthy and restored in 1993/94 as General MacArthur's "Bataan." Flown to the Planes of Fame Annex in Valle, Ariz., in early 1995 and currently on display.

VC-121A – c/n 2606, 48-614 – Named "Columbine" in 1952 while it was the personal aircraft of General Dwight D. Eisenhower when he was SHAPE Commander in Europe. To Pima Air and Space Museum and restored as "Columbine" in 1989/90.



The first "Columbine," VC-121A, 48-614, is currently on display at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson. The aircraft was used by General Dwight Eisenhower in the early 1950s before he became president. (Photo by the author)



Used for many years as a training airframe at Casablanca-Anfa Airport by Royal Air Maroc, L749A, CN-CCN, was restored and repainted in period Royal Air Maroc colors in 2004/05. (Photo by Patrick Milone)

L749A – c/n 2675, CN-CCN – To Royal Air Maroc Centre de Formation Professionnelle at Anfa Airport, Casablanca, after retirement by Royal Air Maroc in 1970. Restored and painted in Royal Air Maroc colors 2004/05 and currently stored at Anfa Airport.



The third and final "Columbine," VC-121E, 53-7885, is currently on display at the National Museum of the USAF in Dayton, Ohio. (Photo by the author)

VC-121E – c/n 4151, 53-7885 – Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential aircraft from 1954 to 1961. Retired by the USAF in 1966 and flown to Wright Patterson AFB for display at the National Museum of the USAF. Currently on display in the "Presidential Hangar" as "Columbine III."



This beautifully restored military Super Connie is on display at the History and Traditions Museum at Lackland AFB. No. 54-155 was one of the last Constellations in service with the USAF when she was retired by the Pennsylvania ANG in 1979. (Photo by the author)

EC-121S – c/n 4174, 54-155 – Retired by the Pennsylvania ANG and ferried to Kelly AFB, San Antonio, Tex., in April 1979 for display at the USAF History and Traditions Museum at Lackland AFB. Currently on display as C-121C 54-155.

C-121C – c/n 4196, 54-177 – Acquired by the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) and ferried to Dulles International



C-121C 54-177, c/n 4196, was stored for many years at Dulles Airport waiting for the Udvar-Hazy Center to be built. This veteran aircraft was almost scrapped by the Smithsonian before a group of United Airlines mechanics volunteered to restore her in 2007. Seen in June 2009 on display at the museum's Udvar-Hazy Center in West Virginia ANG markings. (Photo by the author)

Airport for storage in February 1988. Restored in 2007 by a group of United Airlines volunteers and NASM employees. Currently on display in West Virginia ANG colors at the NASM's Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport.



EC-121T 52-3425 was flown directly to the Peterson Air and Space Museum after being retired by the USAF in October 1978. Pampered by museum volunteers, the aircraft is on display at the museum's park-like setting at Peterson AFB. (Photo by the author)

EC-121T – c/n 4343, 52-3425 – Retired by the USAF and ferried to Peterson AFB, Colo., in October 1978 for display at the Peterson Air and Space Museum. Currently on display.



C-121C 54-180 is on display at Charleston AFB's Transport Aircraft Museum in 1960's MATS colors with the false serial 40153. (Photo by the author)

C-121C – c/n 4199, 54-180 - Retired by the Pennsylvania ANG and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in April 1977. Made airworthy and ferried to the Transport Aircraft Museum, Charleston AFB in June 1985. Currently on display as 40153 (54-153).



Former EC-121K, BuN 137890, was flown to Tinker AFB in October 1985 after being retired by the U.S. Navy. It is currently on display at "Connie Airpark" in USAF markings with the false serial 0-30552. (Photo by the author)

EC-121K – c/n 4347, BuNo 137890 – Retired by USN and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in May 1979. Made airworthy and flown to Tinker AFB, Okla., for display at the Heritage Air Park Museum in October 1985. Currently on display in USAF colors as 0-30552.



EC-121T 52-3418 at the Combat Air Museum in Topeka, Kans., in June 1981 and is currently on display. (Photo by the author)

EC-121T – c/n 4336, 52-3418, N4257U – Retired by USAF and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in April 1976. Made airworthy and ferried to Combat Air Museum, Topeka, Kans., in June 1981 as N4257U. The aircraft's interior is essentially intact and open to museum visitors.



Retired by the USAF in 1976, EC-121T, 53-554, has been on display at the Pima Air and Space Museum since 1981. (Photo by the author)

EC-121T – c/n 4369, 53-554 – Retired by the USAF and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in February 1976. To Pima Air and Space Museum, Tucson, Ariz., for display in 1981. Currently on display at the museum.



Retired by the USAF in 1971, EC-121D, 53-555, "Triple Nickel" was ferried to Wright Patterson AFB where it is now on display at the National Museum of the USAF. (Photo by the author)

EC-121D – c/n 4370, 53-555 – Retired by the USAF and ferried from McClellan AFB to Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, in August 1971 for display at the National Museum of the USAF. Currently on display at the museum as the "City of Sacramento."



Former U.S. Navy EC-121K was retired by the U.S. Navy in August 1979 and ferried to Robins AFB eight years later for display at the Museum of Aviation. Currently on display in USAF colors with its former USN BuNo 141297 painted on the vertical stabs. A group known as the Naval Aircraft Restoration Foundation spends a month working on the aircraft twice a year in May and October. (Photo by the author)

EC-121K – c/n 4421, BuNo 141297 – Retired by the USN and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in August 1979. Made airworthy and flown to Robins AFB, Ga., for display at the Museum of Aviation in November 1987. Currently on display in USAF colors but with BuNo 141297 markings on vertical stabilizers. Aircraft cared for by the Naval Aircraft Restoration Foundation (NARF), which meets twice a year for a month in May and October to continue restoration efforts.



BuNo 141309 is one of a number of former U.S. Navy EC-121Ks that are currently on display in U.S. Air Force colors. This aircraft was retired by the U.S. Navy in 1978 and is currently on display at the Aerospace Museum of California at the former McClellan AFB in USAF colors with the false serial 03-0552. (Photo by the author)

EC-121K – c/n 4433, BuNo 141309 – Retired by the USN and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage March 1978. Made airworthy and flown to McClellan AFB, Calif., for display at the Aerospace Museum of California April 1983. Currently on display in USAF colors as 03-0552.



EC-121K BuNo 141311 was acquired by the Chanute Air Museum when the base closed in 1993 and a group of volunteers spent 11,500+ man-hours restoring it between 2000 and 2005. (Photo by the author)

EC-121K – c/n 4435, BuNo 141311 – Retired by the USN and ferried to Davis Monthan AFB for storage in May 1979. Made airworthy and flown to Chanute AFB, Ill., for display in June 1983. Chanute AFB closed in 1993 and aircraft acquired by the Chanute Aerospace Museum in 1994. Restored by volunteers from 2000 to 2005 and currently on display in U.S. Navy "midnight blue" colors.



EC-121K BuNo 143221 was retired by the U.S. Navy in October 1973 and transferred to National Museum of Naval Aviation. Damaged by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004, parts were salvaged from EC-121H 53-535 to make the necessary repairs. (Photo by the author)

EC-121K – c/n 4495, BuNo 143221 – Retired by USN at NAS Pensacola, Fla., in October 1973 and transferred to the National Museum-Naval Aviation across the field. Damaged by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 and repaired in 2006/07 with parts salvaged from EC-121H 53-535. Currently on display in USN VW-4 markings.

L1049G – c/n 4519, F-BRAD, F-BGNJ – After being retired by CATAIR in early 1973, aircraft ferried to Chateau Bougon Airport, Nantes, France, in May 1974. After being declared a "historic monument" in 2001, restoration began by a group of volunteers. Painted in Air France colors as F-BGNJ in 2006 and currently on display at the airport.

(Photo top left of next page)



Former Air France F-BGNJ was restored by a group of volunteers at Nantes Airport in France from 2001 to 2007. The aircraft is currently on display at the Nantes Airport after being held "hostage" by French military authorities for almost a year in 2009. (Photo by Romain Salerno/Aeronantes Spotters)



L1049G CF-TGE was acquired by the Museum of Flight in 2005, and is currently stored at Boeing Field awaiting a final decision on display arrangements. (Photo by the author)

L1049G – c/n 4544, CF-RNR, CF-TGE – Acquired by the Museum of Flight in 2005 and disassembled in early 2006. After a long struggle with Canadian authorities, aircraft trucked from Toronto to Rome, N.Y., in June 2007 for restoration at the Empire Aero Center. Restoration completed in spring 2009 when aircraft was disassembled and trucked to Seattle, Wash., where it arrived September 4, 2009. Reassembled and currently stored in full Trans Canada colors as CF-TGE at Boeing Field awaiting finalization of display arrangements.



L1049E N1005C has been restored to represent a C-121C military transport. Landing gear, engines and a rear cargo door from NC-121K BuNo 141292 were used in the restoration. (Photo by the author)

L1049E – c/n 4557, N1005C – Donated to the AMC Museum at Dover AFB in 1997 after sitting atop restaurant in Pennel, Pa., as cocktail lounge for 30 years. Restored at Dover AFB

from 2003 to 2008 by the AMC Museum to represent a C-121C. Landing gear, engines and rear cargo door salvaged from NC-121K, BuNo 141292, in September 1997. Currently on display in MATS colors as 40315. (Editor's note. Originally sold to Cubana Airlines, Lockheed produced a photographic essay of the construction of this aircraft. The photo essay is in the AAHS Library, and excerpts appeared in the AAHS Journal, Fall 2009, Vol. 54, No.3.)



D-ALIN was delivered to Lufthansa in March 1955 and, after a relatively short career with the airline, was retired in 1967 and donated to the Hamburg Airport Authority for display at the airport. It was acquired by the Hermeskeil Museum in Mosel, Germany, in 1980 and is currently on display there in Lufthansa colors. (Photo by Antti Hyvärinen)

L1049G – c/n 4604, D-ALIN – Donated to Flughafen Hamburg GmbH after retirement in July 1967. Displayed at Hamburg Airport until May 1980 when aircraft disassembled and trucked to the Hermeskeil Museum in Mosel, Germany. Currently on display in Lufthansa colors.



Former Air India L1049G IN315 served with the Indian Air Force and Navy after retirement from airline service in 1961. Retired by the Indian Navy in May 1983, the aircraft is currently on display at the Naval Aviation Museum at Dabolim Airport, Goa, India. (Photo by Peter van Oostrum)

L1049G – c/n 4614, IN315 – Former Air India aircraft retired by the Indian Navy in May 1983 and stored at Dabolim, Goa. By April 2000 it had been moved to the Indian Naval Aviation Museum at Dabolim for restoration. Currently on display at the museum in Indian Navy colors as IN315.



Delivered to Air France in February 1957 as F-BHML, this L1049G has been on display at FJ Strauss International Airport in Munich, Germany, since 1993. Currently on display with the false registration D-ALEM. (Photo by Antti Hyvärinen)

L1049G – c/n 4671, F-BHML – Former Air France aircraft moved to F.J. Strauss International Airport in Munich, Germany, in August 1993. Acquired by Munich Airport Authority in March 2000 and repainted in original Lufthansa colors as D-ALEM in 2001. Currently on display and open to public.



One of three Starliners owned by Maurice Roundy, L-1649A, N974R, was made airworthy by Maurice and flown from Sanford Airport, Fla., to Kermit Weeks Fantasy of Flight in Polk, Fla., on October 19, 2001. It was purchased by Lufthansa in December 2008, along with Roundy's other two Starliners N7316C and N8083H. It is currently on display at Fantasy of Flight. (Photo by the author)

October 19, 2001. Acquired by Lufthansa in December 2007, along with L1649A's N7316C and N8083H, and currently on display at Fantasy of Flight in faded Lufthansa colors.



Saved from the scrapman by volunteers of the Save-A-Connie organization in 1986, L1049H N6937C thrilled spectators at airshows for many years until grounded by a catastrophic engine failure in July 2005. It is currently on display at the Airline History Museum hangar at Kansas City Downtown Airport. (Photo by the author)

L1049H – c/n 4830, N6937C – Restored from near derelict condition by volunteers from Save-A-Connie (later renamed Airline History Museum) in 1986 and ferried from Mesa-Falcon Field, Ariz., to Kansas City Downtown Airport, Mo., in July 1986. Restoration continued and aircraft formally “dedicated” in July 1988 with TWA colors and SAC markings. TWA titles replaced SAC titles in 1996 and aircraft was active on U.S. airshow circuit until July 2005 when the #2 engine experienced a catastrophic failure. Grounded since then and currently on static display at the museum's Kansas City facility.

L1649A – c/n 1040, N974R – Former Lufthansa aircraft acquired by Maurice Roundy in 1986. Made an emergency landing at Sanford Airport, Fla., in September 1988 while on ferry flight to Auburn-Lewiston, Maine. Made airworthy and flown the short distance to Fantasy of Flight in Polk, Fla., on



Delivered to Lufthansa in January 1958 as D-ALOL, this Starliner served with a number of airlines before being retired in 1969. Acquired by the South African Airways Museum in 1978, it was transported to Johannesburg in May 1979. Currently on display at Oliver Reginald Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. (Photo by Michael S. Prophet)

L1649A – c/n 1042, ZS-DVJ – Former Lufthansa aircraft acquired by the South African Airways Museum in 1978. Moved by road to Johannesburg Airport in May 1979 and restored from 1984 to 1986. Currently on display in Trek Airways colors as ZS-DVJ.

Long Term Storage/Derelict

Aircraft in this category are essentially intact and recognizable as aircraft. While it would be possible for many of these aircraft to be restored for static display, it is highly unlikely that any will ever be flown again. Many could also be considered “endangered” and possibly face scrapping in the foreseeable future.

VC-121A – c/n 2603, HI-393 – Stored at Santo Domingo, DR, and stripped of usable parts in the mid-1990s to keep the MATS Connie (N494TW) flying. By 2006 the aircraft was on its tail and being enveloped by vegetation. In April 2007



VC-121A HI-393 has come a long way from her days of transporting VIPs for the USAF. Rescued from the weeds at Santo Domingo Airport in early 2007, it still faced an uncertain future when this photo was taken in June 2007. (Photo by Mike Mumford)



After purchasing C-121G N105CF at Santo Domingo in September 2000, SCFA ferried the aircraft to Marana Regional Airport in January 2001 for restoration. Efforts were abandoned in August 2002 when C-121C HB-RSC (N73544) was acquired from Benny Younesi. (Photo by the author)



Former USN BuNo 131643 was purchased by William "Winky" Crawford in 1981. After a six year restoration effort, he flew it to Palau Island in the Pacific where he planned on transporting tuna to Japan. N4247K was impounded at Manila Airport in June 1988 and has been stored there in deteriorating condition ever since. (Photo by Martin Fenner)



EC-121H has been a long time resident of scrap yards surrounding Davis Monthan AFB. It has been a source of parts over the years and in 2007 it was acquired by the Australian group HARS. Moved to the Pima Air and Space Museum in June 2008, it awaits an uncertain fate. (Photo by the author)

aircraft was back on tarmac on all three landing gear with rumors about a static restoration.

C-121G – c/n 4137, N105CF – Ferried Santo Domingo, DR, to Opa-Locka, Fla., on November 7, 2000 and from Opa-Locka to Marana Regional Airport, Ariz., January 1 thru 7, 2001 for restoration by the Super Constellation Flyers Association (SCFA). Restoration abandoned in August 2002 when SCFA lease/purchased C-121C N73544 (c/n 4175). Currently stored at Marana Regional Airport, where it has been picked clean of useful spares by SCFA.

C-121J – c/n 4144, N4247K – Impounded at Manila International Airport, Philippines, in June 1988, where it has been stored ever since in deteriorating condition.

EC-121H – c/n 4350, 53-535, N51006 – Stored at Allied Aircraft yard adjacent to Davis Monthan AFB from the early 1990s, where it was used as a source of spare parts and engines. Sold to the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) in 2007 and towed to the Pima Air and Space Museum June 2008 for storage. Currently stored in the museum's restoration area but visible to museum visitors.



Former Air France L1049G F-BHBG. (Photo by Helge Huber)

L1049G – c/n 4626, F-BHBG – Former Air France aircraft moved to Quimper, France, by August 1976 and parked adjacent to "Le Moulin Discothèque." Currently stored in poor condition in Quimper.

L1049G – c/n 4686, BG583 – Former Air India aircraft retired by the Indian Air Force in November 1983. Stored at Agra Air Base in 2002 awaiting restoration by Indian Air Force Museum.



AMSA L1049H HI-542CT was damaged by a runaway DC-4 in February 1992 at Aquadilla-Borinquen Airport, Puerto Rico. It was abandoned and has been parked at the airport in deteriorating condition ever since. (Photo by Thomas Posch – VAP Group)

L1049H – c/n 4825, HI-542CT – Right wing and spar damaged in a ground collision with DC-4, N74AF, at Aquadilla-Borinquen Airport, Puerto Rico, in February 1992. Aircraft abandoned and stored in poor condition. Restoration for static display as a C-121C began in April 2003 by the Ramey AFB Historical Association but the project seems to have stalled.



L1049H Super Connies CF-NAL and NAM were abandoned at the Sao Tome Airport in 1970 after participating in the Biafran Airlift. Parked in the weeds in deteriorating condition, a local organization is attempting to restore them as monuments to the airlift. (Photo by Jesper Helboe via Nicolai Musante)

L1049H – c/n 4831, CF-NAL – Abandoned at Sao Tome International Airport in 1970 after participating in the Biafran Airlift. By 2005 it was in use as a bar/café. In 2007 a group of locals developed a plan to declare the aircraft, along with CF-NAM, national monuments to commemorate the humanitarian airlift based out of Sao Tome during the Biafran conflict. Currently stored at Sao Tome in poor condition.

L1049H – c/n 4832, CF-NAM – Abandoned at Sao Tome International Airport in 1970 after participating in the Biafran Airlift. In 2007 a group of locals developed a plan to declare the aircraft, along with CF-NAL, national monuments to commemorate the humanitarian airlift based out of Sao Tome during the Biafran conflict. Currently stored at Sao Tome in poor condition.



N8083H was one of three Starliners owned by Maurice Roundy. Acquired by Lufthansa in December 2007 along with sisters N7316C and N974R, she sits in the rain at Auburn-Lewiston Airport awaiting an uncertain future. (Photo by the author)

L1649A – c/n 1038, N8083H – “Rescued” from San Pedro Sula, Honduras, by Maurice Roundy and flown to Auburn-Lewiston Airport, Maine, May 31/June 1, 1986. Stored in front of Maurice’s airport house until acquired by Lufthansa in December 2007, along with Starliners N7316C and N974R. Components removed to support the restoration of N7316C and currently stored at Auburn-Lewiston Airport.

Cockpit/Fuselage Sections

While it often proved impractical to save an entire aircraft, a number of fuselage and cockpit sections survived scrapping and are on display at museums or are part of private collections.

C-121C – c/n 4179, 54-160 – Finnair pilot Antti Hyvärinen purchased the cockpit from the Frankfurt Airport Authority in 2007 and it arrived at the Finnish Aviation Museum in Helsinki in July 2007 for display. Currently stored in Antti’s garage in Järvenpää, Finland.



C-121C HI-548CT was severely damaged at Santo Domingo by Hurricane George in September 1998 and scrapped in 1999. The cockpit section was salvaged and transported to Switzerland where it was restored by SCFA member Christian Müller. (Photo via Christian Müller)

C-121C - c/n 4202, HI-548CT – Cockpit section and other components salvaged by the Super Constellation Flyers Association (SCFA) after aircraft was severely damaged at Santo Domingo by Hurricane George in September 1998. Restoration of the cockpit began in early 2006 by SCFA member Christian Müller and was completed in 2009 along with conversion to a flight simulator. The simulator is currently operational and available for use by SCFA members. Additional information about the simulator can be found on Christian’s website <http://conniesim.blogspot.com/>

NC-121K – c/n 4416, BuNo 141292 – Scrapped at Florence, S.C., in 1997 after Florence Air and Space Museum closed. Engines and landing gear went to the AMC Museum at Dover AFB for restoration of L1049E, N1005C. Fuselage forward section acquired by Brian Hicks, who trucked it to Stanley, N. C., for restoration around 1999.

L1049G – c/n 4640, 5T-TAK – Ferried to Lisbon, Portugal, in September 1968 and abandoned after participating in the Biafran Airlift. Stored in deteriorating condition until scrapped in early 1981. Cockpit and landing gear salvaged and currently on display at the TAP Museum in Lisbon, Portugal.

L1049H – c/n 4813, N6931C – Aircraft scrapped at Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe, in 1980 five years after making an emergency landing there. The cockpit was salvaged and moved to France where it reportedly survives as part of a private collection. Exact location is unknown.

L1049H – c/n 4846, N468C – Dismantled at Belize City, Belize, after landing accident on May 19, 1976. Fuselage moved to Blue Creek, Belize, where it was used as a store room. Last reported in 1990.

Wrecks and Hulks

All of these aircraft met a violent end but their remains, to varying degrees, are still recognizable as aircraft.

VC-121A – c/n 2607, HI-328 – Crashed on final approach to Harry Truman Airport, St. Thomas, VI, on October 26, 1981, in a heavy rain storm. Aircraft essentially intact in 150 feet of water.

C-121J – c/n 4145, BuNo 131644 – Crashed while attempting to land at Williams Field, McMurdo Station, Antarctica, on October 8, 1970, in near zero visibility and high wind conditions. Remains substantially intact and photographed in August 2006.

L1049G – c/n 4581, N11SR – Impounded at Kuwait City International Airport in June 1976. Moved to Almad Al Jaber Airbase, Kuwait, for fire training in mid-1980s and severely damaged during the 1991 Iraq invasion of Kuwait. Major portions of wreckage photographed at airbase in February 2005.

L1649A – c/n 1013, N7311C – Made a forced landing in Colchane, Chile, on March 26, 1969, after a double engine failure. Wing center section and partial right wing were all that remained when photographed in April 2004.

Missing in Action/Presumed Scrapped

Over the years there have been a few aircraft that merely faded away and disappeared. While there have been rumors and reported sightings regarding these aircraft, their whereabouts cannot be confirmed and they are presumed scrapped.

L749A – c/n 2522, HI-332 - Reportedly abandoned after attempting a three-engine takeoff from a dirt strip northeast of Riohacha in the Colombian Department of Guajira in March 1980 while on a smuggling mission. No confirmed sightings of aircraft since then and presumed scrapped.

L1049 – c/n 4017, N6903C – Aircraft scrapped at Oakland, Calif., October 1965 but forward fuselage used by Trans International Airlines for flight attendant training until mid-1970s. Photographed at the Oakland Airport dump in October 1999 but gone by September 2008. Presumed scrapped.

L1049G – c/n 4616, 5N-83H - Ferried to Faro, Portugal, in November 1969 and abandoned after participating in the Biafran Airlift. Used as a restaurant from 1981 to the late 1980s when it was dismantled and stored. Burned by vandals in fall 1999 and remains moved to scrapyard shortly thereafter. Presumed scrapped.

L1049G – c/n 4687, BG579 - Former Air India aircraft retired by the Indian Air Force in March 1984. Stored at Lohegaon Air Base in deteriorating condition. Presumed scrapped.

Parts and Pieces

When does a “survivor” cease to be a “survivor”? While these two aircraft have been scrapped, significant portions remain extant and they are worth at least a mention.

L749A – c/n 2647, N6011C - Last flight on November 11, 1969, when engine problems resulted in a three-engine landing at Chacalluta Airport in Arica, Chile. Sold at auction March 13, 1974, for \$7,500 and fuselage noted at ITACA scrapyard in Arica in 1999. Three engines sold to the Dutch Aviodrome in 2003 for use on museum’s L749A, N749NL. Aircraft components and associated equipment noted at ITACA on May 6, 2004.

L1049G – c/n 4618, 5T-TAF - Participated in the Biafran Airlift with the false registration 5T-TAF. Impounded at Luqa, Malta, February 1968 with a load of aircraft tires. Used as a bar/restaurant from 1974 to 1988, when it was abandoned. Burned by vandals in January 1997. Malta Aviation Museum Foundation acquired remains, which included wings, undercarriage and engines.

About the author

Ralph M. Pettersen is an aviation photo-journalist specializing in vintage civilian and military transport aircraft of the 1940s and 1950s. His specialty is Lockheed Constellation Survivors and he created the www.conniesurvivors.com website in February 2004. He has traveled throughout the continental United States, western Canada and Alaska chasing down old airplanes and writing about them and their owners. His articles have appeared in *Propliner Magazine*, *Air Classics*, *Warbirds International*, *Airliners Magazine* and *Aeroplane Monthly*. Ralph grew up in New York City in the 1950s/60s just a stone’s throw away from JFK (Idlewild then) Airport and remembers both JFK and LaGuardia Airports in their glory days! Ralph lives in Waldorf, Md., with his wife Dee Dee and, in his spare time, enjoys flying his 1966 Beechcraft Debonair. An engineer by education, Ralph’s entire career has been spent in the aerospace manufacturing and services sectors. He currently works for the U.S. Navy at Indian Head, Md., where he is Director of CAD/PAD Manufacturing Division.