



**March 5, 2014** - The world's only flying Consolidated Vultee PB4Y-2 "Privateer" is scheduled to appear at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2015. Based at Casa Grande Municipal Airport, Arizona, the airplane (N2871G) was being prepared to fly to Oshkosh last year but issues in two of its four Wright R-2600-35 engines ended those hopes. It flew again on February 20, 2015, the first flight in nine months, and now all sights are set on Oshkosh.

This unique aircraft is owned by 4Y-2 LLC and sponsored by SAC Holdings, an affiliate of U-Haul Corp. It was restored to its original navy configuration after serving for years as a fire bomber. Restoration to original Navy configuration was performed by GossHawk Unlimited of Casa Grande, led by its president, Dave Goss.

The Privateer is the Navy version of the Consolidated B-24 that served as patrol bombers in World War II and the Korean War. N2871G came off the line in 1945 and was one of nine PB4Y-2s reassigned to the U.S. Coast Guard. Modifications from the B-24 included a longer nose, as well as an additional top turret and new waist-powered turrets. Perhaps the most obvious modification is its single vertical tail in place of the B-24's twin tails as Navy patrol missions were flown at lower altitudes and the high-altitude capability of the B-24 was not necessary.

After WWII, Privateers were used as hurricane hunters and played a large role in training thousands of Naval Reservists. The type also became the first intelligence-gathering aircraft casualty of the Cold War on April 8, 1950, when an unarmed Privateer was shot down by Soviet La-11s in what would come to be known as the Baltic Sea Incident.

Several PB4Y-2s were recalled to duty in Korea to hunt down and destroy enemy infiltrators along the coasts with their air-to-surface radar. Privateers also flew dangerous nighttime Firefly missions to drop flares over embattled United Nations troops so that air support could continue around the clock.

Many were later converted to fire bombers, including N2871G, which was placed into aerial tanker service. From 1959 to 1969, the now orange and white Privateer flew as tanker No. A20 and later as No. B21 and No. A23 with Avery Aviation, Greybull, Wyoming. In July 1969 Hawkins and Powers Aviation, also of Greybull, purchased the aircraft and flew it until 2006 as tanker No. 121.

It came to GossHawk Unlimited in 2010 after being purchased at auction, still in orange and white fire bomber configuration. It remained in that livery for about three more years while work proceeded to restore it. "We replaced everything we thought needed replacing," Goss said.

When the engine problems were discovered last year, they were sent to Anderson Aeromotive, Grangeville, Idaho, for thorough inspection, and passed. The plane effectively received a complete firewall forward restoration including the propellers (by Tulare Aircraft Service in Atwater, California) over the ensuing nine months.

"Right now there's not much left to tweak, and it's really purring," Goss said.

Woody Grantham of Arizona Air Response, a legendary fire bomber pilot with more than 6,000 hours PB4Y-2s alone, is N2871G's chief pilot and will be flying the airplane to Oshkosh in July.

Many attendees of the annual Copperstate Fly-In held at Casa Grande will recall seeing the airplane on static display during some recent fly-ins. This year, it's finally Oshkosh's turn to see and experience to world's only flying Privateer as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.