

**A HISTORY OF MUSTANGS MOUNTED
ON POLES FOR OUTDOOR DISPLAY.
AMAZINGLY, SOME OF THESE
AIRCRAFT ARE STILL BEING
SUBJECTED TO HARSH WEATHER
BY NICHOLAS A. VERONICO**

STUCK ON STICKS

North American P-51 Mustangs on “poles?” More than 75-years after the type’s first flight, a genuine P-51 Mustang on a pole is a crime. Exposed to the elements, they quickly deteriorate from the inside out and can fall victim to vandals. Most pole-mounted aircraft are a curiosity when first seen, but quickly fade into the background, hidden in plain sight. Thankfully, most of the Mustangs on poles in the United States have been rescued, or at least lowered to the ground and are now sitting on their gear, but there are a few skewered Mustangs still sitting out in the weather.

D-MODEL MUSTANG ON A POLE
One mounted Mustang exposed

to decades of weather is Dallas, Texas-built P-51D 44-84900, which was delivered on 4 September 1945. This aircraft flew from the factory to Brookley Army Air Field, Alabama, before it was requisitioned along with some other D models by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA, the predecessor of today’s National Aeronautics and Space Administration — NASA) and flown to their facility at Langley, Virginia. P-51D 44-84900 lost its military identity and became “NACA 127” while flying as an airborne testing laboratory.

NACA’s most obvious external modification to the Mustang is its tall vertical tail that increases lateral stability during high-speed dives. The aeronautics



This is how 44-84900 looked for many years. It was seen by tens of thousands of drivers who passed by the aircraft on a regular basis.