

CORRESPONDENCEHOME-BUILTS ETC.

Regarding the controversy about "what to call airplanes not of a production type" - - - Please don't call them "home-builts". This word has a helluva poor conotation. Of course some of the ships are "back-yardish", but on the other hand many of these airplanes are built and designed by highly skilled professionals or talented skilled amateurs. If I'm not mistaken the first Aero Commander was built in a garage down in L.A. The experimental Landgraff Helicopter was built back of a filling station etc. Companies such as mentioned above would be unfairly and seriously injured in public relations (stock sales; aircraft sales etc.) if they had their products labled "home-built".

The C.A.A. requires that such craft have the word "Experimental" on the fuselage. I think this is the correct word to use. It is accurate and not derogatory.

Regarding the second phase of the question, "What name should an experimental airplane be called". Past precedant involving everything including racing cars, speed boats, airplanes, and even human babies says that the maker or owner can call it any ---- thing he wants. The C.A.A. operates on this basis too when registering a ship. They'll call it anything the owner says (except offensive or suggestive names). Personally, I think builders and/or owners should observe certain ethics in naming their ships. Some of the more outstanding ones are;

1. A ship built almost exactly from someone elses design -- so that it can be easily recognized as such -- ought to bear the designers name all or in part, unless he specifically objects. For instance, a "true" Heath parasol ought to be called a "Heath" or a "Finklestien-Heath".

2. A considerably modified design built completely by someone other than the original designer should not be called by the original name only. For instance; a fellow makes a twin engine out of a Pietenpol, or builds a Corben out of angle iron. He is not doing the originator a favor by calling the ship a "Pietenpol" or "Corbin". It would be better if it were called a "Miller-Pietenpol" or a "Blooper-Corben", or if greatly modified maybe just a "Miller" or "Blooper".

3. A fellow that buys an experimental ship and does not modify it from the original shouldn't rename it. I think this is taking false credit. Although it has been done extensively amoung race car, speed boat and airplane owners.

4. A modified ATC airplane could and should be renamed if the change is extensive from an aerodynamic and/or identification standpoint. If it involves something like clipped wings or slightly different fuselage and/or tail shape it could be called a "Figby-Taylorcraft". Or if it has a completely new wing or fuselage design it probably could and should be called a "Figby".

On another facet of this general subject--there has been considerable discussion about amateur built ships and modified ATC'd craft. The C.A.A. in some cases has made a dividing line between the two categories and, strange as it may seem, they have discriminated against modified ATC ships! Personally, I can't understand this. I can see no legal or technical difference between the two. A converted Cub may be a superbe creation or it could be a death trap, even if the modification might seemingly be minor. A chain (or airplane) is no stronger than its weakest link. As with an amateur built experimental aircraft -- you'll see lousy jobs and marvellous ones -- it depends on the individual involved and not the magnitude of the job, necessarily. The only difference between building a

complete airplane and building a new tail assembly for an Aeronca is the magnitude of the task.

So much for this discussion for the time being. Keep up the good work.

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LOCKHEED ORION

May the writer respectfully submit the inclosed notes applicable to Mr. Chalmers A. Johnson's excellent article entitled "A Survey of Lockheed Orion History" pages 4-6 of the Journal?

The Lockheed 9-D2 Orion airplane (Lockheed serial number 208, circa 1 June 1934), with one Pratt and Whitney S1D1 engine (Pratt and Whitney serial number 5517), was sold by the Detroit News, circa 1 March 1941, to Mechanical Products, Incorporated, Arthur D. Knapp, President. This rehabilitated Orion was resold by Mechanical Products Inc., 28 May 1942 to the Defense Supplies Corporation, an instrumentality of the federal government. Title, thereto, was transferred by the latter agency, 3 July 1942, to the War Department.

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VULTEE V-1 ETC.

Just a line to express appreciation of the latest number of the A.A.H.S. Journal, what a goldmine for the enthusiast! The article on negative deterioration was most timely, and caused much searching in my own collection for signs of decay, and a determination to work thro the whole collection altering envelopes where necessary, and rewashing and so on.

Regarding L.S. Smalley's "Ventura" article, I can add the following mite to the list of registrations carried by civilianised Venturas; 5324 CF-FAV Spartan Air Services Ltd., Ottawa, and 5487 CF-FAW also Spartan Air Services. Both these were PV-1, as of course the majority of civil Venturas. No information on previous Navy serials, or RCAF serials. It surprises me that none have appeared on the South African register as the S.A.A.F. used them during W.W.II.

Referring to the note on page 46, a new series of plastic (polystyrene) model aircraft kits, to the standard British scale of 1/72, has been introduced. These are the FROG series, and the first three are the F-86E, S.55 and Hawker Hunter. Excellent models, at only around 5 shillings each. Forthcoming attractions include the Hawker Seahawk, D.H.110, Canberra, D.H. Venom, RF-84F, Gloster Javelin, Gloster Meteor, and so on. I'd like to hear from any member interested in trading (so long as there arn't too many!).

Now to the Vultee V-1A correspondence. I have the complete listing of all entries for the MacRobertson race, England-Australia, in 1934. This shows two V-1A aircraft, as stated by Gregory Kohn. The first, racing number 50, was NR-13770 entered by New York, London, Moscow Airline (who were they?), to be flown by Lt. Col. G. R. Hutchinson, and the second, listed as an Australian entry was to have been entered and flown by H.W.G. Penny. This had racing number 64 allotted (the last entry, in fact). Other U.S. built aircraft entered were;

No. 5 Boeing 247D, NR-247Y, Roscoe Turner and Clyde Pangborne.

No. 4 Douglas DC-2, Unknown, Harold Gatty (to be flown by J. Frye & H. Hull).

- No. 11 North Rider R-3, NR-14215, Entrant R. Rider. Pilot J.E. Granger.
 No. 11 Lockheed Altair, Unknown, Entrant W.T. Varney. Pilot F. Rose.
 No. 20 Lockheed Vega, NR-105W, Guess who!
 No. 22 Northrop Delta, SE-ADI, A.B.A. Pilots M. Lindholm & G. Lindow.
 No. 25 Wedell Williams 44, NR-91, Entrant & pilot Wedell Williams.
 No. 28 Lockheed Altair, VH-USB, O. Kingsford Smith & P.G. Taylor.
 No. 29 Bellanca 28-10, EI-AAZ, Irish Hospitals Trust (Capt. Fitzmaurice).
 No. 30 Northrop Gamma, NC-13761, J. Cochrane (Wesley Smith).
 No. 32 Lockheed Orion, Unknown, Lyon Flight Expedition.
 No. 33 Monocoupe, NC-501W, John Wright and E. Polando.
 No. 36 Lockheed Vega, G-ABGK, H. Miller and J. Woods.
 No. 37 Cessna AW, NC-7107, D. Wehman and P. Clough.
 No. 44 Douglas DC-2, PH-AJU, K.L.M. (Parmentier and Moll). Has anyone ever traced the c/n of this plane?
 No. 45 Vance Viking, NR-12700, Murray B. Dilley.
 No. 46 Granville, NR-14324, Clyde Panbourn (Miss Cochrane).
 No. 48 Hosler B, NR-147, Russell A. Hosler.
 No. 50 Vultee V-1A, NR-13770
 No. 49 Lockheed Altair, NR-13W, R.R. Nichols.
 No. 53 Lockheed Orion, NR-14222, Laura Ingalls.
 No. 57 Beechcraft A-17F, NR-12569, Louise Thaden (Frank Hawke).
 No. 64 Vultee V-1A, Unknown.

Hope this lot may be of use to somebody.

On the "manufacturers names" problem; I always list under initial design the manufacturer's name (for example I list all B-17s under Boeing, and all Avengers under Grumman) regardless of where the particular plane may have been built. In the case cited, I call it a Boeing B-17G-80-VE.

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VULTEE V-1A

I was interested in your Vultee V-1A story and can augment it by this information: NC-22077 visited Westchester County Airport, White Plains, N.Y. on March 14, 1948. The lettering "George H. Armitage Co." appeared above the cabin windows. Before the month was out I read a newspaper account of the crash of a "15 year old Vultee transport, belonging to the George H. Armitage Company, killing all aboard", somewhere in Pennsylvania.

Robert Straub

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VERVILLE AIR COACH MODIFIED

I have received the first two issues of your excellent Journal and I am very impressed by your thorough and business-like approach to the subject of American Aviation History. I was particularly interested in the story of the Ryan C-1 in your second issue.

I am enclosing a photo of a reworked Verville Air Coach monoplane which had somewhat the same story as the Ryan, although I am not sure of all the details or of the name of the pilot.

The picture was taken at the Wayne County Airport, Romulus, Michigan, in 1937 or 1938. The owner of the plane worked on it for about three years, rebuilding it and installing huge fuel tanks in the cabin. It was powered with a Wright J-5 engine, and appeared to have a landing gear and possibly the lift struts from a Stinson SR-5. The only access to the pilot's cabin was through the trap door in the floor shown hanging open in the picture.

During the summer of 1939, I believe, the plane took off from Detroit on a projected non-stop flight to Europe. It was apparently lost over the Atlantic, and I remember reading that parts of it were washed up on the Nova Scotia coast. When I saw the ship it had only a CAA Identification Number, that is no Restricted or Experimental designation. Perhaps some of your members who were in the Detroit area at that time may have some more accurate information on the ship and its pilot.

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Editors Note:

A check of the annual registers was made, as well as the New York Times Index, and the following information can be added, although it does not explain the ultimate ending of the aircraft;

1936 Register, Identified Section: -506, Verville, 3PCIM, c/a 2, Built 1929, Warner (125). D.E. Smith, 172 Tennyson Ave., Highland Park, Mich.

1937 Register, Identified Section: -506, Verville, 1PCIM, c/n 2, Built 1929, Wright (220). Davis Emmons Smith, 1282 West Grand Blvd., Detroit, Michigan.

1938 Register; Same as above.

1939 Register; Out.

New York Times, July 26, 1938, page 3; Davis Emmons Smith reported missing since take-off from Wayne County Airport on June 29th. ...police department last night received radio message from Detroit Police stating that Davis Emmons Smith, 46, disappeared or left Wayne County Airport in his own airplane "506" at 4PM on June 29 and we have not heard from him since. He may be heading East. (No further information given and no mention of a transatlantic flight).

PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Ford 4-AT-B modified, NX-4542, c/n 4-AT-15. Nose Whirlwind replaced by Wright Cyclone and three bladed prop, an item completely overlooked on the recent plastic model of this famous Byrd aircraft. See page 103.
2. For information on this a/c and presumed Transatlantic attempt, see page 97..
3. See page 103.
4. For full story on this plane see page 104.
5. See page 103.
6. See page 102.
7. For story on Air Force Museum see page 111.