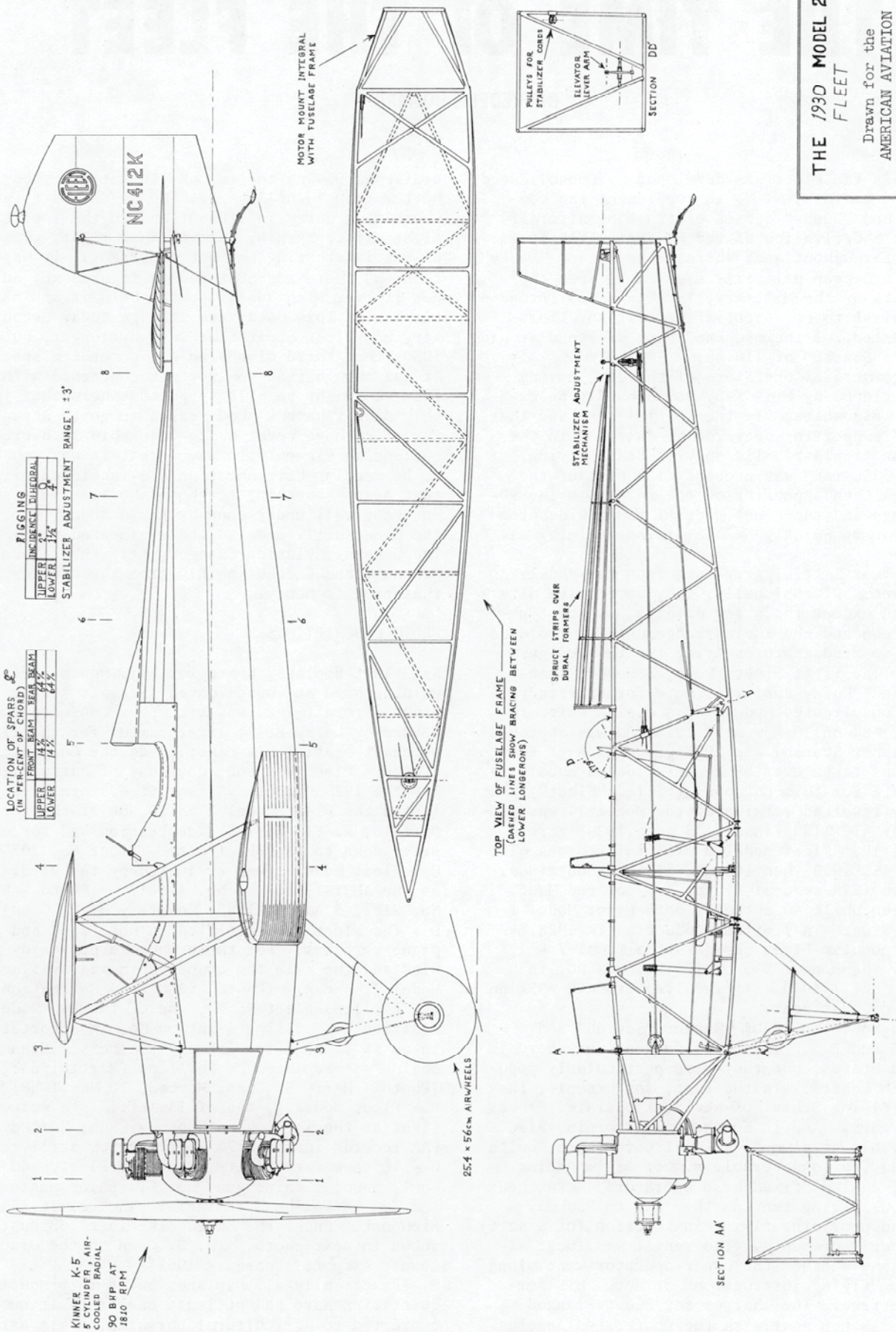




THE 1930 MODEL 2 FLEET

Drawn for the
AMERICAN AVIATION
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
JOURNAL

by FREDERIC HOWARD 6-67

THE TIME OF THE FLEET

By FREDERIC HOWARD

In 1928 the Fleet was developed by Consolidated Aircraft of Buffalo, N. Y. to supplement the company's PT and "Husky" series of training aircraft. It was not a derivation of the PT design for it was brand new throughout and, whereas the PT and "Husky" airplanes had been primarily slanted to meet the requirements of the Military, the Fleet was intended from the first to be essentially civilian. This fact accounted for the machine being designed around the Warner "Scarab" of 110 hp.

The commercial operators of the day, having been conditioned by the OX-5, could hardly be expected to welcome eagerly the initial cost and the expense of supporting over 200 hp (as used in the PT-3) in an airplane built only to teach flying. The Warner "Scarab" was probably the best of the new engines then appearing on the market in the 90-120 hp range and the Fleet Model 1 found widespread acceptance very quickly as a civilian training machine.

There was little carry-over from the "Husky" to the Fleet. Dimensionally, they were quite different, and except for a few details, as the type of windscreen and the fuel arrangement, it would be difficult to find features tying the two designs together. The first Fleets were, however, sometimes called "Husky Junior".. More formally they were the Consolidated Model 14, a design which received ATC #84 on 10 November 1928 and was approved for the Warner Scarab. In 1929 production of the aircraft was taken over by a Consolidated subsidiary formed only for this purpose, (titled "Fleet") and a slightly reworked version of the Model 14 was produced under ATC #122 (issued 15 June 1929) termed the "Model 1". Fleet Model 2 officially dates also from June 15, 1929 when its ATC #131 was obtained. However, in 1928 several Kinner K-5 powered Model 14s had been built so actually both Fleet Model 1 and Model 2 were in limited production in 1928. The third popular Fleet design - the Model 7 - powered by the Kinner B-5 of 125 hp, was not in production until 1930. It received its ATC #374 on October 4 of that year.

Throughout the 1930s Warner "Scarab" and Kinner K-5 and B-5 Fleets were common everywhere in the United States, but they were particularly popular on both coasts. In the east, for example, the Roosevelt Flying School of New York operated Fleets for many years. And in Southern California, Fleets were available at almost every airport where, quite unlike today, a considerable number of impending bankrupts, called "fixed base operators" scratched a precarious living renting them out to "Sunday Flyers" and providing flying instruction (of a sort) in half-hour increments. The rental was almost always the same whether the owner-operator went along to provide "flying instruction" or not. His services came free. The charges for Fleets ranged from \$6 to \$8 per hour with the poorer Los Angeles area fields like Dycer or Culver City offering the lower prices.

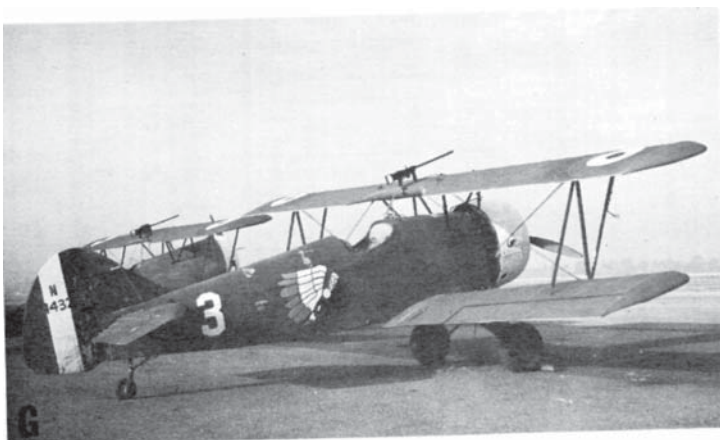
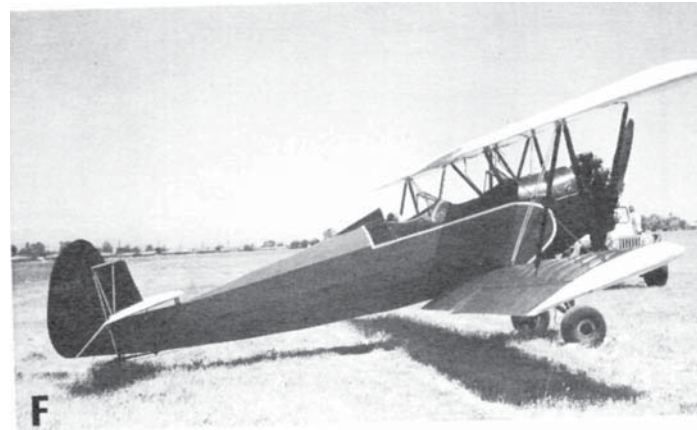
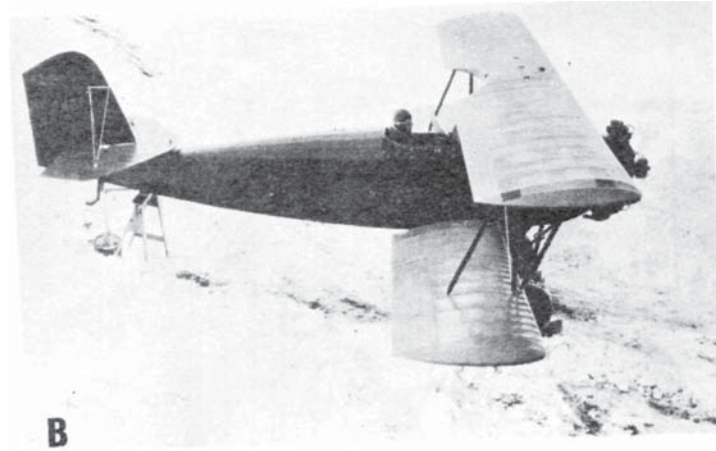
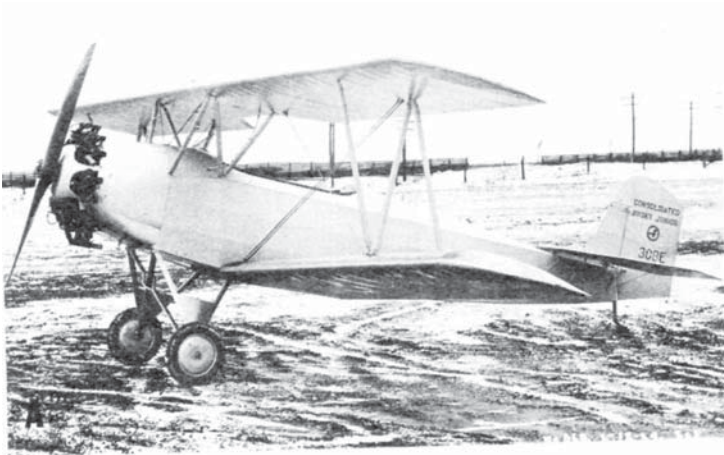
The specifications for the K-5 Fleet gave the

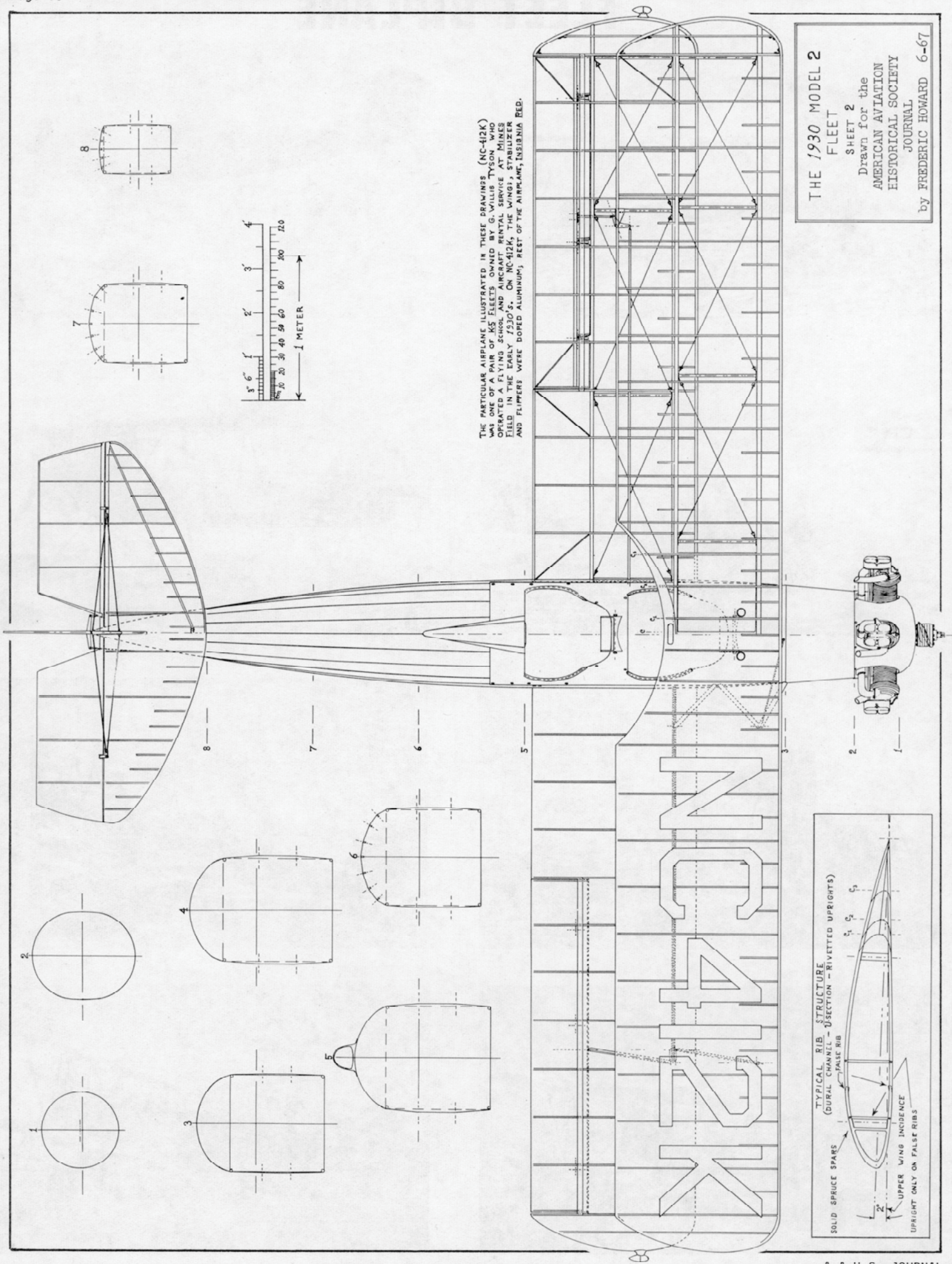
cruise as 95 and the top as 110 but everybody knew better than to believe it. Noone wanted to go anywhere in a hurry in a Fleet and so the fact that it might, if everything was set just right, cruise at 85 was interesting but not important. It was nice to be up there and most people figured why hurry and get it over with and so nobody held it against the airplane. This does seem strange today because not very many look at it that way any longer, but in the 1930s that third dimension was something special. It was enough that you weren't concerned with how fast you might be able to go somewhere that you probably didn't have a good reason to go to anyway. A few of us have never quite been able to overcome this outlandish viewpoint. Maybe that is why you happen to be reading here about an old-fashioned airplane that meant something to those who flew it - something not very well understood by those today, who, within the necessarily ordered and regimented confines of The General Aviation Category, fly their Mooneys, Cessnas, and Beeches mainly from the odd conviction that time is money.

PHOTO DESCRIPTIONS

- A - Fleet Biplane, named for Maj. Ruben Fleet, the guiding hand at Consolidated Aircraft at the time. Fleet Aircraft Inc. was set up by Consolidated and headed by Larry Bell, later famous for the line of aircraft bearing his name, to do the manufacture. (Photo - Fleet No. 568, courtesy of Harry S. Gann)
- B - The 1929 Directory issue of Western Flying listed the Fleet Model 2 as \$5,500 at the factory, Buffalo, N. Y. In 1931, depression had forced the price down to \$3,985. (Photo - Fleet No. 2033)
- C - Fleet Model 1 was evaluated by the U. S. Navy as the XN2Y-1, Bureau No. A-8019. (Photo - Fleet No. 2102, 3 August 1929, Courtesy H. S. Gann)
- D - The Fleet was certified in both land and seaplane versions. For those who did not enjoy the wind and the rain the coupe cabin was available as Model 7, shown. (Photo - Bob Lacy Collection)
- E - Phillips Fleet N637M, one of the two Model 7s modified by Phillips Aviation Co. in effort to cash in on WW II need for primary trainers. Kinner B-5 engine was replaced by Phillips (Martin) 333, 120 hp (Photo - Harry S. Gann, Merced, 10 May 1958)
- F - Fleet Model 1, one of 13 left, is a welcome sight at the fly-ins. (Photo - Gann, Merced, 1960)
- FAA records indicate 73 Fleet series still registered.
- G - To show versatility, take one Fleet, add engine cowl, mount machine gun, quickly paint poster blue and add Indian-head insignia. The result: a TV Nieuport. Under the makeup is Fleet 16B Duster shown in next photo. (H. S. Gann photo, Orange County Airport, February 1961)
- H - Practically all biplanes built in production quantities have had at least one of their numbers converted to agricultural pursuits. This Warner powered Canadian-Built Fleet 16B is one such. (Photo - Douglas Olson)

FLEET BIPLANE





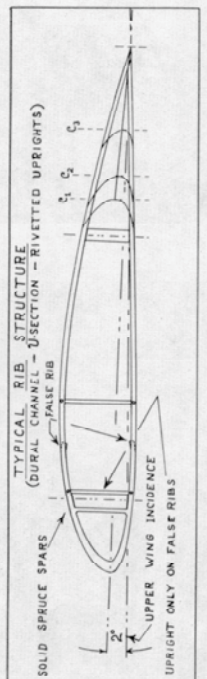
THE PARTICULAR AIRPLANE ILLUSTRATED IN THESE DRAWINGS (NC-42K) WAS ONE OF A PAIR OF K5 FLEETS OWNED BY G. WILLIS TYSON, WHO OPERATED A FLYING SCHOOL AND AIRCRAFT RENTAL SERVICE AT MINES FIELD IN THE EARLY 1930'S. ON NC-42K, THE WINGS, STABILIZER AND FLAPERS WERE DORPED ALUMINUM; REST OF THE AIRPLANE, INSIGNIA RED.

THE 1930 MODEL 2
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SHEET 2

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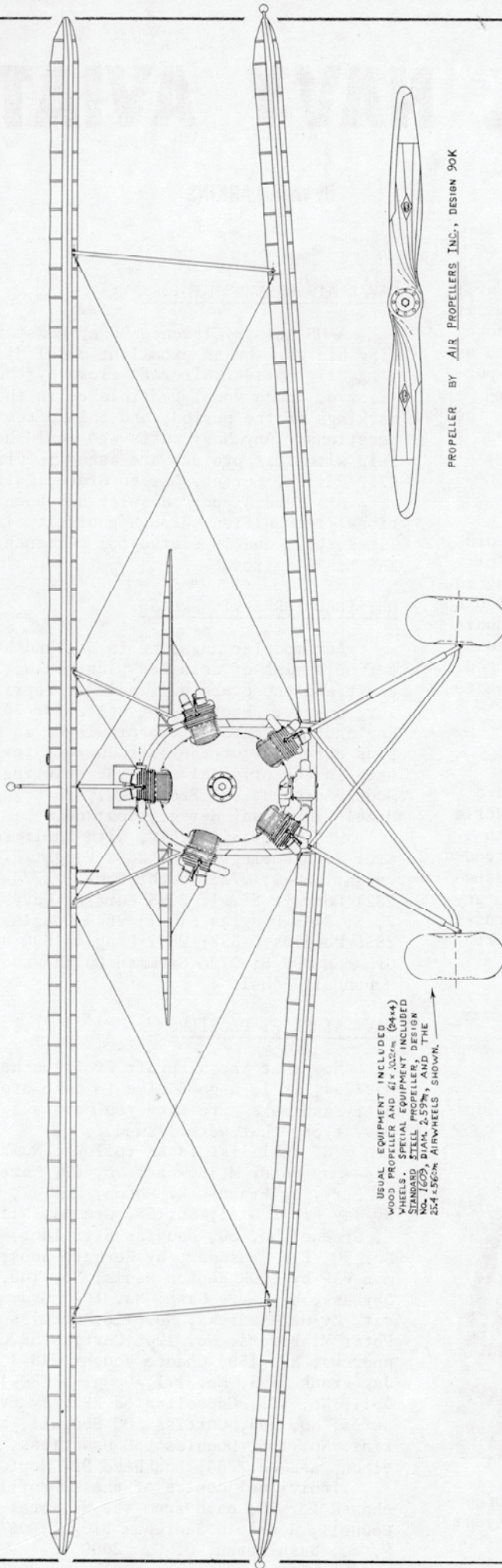
THE 1930 MODEL 2

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SHEET 3

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USUAL EQUIPMENT INCLUDED
WOOD PROPELLER AND 61x102cm (24x4)
WHEELS. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT INCLUDED
STEEL PROPELLER, 2.15cm (1/2")
STEEL WHEELS, AND THE
25x4.5cm (1x18") AIRWHEELS SHOWN.

