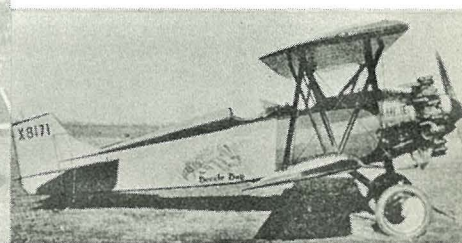




Left - The Braley B2-C6

Below - The B-1



BRALEY "BEEZLE BUG"

by CEDRIC E. GALLOWAY

In the years after World War One, the aviation industry had a very difficult struggle to find a market for the products of the many small companies that sprang up around the country. After Lindbergh's flight the public really became air-minded. The demand for a private type aircraft increased but the number of small companies increased even more. Many of them became engulfed in the depression. Later on, some of the small companies who made it through the depression were cut short by tragedy, not because of a poor design, but because of plain bad luck. The Braley Aircraft Company was one of these unfortunates.

In 1927, the Braley Aircraft Company built a double hanger with shops and office space in front of a building at 211 East Douglas Avenue, Wichita, Kansas, the "air capital". Their field was approximately a mile long and half a mile wide, directly across the road from the Cessna Aircraft factory.

Their first airplane was the "Beezle Bug" B-1, a two place, open land biplane powered with a Wright Whirlwind J-5, 220 H.P. radial engine. Its top speed was 184 M.P.H. and cruising speed was 150 M.P.H. It was fully aerobatic and had a landing speed of only 35 M.P.H. The "Beezle Bug" was designed and built by Mr. Braley and his two sons, Ted and "Scrap". Ted was the chief pilot, young "Scrap" was just out of high school. They flew the "Beezle Bug" at air shows around the air capital and made many demonstration flights to try to get people interested enough to invest money in the company.

In conjunction with the aircraft company, the Braley School of Flying was started. A large dormitory was built some distance from the hanger on the northwest corner of the field to accommodate the students. The school offered a mechanics course and three flying courses -- private, limited commercial and transport pilot. Included with each was a complete pilot's ground school course. The flight aircraft consisted of an OX-5 Travel Air, OX-5 Swallow, two Kinner Swallows, a J-5 Travel Air 4000 B, and a J-6-9 Travel Air 6000 monoplane.

In early '29, Braley redesigned the B-1 and proceeded to build the three aircraft required for an A.T.C. certificate. These were lighter than the B-1 but retained the "Beezle Bug" lines. Each of the three planes were equipped with different power plants. The B2-K5 was the first of the three built and was powered with a Kinner K-5 engine, rated at 100 H.P. at 1810 R.P.M. It performed well but lacked good climb fully loaded. It was painted yellow with black trim. The

B2-R5 was the second plane built in this series, and was powered with a Wright Whirlwind J-6 R-540, a five cylinder engine rated at 165 H.P. at 2000 R.P.M. This extra power made a much faster climbing ship. It was painted red and black with white stripes. The third plane was the B2-C6 with the new Curtiss Challenger R-600, a six cylinder radial engine rated at 185 H.P. at 2000 R.P.M. It was really tops in performance. This plane is the one in the foreground of the picture. It was painted red and blue with a white stripe.

One outstanding feature of the B2-C6 was the air brake, as it was then called. A section of the fuselage between the rear landing gear struts was hinged at its forward edge and could be lowered when coming in for a landing. This slowed the plane to about 35 M.P.H. Actually, it was what we now consider a flap.

The Braley Company also manufactured an Air Siren driven by a two-bladed aluminum propeller. I do not recall the purpose for which the siren was intended, but with one attached to the forward landing gear strut of the B2-C6, it was an "attention getter" at air shows. The pilot would come down in a power dive with the siren screaming like mad. It greatly emphasized the speed of the plane.

The company had completed all the tests required and was in the process of obtaining the A.T.C. certificate in late 1929. They were going to use the "Beezle Bug" as a trainer in the school. It would have made an excellent military aerobatic trainer. It definitely was a good sport plane for the private flyer.

Monday morning, January 13, 1930, was a cold Kansas winter morning. The week-end had been stormy and there were several inches of new snow on the ground with deep drifts around the buildings. All the school's planes were in the hanger, including several privately owned airplanes. The morning classes were in session. The front shop was heated by two gas heaters. One of these heaters was defective, it was later discovered, and gas escaped collecting in the ceiling. Suddenly the entire ceiling was ablaze. I was sanding down a fourth coat of dope on a Travel Air 4000 upper wing panel at the time, and as I turned to run for the door, it burst into flames.

There were six of us in the shop. Two of the boys were blocked off from the door by the flaming wing, so they made their exit via the window. Luckily, they escaped with only singed hair. The chief mechanics

(Continued on Page 150)

From J. R. Ellis of 380 Brock St., Peterborough, Ontario, Canada comes the following addendum:

You may be interested in adding the following notes to the "Mustang" story. The ex-RCAF aircraft are now registered as follows:

R.C.A.F. No.	U.S.A.A.F. No.	Canadian Registry
9223	44-74446	CF-LOR
9227	44-74466	N10607
9231	44-74506	CF-MWM
9232	44-74502	CF-MWC
9271	44-73843	N10601
9290	44-73435	CF-MWN
9586	44-74417	CF-MWB

P-47 SERIAL NUMBERS

Looking back through Volume 4 of the Journal, I came across an error on Page 194 in Mr. William T. Lar-kins' list of P-47 Serial Numbers. He lists "P-47D-25-

RA 42-26389 to 26773" and "P-47D-26-RE 42-28189 to 28438". Information I have in hand from Republic Aviation Corp. indicates that the correct listing should be "P-47D-25RE 42-26389 through 42-26773" and P-47D-26RA 42-28189 through 42-28438."

David H. Brazelton, 5007 W. Linda Curve
Bartonville, Illinois

R.A.F. P-38/P-322 Serials:

Member Bernhard Klein has sent in some additions to the P-38 serial listing in the Summer 1960 (Vol. 5, No. 2) issue of the JOURNAL.

Type	Serials	Quantity
Lightning I	AE 978-AF 220	143
	AF 221-AF 744	524

Only a few of the first group (AE 978-AF 220) reached Great Britain. The rest of the first group and all of the second group (AF 221-AF 744) were retained by the U.S.A.A.F. under the designation P-322. All retained aircraft kept their R.A.F. serial numbers.

B.C.F. Klein, 241 Glen Ave., Midland Park, N. J.

"BEEZLE BUG"

(Continued from Page 120)

instructor grabbed a fire extinguisher and trained it on the fire through the door. He might just as well have used a toy squirt gun for the good it did. The three of us who made it out the shop door into the hanger rushed to the big hanger doors and opened them in record time. The first plane out was a privately owned Szekely-powered "Baby Ace", followed by the J-5 Travel Air biplane. Then it took all three of us to get the big Travel Air 6000B out into the snow.

By then, the boys from the dormitory arrived to give us a hand. But the planes in back of the hanger had already started burning. We got the Kinner Swallow out and the two boys behind us had an OX-5 Swallow almost to the door when it burst into flames from the intense heat. They had to drop it and run. We were only able to save four airplanes out of the fifteen that were in the hanger.

From then on, it was like a Fourth of July inferno. Gas tanks exploded, drums of dope blew up and bursting steel tubing on the fuselages sounded like firecrackers. The firemen arrived and poured streams of water into the fire but to no avail. By late afternoon, there was nothing left but a smoldering mass of twisted steel girders and blackened bricks to mark the grave of the three "Beezle Bugs".

The school continued operations. Classes were held in the dormitory basement. A Warner-powered Travel Air 4000 was added to the small fleet of planes. Old "Beezle Bug" #1 was in the dormitory second floor and was used for rising instruction and practice.

The fire wiped out everything pertaining to the "Beezle Bug", tools, jigs, blueprints and parts. The Braleys did not continue with the design but did build a secondary glider, a real clean design. "Scrap" Braley was demonstrating it one Sunday morning and pulled

up steeply while being towed by a car. The flying wires snapped, the wings folded up and the glider crashed nose first from several hundred feet altitude, killing "Scrap". Soon after the fatal crash, the Braleys sold their interests in the company.

During World War II, Braley Field was purchased by the Cessna Company and they expanded their factory to the east. Now the Braley Aircraft Company's "Beezle Bug" is just a memory, but a deserving bit of American aviation history.

BRALEY "BEEZLE BUG" B-1

Dimensions: Length 21 ft; height 7 ft. 4 in. Upper wing span, 27 ft. Lower wing span, 25 ft. Upper wing chord, 57 in. Lower wing chord, 48 in. Weights: empty, 1230 lbs. Useful load, 800 lbs. Pay load, 350 lbs. Gross weight loaded, 2030 lbs. Wing loading, 9.2 lbs./sq. ft. Power loading, 9 lbs./sq. ft. Power Plant: Wright J-5, rated at 220 H.P. at 2000 R.P.M. Performance: High speed, 184 M.P.H. Landing speed, 35 M.P.H. Cruising speed, 150 M.P.H. Climb (at sea level), 2000 ft./min. Cruising range, 750 miles.

References: page 106, September, 1929 issue of Western Flying.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A.A.H.S. Member Cedric Galloway. Attended the Braley School of Flying, Wichita, Kansas from September, 1929 to September 1930 and completed mechanics course and the private pilots course. He soloed in 4 hours 20 minutes in the Kinner-powered Swallow. T. G. "Pop" Stone was his instructor. Galloway received Private Pilot's License No. 16483, September 15, 1930.