



Society for Preservation And Restoration of Skyrangers

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SPARS – *finally* another issue

Yes, I know it's been more than a year. Yes, I know I promised that I'd have this issue out nine months ago. Yes, I'm a slacker. Well, I'm not actually a slacker, I've just been wildly busy at work, trying to keep up with folks half my age and twice as smart as me. It's been fun, but it's not left a lot of time for writing.

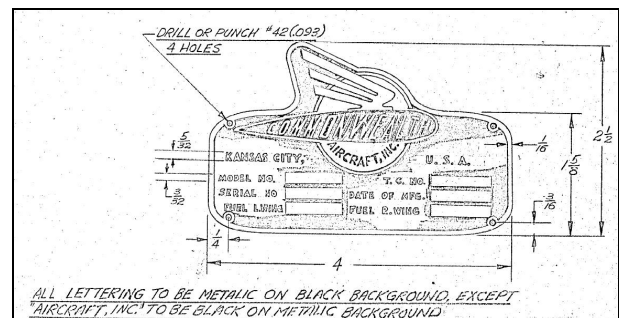
Still, I have to assure you that I've not been completely idle on the Skyranger front. And neither have many other diligent Skyranger pilots - read on for some cheery news...

TC 729 drawings and the FAA – Thumbs down

Last year at this time, I was fighting a losing battle against the FAA, trying to get access their copies of the Skyranger drawings. The FAA was unwilling to let the drawings out because "they were exempted from FOIA status as trade secrets." I tried to convince them that since they'd been giving free access to the Skyranger drawings for decades, there was no way they qualified for "trade secret" status, using a pile of Federal and NY State judicial definitions and decisions as precedent. I prepared an appeal, and even got the thumbs up from a couple of aviation/intellectual property lawyers who said that I presented a fairly bulletproof case.

Nine months later, the answer came back: "good and compelling arguments, but we the FAA disagree with your interpretation. Appeal denied."

At this point, our only recourse in getting the drawing released is suing the FAA, which would cost \$20K-\$40 in legal fees and still be of doubtful success.



But there is *always* another way

Since the FAA used to release these drawings to anyone who asked, there are a few copies floating around. These copies were made legally and without any restrictions on further copying.

Over the past couple of months, Al Barbuto, our favorite patron saint of Skyrangers, has put in enormous effort organizing and hauling his vast collection of Skyranger blueprints down to the local print shop. With a bit of coordination on my part, we've managed to have everything scanned digitized and burnt to CD in TIFF and PDF formats

Eric will have everything up on www.rearwin.com archives shortly, and another copy is going to the AAA folks in Iowa. If you want your very own copy (now who on earth would want that?), send me email, and I'll get a disk out to you as quickly as I can make copies. Be sure to add Al to your Christmas list, too.



G-RWIN – One Year Later On

Ash Bourne - Sampash@aol.com

Owning Skyranger #1522 G-RWIN for just over a year has turned my life upside down in more ways than one. Owning such a rare old girl has opened up a whole new way of thinking about airplanes and introduced me to some very interesting people.

I receive many invites to vintage and classic fly-ins trying to get to as many as possible, unfortunately work and some poor weather have got in the way this summer. Most people have commented on the 'unusual looks' of her and 'where did you get that tacho from'. Most have been too polite to mention the rather tardy gold colour scheme she still wears but not for much longer. It will all change when the annual runs out next July.

I plan to take the wings off and tow her home and start stripping off the 29 year old Ceconite covering which is only just beginning to look really tired. I think it is a good testament to a superb product and as good a reason as any to use Ceconite again. I think I know what to expect when I strip the fuselage but the wings have me full of foreboding. Initial visual inspection shows a clean sound wing interior but I know airplanes have a nasty habit of giving unwelcome surprises, only time will tell.

My day job takes me to Orlando during the summer months and I have been 7 times this year. Prior to each visit I order new parts for 1522 and I am very fortunate in being able to have them shipped to Karl Johnson in Winter Haven FI who co-owns NC34742 Skyranger #1552 with Doug Clukey. I pick them up from their hangar and then carry them home with some very strange looks from the passengers. Try taking two windshields through a security scanner and explaining it the TSA! Doug and Karl have been absolutely

invaluable in steering me in the right direction for advice and parts. I value their skills and knowledge and above all their friendship to this 'Limey' who appeared outside their hangar one day proudly boasting about his Rearwin.

On one visit I met up with Alex and Sue Foder who own N34115 in Mulberry FI and was invited to take a flight with Alex in his Commonwealth built airplane. It was nice to see a well maintained and cared for machine plus I was able to compare the newer airplanes to the older ones. Sorry about the airline style approach Alex. Sue Foder was even kind enough to give me a Skyranger pin which I proudly wear on my Rearwin cap at vintage fly-ins, thanks to both of you.

1522 still had the original Scintilla SF4 magnetos fitted with the unshielded plugs but was becoming increasingly hard to start. As parts are scarce and having seen all the ADs I bit the bullet and put Slick 4333 mags and harness on her. What a difference they make, she starts on the first swing and I fly with more confidence knowing they are up front sparking away. I once force landed a PA28 due to a failed magneto and cracked harness, never again I hope.

I have decided that 1522s strip and rebuild will be as complete as I can achieve and all of the interior trim needs replacing. I know Bob Riffle makes some fine trim items but he agrees with me that Airtex also do some good work. I contacted Dodd Stretch at Airtex and he was able to find patterns for the seats, the sling and baggage box, firewall cover and headliner with some of his Grandfathers original hand written notes on them. He did me a very good deal on these items plus he copied my sidewall and door patterns and I am very pleased with the finished items.

1522 in her early days had an electrical system of sorts with Navigation lights and a Grimes retractable landing light fitted all fed from a total loss battery. The lights and switches are still fitted but the battery installation has long been removed. By 2008 I have to have a Mode S Transponder fitted to fly in Europe so I will fit a Turbo Alternator between the gear legs and would like to fit a battery in its original forward left lower firewall position but I have no idea what the original installation looked like. Does anyone have any pics, sketches or drawings etc of an original battery installation and wiring diagram?

It occurred to me that there may be others of you out there thinking about a rebuild of a Skyranger so I thought I would list all of the items I have purchased so far along with the suppliers. I know there are other sources out there but all these guys did the best deal at the time and I hope the list will help someone.

Winter's here and 1522 can rest a little but find us a fly in, good weather and we will be there. I would just like to thank all of you who have given me advice and helped answer my many questions this past year, be assured there are more to come. I just hope I can return the favour one day especially if you ever come over the water to England just let me know.

Happy Skyranger days Ash Bourne

Item	Supplier/Part number
Cononite envelope set	Aircraft Spruce/09-722
Mechanical fuel gages	Aircraft Spruce/05-00029
Wheel Pants	Aircraft Spruce/MF-5
Slick Magneto upgrade	Aircraft Spruce/ K4334
Windshield 2pc	LP Aero Plastics/ LP590&LP591
Seat sling & Baggage box pattern	Airtex/from pattern
Seat cushion 2pc	" / "
Headlining	" / "
Firewall cover	" / "
Door/Side panel trim	" / "
Control stick boots	Bob Riffle
Landing gear oleo boots	"
Shinn Brakes inc linings/shoes	6CP51&6CA12/Skybound (Atlanta)
Shinn adjusters/springs	6CA2&6CA63 "
Shinn back plates	6CA3 & 4 "
Landing gear oleo seal	461537501000/Parker seals

Online Skyranger Resources

Web

<http://www.rearwin.com> - Eric Rearwin's site of all things related to the Skyranger and other Rearwin aircraft.

Skyrangers mailing list

If you've not done so yet, go to

<http://groups-beta.google.com/group/skyrangers/>

to subscribe or read old messages (yes, it's free). Once signed up, you can post messages to the group by sending email to skyrangers@googlegroups.com; postings go out as email to all group members, just like they did on the old skyrangers@ai.mit.edu mailing list.

Dogs

by Bob Tilden – July 21st, 2004

From *Gone Flyin'* <http://goneflyin.us/>

"That's a nice dog"

"Yup."

I would hate to think of this conversation as being the highlight of my Saturday, and fortunately it wasn't. There were several of us sitting at a table overlooking the runway at Cooperstown, watching the planes come and go. For the most part, the planes were the wholesome old taildragger types because this fly-in always offers a free breakfast to all pilots who arrive in a vintage airplane. A free meal does a good job of bringing out us wholesome old types.

A big Waco bi-plane had just landed, and conversation had lapsed while each of us admired the smooth flowing classic lines of a rare airplane. We listened raptly to the deep purring rumble of its radial engine. It had fresh fabric and paint, and stole the show as the first glints of sun broke through the low clouds overhead. The plane taxied to our left and disappeared behind the crowd, which included a tall young woman who also had smooth flowing classic lines. On a leash, she was holding the aforementioned dog.

A short conversation followed, and it was decided that the dog was about all we could handle; scratch it behind the ear and it would lay down next to the recliner with a sigh while we took a nap. Just a few generations ago, when flying was new and pilots were young and adventurous, old-pilot humor was not nearly as rampant.

It was very much a day for old pilots though. Over the years I have noticed that the percentage of tailwheel airplanes at a fly-in increases dramatically as the ceiling and visibility drop. Part of the reason is that the older planes are slower, and pilots have an easier time picking their way across a misty landscape. Another factor relates to the experience level, and the fact that many of the old slow pilots have been picking their way around their local area for decades.

When I left home, the weather was good, and forecast to remain that way until late afternoon. By the time I crossed Route 81 though, there were quite a few clouds below me. The clouds became thicker as I headed east, until they finally knit into a solid undercast ten miles short of Cooperstown. I back-tracked to a point where I could descend through a hole in the clouds, and proceeded to follow the valleys south and east, zig-zagging my way to the airport.

All of the others had to do the same thing, and one of the guys was telling how there was a big hole in the clouds below, and that all he could see was water. He laughed as he said "I knew it was Schuyler Lake (more properly Canadarago Lake) because of the island in it". From there it was a simple matter of following route 28 to Milford and then up Cherry Valley to the airport in Westfield. Familiarity with the terrain is far more valuable than all the other "informational resources" that can be purchased at any price.

Older guys can often afford to wait out weather problems better than younger pilots, but the biggest factor, I think, is that "scud- running" is not taught to new pilots. At this point in time it is almost a taboo to talk of such a thing. Recently I read a letter to the editor of a glossy- paper magazine, concerning an earlier article about visual flying in poor weather; it scolded the magazine for "encouraging recklessness...".

I had started the day with no enthusiasm for anything, and went to Cooperstown because I had promised another Commonwealth owner that I would meet him there. As I flew home though I was reinvigorated, and I marveled at this wonderful mode of travel. I had wiggled around through some murky sky to get to the airport, but those ten minutes were a lot less stressful than traveling ten minutes on a crowded four- lane. I even found myself singing, something few people can muster when half- lost in traffic on a strange highway.

In all, I had a wonderful morning. I had the chance to gaze idly down upon our rolling hills and a rolling cloudscape as well. I stretched the plane's legs a bit with a flight that was longer than the usual, and met up with a mix of old friends and new ones. I was reassured to discover such a vibrant airport as Cooperstown tucked into a rural valley.

It was quite a morning for the old dogs, and it made me proud to see so many planes lined up in a row, all sitting back comfortably on their tail ends. Some of them were shiny and well groomed, and some others simply looked well exercised. Possessing the wisdom of the years, they sat patiently, waiting to ramble back across the hills and valleys to home again, and understanding the futility of trying to keep up with the younger critters.

Gone Flyin' in Print!

Bob Tilden's book of flying stories has finally made it out in print. Those of you who have grown to love Bob's contributions to SPARS over the years will love this book. I've been a fan of Bob's for years. To order your copy, send the following information to

BOB TILDEN
3640 CR 16
MONTOUR FALLS
NY 14865:

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