



"Zot" Barrazoto, N92932 and friend (no, the crutch isn't a result of Zot's landings!)

Society for the Preservation And Restoration of Skyrangers

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Summer Fly-Ins

Things have been a bit busy at work for me, so I'm afraid this issue is a little slim and a little late. But summer's coming, and the flying's getting good. The two big fly-ins this summer are, of course, the EAA at Oshkosh (29 July-4 August) and the AAA/APM in Ottumwa (5-7 September).

I won't be able to make it to Ottumwa, but there's a reasonable chance that I'll make it to OSH this year. Unfortunately, I'll be in the back of a United 757, and the Skyranger won't fit in the overhead luggage bin, so it'll be staying in California. But my company may fly me out to Wisconsin for a meeting the week before Oshkosh; if that happens, I can just stay after and join in the merriment. Who else thinks they may make it out to either meeting? It'll be a great opportunity to actually see a few other Skyrangers in action.

Skyrangers on the Web

Those of you who have access to the world wide web should really have a look at Eric Rearwin's page at <http://www.rearwin.com>. He's put together a great site, with photos, news, and history about the Skyranger and other Rearwin designs. Best of all, he's put the first couple of issues of SPARS online. Other great bits are an aircraft locator listing all Rearwin/Commonwealth aircraft still known to exist, with photos when he's been able to get them. If you want a photo of your plane in his directory, send it along to Eric at theneko@ix.netcom.com.

Looking for N92956

I got a call last month from Edgar Woods, in Thurmont Maryland. When Ed was overseas in 1958, he flew Skyranger N92956 (#1689) at the Misawa Aero Club in Japan. How exactly the Misawa Aero Club got ahold of it is a rather involved story, which I hope to convince Ed to write up for us some time soon. Now, N92956 is no longer registered with the FAA, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Ed's trying to track down whatever happened to it – next stop is the FAA archives. If any of you have come across that tail number in your research or travels, please let Ed (and me) know. You can reach Ed at 110 Vista Avenue, Thurmont, MD 21788, or by phone at 301-271-3541.

Skyrangers for Sale

For those who don't tune in to the electronic mailing list, John Lorence is selling N90697. It's got an O-235 up front (go fast) and Cleveland brakes (stop quick). If you're interested, or know someone who is, have them send John a self-addressed, stamped envelope at 853 Cessna St, Independence OR, 97351. Or you can send him email at <JLore56871@aol.com>.



Skyrangers seem to be popping up left and right these days. People keep calling me up telling me they're considering buying a Skyraider they've seen for sale, and it's always one that I haven't heard about yet. Edgar Woods in Maryland has tabs on at least three for sale in various states of airworthiness. Phil Stewart is looking at another Skyraider project just a few miles from where I live. Since I've heard about these planes from the people who might want to buy them, I'm holding off on putting out info on exactly where these planes are. If you're looking for a Skyraider, I'd recommend dropping a line to Ed (301-271-3541) or Phil () and asking about "leftovers" (i.e. if they've decided not to buy).

On my own, I did a quick search for "Commonwealth Skyraider" on the web to see what I could come up with. I was surprised at the number of hits:

from <<http://www.aircraftforsale.com/aclist.htm>>

Commonwealth Skyraider 1945, N# not supplied, Picture not Supplied, Not Flyable
Price: \$2,000; Owner is represented by Paul Prentice (flyabout@gte.net).

This plane was not wrecked but cannibalized for parts. The airframe is stripped and looks ok. Wings need some rib work and cover. The empennage is stripped and looks ok. The "N" number is known but there is no data plate, ATC, or logs. Project has; no engine, prop, engine mount, doors, ailerons, struts, or landing gear. It's a scroungers dream at only \$2,000. With the exception of the engine and prop, the other parts can be hand fabricated. Considered building it up as a replica licensed as experimental with a subaru engine hung on the front end. Projected located at North West Regional airport on Dallas/FT Worth sectional.

from <<http://www.barnstormers.com/p0000000.html>>

COMMONWEALTH SKYRAIDER PROJECT. 1946. \$7,000. This airplane is disassembled. Fuselage is in excellent condition. Wings need new ribs built. Engine is low time C-85, but sat for 13 years. It has been disassembled and partially inspected by A&P and looks pretty good. Prop is in very good condition. It has the original wheel pants, and "all in one" tach and engine instruments. A new "in the box" windshield goes with it. Contact David Williams (dccb@budget.net) in Grants Pass, Oregon. Telephone: 541-471-1072. Fax: 541-471-1072. -- Posted: 2/18/98

from <<http://www.freeclassifieds.com/1350.htm>>

1946 Commonwealth Skyraider 185 Cont^l C-90-12, 360 SMOH, 1050 TTAF Metal Prop, Cotton Fabric Toe Brakes, New Tires, Electrical Sym., Always Hangered, 9 In-Out, Side-By-Side Stick Taildragger, Org. Panel, New Wool Headliner. Ph. 218-369-2450, E-Mail: markar@runestone.net (W.C. Mn.). Ref#:69261-2 Posted:19980128

from <<http://aircraft.classifieds.yahoo.com/cache/sanfranciscobayarea/aircraft/airplanes.html>>

Price: 6,000.00 Year: 1946

Description: 1946 Commonwealth Skyraider project for sale. 2 place side-by-side,tube and fabric airplane. Ready for cover. Needs an engine and prop. Very complete. Contact: Carl Prather, San

Jose, California , 95125, Email: Carl_Prather@hotmail.com, Date posted: 03/28/98 Ad ID: aircraft-891066204-24217

Skyranger: Coast to Coast...By Rail

Brett E. Lovett Commonwealth Skyranger 185 NC67048 S/N: 1772

In 1946, more civil aircraft were manufactured than any year before or since. To help promote this manufacture, the Civil Aeronautics Authority approved the final assembly, and registration of aircraft by aircraft distributors. Prior to this, if an aircraft was to be shipped, it had to be assembled, registered, test flown, then disassembled at the factory, prior to shipping. Commonwealth Aircraft took advantage of this policy and prepared assembly manuals and drawing sets for their distributor(s).

In August 1946 12 to 15 Skyrangers, including serial number 1772 (mine), were loaded on train cars in Valley Stream, NY, and shipped to Concord, CA. Pacific Aero Sales, Inc., located at Buchanan County Airport, in Concord, was the west coast distributor for Commonwealth, and received the aircraft in late August. The aircraft were registered and assigned identification numbers on or about August 26, 1946. By Commonwealth's policy, this became the date of manufacture for the airplanes.

Aircraft were painted at the factory as follows: Fuselage was painted in optional colors (maroon on mine, others may have been red, blue, and green). Wings and horizontal tail were painted cream. No trim or registration numbers were painted aircraft at the factory if they were to be assembled at a distributorship. Registration numbers weren't assigned until the aircraft reached the distributor, and trim stripes couldn't be painted until the aircraft was assembled. However it appears that "NC" may have been painted on the vertical tail and wings at the factory.

Pacific Aero Sales paid Commonwealth for complete aircraft with engines, with the understanding that the engines would be shipped separately from Continental Motors. The engines failed to arrive, and upon inquiry it was found that Continental had received payment for the engines from Commonwealth, but had applied it to an unpaid credit. By this time Commonwealth was preparing to close its doors forever.

Pacific Aero Sales eventually did receive engines for all of its aircraft in 1947. However, with the death of a principal in the company, and the struggles of getting the engines for its craft, it went out of business prior to completing assembly on all of the airplanes.

Serial number 1772, now NC67048, was one of the airplanes that remained unassembled. Even though it was never registered to them, the unsold aircraft became property of a bank. NC67048 was purchased by an individual in 1948, and assembly was completed by a mechanic in August of that year. Because of this NC67048 had a unique trim scheme, conceived of by the owner and his mechanic.

Upon completion of the restoration of NC67048, I hope to make a flight recreating the movement of my aircraft and the company that built it.

Commonwealth Aircraft, Inc. was originally located at Fairfax Airport in Kansas City, KS. In 1985 Fairfax Airport was closed, and the building that housed Commonwealth aircraft was destroyed. In January 1946, Commonwealth moved equipment by rail to Valley Stream, NY. My flight will originate from the nearby Kansas City Downtown Airport.

Commonwealth's factory in New York, is located just a few miles from the current Kennedy Airport. Although the land where the airport was located is now occupied by a shopping mall, and a housing development, a most of the factory buildings remain. Interestingly enough they are currently being used by air cargo companies, in support of Kennedy Airport. I wonder what kind of response I will get to a request for a Commonwealth Skyranger to land at Kennedy Airport VFR, since it is the closest field to the factory site.

It is my understanding that the buildings that housed Pacific Aero Sales at Buchanan County airport in Concord, CA no longer exist, although the airport does. NC67048 stayed nearby in the San Francisco area until the 1970's when it was shipped, this time by truck, back to none other than Kansas City.

In 1990 I found NC67048 in a hangar at the East Kansas City Airport, Grain Valley, MO. I hope to discover if there were any other distributors that assembled aircraft under this program. I hope to find exactly which aircraft were and weren't finished by Pacific Aero Sales. I would like to find a photo of an aircraft assembled by Pacific Aero Sales in order to find what design they used for trim, if they painted any trim at all. I would like to find photos of any other paint schemes that are original, but not factory. IF ANY OF YOU SKYRANGER OWNERS CAN HELP, IT WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. I plan to visit the FAA in Oklahoma City this summer, and check records that will help me find some of these answers. In addition I hope to be able to develop a full serial number/N-number list, including distributors, or dealerships for each aircraft, and the disposition of aircraft no longer registered. I am going to concentrate on just Commonwealth Skyranagers for now, serial numbers 1601, and up, and also the 2 Commonwealth Trimmers. If anyone would be interested in going to Oklahoma City and doing the same research on Rearwin Skyranagers or anything else, please let me know, and I will get you the information you need to do the research.

Brett

What to File As?

You've probably all faced this problem once. I've asked Flight Service, my local FSDO, and the FAA in Oklahoma City, and I still can't get a straight answer. When you file a flight plan, VFR or IFR, the folks at Flight Service are required to put in a designator for your aircraft type. They don't have anything listed under "Rearwin" or "Commonwealth", but they still need a designator, and won't let you file without it.

My conversation with the poor FSS briefer usually goes on a bit as they attempt to find a designator ("Hang on, I'm sure we've got one somewhere...") while I try to convince them that no they don't, and 50 FSS briefers before them have tried and failed to find one. I end up convincing them to let me file as type HXA ("experimental, less than 100 knots") and add a note in the comments section indicating that I'm a Skyranger. Unfortunately, ATC uses the same set of designators, so whenever I get flight following or need to transit class B or C airspace (a necessity here in the Bay Area), I have to go through the same hoops, but on a radio frequency crowded with air carrier traffic. Worse, I have to endure the indignity of being called "Experimental '395" for the rest of my trip.

Oklahoma City assures me that the designator for the Commonwealth Skyranger is "185". Yeah, right. The closest FSS has to that one is the eponymous piece of Wichita aluminum. So, how do other people deal with this? Do you just not file? Have you figured out a secret designator that fits? I went so far as to try finding out who I apply to to get a designator created. Nobody seems to know. Ah, the joys of federal government!

Email archives - repairing an oil temp gage?

From: LEON ORTON <LEONORTON@aol.com>
Date: Sat, 2 May 1998 23:09:10 EDT
To: skyrangers@ai.mit.edu
Subject: Oil temp gage ? (skyranger)

I am flying a 1940 Rearwin 175 (skyranger) which has the original round engine cluster. My oil temp has quit working. Does anyone know where I can get a replacement part? I believe that the gage, tube and sending bulb are a sealed unit and has to be replace together. If these parts are no longer available does anyone have any ideas for a substitution part. The gage makes a quarter circle arc and does not use electrical power. Perhaps there is a automotive solution?

Any coments will be appreciated.

Thanks
Leon

Subject: Re: Oil temp gage ? (skyranger)
Date: Sun, 3 May 1998 22:51:44 -0500
From: "Brett E. Lovett" <blovett@swbell.net>

Leon,

I don't have the information on who does it, but I understand that someone is supposed to be able to repair oil temp guages with broken bulbs.

If not, these units were built by Stewart Warner. The 3 in 1 guage on your Skyranger was also used on other aircraft such as some Aeroncas. In addition, these were often automotive units that were simply made with aircraft markings. So, you may find a period automotive guage that could be rescreened with the correct markings.

Brett

Date: Mon, 11 May 1998 13:01:49 -0700
From: "David 'Pablo' Cohn" <cohn@harlequin.com>
Subject: Re: Oil temp gage ? (skyranger)

A few places you might want to try (extracted from SPARS #1):

- Mike Schwartz at AirTech Instruments in Seattle (206-767-6040).
- Air-Parts of Lock Haven, PA (1-800-443-3117). They do Stewart-Warner cluster gauges, but the fellow I talked with said he'd never seen on like mine, with the big tach in the center (I thought they were all like that)
- John Wolf and Co in Willoughby, Ohio (216-942-0083) mentioned as a source for the oil temp capillary tube. I hear they charge a bit much for their services, but do a good job
- Dave Stover at Keystone Instruments, Inc. (Piper Memorial Airport, Lock Haven, PA 17745, (717-748-7083)

One of these places ought to be able to get you the right parts.

-David

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Commonwealth/Rearwin Skyranger