

SEABEE CLUB INTERNATIONAL

NEWSLETTER

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Congratulations! You are a recipient of the world's first Seabee Club International Newsletter! This is the first edition (& hopefully not the last) of the newsletter for and by you Bee-keepers. It's bee a long gestation period. Over the years, several of you have suggested that we need such a clearing-house for pertinent info for our mutual benefit: parts needed, parts available, problems solved or needing a solution, STCs, or neat ideas for our beloved Bees, and historical data and memorabilia. An additional benefit might be the peace of mind of knowing that a fellow member may be of help, if necessary, in the area of your destination on a long XC. Yes, I realize that you don't normally make long XCs in your Bee, but wouldn't it be fun upon occasion? And knowing you could have help?



My respects to George Mojonner (N6723K; s/n 1006) in Seattle who put out a newsletter in the early '70s when he and Mary lived in Chicago. It's from his efforts that I got the idea for an International version. Those of you who are also EAA members will have seen George's (EAA #4371) Seabee pictured in the Feb '84 issue of Sport Aviation (p.61). Coincidentally, his prized Bee was in Sports Aviation exactly 10 years before that, in Feb. '74, p.25. You perceive that I've been collecting info for may years to lead up to this Club Newsletter.

If any of you need information or reference material info, let me know. That's part of what we all want in the Club. I don't claim to be a Seabee expert, but I do consider myself one of the most avid enthusiasts. There are experts I know to whom I can refer your question or problem.



To acquaint you with some current on our favorite wind-wagon, there are about 450 RC-3s left alive in the world, out of one thousand and sixty built 37 and 38 years ago, from mid-March 1946 to 2 Oct 47.

Mine's NC 6458K; s/n 708; Franklin B9F; (19 Apr 47). Bought her in Minneapolis in '70 from a TV station owner. He'd gotten 58K in '66 to replace his wrecked one (N6058K, s/n 233). Before that time, mine had been with the Einarson Bros. In International Falls since its earliest days. The Einarsons seem to have had a recognizable "trademark" for all the Seabees that have lived with them over the years. When you see a Bee with airflow-outline "splates" (wing-tip-spill-plates) and inboard wing-root fences and extended spray rails (this was before droop tips and wide spray rails), the logs will probably show "Einarson Bros. Flying Service". Anyway, after a checkout in 58K, we flew her from Minnesota to Ft. Worth, (it was, of course, not that easy. The familiar story: hyd. Problem and engine problems - took six weeks. Long story.) where she enjoyed 7 years of fun an Eagle Mt. Lake next to Meacham Field, in the company of 3 others: Tom Danaher's N191VW (s/n 150), Capt. Wright's N6048K (s/n 223), and Stell's N6705K (s/n 988). My Bee currently resides in regal splendor in her "Nest". A hangar at Cav-Air on Ft. Lauderdale's Executive Airpatch. Drop in and say "Howdy" if you're in the neighborhood.



Interesting trivia department:

*A Franklin Bee has flown 200 mph. "Terminal" (ugh!) test dive by Republic's Hank Faller.

*The Seabee was one of Clarence Chamberlin's favorite planes. (You don't remember him?)

*Tex Rankin died trying to fly an over-gross Seabee with 4 men, all their luggage and full fuel out of a high density altitude airport.

*The US Army had a Bee for evaluation, designated YOA-15. It's now N6429K, s/n 674, owned by Herm Mau in central New York. 29K is also one of the 52 teast-flown by Mr. P.H. Spencer himself.

*The RC-3 production stopped 2 Oct 47, for an average production of 59 units per month for 18 months.

*The beaded surface (wings and tail) were formed on a "reverse camel-back die". That's what those small holes in the leading edge were for: positioning. Speaking of which, Republic's simplified design (as opposed to the conventional method with ribs and spars) of the stabilizer, e.g.: 9 parts vs 42; man-hours 2.7 vs 14.2; 160 rivets vs 52. Both methods resulted in the stabilizer weighing 13 lb, but there was a very significant cost saving.

*The tailwheel has an interesting genesis. Its retraction started out to be linked, literally, by cable, to the main gear. This cable was wound around the main gear through-hull shaft so that as the mains were retracted, the cable was further wound up which pulled up a tailwheel lock-pin and then rotated a horizontal shaft which rotated the tailwheel 132 degrees to place the tailwheel alongside the tail boom. (Well, I warned you that this was trivia.)

*Mr. P.H. "Spence" Spencer, from whose 12th airplane design, the Spencer-Larsen Amphibian, the "Thunderbolt Amphibian" (RC-1; NX41816) was developed, has been designing building, and test-flying his own planes since 1909. That's correct, 1909, in an unpowered hang glider of his own design. He was born in 1897. Last Nov, 1983, he did the test flight of his 14th design, the Spencer Air Car Junior. This month, April 1984, he'll be 87. It is my contention that Spence has been flying (and legal) over a longer span of time than any other person in the world: 75 years. Boggles the mind to digest the realization of that achievement.

Just now got a letter from Spence and Andy telling us about the water testing of JR. They had to remodel the aft hull as there was not the expected buoyancy, so it's "back to the drawing board", then the shop, then to the water-strip adjacent to a runway west of Bakersfield. Their shop/office is at Whiteman Airpark in northern Los Angeles.

Also in the recent mail is a very welcome registry list of Seabees in British Columbia from Dr. Ken Turnbull, CF-LPG, (s/n 348) in Vancouver. He wants to find STC info on a landing light. Who has the answer? (Please reply) Having visited about half of the Bees in the country in the past 14 years, I've seen several landing light arrangements - some super installations, some good, and one bad (a tractor Light bolted to the upper wing strut fitting). Glenn Feit, N6566K (s/n 836), on Long Island, needs the same info.




Back to B.C. Dr. Turnbull was the first person to respond to my notice of Seabee Club intent, in the SPA Newsletter. His Seabee List of 30 Bee-keepers in B.C. was just the kind of data that I'd like to have to complete my Master File. I'm attempting to account for all of the 1,060 Bees built, whether they're "alive", resting, wrecked, converted to Twin Bees (23), or abandoned. I've just gotten a print-out of the FAA Registration list of Bees (260), thanks to Mr. Chuck Sallaway of candle and Associates (aircraft brokers) here in Ft. Lauderdale for the help in obtaining that list. Chuck doesn't own a Bee, but is a "friend of aviation" and sympathetic to the plight of the older types. (Airplanes, not us). Copies of the list will be available to Seabee Club International members



Double-take department: some time ago when Peggy and I were flying a charter through Orlando, I glanced idly at a Cessna 150 beside us at the runup area and saw the N#, which looked familiar, then did a double-take. Cessna N6040K?!? "That's a Seabee block number!" Republic had reserved numbers for the RC-3 starting with NC 87451 for s/n 1 (1 through 4 were pre-production models) and up to NC 87600, at which point the numbers, beginning at s/n 170, were from NC 6000K up to - infinity? - anyway, they were consecutive up to the last one, s/n 1,059, NC 6769K, on 2 Oct 47. The post-war flying bubble had burst.



The "International" of the Seabee Club is not a manifestation of delusions of grandeur, but rather of fact. My info, not necessarily complete, indicates that there are 2 or 3 (conflicting data) in Australia, one owned by Capt Graham "Fatty" Hawkins, who flies for TAA. There is another Capt with the same name on the same airline; you guessed it, "Skinny". 

There was a Seabee languishing, appropriately enough, in SIN. (That's the 3-letter ident for Singapore) Ten years ago, the Seattle group of Bee-keepers, plus Fred Sorenson of HON(olulu), were asked by Brian Woodford, who is also firmly ensconced in SIN, to send him an intact Bee with run-out engine so that the "engineers" (that's British for mechanics) at his FBO could rebuild it to be powered by the GO-540. Unfortunately the poor Bee (N6740K, s/n 1028) didn't receive timely attention and then was later abandoned on the edge of the Seletar Airpatch. Several years later, after our receiving no reply from Brian to our continued queries as to the status of said Bee, Capt Don Kyte (N6144K, s/n 330) visited him there and at Don's urging, they finally found her by searching from a chopper. It was still where it had been abandoned, but the jungle had grown around and up through it.


SPA has a very dedicated Norwegian seaplane fan, Seabees in particular, who is one of our (SPA's) newest and youngest members, Steinar Sevdal has furnished data on all Seabees left in Scandinavia, which I greatly appreciate. He's just finishing high school, and has as a neighbor, Arnfinn Halland (who is also as EAA member). Arnfinn has his own SPB, with a Teal and a Super Cub 135 on EDOS. Last fall, Peggy and I had the opportunity to take advantage of our airline passes to visit Norway and the seaplane folks there. The only Seabee left, from about 20 in the late '40s and early '50s, is in Trondheim. She's owned by Knut Solem (LN-LKK, s/n 270) who is a teacher of mechanics and who has accomplished the Lyc conversion, plus droop tips, an ingenious bilge pump system, extended wings, and other nice refinements. She's in good hands.

There are about ten Bees in Sweden. For those of you who like to keep score, they are s/n 202, 646, 647, 737, 828, 829, 864, 953, and an unknown one or two more, I'm sure that nearly all were exported by Republic in its Halcyon days.

Continuing the Baedeker, there's a Bee in Jo'berg in S. Africa, whose keeper I met many years ago at an antique aircraft fly-in at Dallas, but I neglected to get the numbers from him.

From my last research ('74) of the Canadian DOT registration, there were then 86 of our beloved wind-wagons scattered about. I hope to have an up-date on the Canadian list soon. (Very broad hint) But I'm sure that the largest concentration is in the Vancouver area. They and the Seattle/Tacoma Bee-keepers make quite a sizable "swarm". When I visited the area years ago, there were at least 50 very active Seabees in the SEA/TAC/VAN group.

Gleanings from my older file show that in Iceland, Mr Gudjon Sigurgeirsson, owns TF-RKH (s/n?), and that EC-DXB is/was in Spain.

As you can see, our favorite Republic product is represented around the world, and to realize that there are still more than 450 is quite a tribute to her stoutness, integrity, durability, and charm. She's a good ol' girl! 

The next big SPA Splash-In will be on Lake Pleasant, hard by Speculator, in the foothills of the Adirondacks in upstate NY, a very scenic setting for us water-types to gather. That'll be June 15-17. We've had as many as 60 seaplanes of all persuasions lined up wing-tip to wing-tip on the beach there, many of which were Bees. Last year's collection of Bees and Super Bees was 10, with many more represented by Bee-keepers, like Peggy and me, Donn Booth, Mike Fuller, Glenn Feit, etc., who either live too far away or whose Bees were in there familiar (constant) process of incapacitating maintenance. Also coming up June 8-10 is Dick Scribner's seaplane splash-in north of Pontiac, for you in the north. He

has a Continental-powered Seabee (IO-470 P/250hp; N6432K, s/n 682), which conversion was done by George Pappas in ANC about 15 years ago. Shortly after Don Kyte published an article about the Continental installation in the Aug '69 Private Pilot (p.43), notice was received from Continental of their shutting down the IO-470 engine and parts line. And so it goes.

I'm sure that most, if not all of you, know of Fulton Ivy's Seabee parts being available from his STOL Amphibian Corp., 188 Atlantic Blvd. A/RR2, Key Largo, FL 33037 (305-451-0308). He is also empowered by the Feds to manufacture NEW Seabees, Fulton having title to Republic's ATC#A-769. He has built two, s/n 2001 and 2002. If someone were to want to be the proud owner of a brand new RC-3 (minus Franklin) and have it equipped with a brand new Lyc GO-480 --- WOW! Wouldn't that Bee something! Fulton's parts inventory is for sale if any of you are interested in acquiring the world's largest collection.



Remember, I'm counting on your input for subsequent Newsletters. Even if it's just a request for a place to get a square-tread tailwheel, it'll be welcome. Or if you know of a solution for the overhaul or replacement of Franklin's fuel pumps. I'd like to know the answer to that one myself. Also, I'd like to have an oil filter. This compendium is for the benefit of all of us. There's Gerald Fenton (N6657K, s/n 734) in Bethesda who needs some STC paper-work info on the BT-13 oil cooler that's in the Bee he just bought. Is there an STC?

Hopefully, the next Newsletter will include more useful information for you, but I have to start somewhere, and I need your input in order to accomplish the intent of a Seabee Club International. Let me hear from you. And if you figure it'll be worthwhile, I figure it'll take \$10/year to cover the printing and postage and incentive (mine) costs. That's the only way there can be a second issue. Let's see if we can get this show on the road. Or more appropriately, let's see if we can get this Club on the step. Please sign up the other Bee-keepers you know who may not have learned of this through SPA. And sign them up for SPA also. Remember the words of one of our patriots, to paraphrase, "We either float together or we sink separately".

Happy Beeing,
Dick Sanders, SPA #200
(Southern Director)
305-485-5769



Thanks to you Bee-keepers who have already joined. Those of you who would like to, please fill out this form and send to me with \$10.00, payable to Seabee Club Int'l.

MEMBERSHIP/INFO FORM

Name _____ Phone? _____

Address _____

Seabee tail # and s/n and date of mfg. _____

Comments or questions appreciated. SPA? _____ Engine _____