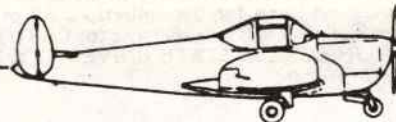


COUPE CAPERS

NEWSLETTER OF ERCOUPE OWNERS CLUB



Volume 9, SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

Editor: Skip Carden

AREA NEWS

Region 1

Dear Northwest Coupers,

I don't suppose it was such BAD weather the day of our October Fly-in—you just couldn't see the weather through the fog!! Therefore, we had to drive for the first time in months. Most of the crowd were reduced to the same tedious transportation. Steve Crosley and Dick Kleinschmidt were waiting in their cars when we arrived. Art Leppin drove in before we got our coffee and Clark and Bella Mohr arrived soon after. Leroy and Sue Geddis, new to the group, also drove (much to Sue's relief). The one free spirit who flew was Malcolm Gibson with his daughter, Laurie. He was able to wait until the fog lifted and scooted the short hop up from Cresswell. Glad to see a little class in the parking lot! We haven't seen Laurie much since she went along on the group flight to the '79 National Fly-In and she's become quite a young lady!

We were glad to welcome the Geddises and look forward to their becoming regulars. Leroy successfully reassembled several truckloads of Coupe parts into a very nice "whole Coupe" but commented after our Fly-in chatter that he wishes he had come to our gatherings during his rebuilding because he could have benefited from the ideas and suggestions. Either way, we're glad his Coupe is now flyable and, once Sue becomes more comfortable in the air, we hope they'll get a lot of enjoyment from it.

Shortly after we got home Ken Damewood called to say that he and Dorothy had flown up from Eugene and got within 3 mi. of the Albany field but the fog was impenetrable so they had to turn back. We were sorry not to see them but at least got to talk with Ken on the phone.

Since hardly anyone got to fly to the gathering there was no line of Coupes to paw over, but we traded some ideas on various ways of overcoming gas overflow and engine sputtering in flight. The other information shared concerned quality of annual inspections done recently. At the latest report Lebanon does a good job; Independence and Clark County have not been good. We personally have been particularly pleased with the quality of Jim Prosser's work on our plane. If anyone else has found good or bad mechanics, let us know so we can spread the word, support the better work, and live longer!

November's Fly-in will be at Albany on Sunday, Nov. 14, at 1:00 p.m. Remember that we don't have a December Fly-in due to the busy holiday schedule. Also, next year we will return to the THIRD SATURDAY of each month for our get-togethers. We hope some of you who have found Sunday to be an inconvenient day to meet will be able to rejoin the gang.

Those of you who knew Dan Smart and Jo Johnson will be sorry to hear that they sold their Coupe this year; you will be glad to hear that they still plan to join our group again when we are back to the Saturday meetings. We've missed them.

Guess I'd better flip this in the mail since I'm late anyway!

Roy & Eileen Wright

REGION 3

As of this date, area three has been busy doing our thing, but not saying too much about it. We have been having our monthly meetings on the second Monday night of the month with good turnouts. New arrangements have been made with the restaurant at the Glendale Airport for our dinner meetings. This has been working great and gives those from other fields the chance to fly-in for the evening. Our president, Kent Foster, has plans well under way for our annual April Southwestern Fly-In. It looks like at this time we will be changing fields here in the Phoenix area with much more convenience being added and the hopes of getting sleeping close by at a reasonable rate. The restaurant on this field would also be serving the banquet. We will be letting you know more of the details as plans are firmed up.

In October the group (35 persons) had an old fashioned hayride with a dinner meeting. A good time was had by all. Several Sunday morning breakfast flights have been held, and great times have been had by those attending. Our flying weather has been at its best and many more outings are in the planning stages.

Many of our group were in attendance at the Copperstate E.A.A. fly-in and some came away with awards. "Red" Ward will cover this event for all the up to-date news.

As usual we have some changes in our membership with job transfers taking one and some proud new owners joining the group.

It seems hard for me to imagine, as Shirley and I are sitting in our yard late in the afternoon and saying to the rest of the country

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY SAFE FLYING NEW YEAR

From the Arizona Coupe Group
Jack L. Harkness

1980 National Erco Coupe Owners Club Fly-In Bowling Green, Ohio July 3 - 6

Now that a great summer has come and gone let's look at some of the numbers to better know what a swell time we all had.

Pre-Reg. - 171 persons; Receipts - 195, written on field; Housed at dorms - 256 persons; Banquet - 230.

Best of all we had 125 aircraft at the Fly-in. This group of Coupes was a fine one, each was a beauty. The city and airport people were happy to have us here. They hope to have a better fuel truck for next summer and much better weather.

I expect to use the same format for next year. If anyone has names of people you want to hear in a forum, let me know and I will try. I am also planning to use a better room for the evening meetings (plus fun and games and perhaps dancing). I have asked Joe Todd to be the head judge and he, Skip and Don may well have some better ideas. I also hope to hire people to run vans which will give Jim Jackson and the others time to see and talk a bit more. Our on the field meals will be improved as will the dorms. I hope to get a better air conditioned dorm, if at all possible.

It was a great Fly-In with no problems, which is fun for me. Skip said for the first time it was a joy. (He never does anything).

The main change for next year will be to get help at the "on the field office" and from some of you who can help park aircrafts, etc. Next year will be even better and I, for one, look forward to seeing everyone again.

KCF
Carl Hall

TO: ERCOUPE ARCHIVES FROM: CARL HALL

Enclosed you will find Mr. Yon's letter. As his father once owned a coupe he is very interested in such a collection. There are three main questions on this matter:

1. Where is the best place for such an archive?
2. What can be held and how can it be made available to researchers?
3. What are the costs, and how will they be covered?

While some things are not much until they happen, we can address these items with some ideas.

Let us consider what can be done by the archive staff. They can receive, catalog, and store. However, this is only of printed or photographic materials.

One of the things that can be done is to copy your photograph for records then return it to you. After materials are cataloged this information list can be published and after that time items may be ordered by number and photo copies will be made at a small cost to the researcher.

At the outset of such a program we will need to start a fund to cover the cost of handling and cataloging information gathered. As of this moment it seems we will need a fund of about \$500 to \$700. We do have a start as Mr. Moore of "Blue Magic" has given \$25 to the Archive Fund. But we need your help to reach the goal.

Is Bowling Green State University the place to handle such a collection? I had first felt there might be a better place. However, after talking with Mr. Yon, I now feel this is a good place. Why? First, Mr. Yon and his staff want to do it. His interest is strong as his father once owned a coupe and loved it. So that is very important. Further, the Archival center has skills to do what needs to be done. Best of all it can be reproduced and sent to anyone wanting such information anywhere in the world at anytime.

All in all it can be a great thing and a properly run collection we can be proud of.

What next? Send your money to me to get the fund going. And by all means send items for the collection. All of this is tax deductible and funds and materials may be sent to: CARL HALL, SCHOOL OF ART, BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY, BOWLING GREEN, OHIO 43402.

Thank you,
C. Hall
Design Division



Since this is the Christmas Season and our Christmas issue, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR. The last weeks have been very busy and I know that all of you are also busy at this time of year. We have made arrangements with the help of our Chief Ercoupe Consultant, Ken Heath, to have a complete kit of stainless hardware for the Coupe. This took a lot of time and effort on Ken's part and I am sure everyone appreciates it. The kit will sell for \$19.95 and includes all screws and nuts needed to replace those on a Coupe. I would also like to thank Mr. Gene Santi of Trimcraft Aero II who has made this kit for us. In the next issue I hope to have another new service available for members. This one should be a great help in knowing the condition of your engine. Well, that's about all for now except that if you are a Wing Leader or Regional Director, please get me a new listing, as the last one we printed was outdated and we need to have a new list!

Skip

Once again it is my sad duty to inform you of the untimely passing of another of our members, Garrett Heusinkveld of Springfield, South Dakota, who died of cancer. He was a good friend and fellow Couper. He attended the first National at Harvey Young in Tulsa and to the National at Tahlequah. He was a nice person and an asset to our Club. His wife, Edith and a married son survive. We all mourn this loss.

Be sure and check the listing of Club Items this time, sometimes the very gift for that special Couper. Fran said that she will fill all orders as soon as possible in hopes of a before Christmas delivery. Don't delay — send in that order today!

Skip

SUN 'N' FUN

Don't forget that Sun 'N' Fun is just around the corner. In fact, from March 15-22, 1981 at Lakeland, Florida. I don't have any firm plans regarding the Club's part in this event, but we will be there. I suggest that you make reservations NOW as space will again be at a premium. In fact, it might not be bad to make more than one reservation. I have heard from President Don Stretch and he will also be there. More later.

Skip

CORRECTION

In last month's issue under the Column "Hints 'N' Tips" with regard to the aluminum cleaner, the second paragraph should have read "Not for use on Aluminum" instead of "Just for use on Aluminum."

FOR SALE AND WANT ADS are placed free of charge to any current member of the Ercoupe Owners Club. Ads are run as received and those received after the 15th of the month will be held until the next publication. If you want to repeat your ad, then you must re-submit it for publication before the 15th. We accept no responsibility for any errors in ads other than to re-print it the following month. Non-members may place ads for a \$5.00 service charge per ad.

FOR SALE

1946 Ercoupe 415D (N89331) 85 hp Continental. All polished metal including wings. I have replaced or rebuilt the following: Mags, Main Gear, Nose Gear, Harness, Baggage Compartment, Oil Sump, Tires and More. Included with the Plane \$500 worth of Sigtronics Transcom and Telex Headsets (Model 1400). May 1979 annual, 1800 TT, 700 S.T.O.H., It's time for a Major. Asking \$2,900. Phone 312-898-2802, Lavon Davis.

Ercoupe N87346, 415C converted to 415E: Double nose fork, Forney nose wheel steering kit, split elevator, panel elevator trim, new battery, new glass and welts all windows, new Cleveland wheels and brakes, ELT, Narco Mark V, Dir. gyro, Cabin fresh air, AF 1735 hours, engine TT 1730, 735 SMOH. \$5,000 — No collect calls. L.M. Davis 904-456-3215.

Used Parts: Pair Goodyear Wheels, 600 x 6, w/brake units and new chromed discs w/bearings \$100. Tail cone w/tail light \$25. Control mast assembly \$15. Control column and shaft assembly \$15. Trim crank unit (instr panel) \$10. New, never installed, Cessna electric Bank & Turn - 2 min. \$75. Hobbs hour meter, new, direct reading \$20. L.M. Davis 904-456-3215.

1946 Ercoupe 415C C-75 950 S.M.O.H. All aluminum polished body, D.N.F., R/Bec. b/windshield, flat hat shelf, E.L.T., sun shade, new steering, new brakes, new oil quick drain, clean, no damage, wings are off, plane in my garage - \$4,800.00. Frederick J. Ryan, 46 Marshall Ave., Schenectady, N.Y. 12304, 518-374-1845.

WANTED

Co-ownership or Partnership - Ercoupe Flying Club being planned. Need details, rules, cost figures, etc. for same, or any helpful information. Joe James, 4825 Kingfisher, Houston, TX. 77035 (713) 728-1181.

FROM THE MAIL BOX

Dear Skip:

Haven't seen you for some time now, but hear from you in Coupe Capers.

You are doing a good job, keep it up. I look forward each month. I would like for someone to come up with some way to put a shimmy damper on the nose wheel of the Ercoupe with the double fork.

Mine shimmys like hell on a hard surface with proper inflation. It does not do this on soil runway.

I understand that it is a lot of paper work through the FAA, unless it has already been done.

There is a bushing that goes in the bottom of the steering column, but you have to take out the gas tank, and radios to get the steering column out. So I think this is a much need project for all Ercoupers.

Thanks,
Hiram L. Martin

I think Roy Wright has done this. Maybe you can contact him.

Skip

Dear Skip,

Please excuse my handwriting. I fell and broke my right hand and am writing this with my left hand.

Our problem is this. We're desperately trying to get together a Complete set of Volumes of Coupe Capers 1-8 and hopefully soon Volume 9. We know of 11 coupes based at three small airports around us and we could all really get a lot of use out of them. We'd be willing to share them amongst ourselves. All we see advertised are Volumes 3,7,8 and some 5, which we plan to send for in 2 weeks. What we want to ask is, if anyone has Volume 1, 2, 4 and 6 that they'd sell us or lend us so we could get them zeroxed or copied somehow. We'd take very good care of them and get them back inside of two weeks time.

Could you possibly print this in the Capers? Thanx.

P.S. Watch for "The Saga of Tweedy-Bird-M" coming soon.

Sincerely,
Maxine Teachout
20170 Williamsville Rd., Gregory, MI 48137

Anyone got a complete set that they would share?

Skip

Dear Skip:

Being proud new members of the EOC, I am happy to say I am now a proud owner of a '46 Coupe, N2341H. I feel like I got initiated into the EOC to the fullest. I had always heard how well built the Coupe was and how easy it would take rough landings "anywhere." Well, now, I can truthfully say it is all true and more, especially since my "Snoopy Dive" with Fred Shannon, great friend and pilot. My wife thinks he's the greatest pilot ever. Ha! I wasn't shook up at the time of our dive, until I woke the next morning after dreaming about it, but after Leonard Page took me around the pattern the next morning it brought all my confidence back. I am looking forward to flying now to all the fly-ins after I complete my flying lessons which I am now taking. Looking forward to my first try at the strip at Leonard & Laura Page's. He might end up with two strips after my try at it. Carmelita and I have enjoyed all the fly-ins we have attended and have met so many wonderful people. Really enjoy Coupe Capers.

John & Carmelita Gaither
Oil City, La. 71061
318-995-6490



Coming in on a Road and a Prayer

"An airplane is trying to land on top of us!"

That alarming cry startled the residents of a Florida housing development a year ago last December and everyone rushed outside. It was not a joke. A small plane was circling a few hundred feet above ground in the dark and cloudy sky, and appeared to be looking for a landing area. In fact, the *Aircoupe* was running low on fuel, the pilot was lost and groping through weather beyond his capabilities to handle, and the lights of "Woodgate Estates" were the only reference to the ground he had been able to find in the past hour. In the FAA control tower at Tallahassee Municipal Airport, controller Richard Gardner was attempting to steer the pilot toward the airport, but without success.

The problems of *Aircoupe* N99166 had begun earlier in the day. The 27 year-old pilot/owner, a resident of Tallahassee, had flown the vintage 1946 airplane down-state to Tampa for the annual inspection, and

then across the state to Daytona Beach for a relaxing weekend. He was due back at work on Monday morning, so he planned to fly back Sunday afternoon. The weather briefing for Tallahassee at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 30, was: *Ceiling broken at 2,200, visibility seven miles, thunderstorms in the area.* The pilot, who was not instrument rated, took off without a flight plan, intending to keep a close watch on the weather ahead.

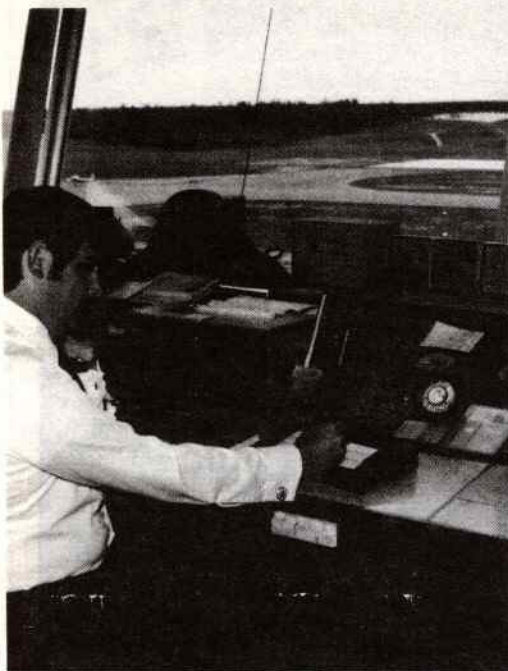
By 5:00 p.m. he had covered 200 miles and was in the vicinity of Perry, about 25 miles southeast of Tallahassee, on Florida's Gulf coast. The weather ahead looked troublesome, so he decided to land at Perry and get a briefing on the ground while the plane was being refueled.

The Tallahassee weather did not look too bad on paper: *Ceiling scattered at 2,000 feet . . . visibility seven miles or better. thunderstorms moving out of the area.* Reassured, the pilot of *Aircoupe* N99166 took off again,

expecting to complete the short, 15 minute hop with the last of the fading daylight.

He did not make it. The weather along Florida's gulf coast is known for its rapid changeability, especially in winter when air warmed by the gulf passes over the land and creates instant fog and low-lying clouds. Although the ceiling was 2,000 feet scattered immediately over Tallahassee Municipal when the pilot had been given his briefing by the FSS specialist, a few moments later the briefer learned from pilots flying through the area that much denser cloud formations prevailed in the vicinity. He immediately tried to contact the *Aircoupe* pilot by radio.

The *Aircoupe*, airborne by this time, apparently received the call from Tallahassee FSS, but was unable to acknowledge. The pilot assumed that his transceiver was not functioning properly, but continued his flight. He had decided to fly due north from Perry and then make a dogleg west to Tallahassee,



Controller Richard Gardner spent two tense hours in the Tallahassee Tower talking the frightened pilot down to a safe landing.

in order to avoid the reported thunderstorms.

But as he turned west he soon found himself being pushed lower and lower to stay under the clouds. At 1,100 feet he was just under a ceiling that was closer to broken or overcast than scattered. Darkness was falling and abruptly he lost visual contact. Unable to raise the FSS on his radio he switched to 118.7, and tried to contact the Tallahassee control tower. At that moment he flew into clouds and had to descend to 900 feet to avoid them. The ceiling appeared to be dropping rapidly, and he found himself flying in circles trying to dodge the clouds. He could see no lights on the ground.

At 6:09 he finally managed, to his immense relief, to contact the Tallahassee tower. He estimated his position as ten miles east of the city and asked for landing instructions.

"*Aircoupe* N99166, you are advised that Tallahassee Airport is below VFR minimums. We have broken cloud ceiling at 800 feet, also a broken ceiling at 2,000, visibility seven miles. What are your intentions?"

"I don't know. I'm getting a little confused up here, and I can't see the ground. I think I'm over some kind of swamp."

The controller, Richard Gardner, endeavored to calm the pilot while he made other calls to insure him of separation from traffic in the area. Several aircraft were held on the ground, others approaching to land were placed in a holding pattern or diverted. Since Tallahassee does not have radar, he also called the flight service station, located in the same building, and asked the specialist manning the direction finding equipment to get

a bearing on the *Aircoupe*, on the tower frequency. The bearing indicated that the plane was northeast of the airport. To get a more accurate fix would require the execution of precision turns, which appeared to be beyond the pilot's capability under present circumstances. He was given a heading and told to keep a lookout for the brightly illuminated state capitol dome.

Continued monitoring of the DF scope showed that the *Aircoupe* pilot was unable to hold a heading, that he appeared to be flying around in circles. The pilot indicated on radio that "something is wrong with the instruments." He said they had been functioning all right when he started out, but he suspected something had happened to them in flight. He said he had no directional gyro or turn and bank indicator, and his magnetic compass was spinning wildly. The only instrument he felt sure about was his altimeter.

Controller Gardner, an experienced pilot and flight instructor, realized that the spinning compass was caused by erratic and circular flying, and he thought possibly that the apparent failure of the other instruments might be related to pilot panic, but he did not argue the point. He asked the pilot to keep his wings level, stay clear of clouds and try to get some ground reference.

"... you should be able to see those dome lights pretty soon. Can you see any lights at all?"

"Negative."

"All right, N166, what is your fuel situation? How much fuel do you have remaining?"

"I topped the tanks at Perry."

So fuel was not an immediate factor in getting the *Aircoupe* down safely. But the weather was an unrelenting threat. Circling blindly in the dark, the pilot soon reported that he had been forced down to 800 feet to avoid clouds. And then 500 feet. And no lights in sight. He had a sudden thought.

"Tallahassee tower, how high are the clouds on top of me?"

"N166, cloud tops are reported at approximately 4,600 feet in this area. What are your intentions?"

"I think I had better fly up through the clouds and get on top. Then I could see where to go."

Gardner knew that such an escape effort would in all likelihood lead to the pilot's losing control of the airplane completely and spinning down, but he kept the excitement out of his voice as he asked if the pilot was instrument rated.

"I've had about five hours of instrument instruction."

"N166, are you able to read your directional gyro?"

"Negative."

"Does your turn and bank indicator appear to be working?"

"Uh, negative on that too."

Gardner then advised the pilot against any attempt at IFR flight in any direction. He cautioned him to stay below the clouds and to keep looking for a ground reference. Again, with the aid of the direction finder scope in the flight service station, the *Aircoupe* was given a heading to the airport. And again, and again. He was still flying in circles, weaving about in the dark night, dodging clouds.

Shortly before 7:00 p.m. the tower received a telephone call from the owner of a large plantation near Bradfordville, about 15 miles northeast of the airport. The caller said he had been hearing the sound of a small aircraft overhead, apparently circling his land at a low altitude. Gardner asked the caller to turn on all of his outside lights and any available automobile headlights.

"N166, will you look down carefully and see whether there are any lights on the ground below you now? Can you see anything?"

"I think so."

"N166, can you see some automobile headlights now?"

"Maybe."

"Good. There's a lighted house, and some open fields behind it. Can you see them, N166?"

"No, just some lights."

"All right. Now we know exactly where you are. I am going to give you another heading, N166, and if you follow it you should have the airport in sight in about five minutes."

But again the pilot was unable to hold the heading, and in a few minutes, to Gardner's dismay, he reported that he had lost the lights and was circling in darkness.

For another agonizing 15 minutes the pilot was unable to report any ground reference, and he was driven down to 400 feet

Lights in "Woodgate Estates" provided the disoriented pilot with ground reference.



by the lowering ceiling of clouds. Then at 7:09 p.m. he called in excitedly.

"Hey, I see a lot of lights down there. Homes and streets, I think."

At that moment the tower was receiving a flurry of telephone calls from the residents of Woodgate Estates, a housing development about 10 miles northeast of the airport. A small airplane was reported circling low over the houses, apparently looking for a place to land.

Gardner gave the pilot his location, less than five miles from that illuminated capitol dome. If he could make his way to the dome on the given heading, he could practically see the airport runway lights. He was advised to fly a straight and level course over the lighted housing development, to establish control of the airplane and steady his compass, and then take up the heading.

But the *Aircoupe* continued to circle over Woodgate, seemingly attracted to the lights with the same fatal fascination that draws a moth to the flame. Sooner or later he would be forced down, by lack of fuel or descending clouds, and there was just no room to land between the houses.

To make matters worse, the pilot was becoming less responsive to the tower, so that it was difficult to know whether he was actually paying attention to the radio calls. He seemed to be mesmerized by the lights below. Gardner realized at this point that he would have to give up on vectoring the *Aircoupe* to the airport, and find an emergency landing site for him.

The possibility of a major tragedy was beginning to loom larger in his mind. He sent out an alert that soon had police cars, ambulances and fire engines rushing to the scene.

A check of the map showed no open space or field of any kind in the vicinity of Woodgate that could be used for an emer-

gency landing. But finally a call from the *Aircoupe* pilot provided a possibility. He reported that he could see what appeared to be a four-lane highway below. It was Interstate I-10, a completed but not yet officially opened highspeed road about a mile north of Woodgate Estates.

At Gardner's direction, police cars lined up along the road, using their headlights to brighten the pavement for a quarter mile. When everyone was in place he contacted the pilot:

"*Aircoupe* N166, I suggest an emergency landing on Interstate I-10. Can you see that stretch of highway with the police car lights on it?"

"I think so."

"Then I suggest an emergency landing on the highway sir. There are no surface vehicles moving on it, it's quite straight and long enough for you."

"I'll take a look at it. I want to see if there are any obstructions."

"All right, N166. Proceed with caution."

The *Aircoupe* made a pass over the designated area at about 100 feet over the ground. The pilot said nothing, but circled and made a second pass. And another, and another. He was still not satisfied that the roadway was clear, and he returned to the security of Woodgate to continue circling. His ceiling was now down to 300 feet.

Gardner called him again.

"N166, we have had police cars traverse that section of the road. There are no obstacles, repeat no obstacles. Are you ready to land?"

"I think the police cars are too close to the road. Can you move them back some?"

A few minutes later Gardner was able to report that the police cars along the road had pulled back to the grass. After more discussion with the pilot he had them moved back still farther. The pilot flew

back over the highway, but for the next 15 minutes he continued to make low level passes over it without attempting to land.

"... N166, are you going to land now? Are you ready to land?"

No reply.

"N166, we have two ambulances standing by, also fire engines in case of any trouble. Do you see the police car with the blue flashing light?"

"Roger."

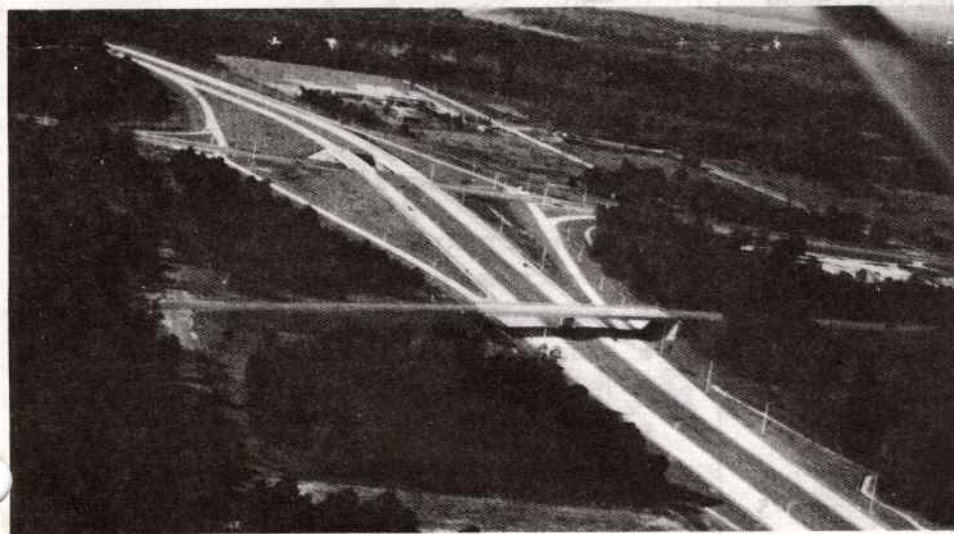
"All right, N166, that car is going to lead you down. Just line up with the highway behind him, and as you approach he will move out and lead you right down. He'll be moving faster than your landing speed, so you won't have any problem. Once you start the landing, you'll probably be below the range of my radio, so don't bother to call me. Just land the airplane, get it down. N166, do you understand?"

The *Aircoupe* acknowledged. The pilot circled to line himself up with the highway and began his descent, which took him over an overpass crowded with gawking spectators. As he cleared the overpass, the waiting police car accelerated furiously to 90-mph and the plane touched down a safe distance behind it. A roll-out of some 200 yards, and the episode was over; no injuries, no damage, no problem. After nearly two hours of unrelenting tension, the control tower returned to normal operation, and traffic flowed at Tallahassee Airport again.

In recognition of the remarkable job done by the controller in assisting the *Aircoupe* to a safe landing, Richard Gardner was given one of FAA's three national awards for the year's most outstanding flight assists. His experience also paved the way for the establishment by the Tallahassee flight service station, under the direction of FSS chief Robert Hayden, of an "Aircraft Emergency Network" for coordinating the efforts of all emergency units in the area. The network is activated by one call from the FSS to the police dispatcher, who then contacts all other organizations which might have to participate in the assist: highway patrol, sheriff's office, fire department, rescue squads, coast guard, etc. Network facilities are equipped with receivers which can pick up the FSS frequencies and thus follow the progress of any assist without having to interrupt the work of the FAA personnel actively in contact with the distressed aircraft.

In the first year of its existence, the Tallahassee Aircraft Emergency Network has been used on ten occasions, each culminating in a safe landing. And Interstate I-10 was used for a second emergency landing scarcely six months after the first. However, FAA does not wish pilots to expect miracles of the Air Traffic Service. No invention or organization can assure safety if the operator of an airplane chooses to take chances with bad weather. Sooner or later he will run out of luck—and help. ■

With headlights illuminating the pavement against the pitch black night and the flashing blue light of a police car leading the way, the *Aircoupe* landed on this highway.





• Postscript from Ercoupe N99166

I read your February article "Coming In On a Road and a Prayer" with much interest. I am the current owner of that famous Ercoupe N99166, having purchased same from the unfortunate subject of your article. I have a few additions and corrections to your story. First of all the aircraft is an Ercoupe, not Aircoupe. The original Ercoupe was built by Engineering and Research Co. of College Park, Md. Aircoupes were later versions by successors to the design.

I discovered, after purchasing the aircraft, why the pilot was having some of his problems. The intermittent radio transmissions were due to an instrument panel brace which had come loose and was periodically shorting the microphone jack. The gyro horizon and directional gyro had worn out bearings and the DG had the air inlet plugged. The turn-and-bank instrument worked OK.

Worth noting was the lifesaving inherent stability of the aircraft which saved the pilot's life. The plane did not stall or spin, even though the pilot stated he was inverted at times. I don't know of any current production plane which would have been so forgiving.

Ercoupe N99166 and myself thank you for a very good and interesting article. Kudos to controller Richard Gardner (no relation) for giving calm, reassuring directions.

William R. Gardiner
Perry, Fla.

JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

CLUB ITEMS

The following Club items are available from Fran Heath, 710 S. Woodbine Drive, Sapulpa, OK. 74066 (918) 224-0644.

MODELS

Ercoupe Models \$1.75 ea. pp.

DECALS

Vinyl (Club) \$.50 + postage
Water (Club) \$.25 + postage
Cloth (Club) \$1.50 + postage

PREVIOUS VOLUMES OF COUPE CAPERS

Vol. 3 \$6.00 p.p. Vol. 6 \$6.00 p.p.
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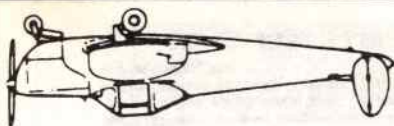
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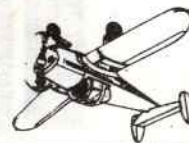


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