

MARKINGS OF EARLY CIVIL AIRCRAFT

By Dave Stott

An article published in the December 2002 issue of the FAC Newsletter, Lin Reichel, Editor

Ever notice the registration markings on such early birds as the Curtiss Falcon Mailplane operated by TAT and wonder about their origins? Here are highlights clipped from an article of unknown source that explains these markings and their size and location. Good info to have when you layout your next model of a civil airplane existing before the arrival of the Airworthy Type Certificates and "NC" numbering.

The Secretary of Commerce is required by law to establish rules for the identification of all aircraft that are licensed. The following system is used for marking airplanes; these symbols are painted on the wing, as noted below, and all licensed aircraft can be readily identified by these symbols.

Commercial aircraft carry the Roman capital letter "C", followed by the license number. Thus: C 4682.

Aircraft used solely for governmental purposes, and belonging to States, Territories, or political subdivisions thereof, carry the Roman capital letter "S" before the license number. Thus: S 219.

Licensed aircraft engaged in foreign air commerce, carry the letter "C" and license number, as noted above, and in addition have the letter "N" preceding. Thus, NC 4682.

Unlicensed aircraft must display, when in flight, an identification mark permanently affixed, consisting of a number only. Thus the lack of a preceding letter clearly denotes the lack of a license, and this protective safeguard for passengers, insuring that a qualified pilot is at the controls, should always be looked for before an aerial trip is made. Over 75 per cent of accidents occur to unlicensed aircraft and pilots.

PLACES AND DIMENSIONS OF MARKS.

On airplanes the marks are to be located on the lower surface of the lower left wing, and the upper surface of the upper right wing. The top of the letters or figures is to be toward the leading edge, and height is to be at least four-fifths of the mean chord (width of wing). This height need not be more than 30 inches, but shall not be less.

The marks shall also appear on the rudder, as large as possible.

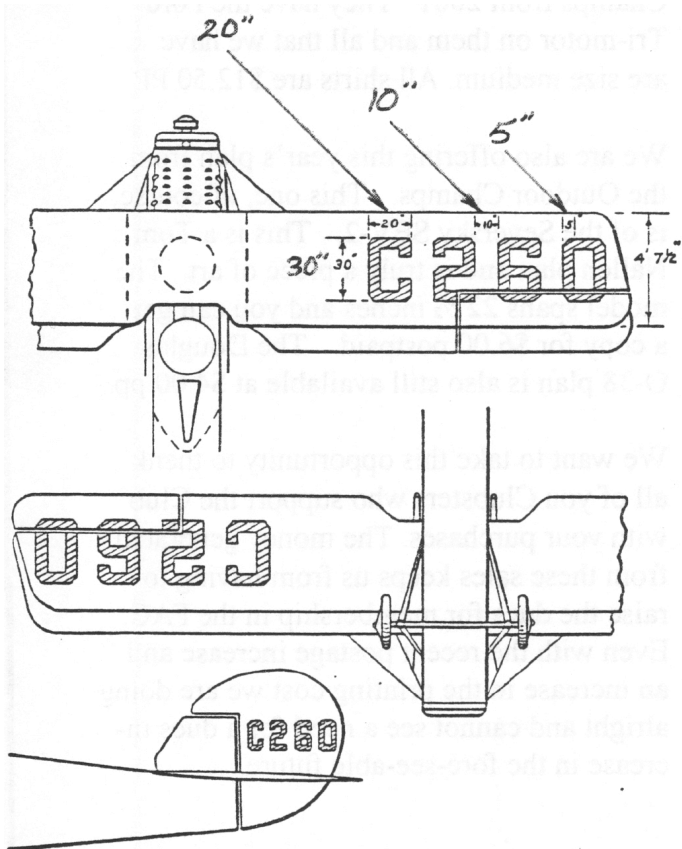
It is against the regulations, except upon direct approval, to place any other design, mark, character or description, if it will in any way modify, add to, or destroy the clearness of the assigned mark.

The License number or identification mark, with name and residence of owner, are inscribed on a metal plate furnished by the Secretary of Commerce, to be affixed to the fuselage, except on governmental craft.

Full details on marking are to be found in Air Commerce Regulations, issued by Aeronautics Branch, Dept. of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

Experimental craft are usually given an "X" number while undergoing tests. All experimental navy craft are so marked.

See examples on next page



License Numbers on Airplanes—From Air Commerce Regulations,
U. S. Dept. of Commerce.