

The First Clipwing Taylorcraft



Little Poopdeck

BY PAUL POBEREZNY
WITH H.G. FRAUTSCHY

A few weeks ago we sat down with EAA's founder and chairman of the board, Paul Poberezny, to chat about a fun little airplane he created out of a 1940 Taylorcraft. Paul was looking for something that he could use on a regular basis, and a previously clipped lightplane served as an inspiration to Paul to create his own little speedster. Here's our interview with Paul.

—HGF

HGF: How did *Little Poopdeck* come to be?

PHP: It was a 1940 40-hp airplane that hadn't been damaged or anything. I just bought it whole, less engine, and decided that I'd like a faster cross-country airplane. I was stationed at Volk Field (it was called Camp Douglas at that time); I had a BT-13 and an Army National Guard L-17. I thought it would be kind of nice to fly back and forth at a roaring speed of about

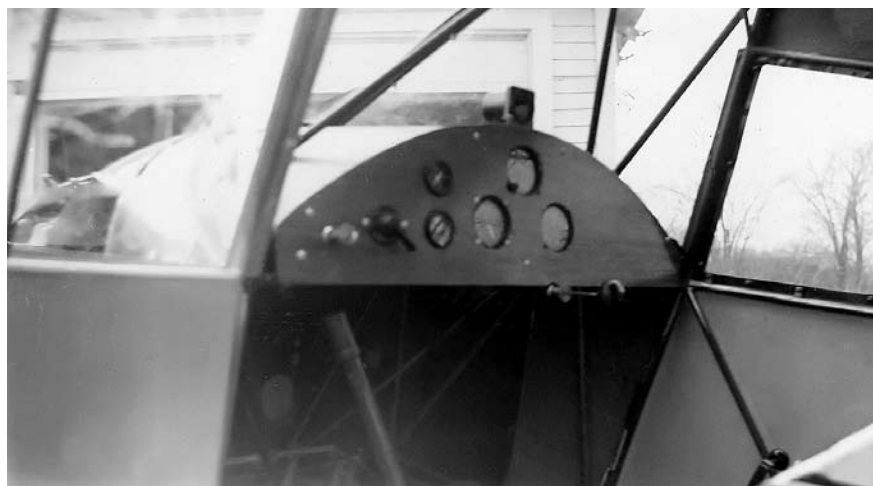
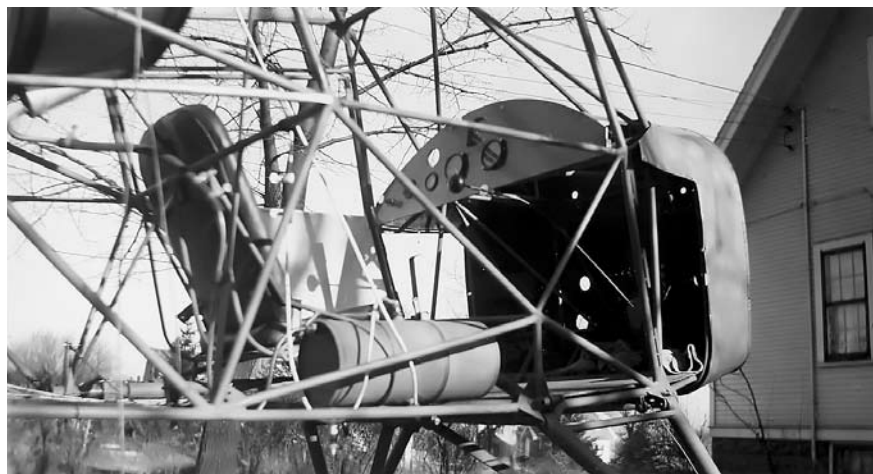
135 mph.

About that same time, I had an opportunity to fly Duane Cole's Clipwing Cub *Little Bit*, and I think that would be about the same time—'48 or so—at Hales Corners airport. That inspired me because it was a little snappier than dragging a lot more wing along. So I took the project and started on that one. I took the wings completely apart. I used the extra wing ribs from the



wings that I clipped down to 26 feet (I took out a total of 10 feet), doubled all the wing ribs on the wings for extra load and so forth, and I put a Continental engine in it with the Ex-Cell-O fuel-injection system so I could operate it upside down. It was an 85-horse engine. I designed a different cowling, and I used a nosebowl from something that I don't recall offhand.

I brought the wings in at the wing root, like a Fairchild 24, and built a windshield that sloped back—it was a two-piece windshield—sloped to the front spar area. I converted it to a control stick on the left side—just a single seat



on the left side of the airplane.

HGF: What about the fuel system?

PHP: I put a Luscombe tank behind me. And then I got a 2-gallon tank out of an Aeronca Defender; that was on my right side, on the floor. Then when I was inverted, the little 2-gallon tank gravity fed the fuel system. When it was

right side up, the Luscombe tank fed, and when you really look at it, with all the plumbing and all that stuff, it looked like a moon-shine still-maker thing.

I built a wooden dash for it, and since it was a single-place airplane, the instruments were mostly on my side. I clipped the ailerons down to the first hinge point, which was a



mistake because I could have used a lot more aileron on it. You notice the rudder is changed a bit. It seems a little bit bigger rudder, especially at the lower end, would have helped.

I could do a barrel roll real easy going along. Just bring the nose up and push full rudder, and she'd just roll right around. I had used some heavier tubing for the wing struts. The vee-struts were welded to one piece into the single point.

HGF: Did you change the horizontal tail at all?

PHP: No. The horizontal tail was trimmed 11 inches. I built a moveable a trim tab. You can see it was kind of squared off. The rudder was more squared-off at the bottom. For the landing gear, I used a Cub gear front strut and axle, and welded in a streamline tubing aft brace.

HGF: Short stack exhaust, too.

PHP: Oh yeah! I had short stacks on it. I often had to wipe off the cowl.

At one time I had wheelpants on it. I flew it even when I was on active duty. I flew it a couple times at Volk Field, and back and forth. I flew it regularly to Truax Field in Madison when I was attached to the 176th

fighter squadron, a P-51 outfit.

HGF: So you got that 125-mph cruise back and forth.

PHP: At least. But the airplane probably flew 100 hours. About 75 to 100 by myself. I flew at some aviation events over in Michigan. Once I flew *Little Audrey* to Detroit, and Bob Nolinski flew *Little Poopdeck*, the name of my new clipwing, there and back. It got off, climbed good. Marion Cole flew it. Duane Cole flew the airplane. But it lacked extra aileron; it would have balanced out just real nice with a bit more force. It flew good inverted and upright. I never had any problem with it. When I went to Korea in the fall of '51, I put it in storage at Curtiss-Wright Airport.

After I returned, I flew it for a while; then I sold it in 1953 to a flying club in Sturtevant, Wisconsin. They flew it for quite a while as a club airplane. It's probably one of the first experimental amateur-built clipwing that a flying club owned.

As I understand it, it got damaged around '54 or '55. It came back to Waukesha for repairs, and from what I understand (I didn't know it was there), they

were working on the fuselage, and it caught fire and that was the end of it, other than the wings. I don't know what ever happened to the wings.

The clipwing monoplane photos displayed on the walls of Paul's offices show a sporty little experimental lightplane, with plenty of personality. Paul noted that the airplane could have used more roll authority to match its zippy performance. When you bring the ailerons in closer to the fuselage, their moment arm is decreased, necessitating an increase in area when compared to the new wing area. In reality, so much of the airframe was changed during Little Poopdeck's construction that it was a pretty simple matter in the late 1940s to have the aircraft licensed by CAA inspector Tony Maugeri, a founding member of EAA (EAA 18). Tony saw that well more than 50 percent of the structure and systems were redesigned, built, and documented by Paul, and he agreed that it was proper that it be certificated in the Experimental Amateur-Built category.

Oh, and the name? Paul says that all sorts of folks had a tough time pronouncing his name during World War II, and Poopdeck seemed to stick, so that's what he named his nifty little single-seat speedster.