The Ercoupe

Fred Weick's vision of everyman's airplane was changed into a conventional one by the market and four different manufacturers.

BY THOMAS A. HORNE
AOPA 566732

Prewar America and the government was holding a safe-airplane contest. Fred Weick's (AOPA 9893) winning ideas were put into action by the Engineering and Research Corporation (Erco), in an effort to provide the public with a safe, easy-to-fly monoplane. The result was the Ercoupe, a revolutionary airplane that was way ahead of its time. The original design kicked off a 30 year history involving four different manufacturers and a host of modifications.

The Ercoupe received immediate attention because it was the first all-metal monoplane with steerable tricycle gear and spin-proof stall characteristics. Even more novel, the Ercoupe's nosewheel was tied in with its rudder and aileron control systems in a design that eliminated rudder pedals. The only thing on the floorboards was a single brake pedal. Just like a car's. Since the control column had all the steering functions, all one had to do to steer the Ercoupe, on the ground and in the air, was to turn the wheel. Want to go left? Then turn the wheel left. Simple.

The whole idea was to provide the neophyte pilot with control systems that resembled as closely as possible that of an automobile's, reducing the pilot's workload and narrowing the psychological distance between airplane and car. The ease of the learning transference together with its built-in safety features would, in theory at least, provide the public with as foolproof an airplane as could be expected and a corresponding reduction in fatalities sustained by the civilian flying population.

This was the era of wood and fabric biplanes with conventional gear and infamous stall behavior. The accident rates of the day reflected the pitfalls into which the inexperienced could plunge when operating these types of aircraft.

The Ercoupe's control surfaces and travels were specially designed to eliminate the possibility of spinning or entering a deep stall of any kind. The elevator's up-travel is restricted to just 12 degrees, preventing any drastic nose-high attitudes. Adverse yaw is countered by the differential movement of the Ercoupe's ailerons. When turning, the "inside" aileron moves upward 40.5 degrees; but the "outside" aileron, the one that causes the adverse yaw opposite to the direction of turn, can only move down 9.5 degrees, lessening its drag effects.

Its twin-boom tail design also aids the stability of the plane because the rudders are out of the propeller's slipstream, therefore significantly reducing any torque effects present at high angles of attack and slow airspeeds. The rudders' travels are also differential and limited, with just enough movement to counter what little adverse yaw might be present in a banked attitude.

Another built-in torque-compensating ploy involved mounting the engine a few degrees downward and to the right, further decreasing the airplane's "P-factor."

The owner's manuals state that the Ercoupe is stressed to handle up to 3.5 positive G's and is not approved for aerobatic maneuvers of any kind. But the quality and intentional over design of the airframe structure make that statement questionable. The stubby, paddle-shaped wings are incredibly strong, using a Warren truss arrangement that resembles the kind of reinforcing seen in old railroad bridges. The inherent strength of the truss units made it possible to build the wing with a minimal number of ribs—eight in each wing—and a commensurate bonus in weight reduction.

The two-control system of flying without rudder pedals was meant to simplify crosswind landings, a source of many low-time pilot crackups. To perform a crosswind approach in an Ercoupe, the recommended procedure is to maintain a crab right down to the point of touchdown and land in a crabbed attitude. That's right, just land it with the crab still in. The Ercoupe's trailing arm main gear and inherently stable tricycle arrangement will instantly straighten the plane out once the mains touch down. The center of gravity shifts forward and, with the nosewheel on the runway, the transition to automobile type steering is complete. The landing roll is accomplished as though you were in the family sedan.

The maximum allowable crosswind component for the original Ercoupe is 25 mph, although you sometimes hear boasts that it can satisfactorily handle a direct 40 mph crosswind and land with a crab of as much as 30 degrees relative to the runway. The airplane may not have any trouble negotiating these feats, but getting used to it as a pilot will take some doing. Most of us are accustomed to a slipping type approach using rudder action, and when the time comes for a true crosswind landing in an Ercoupe, the experience is usually marked

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER ROZELLE


N87118

by intense isometric foot exercises as one struggles with an imaginary set of rudder pedals.

A placard on the Ercoupe's panel says that the plane is characteristically incapable of spinning. However, it will stall. A model 415-C, for example, will stall at an indicated airspeed of 48 mph; stall speeds for other Ercoupe versions vary from this figure. The stall is more of a mush, though, and not accompanied by severe buffeting or a conventional stall "break." The airplane even can be held in the stall attitude without threatening anything more than a very high descent rate of approximately 900 fpm.

Even if a pilot did try hard enough to get an Ercoupe to fall out of the sky, his chances of walking away from the wreckage are better than with many planes far more contemporary. The I-beam under the cabin is, in fact, stronger than the ones in today's Bonanzas. In its crashworthiness qualities, the Ercoupe design was truly ahead of its time. While the National Transportation Safety Board does have accidents attributable to stalls in its Ercoupe files, a close study shows that less than a quarter of all those stall accidents ended in fatalities.

Bringing up the Ercoupe idea to any group of pilots is a call for an animated and opinionated debate of the controversy surrounding this unique plane.

Instructors from the post-war years when Ercoupes were used as trainers raved about the ease of flying and instructing in one. FBO's hated them because students could solo much sooner than in conventional aircraft and spent less time learning.

The 1946 Civil Aeronautics Authority flight instruction guidelines specified eight hours of dual instruction before solo flight was permitted, but an exception was made for the Ercoupe. It could be soloed after only five hours of dual. Weick himself said he knew of solos after two hours of dual, and now and then you hear hangar talk of solos after one hour; but the average was more like the five hour figure. With no flaps, no rudder inputs, trouble-free crosswind landings and inherently coordinated flight, there simply wasn't much for a pilot to

do nor many ways for the low-timer to go wrong. Insurance companies recognized this and rewarded Ercoupe owners with lower premiums.

Perhaps less rewarding was receiving a license that had a non-spinnable restriction attached to it. Before August 1949, pilots who learned to fly in Ercoupes (and there were a lot of them) were permanently limited to flying one. After that time, amendment 20-12 of the CAA's licensing requirements went into effect, making it possible to get a private pilot certificate without demonstrating spins and relieving Ercoupe drivers of the stigma of restricted flight.

Oddities like its rudder pedal-less operation and docile stall behavior have earned the Ercoupe no small number of detractors. Die-hard purists are sometimes heard to say, "I won't fly anything without rudder pedals." Those who believe that a stall should bite back from time to time cast a disparaging eye at the Ercoupe's dearth of macho potential in that area.

"It'll just plain ruin your flying," other critics are apt to say, referring to coordination skills that may go rusty after flying an Ercoupe for any extended period of time. These people fear a negative transference of learning as an Ercoupe devotee transitions to flight with rudder pedals, and scorn the fact that slips to a landing are impossible, making for an incomplete pilot experience.

"I don't care what they say," says Skip Carden, editor of the Ercoupe Owners Club's, *Coupe Capers* and an Ercoupe fanatic from the word go. "What I want is a safe airplane. What's wrong with that? Most of the people who have trouble going along with the Ercoupe idea are the three-control pilots who don't understand its idiosyncrasies.

"For instance, let's say a pilot with a background in a conventional plane comes in for a crosswind landing in an Ercoupe. As they near the runway in a crab, they might get nervous if that upwind wing starts to rise without having any rudder pedals to do anything about it. But they shouldn't worry. The dihedral on those wings will allow that upwind wing to rise 15 or 20 feet

in the air before the other wing will touch the pavement. And what's more, the main gear have about two feet of travel to go from the time they first touch down to the time they are fully compressed by the weight of the plane. Not knowing this could cause an unwarranted go-around as the Ercoupe pilot makes that kind of a landing and hears the tires squeak with that wing still in the air. But it's okay. He's got plenty of room and he'll straighten out as soon as the mains touch. It's just ingenious in so many ways. And it's still the best plane for the pilot who doesn't fly that much; you just hop in the seat and drive it away just like a car and you'll be as safe as you would be if you flew a Cherokee or something like that and put in a lot of practice."

The subject of approach speeds is another topic that generates disagreement. Sometimes it seems that each owner has a different speed all his own. Some say 70 mph, some 80, 90 or even 100. The book on the 415-D model recommends 75 mph, so how come you keep hearing of these wild ranges? An informal poll found that some felt because the airplane was so forgiving and could be landed at a higher than "normal" speed, it accommodated sloppiness. Therefore, unconscientious pilots and instructors over the years began to rationalize substandard performance.

Another body of opinion is that the higher approach airspeeds are needed because the plane is flapless, and a pronounced stall-mush near the runway resulting from a lack of excess airspeed could put the plane on the ground a little sooner than expected.

What is one to do if the Ercoupe finds itself high on an approach? With no flaps and incapable of slipping to lose altitude, instructors used to suggest a series of S-turns or, if time was of the essence, mushing the plane in its stalled condition in order to bleed off altitude in a hurry. Regaining control is never a problem since all it takes is dropping the nose or adding power to stop the descent in time to make the runway in proper form.

Scrutinizing all of the differing views on approach and landing speeds, it turns out that the controversy is no controversy at all. The approach speed to use is a speed slow enough to permit a nose-high, mains-first touchdown and yet fast enough to provide an adequate amount of control given the wind conditions and a safe margin of speed above the stall. In short, it should be landed at speeds comparable to those used in any other aircraft of the same category. The only difference comes when it's time to touch down, and you don't kick out the crab at the last minute as you're used to doing. This whole business of two controls and no rudder pedals has caused much more confusion than is warranted.

Ercoupe aficionados would like to grab you by the lapels and say, "Listen, the plane was designed this way and judging it by the way planes with rudder pedals behave is unfair. What it does, it does well. It gives the pilot safe, fun flying with practically zero hassle."

Those who revile the Ercoupe are prone to forget that its purpose was not to make fighter pilots out of the uninitiated masses, but rather to make the safest and easiest transition to flying for the greatest number of people. In this respect it has been eminently successful. In its tangled 30 year production history, more than 5500 Ercoupes or basic Ercoupe variations were sold. Its modest cost made the Ercoupe the first airplane purchase for many pilots and its handling ease won lasting converts to the general aviation population.

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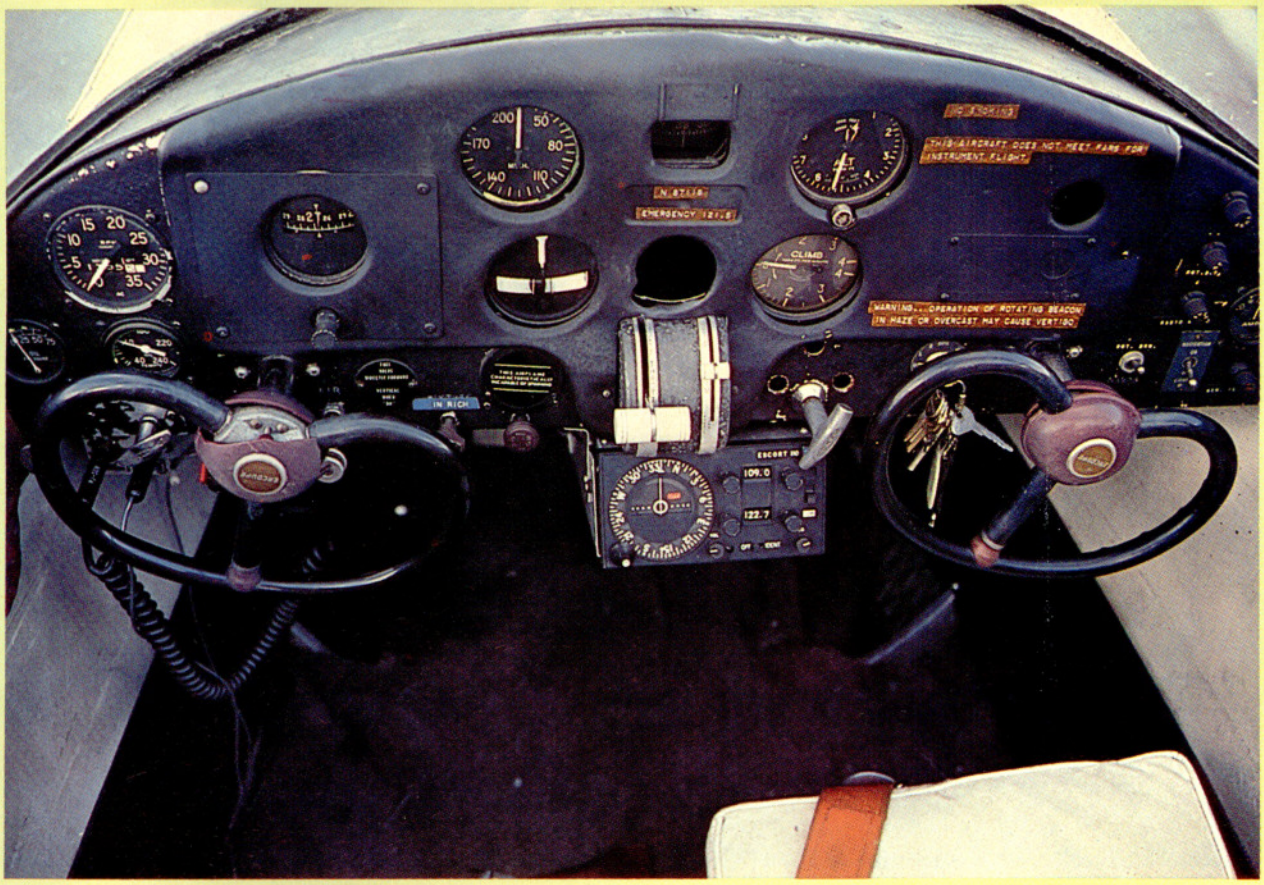

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ERCOUPE

Ready, Set, Drive

Good performance with no surprises

David Dodds is a pilot who has just discovered the advantages of Ercoupe ownership. He bought his 415 model, his first airplane purchase, last July and appreciates the lower costs involved in its upkeep. "I just put in gas and go," he says. "I've never really had any complaints with it."

This particular version is representative of many of the early Erco models one finds on the market today. It was originally a bona fide 1946 415-C, serial number 291. Then it was converted to a -D model in 1957 by the addition of metal wings, an 85 hp Continental engine and a throttle quadrant, complete with click-stops.

I met Dodds at Gaithersburg, Maryland's Montgomery County Airpark one morning to find out for myself just how one of these ubiquitous relics flew.

To look at it, you would never guess that its lines were 30 years old. It has a streamlined shape, and the tail sets it off from all the other planes on the field. The bubble canopy is reminiscent of today's Piper Tomahawk.

Preflighting is simple enough: Drain the two wing- and one fuselage-tank sumps, check the oil and do all the other routine matters. The Ercoupe's fuel pump, located on the front right side of the cowling, pumps fuel from the two wing tanks into the fuselage tank, where gravity feeds it to the engine. Fuel quantity indication is by means of a float device with a sighting rod that runs through the fuselage tank's cap. When the rod begins to sink from view, you are working on the last six of the Ercoupe's 24 gallon capacity.

In checking the control surfaces, it becomes clear how little elevator travel the plane has and how tiny the trim tab's surface area is. The differential aileron travel also is readily apparent.

If safety is the airplane's strong point, then it seems that comfort was sacrificed in order to gain it. The cockpit is not easily accessible and cramped. Getting in required sliding the canopy halves, stepping on to the seats and working my legs under the panel. Finally, there I was with little leg room, gazing at a 1940's state-of-the-art panel, with the exception of a Narco Escort nav-com.

N87118 has an externally mounted Venturi tube that drives the directional gyro, an old-fashioned, backward-reading drum kind. We would need at least 60 mph of airspeed before it could be set reliably.

Starting was accomplished by priming, setting the magnetos then pulling a start switch mounted to the left of the control column. "Why was the mixture already in full rich?" I asked. "Because pulling it all the way back won't cut it off," Dodds replied. "How do you shut it down?" "Turn the key to off." Hmm, I thought, just like a car, all right. Anyway, it started right up, unlike a lot of cars I've known, and we taxied to the runway.

I couldn't get over the feeling that I was getting away with something as I steered the plane-car down the taxiway. It was all too, well, easy. We ambled past a couple of gawking students and hung a left at the runup pad.

Visibility in the Ercoupe was excellent in all directions. No one was in the pattern, so I made my unicom call and got us into position at the approach end of run-

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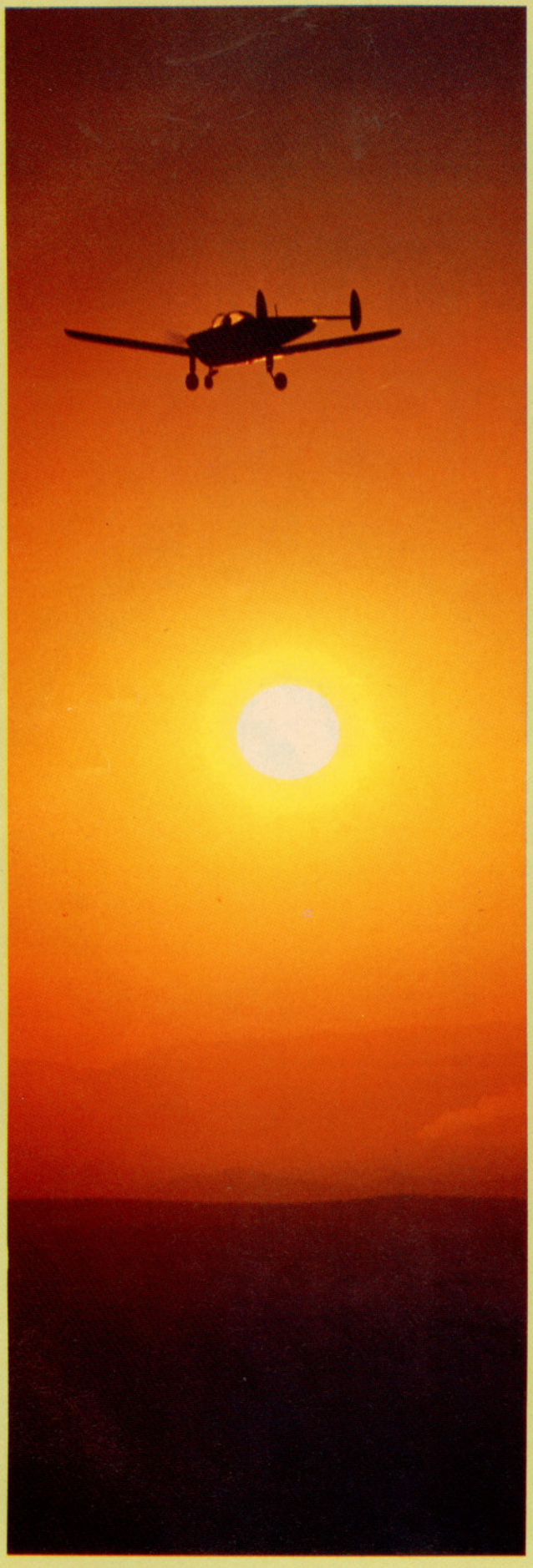

ERCOUPE

way 32. I applied full power gradually to prevent any stumbling by the non-accelerator-pump-equipped engine. As we built up speed down the runway, I noticed we were only at around 2000 to 2100 rpm's. "Cruise prop," yelled Dave. "We'll get the rpm's back once we get more airspeed."

We left the runway after rotating at 60 mph, then climbed out at 85, giving us a fairly flat climb angle.

I've got to say that while all this was going on, I was pushing on those floorboards. Aware of the brake pedal, I did my pushing over to one side, even though the nosewheel steering did a fine job. No way was I going to cross my legs as some of the Ercoupe literature suggests.

After climbing 100 feet or so while tracking the runway centerline, we picked up some wind and I corrected by turning into it. The small rudder areas must have caused a certain amount of yawing that was evident every time I began to turn, especially at lower airspeeds. It was as though there wasn't enough compensatory rudder action, and the yawing was reminiscent of the kind you would encounter in a Beech V35 V-tail Bonanza.

North of the field now, we leveled at 2500 feet and the airspeed and rpm's picked up. As we approached 115 mph the tachometer went to 2500 rpm and a power reduction was made to 2300, giving us an indicated airspeed of 112 mph and an estimated fuel burn of 4½ gph.

A trim lever, located next to the throttle lever on the panel-mounted quadrant, provided a negligible input to the control feel of the elevator.

Time for one of the Ercoupe's famous stall-mushes. Power off, elevator all the way back and the "stall" came at what appeared to be 50 mph. There was some buffeting, but no pitch down. I held it there and we built up a 1000 fpm mush in a level attitude with the airspeed hovering near 50. There is no stall horn.

Departure stalls with full power and a nose-high attitude produced a similar "break." Holding the stick full back yielded a corkscrewing left turn with periodic buffeting, but no tendency to fall off on a wing. The airplane slowly lost altitude and permitted full aileron deflection without a loss of control during this maneuver.

Steep turns required very light elevator pressures and 60 degree banks were easily performed.

I tried some chandelles to see how the rudder ball would react. The climb performance wasn't great—we gained 200 feet of altitude—but was understandable since we were up to gross weight with the two of us, full fuel and baggage. The metalized wings took an additional 40 lbs. from our published useful load.

Coordination was no problem during the chandelle. The ball never strayed far from its central position.

We returned to the field for some landings. I tried one approach at 90 mph, the speed favored by the owner, and another at 80 to see what that was like. The pattern had to be a little wider than normal, because of the shallow approach profile with power on. A power-off glide to the field would be tighter, of course, because the Ercoupe drops readily when the throttle is closed.

Over the fence the power was reduced and speed near the threshold had bled off to 70. Unfortunately, there was no crosswind that day, so there was no opportunity to test out the crabbed touchdown technique.

The touchdown itself wasn't anything special, just a "conventional" landing. The nosewheel came to the runway almost immediately and I was steering again.

ERCOUPE continued

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Time and Changes

Three decades worth, but '46 was a very good year

The name Ercoupe can mean many different things. From its prototype stages in 1937 to the final Mooney M-10 models produced in 1970, there were four different manufacturers of the airplane. In all, 5582 Ercoupes, Aircoupes and Cadets were manufactured from 1940 to 1970. Of this number, Erco made 5076, Forney 161, Alon 241 and Mooney 104. By far the most prolific year was 1946, when Erco cranked out 4310 415-C's.

As the original Ercoupe design passed through a succession of owners, a number of significant changes were made to its engine and airframe. The experimental Ercoupe 415-A of 1937 was fitted first with a 40 hp Continental engine, but this was barely adequate. Sixty horsepower was needed. So the Engineering and Research Corporation (Erco, hence Ercoupe) designed and built its own four cylinder in-line engine, and the Ercoupe 415-B received first certification with it in January 1940. Continental soon came out with a 65 hp engine that beat Erco's production costs, so it was substituted for the Erco engine and supplemental certification was issued in March 1940. This gave the 415-B a cruise speed of 100 mph and a published rate of climb of 450 fpm. Wartime aluminum shortages complicated the production schedules, so only 112 units of the C-65-equipped -B were manufactured before Erco shifted its efforts to purely military goals.

The 415-C came out in 1946, featuring a 75 hp Continental powerplant. Other improvements over the prewar Ercoupes were aluminum fuel tanks, an increased gross weight and beefed-up landing gear. Erco stayed with the C-75 engine until 1948, when it went to an 85 hp Continental in the 415-E model. This engine raised the Ercoupe's cruise speed to 110 mph, its useful load to 566 lbs. and its rate of climb to 550 fpm.

In 1947 the Ercoupe 415-D came with the quadrant-type throttle and trim controls and had better draft sealing and panel lighting. The 415-E, besides having the bigger engine, came with a two-way radio and a stall warning "cushion" on the control column as standard equipment. This device was a pre-loaded spring that made it difficult to exert any further back pressure when the control column reached its aft position. This was also the first time that rudder pedals were offered as an option, indicating that Erco was not deaf to critics.

The 415-F, which came out late in the 1948 production year, was the first to go to the 90 hp Continentals. The 1949-51 production years brought the two final Erco models: the -G model, called the Club Air, and the -H, marketed under the unassuming name of the "Standard." The Club Air was the deluxe edition, with a child's seat that fit in the luggage space, an improved panel that did away with the original glove box compartments and a one-piece bubble windshield. The Standard, which for some reason was given the old 75 hp engine, enjoyed only a brief existence.

When the Forney Company of Fort Collins, Colo., began to manufacture Ercoupes (calling them Fornair F-1 "Aircoupes") from 1956-59, they stayed with the 90 hp engine and the three-control option, made some more panel and interior changes, increased the elevator travel and raised the landing gear. This boosted the Aircoupe's top speed to 120 mph. Depending on how much equipment was ordered for the panel the buyer could have either an Explorer, an Expediter or, the top of the line, an Executa. Forney also came out with a double fork nose gear.

Forney suspended production in 1960 and no airplanes were produced until Alon, Inc., purchased the manufacturing rights in 1965. The end of the two-control, automobile-type steering finally came in that year when Alon began manufacturing its A-2 series of Aircoupes in McPherson, Kan. Rudder pedals were now standard. Alon added spring steel landing gear and all-aluminum wings to the list of innovations. Before, only the leading edges of the wing were aluminum and the rest of the wing was fabric covered.

Mooney took over where Alon left off when it purchased the manufacturing rights to the Aircoupe in 1968 and dubbed it the M-10 Cadet, in production until 1970. Mooney wrought changes that barely made the aircraft's earlier heritage evident, in both looks and aerodynamics. First the twin-boom tail concept was thrown out in favor of Mooney's trademark forward-canted single rudder, and then stall strips were fastened to the wing's leading edges in order to (think of it!) *make* the Cadet stall sharply.

This change and further increases in the airplane's control travels made the Mooney versions stall and spin quite readily. The process had come full cycle: After 30 years the airplane was finally coerced into stalling and spinning with its rudder pedals and full control movements. It is worth noting that this accomplishment coincided with the final demise of any and all production of this remarkable airplane. □

Ercoupe 415-D

Basic 1946 price	$2994
Current market value	approx. $5500

Specifications

Engine	Continental C-85 85hp @ 2575 rpm
Recommended TBO	1800 hours
Propeller	McCauley 1A-90, 50 in
Wing span	30 ft
Length	20 ft 9 in
Height	5 ft 11 in
Wing area	142.6 sq ft
Chord	5 ft
Aileron area	16.8 sq ft
Elevator area	10.2 sq ft
Vertical stabilizer area (2)	3.3. sq ft ea
Rudder area (2)	6 sq ft ea
Wing loading	9.8 lb/sq ft
Power loading	16.47 lb/hp
Passengers and crew	2
Empty weight	855 lb
Useful load	545 lb
Payload with full fuel	393 lb
Gross weight	1400 lb
Fuel capacity	24 gal; 9 gal ea wing, 6 gal fuselage
Oil capacity	4.5 qt
Baggage capacity	65 lb

Performance

Takeoff distance (ground roll)	570 ft
Takeoff over 50 ft	1950 ft
Rate of climb (gross weight)	560 fpm
Maximum level speed	125 mph
Cruise speed (75% power @ 2300 rpm)	112 mph
Economy cruise speed (55% power @ 2000 rpm)	80 mph
Range @ 75% power	430 sm
Range @ 55% power	510 sm
Service ceiling	11,000 ft
Stall speed	48 mph
Best angle of climb	69 mph
Best rate of climb	75 mph
Landing distance (ground roll)	210 ft
Landing distance over 50 ft	1750 ft

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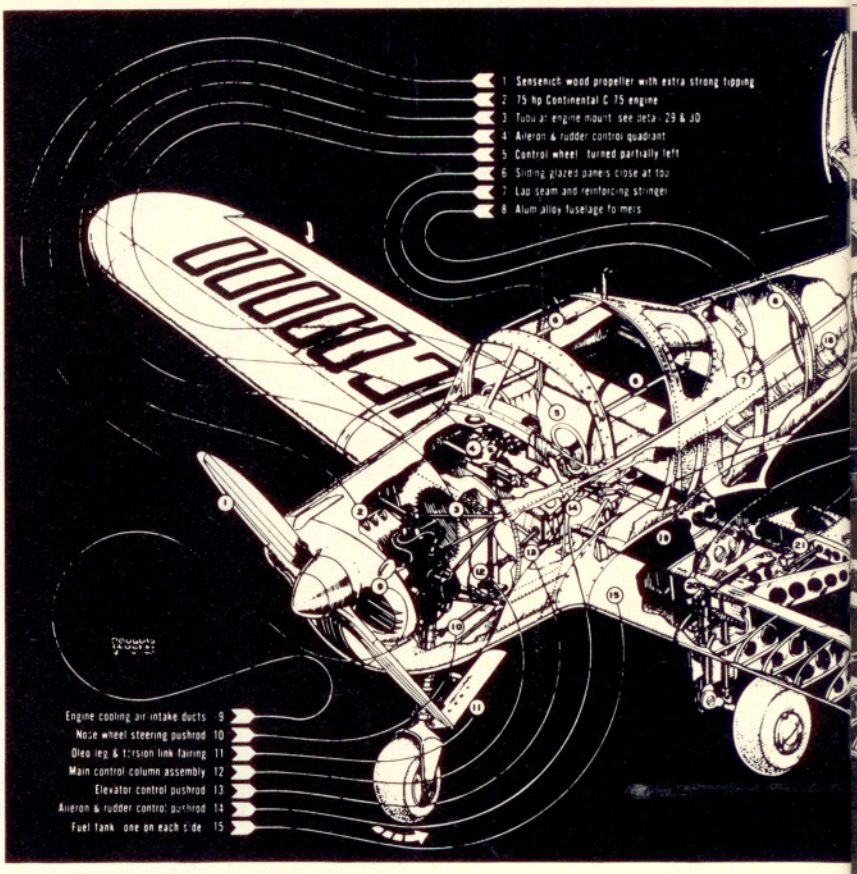
Here is an engineering cutaway of an Ercoupe 415-C drawn for the May 1945 issue of the now-defunct Skyways magazine. The airplane's truss-type wing structure is plainly visible, as is the main control column linkage to the nosewheel. This illustration depicts an early -C model: Notice the wooden propeller, 75 hp Continental engine, and double-forked nose gear. Erco quickly went to a single-fork arrangement once it was learned that mud could hinder the nosewheel's movement after only a small accumulation.



ERCOUPE

In the Market?

What you see is what you get, with a few exceptions

In the used airplane market, Ercoupes and all their offspring continue to turn over very well by virtue of their low acquisition and maintenance costs. You can expect to pay anywhere from $2000 or so for a really beat-up 1946 415-C to around $10,000 for a spotless Mooney Cadet (based on recent offerings in *Trade-A-Plane* and the Ercoupe Owners Club's *'Coupe Capers*). Most prices, though, seem to cluster near the $5000 mark.

There are several things to look out for when scrutinizing a used Ercoupe. One is the condition of the nosewheel in the single-fork Erco models. It has only one bearing and over time can loosen up. The control linkages for the nosewheel also can loosen and the original equipment ball joints (only ⅜" in diameter and the same size as the rod that issues from it) tend to give out over time.

Any airplane as old as an Ercoupe can run into corrosion problems, so consider this: There is a gap between the sliding canopy halves and the fuselage slot into which it fits that, after admitting decades of moisture, can contribute to corrosion in the belly sections. One of the non-standard preflight duties, in fact, is to push down on the tail section to allow water that has accumulated in the fuselage to drain out of a port in the aft section.

Particularly susceptible to corrosion are the aileron push rod tubes, situated at the wing root just inside the fuselage. The wing's dihedral causes a pooling of moisture inside the push rod tubes where it attaches to the bellcrank. Be sure to have a mechanic check this vital area, since a bad case of corrosion could sever the aileron control cables that operate inside the tubes. Corrosion also can crop up under the seat area and in the vicinity of the main spar.

Two years ago in Massachusetts, an Ercoupe T-weld on the control column mast broke, causing a fatal crash. That accident generated service bulletin number 26, mandating dye-penetrant inspection of the welds of cadmium-plated parts that might have sustained hydrogen embrittlement as a result of faulty factory procedures when the control columns originally were joined. This applies to all the Erco 415 models and to the Forney F-1 and F-1A.

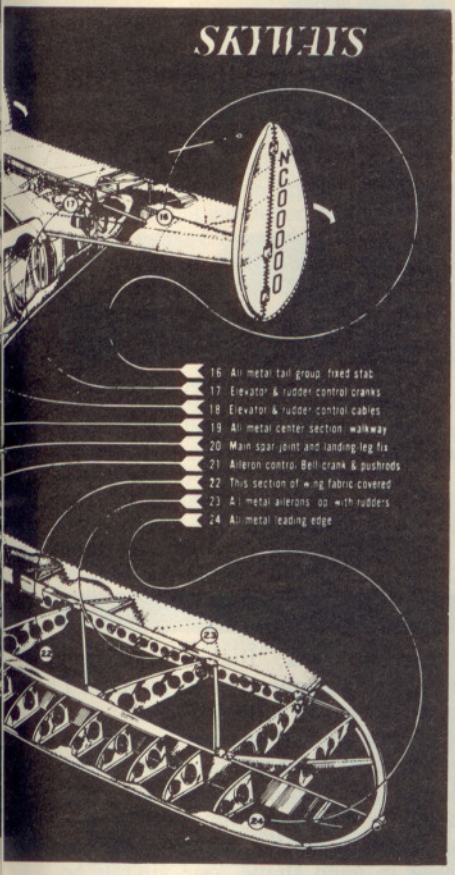
The 415-C and -D airplanes accumulated a whopping 52 airworthiness directives (AD's) in 1946 and 1947, surely an all-time record for any one airplane. These AD's covered a wide variety of potential problems, from defective control column fittings to battery box drain tubes. But the big one is AD 59-5-4, which calls for inspection of the wing's rear-spar center section for cracks and modifications on this area. This only affects the Ercoupe 415-C, -D, -E and -G types.

Time between overhaul (TBO) for the Continental engines (from 65 to 90 hp) used in this series of airplanes is 1800 hours, so be sure to check the logbooks and have a mechanic perform a compression check. If you're looking at an Alon Aircoupe, be sure that AD 73-7-4 has been complied with. This called for replacing coils or magnets in certain Bendix series -20, -200, -600 and -1200 magnetos and must be complied with before 2000 hours time in service. Bendix's service bulletin number 560 outlines the details.

These same magnetos, by order of AD 78-9-7, have to have their impulse couplings checked or replaced before 1000 hours total time and every 1000 hours thereafter.

Parts availability is no problem for Ercoupe owners. Univair Aircraft Corporation (Route 3, Box 59, Aurora, Colo. 80011) holds the type certificate for the Ercoupe, and the company has a complete stock of original and accessory parts.

Skyport Aircoupe Services of Jackson, Mich., is a distributorship that specializes in Ercoupe/Aircoupe services and can modify these aircraft with a supplemental-type-certificated (STC'd) larger baggage compartment, the Continental 100 hp engine, wheel



COLLECTION OF THE ERCOUPE OWNERS CLUB

fairings and panel overlays for any added gyro equipment that an owner may want to install.

The Ercoupe Owners Club has taken an active role in the implementation of several improvements in the stock Ercoupe. Through its efforts a heavier, rod-end-type ball bearing was STC'd for the nose gear steering mechanism, and it also was instrumental in getting Cleveland brakes and the Continental O-200 100 hp engine kit STC'd for the Ercoupe. Anyone seriously interested in an Ercoupe should contact this organization, which claims 1500 members and can provide a vast amount of information on Ercoupe servicing and modifications. You can contact the club at P.O. Box 15058, Durham, N. C. 27704.

If you are planning a used aircraft purchase, especially if it's your first, you could do a lot worse than an Ercoupe. It's a solid airplane with a special history and a steadily rising value in the marketplace, although buying into one would not be burdensome.

Perhaps the best thing about Ercoupe ownership is the camaraderie that comes from being a part of this enthusiastic group. Ercoupe owners can be absolute zealots and are more than willing to help each other in any way they can to make the ease of ownership even easier.—TAH