



The Leader In Recreational Aviation

RUNWAY 35



January 2011

Volume 53 Issue 1

Inside this Issue

B-17 RUDDER TALK	1
CHRISTMAS PARTY PHOTOS	2
PRESIDENTS COCKPIT	3
NEWSCLIPS	4
1914 ACCIDENTS PART 8	5
CHAPTER 35 CONTACTS	8
CALENDAR	9
WANTED & FOR SALE	10
SPONSORS	11
DIRECTIONS TO SAN GERONIMO	12

Next Event

January 8th

- Fly-in Meeting 10AM
- Rotax Maintenance Presentation
- Burgers served afterwards



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY: R. HECKER, D. BAKER, K. BAKER

RUNWAY 35 PUBLISHED BY
ED SEURER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

B-17 RUDDER TALK

By RB "Doc" Hecker

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I was recently asked to recover a spare aircraft control surface, more specifically a rudder, for an antique airplane that was manufactured in 1945 for the US Army and was subsequently transferred to the US Navy for patrol work as a PB-1W. The aircraft was designed by the Boeing Aircraft Company of Seattle, WA, and this particular model was built by the Douglas Aircraft Company in Long Beach, CA as B-17G, SN 44-83872, with delivery accepted by the US Army on July 12, 1945. As one of twenty Douglas built B-17Gs to be transferred to the US Navy in 1945, it was flown directly from Long Beach, CA to the Naval Air Station, Johnsville, PA, where it arrived on July 16, 1945. The US Navy assigned this machine Navy BuNo. 77235 and transferred it to the Naval Aircraft Modification Unit supply pool at NAS Johnsville where it was converted to PB-1W status. Beginning in May, 1947, it was assigned over the next 7 years to VX-4 and its succeeding unit, VW-2 at NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island. NAS Norfolk was its designated overhaul and modification station. The nomenclature plate for the spare rudder carried a Boeing PN and a NAS Norfolk overhaul identification plate on the rudder post. Of interest, the manufacturer's data plate stated that this rudder had been constructed by the Aircraft Division of the Briggs

Company of Detroit, MI in 1945. This aircraft currently is registered as N7227C and is the Commemorative Air Force's (CAF) beloved "Texas Raiders" that is meticulously maintained by the Gulf Coast Wing of the CAF located in Tomball, TX. "TR" has been in the CAF inventory since September 22, 1967.

Briggs started out as a coach manufacturer, and antecedent to WWII, the Briggs Company was a major supplier of stamped auto body metal structures to the auto industry. During World War II, the Briggs Company gradually became a major metal component supplier to the US Armed forces, producing over a billion dollars' worth of stamped steel and aluminum products. A record workforce of 31,000 men and women built the following assemblies for the US Government during the latter part of the war: Aircraft gun turrets, doors and bulkheads for the Martin B-26C Marauder, outer wings, ailerons, and wingtips for the Douglas A-20G Havoc, outer wings, wing tips, horizontal stabilizers, ailerons, flaps, vertical stabilizers, rudders and ducts for the Boeing B-17G, and flaps, aft bomb doors, forward bomb doors, nose wheel doors, and outer wings for the Boeing B-29. Other war material produced by the Briggs Company included tank hulls for the T-26-90 and T26-105 (M26 Pershing) in addition to tools, dies, fixtures, truck cabs, tops, hulls and ambulance bodies, etc. for the Dodge Corporation. Despite its long history in the automotive

(continued on Page 6)