

Check this modern interpretation of the US national insignia against the graphic which shows the correct proportions for its construction. This was an obviously informal application for this *Taylorcraft L-2*.



This mix of insignia conveys a lot of originality on the part of the owner. The using insignia, although intended as correctly constructed, So was that of the fuselage until the aircraft was built, even extending above the point of the star. The US Coast Guard tail stripes are correctly constructed, but inappropriate for an *Aeronca L-3*. The blue field at the top of the rudder is understood.



The best of two time periods is shown here with this *Piper Cub*. This wartime fuselage insignia is no longer used after June 1943. But it was not until 1947 that the USAF became a separate service and again applied their service name on their aircraft in the fashion shown here.



What was it that brought about these strange combinations? Did the owner wish to create a montege collection of markings that represented the span of his military career on a single airplane? Or was it that the owner liked the colors and design and 'went for it'? Whatever the case, the owners were no shy about showing up with their unusual markings on airplanes flying very tight price tags before the markings appear.

A number of Piper L-3 Cubs appeared at this particular prestige event. All were of the correct color. Yellow if there are any other choices of yellow, or two no had the same — or correct — fuselage lightning stripe that matched the original factory application.

An example of incorrect markings is this *Aeronca Champion* that showed up at a major fly-in. Only, it had combat stripes with post-war 1947 national insignia and D-Day 1944 invasion stripes on the wing.



Markings errors become ever threatening on otherwise well-repaired aircraft. Great care must be taken into this North American T-28 Trojan restoration, only to be marred by orange being used instead of red in the South Vietnamese Air Force insignia.

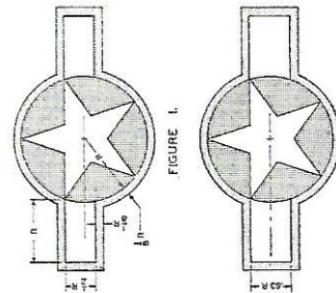


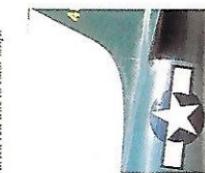
FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 2.
US NATIONAL INSIGNIA. The correct proportions for laying out the insignia are shown in Fig. 1. The most common error is to center the height of the bar to be symmetrical with the centerline of the cross as in Fig. 2. Later insignia have both the border and field for this star in insignia blue, yet the construction format remains the same.

something unique or significant about its color. When questioning these who worked with this airplane, all confirmed that it had been dedicated green and not the US Army standard olive drab. Investigating further, I was able to talk directly with the retired painter who had the overnight task of having to paint the airplane to meet the next day's flying schedule. Tired from a long day of production painting of RCAF Lockheed Hudsons, the painter and his crew merely mixed their paint to the Lockheed Starke Works and painted the test aircraft. What they used was RCAF green from the RCAF sand and green shadow camouflage scheme. With that information it made the task a simple matter to copy that color for this restoration.

At the Fly-Ins
While attending a major fly-in one year, instead of admiring the restorations done with precision and taking the usual record on film, I paid closer attention to those with improper markings. The photographs on the following pages show some of these inaccuracies.

The unrestored XP-80 shows the original but inaccurately constructed national insignia on the side of the fuselage. So as not to alter history during the restoration process, the same inaccuracies have been duplicated. Note how the original green turned to a bright red due to solar shift.



In this restoration, the XP-80 brought about another interesting color problem. This airplane had been disassembled around 1950 and crated when the bulk of NASA's collection was moved from Park Ridge, Illinois, to the Silver Hill facility. When the time came to open its crates for the planned restoration in 1976, the airplane was not green as it was during its operational service life, but almost a salmon pink. There was a trace of green remaining.

This was another example of color shift, like the red we spoke of earlier on the P-51C. Green emulsion flake paint like this and the P-38J Lightning also in NASA's collection, which were manufactured from the west coast, had a tendency to turn to reddish brick tint. Conversely, examples from the east coast areas from different paint manufacturers normally remained more stable; the Martin B-50B Marauder "Eck Bait" is a good example. While this statement describes generalities, it also points out why inconsistent paints can be with regards to color shifts.

An interesting point came to light when preparing to paint XP-80 *Lala Belle*. The airplane also had the nickname *Green Hornet* which signified