

Taylorcraft Aircraft

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Taylorcraft Aviation is an airplane manufacturer that has been producing aircraft for almost seventy years in several locations.

The company builds small single-engined airplanes. The Taylorcraft design is a conventional layout, high wing, fabric covered, two seat aircraft. The basic design has remained unchanged since 1936, yet this same design is still sold as a personal sport aircraft today.

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Company history

The designer, Clarence Taylor, a self-taught aeronautical engineer from Nottingham, England, can be called the father of private aviation in America, as he designed the original Taylor Cub in 1931. Taylor, along with his brother Gordon, formed Taylor Brothers Aircraft Corporation - slogan; "Buy Your Airplane Taylor Made" - in Rochester, New York in 1926, offering a two-seat high-winged monoplane called the "Chummy", priced at \$4,000. The Chummy failed to sell however and after Gordon was killed flying another Taylor design in 1928, Clarence

moved to Bradford, Pennsylvania, where the townsfolk had offered him a new factory at the local airfield plus \$50,000 to invest in the company. One of the investors was William Thomas Piper, who had made his money from oil wells.^[1] Taylor shared with Piper a dream of making airplanes as common as cars for Americans. After continuing with the Chummy for a while Taylor abandoned the design and began work on a new inexpensive and easy-to-build aircraft to compete with the heavier craft which were common at the time. The classic battle between engineer and businessman quickly caused a rift

Taylorcraft Aviation



Type	Corporation
Founded	1935
Headquarters	Brownsville, Texas
Key people	C.G. Taylor, founder
Industry	General Aviation
Products	Light aircraft
Website	www.taylorcraft.com



1946 model Taylorcraft BC-12-D



1975 model Taylorcraft F-19 on skis

between the two. Piper took advantage of Taylor's absence during an illness, and instructed Taylor's junior engineer Walter Jamouneau to modify the Cub to be more attractive and marketable. Taylor returned from his illness and raised the roof in anger and left the company.

Taylor vowed to build a new personal aircraft superior to the Cub. Taylor formed his own company in 1935 as Taylor Aircraft Company, renamed Taylorcraft Aviation Corporation in 1939. Meanwhile, a disastrous factory fire brought production of the Cub J-2 to a halt,^[2] and Piper bought the company out. It was placed back in production as the Piper J-3 Cub,^[3] becoming the iconic aircraft of general aviation in the 1930s and 1940s.

During World War II, light aircraft were used for training, liaison, and observation purposes. Taylorcraft's DCO-65 model was called the L-2 by the United States Army Air Forces and served alongside the military version of the Piper Cub in WW2. Taylorcraft Aeroplanes Ltd., a subsidiary based in Thurmaston, Leicestershire, England, developed the Taylorcraft Model 'D' and the Auster Mk. I through Mk. V, which became the backbone aircraft of the British AOP (Air Observation Post) and the three Canadian AOP squadrons, No. 664 Squadron RCAF, No. 665 Squadron RCAF, and No. 666 Squadron RCAF.

After the war, production boomed until the company reorganized in 1946. It produced few aircraft during the 1950s.

Ownership by the Feris family 1965-1992

In 1965, Charlie and Dorothy Feris purchased what was left of the company and started production again in 1970. Mr. Feris died in 1973 and Mrs. Feris kept the company going until her retirement in 1985.

New owners moved production to Lock Haven, Pennsylvania until business problems forced the company to close again in 1992.

Polychron & O'Rielly ownership

John Polychron, former CEO of Delmonte Foods purchased Taylorcraft and operated it for approximately one year until he sold it to Philadelphia Attorney Phillip O'Rielly. O'Rielly never reopened and the company became deeply in debt resulting in a Sheriff's sale in 1996.

Booth ownership

Taylorcraft was saved from extinction by Lee Booth, a former Marine and an engineer from Seaford Delaware. Booth renamed the Company Booth-Taylorcraft Aerospace, Inc. Booth-Taylorcraft Aerospace paid all creditors in full and relocated the entire company in 88 53ft long truck trailers to Greensboro, North Carolina.

Booth, as Chairman and President, directed the Corporation through an extensive recertification of all type certificates, engineering, FAA audits up to the Aircraft Certification Office level, production procedures, complete re-tooling and certification of tooling and work processes. Booth enlisted the assistance of Dayrl Romick, former Chief Engineer of Taylorcraft Airplane Company and BF Goodrich. Romick was a close associate of Werner von Braun. Booth also hired a young physicist and chief test

pilot Hooman Bahrani of Winston Salem, North Carolina. Bahrani, a graduate of Wake Forest University, became a minority stockholder thus becoming the first American-born Persian to become an owner of a US aircraft manufacturer in aviation history.

Booth-Taylorcraft Aerospace, Inc became a contractor to numerous governments for military aircraft, weapons systems and firearms. Booth was the first Taylorcraft owner in the company's history to keep the company debt free the entire time he operated it. In March 2000, Booth formed a strategic partnership by selling half of the Civil Aircraft Division to Harvey Patrick of Pats, Inc. Booth retained all military items, UAVs, several type certificates, designs and patents. The Small Aircraft Division was moved to Georgetown, Delaware at the Sussex County Airport. Booth and Patrick then formed Taylorcraft 2000, LLC and served as Co-chairmen. Booth eventually sold his half to Harvey Patrick and Taylorcraft 2000, LLC was owned by the Harvey and Vera Patrick Foundation. In 2003 The Harvey and Vera Patrick Foundation sold the company to Harry Ingram, with 100% financing.

The current owner, Harry Ingram, moved the plant to La Grange, Texas in 2003 and on April 25, 2005 it was announced that the factory was moving again to Brownsville, Texas and outsourcing the labor.

2008 Repossession

On February 21, 2008 the company was repossessed by its former owner, Taylorcraft 2000 LLC. The previous owners had taken orders for new struts for existing aircraft to alleviate a repetitive inspection Airworthiness Directive and is delivering struts to customers. The design's type certificates, drawings, jigs, templates and parts have been put up for sale.^[4]

Taylorcraft Aeroplanes (England) Limited

The **Taylorcraft Aeroplanes (England) Limited** company was licensed in 1938 by Taylor to produce Taylorcraft designs in the United Kingdom for the British market, beginning as "Taylorcraft Aeroplanes England, Ltd" which subsequently became Auster Aircraft developing its own range from a Taylorcraft design.

Aircraft produced (incomplete)

- Taylor Cub
- Taylorcraft A, B, and D
- L-2 Grasshopper
- Taylorcraft TG-6
- Taylorcraft Ace
- Taylorcraft Tourist
- Taylorcraft Traveler
- Taylorcraft De Luxe 65
- Taylorcraft De Luxe 85
- Taylorcraft Sportsman
- Taylorcraft Special De Luxe
- Taylorcraft Ranch Wagon
- Taylorcraft Topper
- Taylorcraft Seabird
- Taylorcraft Zephyr



Taylorcraft L-2M at the National Museum of the United States Air Force

References

- ↑ Aeroplane Monthly - April 1987 issue - *For Business And Pleasure* article, P. 188
 - ↑ Donald, David, ed. *Encyclopedia of World Aircraft* (Etobicoke, Ontario: Prospero Books, 1997), p.874, "Taylor Chummy and Cub".
 - ↑ Donald, p.874.
 - ↑ Niles, Russ (March 2008). "Taylorcraft Repossessed: Strut Customers Contacted". http://www.avweb.com/avwebflash/news/TaylorcraftRepossessedStrutCustomersContacted_197331-1.html. Retrieved on 2008-03-10.
- Fromow, Lt-Col. D.L. *Canada's Flying Gunners*, Air Observation Post Pilot's Association, Ottawa, Canada. 2002. ISBN 0973005505

External links

- Taylorcraft factory website
- "The Taylorcraft Story" by Chet Peek - Book covering the history of C.G. Taylor's aircraft designs

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