Sequoia Aircraft Corporation
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October 2, 1979

Dear Falco Builders:

All of you will be saddened to hear that Mike Shield's Falco, G-AVUJ, which was featured in our flight report has been destroyed. It seems that a member of Mike's flying club became angry with the club and poured gasoline on eight aircraft including the Falco and put a match to them all. From what I hear the culprit is in jail pending a trial.

A question has been raised about our kits and the so-called 51% rule. I will shortly contact the FAA in Washington to clear the entire kits so that all of the kits including the wing ribs, wing spars, and fuselage laminations will be cleared and approved by the FAA so that the builders using all of the kits will be able to have their Falcos certified as Experimental Amateur Built, and not in the Exhibition category. At this time, there is no effective difference in the way you may fly your aircraft, but that situation could always change. We will be showing that the kits will constitute about 30% of the work on the Falco -- so let's all sing the same tune. Also, it is very important that I handle this matter with the Washington FAA and that it not fall into the hands of a regional chief as it did with the Christen Eagle. In particular, the Pacific Coast Regional Chief hates homebuilt aircraft and will be a tough cookie to handle and I am confident of no problems with my way. It is very political and a matter of knowing which door to go into first.

I should point out that some aircraft kits such as the very complete kits for the Wag-Aero Cuby and Wagabond are not approved for Amateur-built if used in their entirety. Yet, plenty of these aircraft are flying under the category. The nitty-gritty is that the builders just lie about who did the work. The usual question will be from an inspector who will tell you that you are required to do at least 51% of the work and then ask you if you have done this. An affirmative answer is all that is usually needed. Believe me, if the kits for the Sequoia can pass these inspections, the Falco kits will not be a problem.

As it now stands, and in the absence of any official ruling, I cannot imagine a problem for the builder doing all of his own woodwork and buying all of the metal fittings, etc., nor for the builder buying the spar, ribs and fuselage laminations and doing a part of the metal fabrications. With some inspectors there may be a problem with buying all kits, but I would judge this to be very low. I will be preparing a presentation of the time involved and can supply this to you when it is complete.

We are now sending you a tube with a number of additional drawings and you may have received this already. There are still a number of drawings yet

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to come. We are now printing many of the smaller detail drawings and plan to ship these in two or three weeks in a notebook. I hope to have time to work on the construction manual so that I can give some explanation of these drawings. If not, please do not write me with questions until I have had a chance to type out the appropriate section for the construction manual, as I will never finish it otherwise.

Also, when you write me with questions, I would appreciate you numbering your questions and giving the drawing or sheet number. Like this:

1. Sheet D 13. Drawing No. 464. Is the P/N 627 pulley assembly on the forward face or aft face?

2. Sheet C 3. Drawing No. 304. This drawing shows the height above W.L. 0 as 300mm while is is shown as 308mm on Sheet C 1. Which is right: 300 or 308?

My answers would come back:

1. Forward Face.

2. 300mm. The table on Sheet C 1 is theoretical in the cockpit area and the top of the instrument panel is slightly lower than the theoretical fuselage shape.

Get the picture? It is much easier this way. These questions, by the way, are actual examples that I got yesterday.

Some of you have asked for copies of an earlier builder letter in which I mentioned some changes and revisions. We will have a complete revision section in the construction manual and will send this out shortly, but in the mean time we have enclosed a preliminary copy with this letter.

Progress reports: Tony Bingelis has his tail group done, all of the wing ribs finished (or nearly so) and has several of the fuselage frames done. Tony is working from planks of spruce not cut to size and so has to cut all of his own wood. He reports that the wing ribs will take him about 500 hours total and thought that it might only be 150 hours for a builder working from a wood-to-size kit. Robert Esau promises to be the first to finish as he is working on his Falco full time. He has sold his insurance agency and is planning to do nothing but work on the Falco and hopes to build them on a custom-built basis after his is finished. So far he has completed all tail group ribs, stabilizer and elevator spars, and has the jigs and templates for the wing ribs and fuselage frames all done.

Many of you have asked about the problem of not being able to find 1.2mm birch plywood. Some builder have found that their 1mm plywood checks out to be 1.2mm and they just select the thicker pieces to use. In absence of this, we would suggest using 1.5mm birch plywood.

Sincerely,
SEQUOIA AIRCRAFT CORPORATION