

No: 000333

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By: FLC Date: 11-03-83 Page: 1 of 1

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Subject: RECENT AVCO/LYCOMING
SERVICE BULLETIN 465
CONCERNING CRANKSHAFT
PROPELLER FLANGES

Christen Product Letter 331 and a copy of the subject bulletin were issued to all Eagle aircraft owners on 09-19-83, and Christen factory personnel received many telephone calls and letters from owners in response. The responses ranged from simple requests for advice to angry threats to file lawsuits against AVCO/Lycoming Corporation. We suggested that owners be patient and do nothing while awaiting settlement of the strike at the Lycoming factory. Now that the strike has been settled we are regularly communicating with senior Lycoming personnel on behalf of both Eagle II and Pitts Special aircraft owners to develop a reasonable and mutually satisfactory solution to the problem of crankshaft propeller flange inspection and/or replacement.

Lycoming is a responsible manufacturer who has a long history of supplying durable and highly reliable aircraft engines and who has actively improved these engines to make them suitable for even the most demanding applications such as aerobatic flying where they are subjected to extreme loads and temperature cycling. All of us who are involved in aerobatic flying should recognize that Lycoming is a unique and valuable contributor to this activity, and we think that it is wrong to threaten lawsuits in response to Lycoming's responsible efforts to improve its products and to increase flight safety for the benefit of us all. Legal action may have a short term benefit for a few, but ultimately it increases product liability costs to all manufacturers, and it will eventually increase the already too high cost of engines and aircraft for everyone. In our view there are better solutions to this problem, and our recent communications with Lycoming have confirmed this.

Lycoming acknowledges that the service bulletin was hastily prepared and that its content is somewhat ambiguous and misleading. They also indicate that additional research suggests that the inspection requirements imposed by the bulletin may be overly stringent. They are now preparing a new bulletin which will likely lengthen the required inspection intervals significantly, and will offer a crankshaft exchange program at moderate cost. The details of the new bulletin contents have not yet been finalized, but it is obvious that Lycoming is trying to make them as reasonable as possible. We will forward a copy of the new bulletin to all owners when it is released, and we will offer a Christen factory crankshaft inspection and/or exchange program as soon as the requirements are known. We expect to have more information to report within the next three weeks. In the interim, we suggest that the inspections required by the original bulletin be performed.

ENCLOSURES: None