

HIGH-COUNTRY CALLAIR

THIS NOW-RARE AIRCRAFT TYPE PRESERVES AN
INTERESTING SEGMENT OF AMERICAN AVIATION HISTORY
BY ROGER CAIN



CallAir Model A-4 N6028C as seen from Eric Presten's PA-16 Clipper on floats.

Publicity photo showing a freshly-completed CallAir at Afton, Wyoming.



The aircraft featured in this article is not exactly common so we need to review a bit of its oft-confusing history. We have to go back to the late 1930s when Reuel T. Call was living in the high-altitude town of Afton, Wyoming. Always enamored with aviation, Reuel owned and operated a Curtiss Junior. Almost an ultralight by today's standards, the Junior was designed and built during the Great Depression to offer pilots a very low-cost method of flying. With its pusher engine pumping out barely 30 horses, the Junior had a hard time staggering into the air with passenger and pilot from Afton's air strip, which was located at an altitude of over 6000 feet in the little town of just 2000 folks.

Reuel wanted to create a practical aircraft that would be efficiently and economically flown from higher altitudes and which could also be fitted with skis for winter operation. Having learned to fly in 1930, by 1933 Reuel could afford a new Kinner Sportster and he took delivery of the plane at Glendale's Grand Central Air Terminal and flew it all the way back home — in the dead of winter.

Flying these light aircraft, Reuel got together with his brother Spencer, uncle Ivan, cousin Barlow, and friend Carl Peterson to create the CallAir Aircraft Company. The first plane had a resemblance to the Sportster but its fuselage had a more pronounced airfoil shape. It seated two or three side by