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**SECTION 7  
DESCRIPTION AND OPERATION  
OF THE AIRPLANE AND ITS SYSTEMS**

**7.1 THE AIRPLANE**

The PA-28-181 Cherokee is a single-engine, low-wing monoplane of all metal construction. It has four-place seating, two hundred pound baggage capacity, and a 180 horsepower engine.

**7.3 AIRFRAME**

The basic airframe, except for a tubular steel engine mount, steel landing gear struts, and other miscellaneous steel parts, is of aluminum alloy construction. The extremities - the wing tips, the cowling, the tail surfaces - are of fiberglass or ABS thermoplastic. Aerobatics are prohibited in this airplane since the structure is not designed for aerobatic loads.

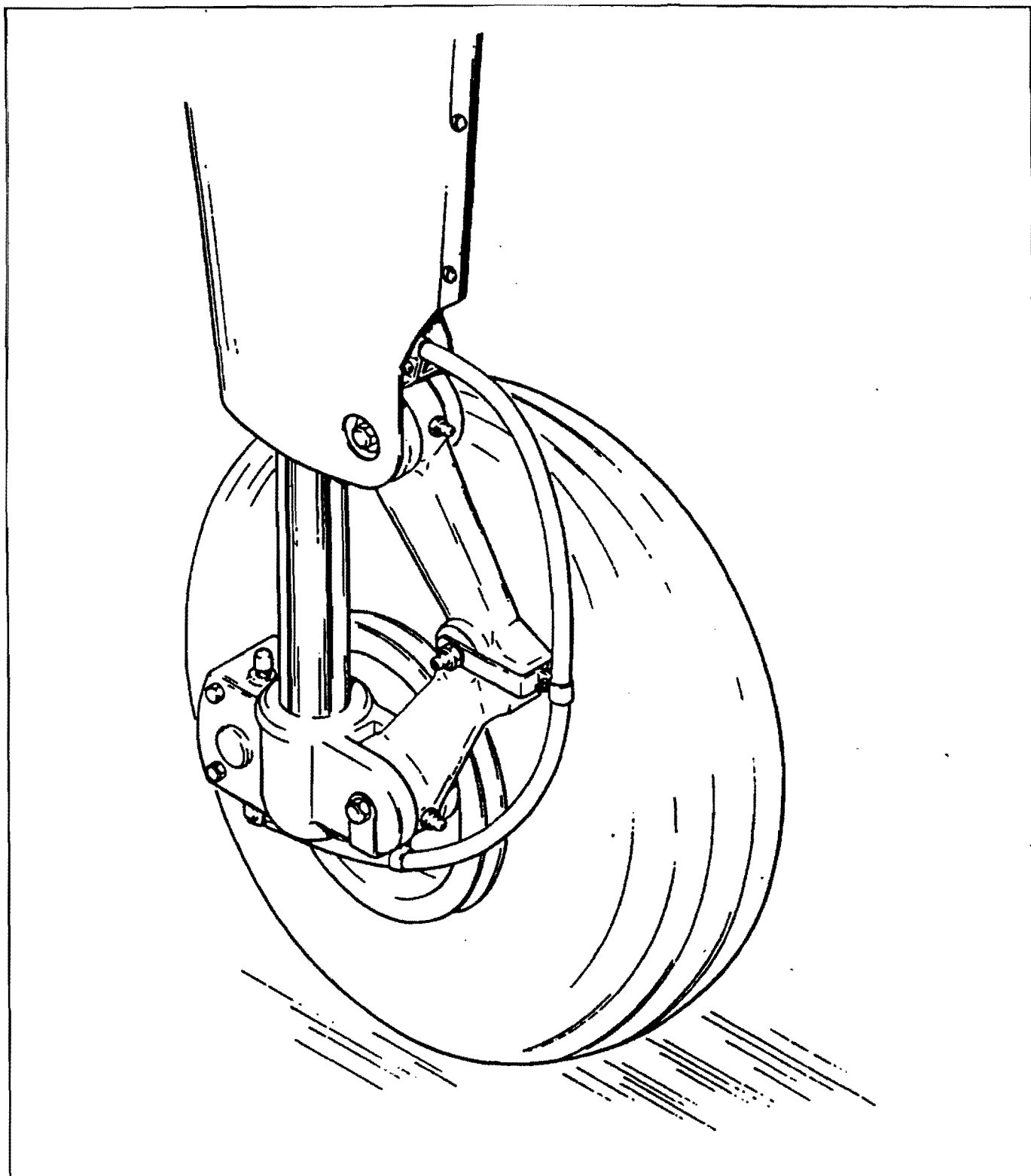
The semi-tapered wings have a laminar flow type NACA 65<sub>2</sub>-415 airfoil. The wings are attached to each side of the fuselage by insertion of the butt ends of the respective main spars into a spar box carry-through which is an integral part of the fuselage structure, providing, in effect, a continuous main spar with splices at each side of the fuselage. There are also fore and aft attachments at the rear spar and at an auxiliary front spar.

**7.5 ENGINE AND PROPELLER**

The Cherokee 181 is powered by a four cylinder, direct drive, horizontally opposed engine rated at 180 horsepower at 2700 rpm. It is furnished with a starter, at 60 ampere, 14 volt alternator, a shielded ignition, vacuum pump drive, a fuel pump, and a dry, automotive type carburetor air filter.

The exhaust system is made entirely from stainless steel and is equipped with dual mufflers. A heater shroud around the mufflers is provided to supply heat for the cabin and windshield defrosting.

The fixed-pitch propeller is made from a one-piece alloy forging.



MAIN WHEEL ASSEMBLY

Figure 7-1

## **7.7 LANDING GEAR**

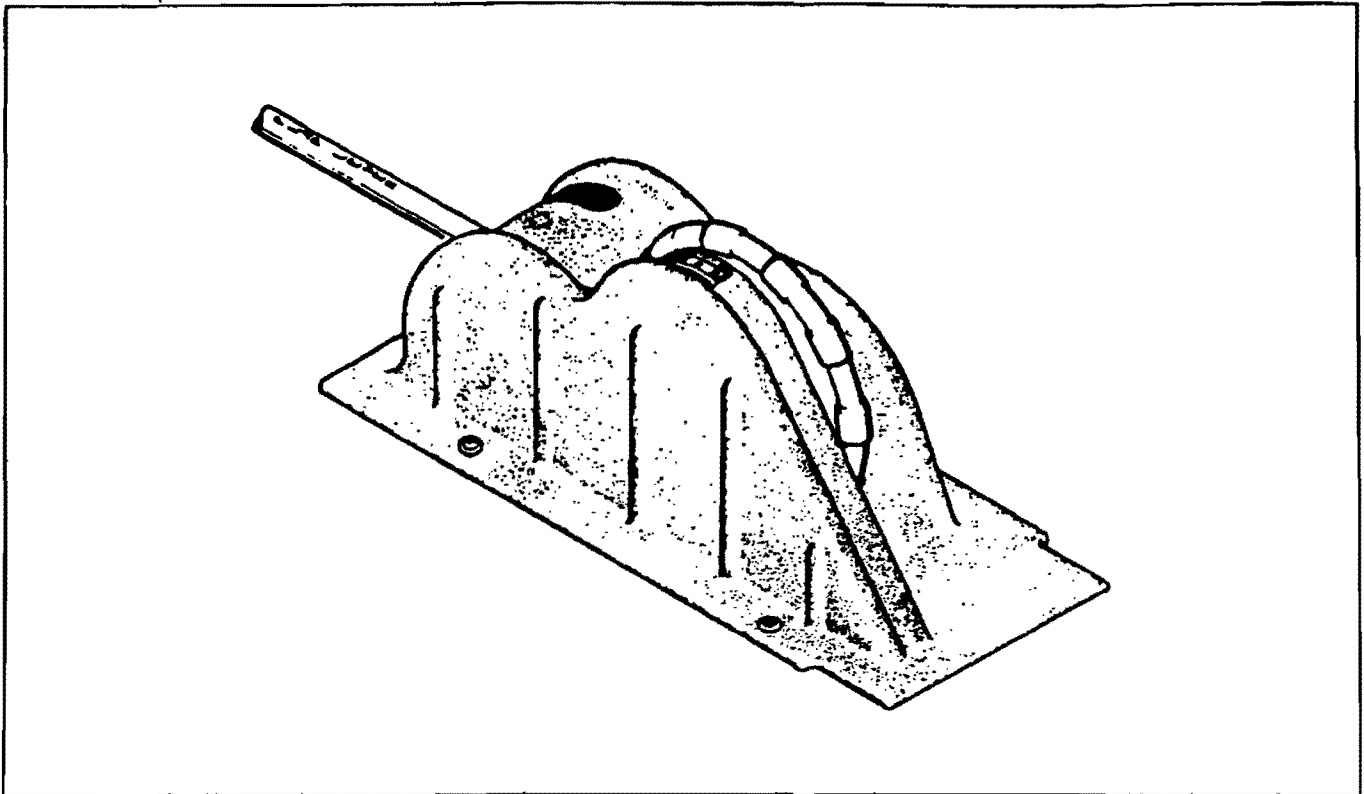
The three landing gears use Cleveland 6.00 x 6 wheels, the main gear wheels (Figure 7-1) being provided with brake drums and Cleveland single disc hydraulic brake assemblies. All three wheels use 6.00 x 6, four-ply rating, Type III tires with tubes.

The nose gear is steerable through a 30 degree arc either side of center by use of the rudder pedals and brakes. A spring device incorporated in the rudder pedal torque tube assembly aids in rudder centering and provides rudder trim. The nose gear steering mechanism also incorporates a bungee assembly to reduce steering effort and to dampen shocks and bumps during taxiing. A shimmy dampener is included in the nose gear.

The three struts are of the air-oil type, with a normal extension of 3.25 inches for the nose gear and 4.50 inches for the main gear.

The standard brake system for this Cherokee consists of dual toe brakes attached to the rudder pedals and a hand lever and master cylinder located below and behind the left center of the instrument sub-panel. The toe brakes and the hand brake have their own brake cylinders, but they share a common reservoir. The brake fluid reservoir is installed on the top left front face of the fire wall. The parking brake is incorporated in the master cylinder and is actuated by pulling back on the brake lever, depressing the knob attached to the left side of the handle, and releasing the brake lever. To release the parking brake, pull back on the brake lever to disengage the catch mechanism and allow the handle to swing forward (refer to Figure 7-5).

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FLIGHT CONTROL CONSOLE

Figure 7-3

## 7.9 FLIGHT CONTROLS

Dual controls are provided as standard equipment, with a cable system used between the controls and the surfaces. The horizontal tail (stabilator) is of the all-movable slab type with a trim tab mounted on the trailing edge of the stabilator to reduce the control system forces. This tab is actuated by a control wheel on the floor between the front seats (Figure 7-3).

A rudder trim adjustment is mounted on the right side of the pedestal below the throttle quadrant and permits directional trim as needed in flight (refer to Figure 7-5).

The flaps are manually operated and spring-loaded to return to the up position. A past-center lock incorporated in the actuating linkage holds the flap when it is in the up position so that it may be used as a step on the right side. The flap will not support a step load except when in the full up position, so it must be completely retracted when used as a step. The flaps have three extended positions, 10, 25 and 40 degrees.

### **7.11 ENGINE CONTROLS**

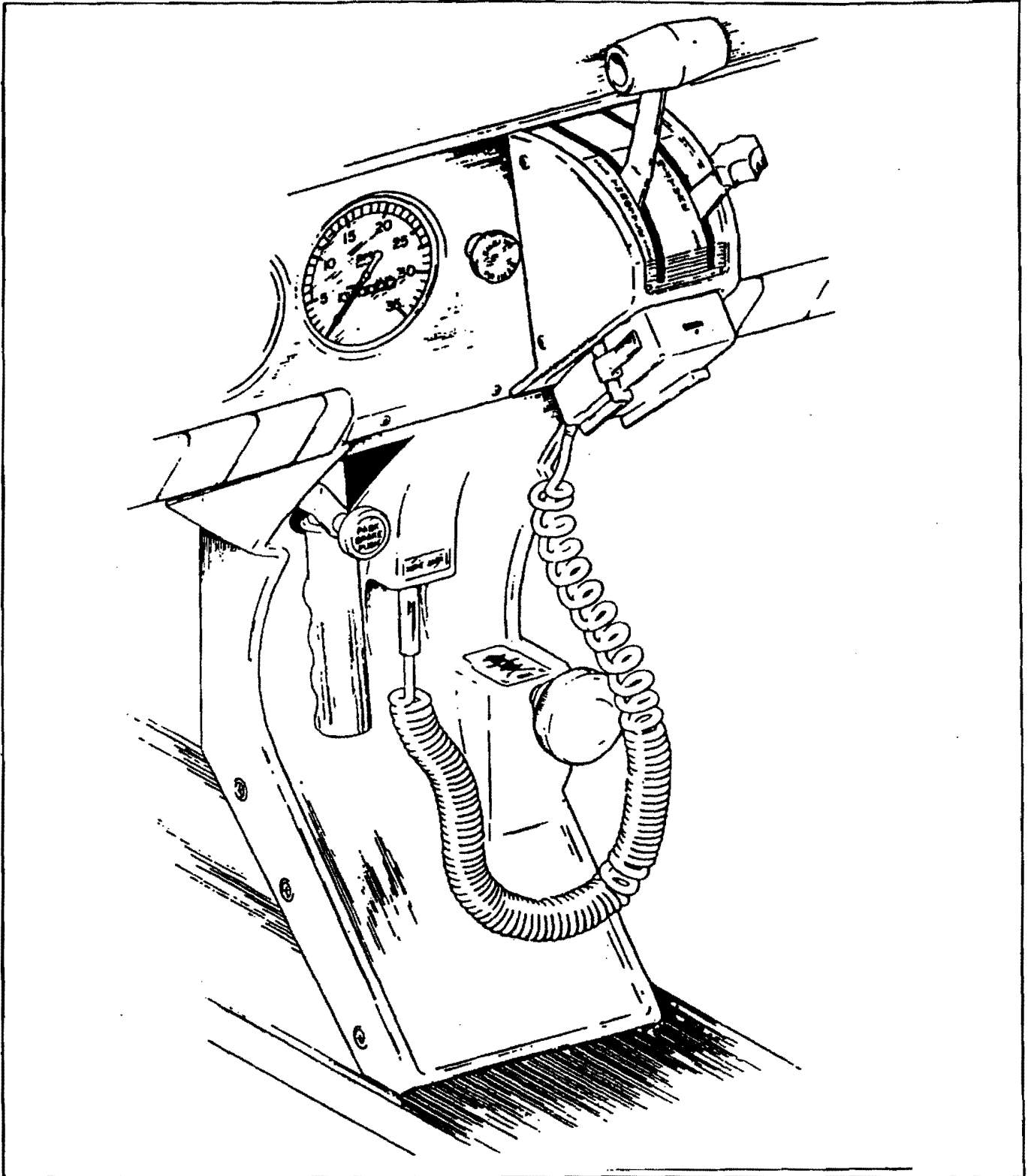
Engine controls consist of a throttle control and a mixture control lever. These controls are located on the control quadrant on the lower center of the instrument panel (Figure 7-5) where they are accessible to both the pilot and the copilot. The controls utilize teflon-lined control cables to reduce friction and binding.

The throttle lever is used to adjust engine RPM. The mixture control lever is used to adjust the air to fuel ratio. The engine is shut down by the placing of the mixture control lever in the full lean position. In addition, the mixture control has a lock to prevent inadvertent activation of the mixture control. For information on the leaning procedure, see the Avco-Lycoming Operator's Manual.

The friction adjustment lever on the right side of the control quadrant may be adjusted to increase or decrease the friction holding the throttle and mixture controls or to lock the controls in a selected position.

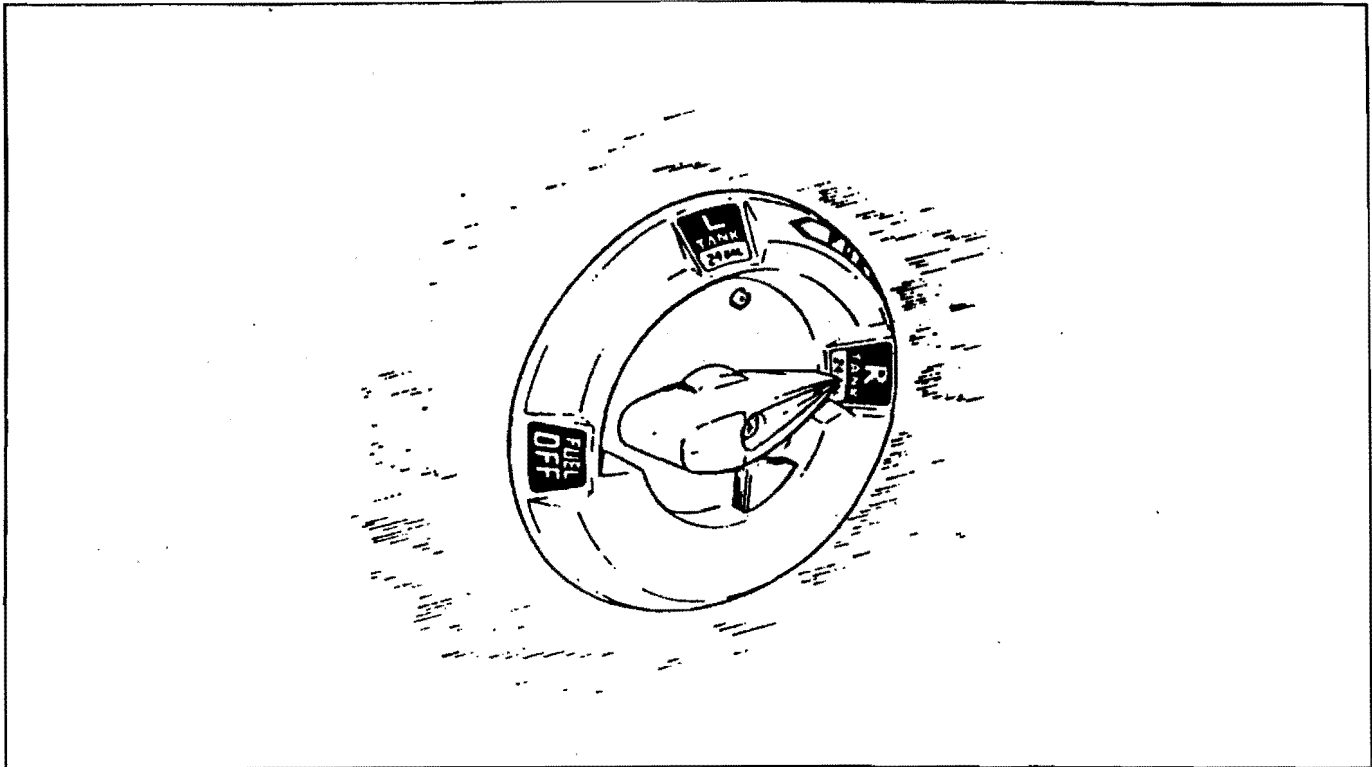
The carburetor heat control lever is located to the right of the control quadrant on the instrument panel. The control is placarded with two positions: "ON" (down), "OFF" (up).





CONTROL QUADRANT AND CONSOLE

Figure 7-5



FUEL SELECTOR

Figure 7-7

### 7.13 FUEL SYSTEM

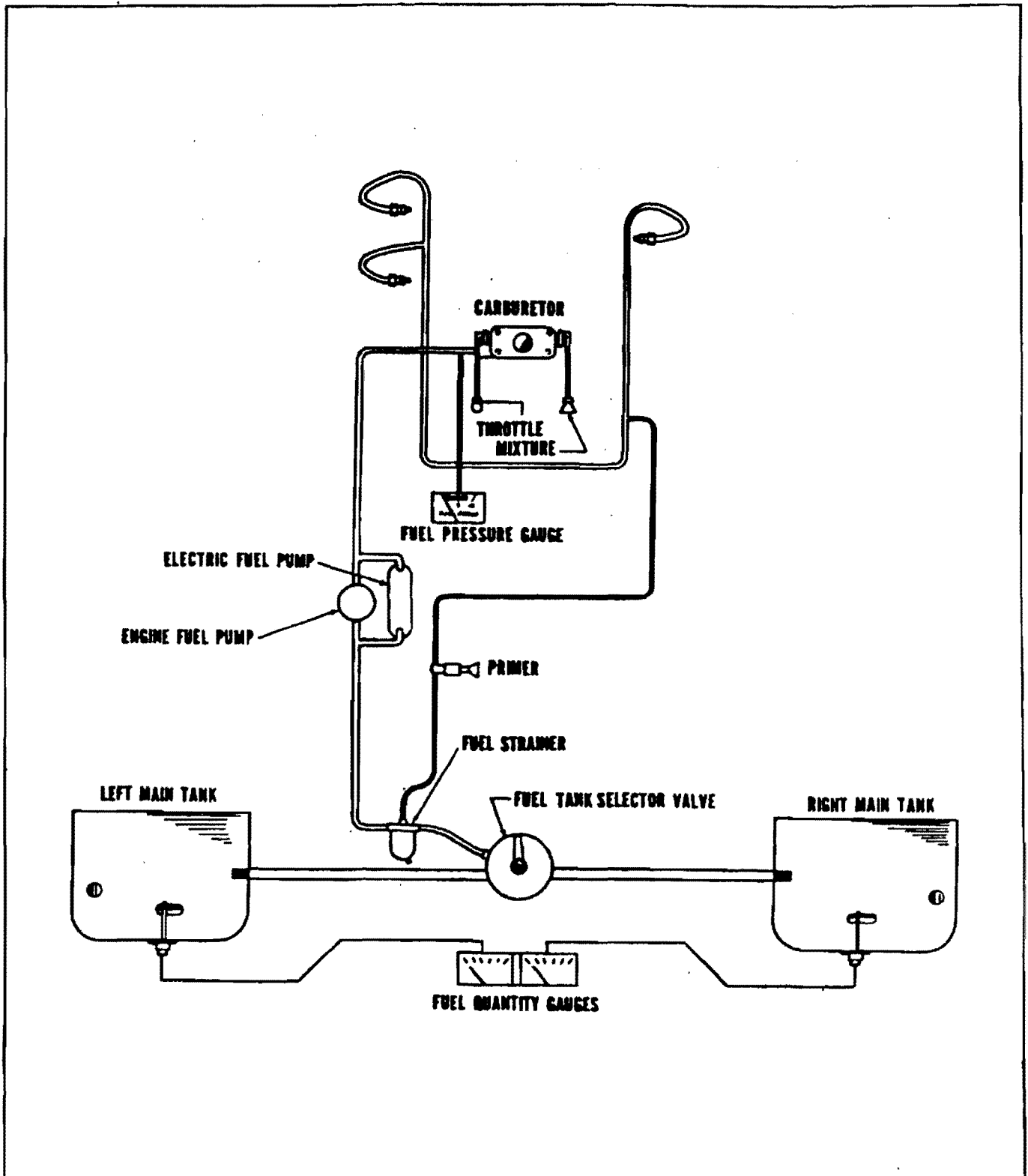
Fuel is stored in two twenty-five gallon (24 gallons usable) tanks which are secured to the leading edge structure of each wing by screws and nut plates.

The fuel selector control (Figure 7-7) is located on the left side-panel, forward of the pilot's seat. The button on the selector cover must be depressed and held while the handle is moved to the OFF position. The button releases automatically when the handle is moved back into the ON position.

An auxiliary electric fuel pump is provided in case of failure of the engine driven pump. The electric pump should be on for all takeoffs and landings, and when switching tanks. The pump switch is located in the switch panel above the throttle quadrant.

The fuel drains should be opened daily prior to first flight to check for water or sediment. Each tank has an individual drain at the bottom, inboard rear corner.

A fuel strainer, located on the lower left front of the fire wall, has a drain which is accessible from outside the nose section. The strainer should also be drained before the first flight of the day. Refer to paragraph 8.21 for the complete fuel draining procedure.



FUEL SYSTEM SCHEMATIC

Figure 7-9

Fuel quantity and pressure are indicated on gauges located in a cluster on the left side of the instrument panel.

An engine priming system is provided to facilitate starting. The primer pump is located to the immediate left of the throttle quadrant (refer to Figure 7-5).

### 7.15 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

The electrical system includes a 14-volt, 60 amp alternator, a 12-volt battery, a voltage regulator, an overvoltage relay and a master switch relay (Figure 7-11). The battery is mounted in a thermoplastic box immediately aft of the baggage compartment. The regulator and overvoltage relay are located on the forward left side of the fuselage behind the instrument panel.

Electrical switches are located on the right center instrument panel, and the circuit breakers are located on the lower right instrument panel. A rheostat switch on the left side of the switch panel controls the navigational lights and the radio lights. The similar switch on the right side controls and dims the panel lights.

Standard electrical accessories include a starter, electric fuel pump, stall warning indicator, cigar lighter, fuel gauge, ammeter, and annunciator panel.

The annunciator panel includes alternator and low oil pressure indicator lights. When the optional gyro system is installed, the annunciator panel also includes a low vacuum indicator light. The annunciator panel lights are provided only as a warning to the pilot that a system may not be operating properly, and that he should check and monitor the applicable system gauge to determine when or if any necessary action is required.

Optional electrical accessories include navigation lights, anti-collision light, landing light, instrument lighting, and cabin dome light. Circuits will handle the addition of communications and navigational equipment.

### WARNING

Strobe lights should not be operating when flying through overcast and clouds since reflected light can produce spacial disorientation. Do not operate strobe lights in close proximity to ground, during takeoff and landing.

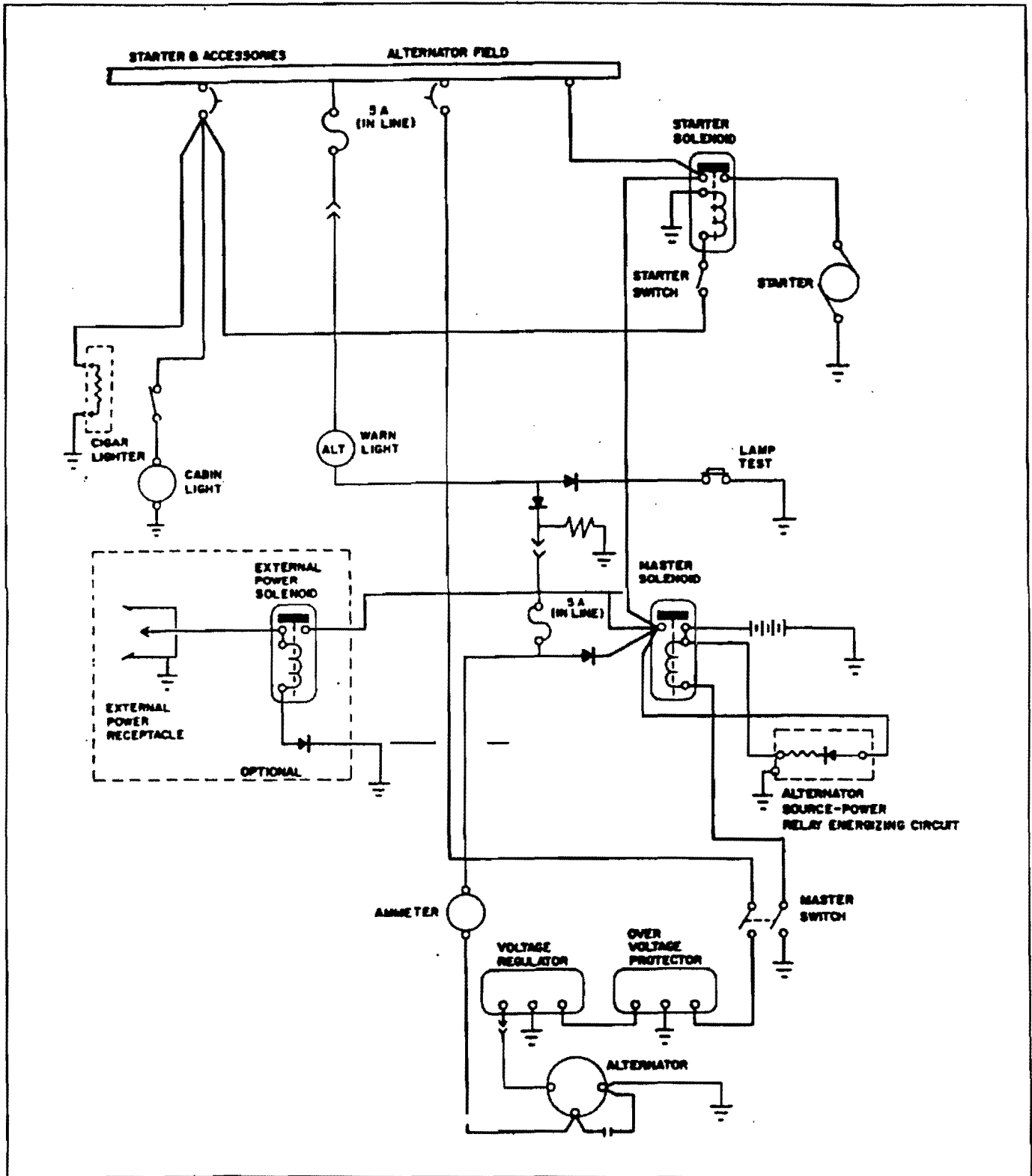
The words "master switch" used hereafter in this manual indicate both sides of the switch; battery side "BAT" and alternator side "ALT" are to be depressed simultaneously to OFF or ON as directed.

Unlike previous generator systems, the ammeter does not indicate battery discharge; rather it displays in amperes the load placed on the alternator. With all electrical equipment off (except master switch) the ammeter will be indicating the amount of charging current demanded by the battery. As each item of electrical equipment is turned on, the current will increase to a total appearing on the ammeter. This total includes the battery. The average continuous load for night flight, with radios on, is about 30 amperes. This 30 ampere value, plus approximately two amperes for a fully charged battery, will appear continuously under these flight conditions. The amount of current shown on the ammeter will tell immediately if the alternator system is operating normally, as the amount of current shown should equal the total amperage drawn by the equipment which is operating.

If no output is indicated on the ammeter during flight, reduce the electrical load by turning off all unnecessary electrical equipment. Check both 5 ampere field breaker and 60 ampere output breaker and reset if open. If neither circuit breaker is open, turn off the "ALT" switch for 1 second to reset the overvoltage relay. If ammeter continues to indicate no output, maintain minimum electrical load and terminate flight as soon as practical.

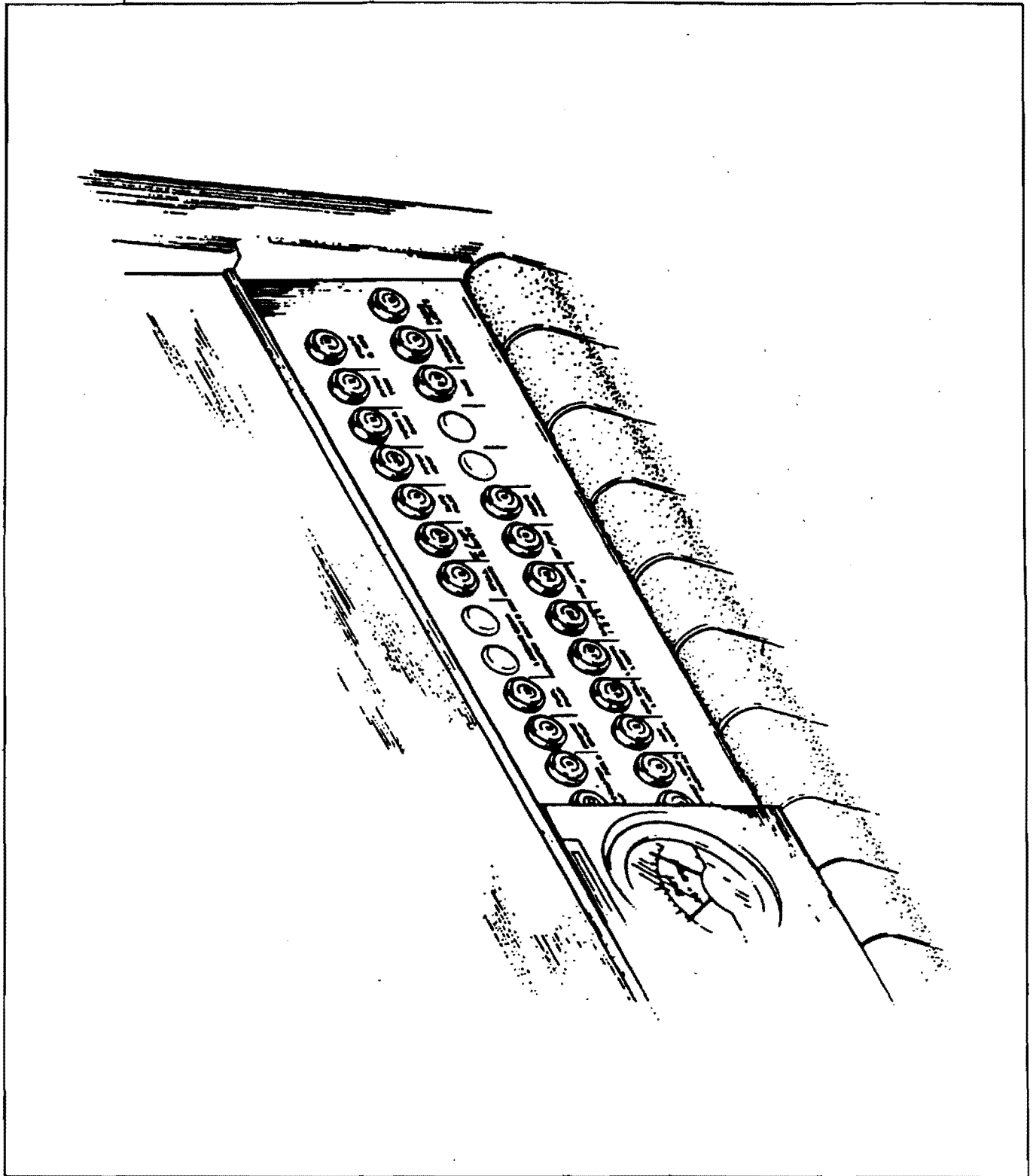
#### **CAUTION**

Do not use cigar lighter receptacles as power sources for any devices other than the cigar lighters supplied with the airplane. Any other device plugged into these receptacles may be damaged.



ALTERNATOR AND STARTER SCHEMATIC

Figure 7-11



CIRCUIT BREAKER PANEL

Figure 7-13

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### 7.17 VACUUM SYSTEM

The vacuum system is designed to operate the air driven gyro instruments. This includes the directional and attitude gyros when installed. The system consists of an engine driven vacuum pump, a vacuum regulator, a filter and the necessary plumbing.

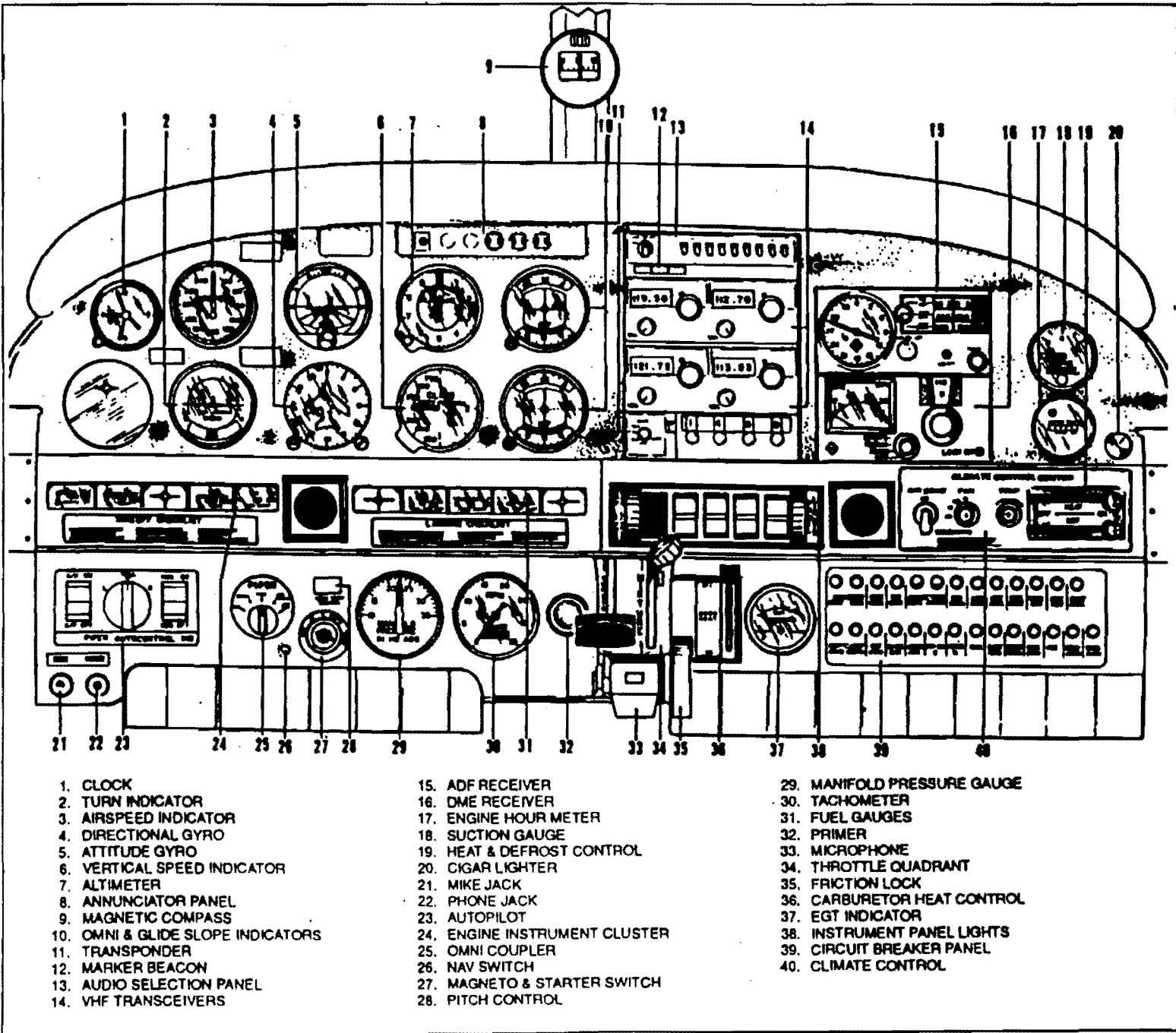
The vacuum pump is a dry type pump which eliminates the need for an air/oil separator and its plumbing. A shear drive protects the pump from damage. If the drive shears, the gyros will become inoperative.

The vacuum gauge, mounted on the right instrument panel to the right of the radios, provides valuable information to the pilot about the operation of the vacuum system. A decrease in pressure in a system that has remained constant over an extended period may indicate a dirty filter, dirty screens, possibly a sticking vacuum regulator or leak in system (a low vacuum indicator light is provided in the annunciator panel). Zero pressure would indicate a sheared pump drive, defective pump, possibly a defective gauge or collapsed line. In the event of any gauge variation from the norm, the pilot should have a mechanic check the system to prevent possible damage to the system components or eventual failure of the system.

A vacuum regulator is provided in the system to protect the gyros. The valve is set so the normal vacuum reads  $5.0 \pm .1$  inches of mercury, a setting which provides sufficient vacuum to operate all the gyros at their rated RPM. Higher settings will damage the gyros and with a low setting the gyros will be unreliable. The regulator is located behind the instrument panel and is accessible from below the instrument panel.

### **7.19 INSTRUMENT PANEL**

The instrument panel (Figure 7-15) of the Cherokee is designed to accommodate the customary advanced flight instruments and the normally required power plant instruments. The artificial horizon and directional gyro are vacuum operated through use of a vacuum pump installed on the engine, while the turn and bank instrument is electrically operated. A vacuum gauge is mounted on the far right side of the instrument panel. The radios and circuit breakers are on the right hand instrument panel. Extra circuits are provided for the addition of optional radio equipment. An annunciator panel is mounted in the upper instrument panel to warn the pilot of a possible malfunction in the alternator, oil pressure, or vacuum systems.



INSTRUMENT PANEL

Figure 7-15

ISSUED: JUNE 18, 1976

REPORT: VB-790  
7-17

### **7.21 PITOT-STATIC SYSTEM**

The system supplies both pitot and static pressure for the airspeed indicator, altimeter, and the optional vertical speed indicator (Figure 7-17).

Pitot and static pressure are picked up by a pitot head installed on the bottom of the left wing and carried through pitot and static lines within the wing and fuselage to the gauges on the instrument panel.

An alternate static source is available as optional equipment. The control valve is located below the left side of the instrument panel. When the valve is set in the alternate position, the altimeter, vertical speed indicator and airspeed indicator will be using cabin air for static pressure. The storm window and cabin vents must be closed and the cabin heater and defroster must be on during alternate static source operation. The altimeter error is less than 50 feet unless otherwise placarded.

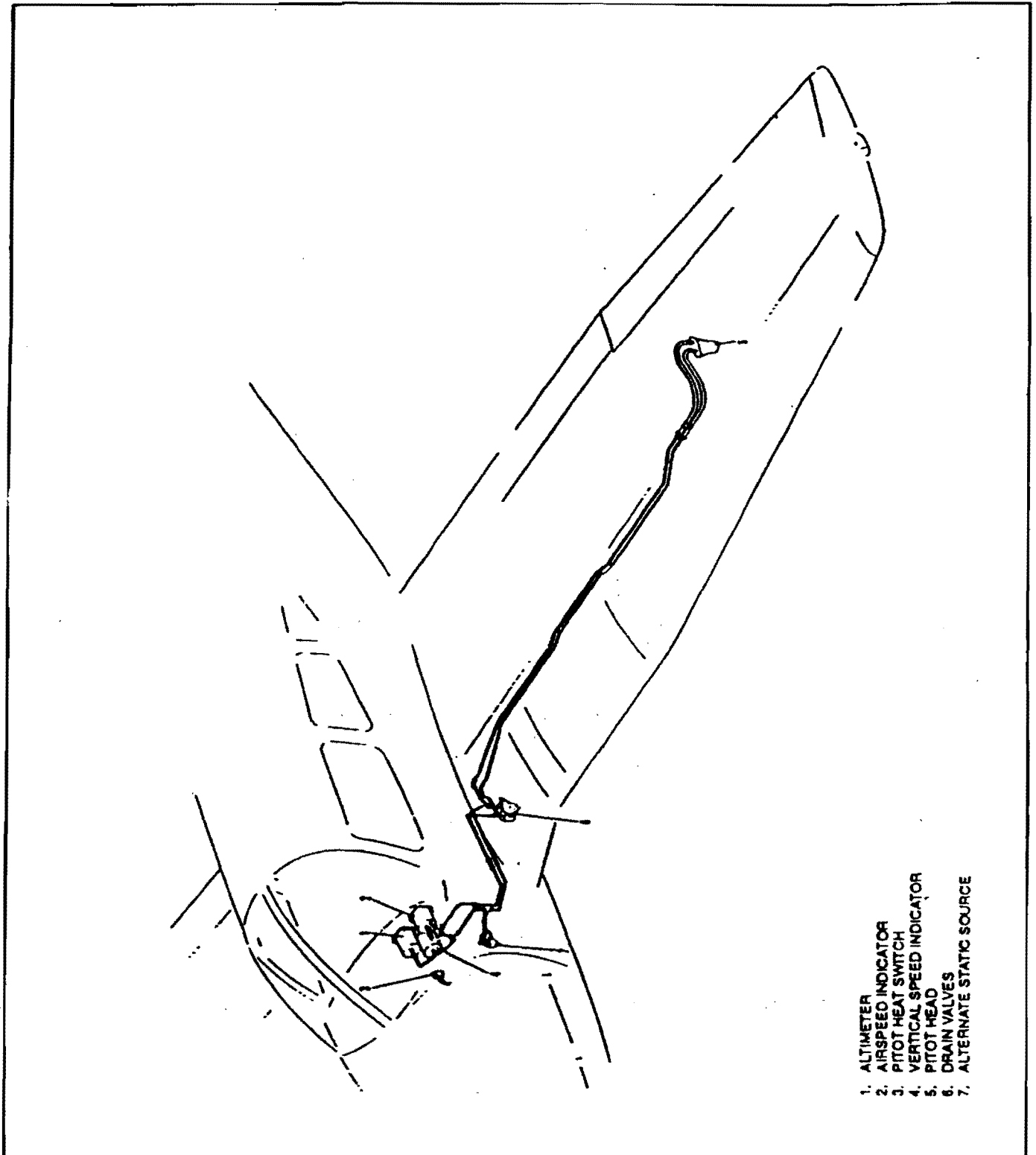
Both the pitot and static lines can be drained through separate drain valves located on the left lower side of the fuselage interior.

A heated pitot head, which alleviates problems with icing and heavy rain, is available as optional equipment. The switch for the heated pitot head is located on the electrical switch panel to the left of the right control wheel.

To prevent bugs and water from entering the pitot and static pressure holes, a cover should be placed over the pitot head. A partially or completely blocked pitot head will give erratic or zero readings on the instruments.

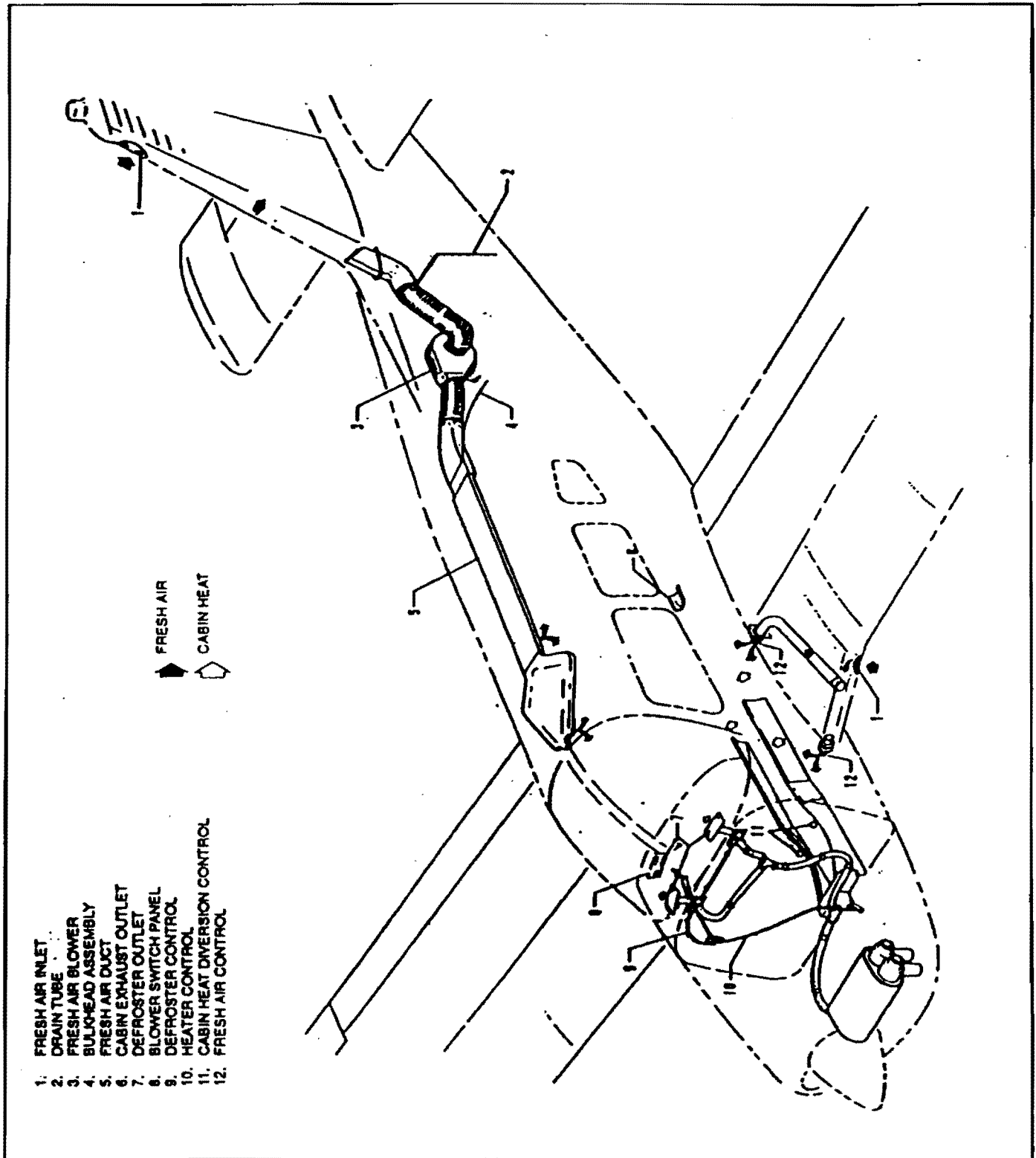
#### **NOTE**

During the preflight, check to make sure the pitot cover is removed.



PITOT-STATIC SYSTEM

Figure 7-17



HEATING AND VENTILATING SYSTEM

Figure 7-19

### **7.23 HEATING AND VENTILATING SYSTEM**

Heat for the cabin interior and the defroster system is provided by a heater muff attached to the exhaust system (Figure 7-19). The amount of heat desired can be regulated with the controls located on the far right side of the instrument panel.

The air flow can be regulated between the front and rear seats by levers located on top of the heat ducts next to the console.

Fresh air inlets are located in the leading edge of the wing near the fuselage. An adjustable outlet is located on the side of the cabin near the floor at each seat location; overhead air outlets are offered as optional equipment. Air is exhausted through an outlet under the rear seat. A cabin air blower, incorporated in the ventilating system, is also available as optional equipment. An optional overhead ventilating system with a cabin air blower is available on models without air conditioning. This blower is operated by a "FAN" switch with 4 positions - "OFF," "LOW," "MED," or "HIGH."

#### **CAUTION**

When cabin heat is operated, heat duct surface becomes hot. This could result in burns if arms or legs are placed too close to heat duct outlets or surface.

### **7.25 CABIN FEATURES**

For ease of entry and exit and pilot-passenger comfort, the front seats are adjustable fore and aft. The rear seats may be removed to provide room for bulky items. Rear seat installations incorporate leg retainers with latching mechanisms which must be released before the rear seats can be removed. Releasing the retainers is accomplished on earlier models by turning the latching mechanisms 90° with a coin or screwdriver. Releasing the retainers is accomplished on later models by depressing the plunger behind each rear leg. Armrests are also provided for the front seats. All seats are available with optional headrests and optional vertical adjustment may be added to the front seats.

The cabin interior includes a pilot storm window, two sun visors, ash trays, two map pockets, and pockets on the backs of each front seat.

A single strap shoulder harness controlled by an inertia reel is standard equipment for the front seats, and is offered as an option for the rear seats. The shoulder strap is routed over the shoulder adjacent to the windows and attached to the lap belt in the general area of the person's inboard hip.

A check of the inertia reel mechanism is made by pulling sharply on the strap. The reel will lock in place under this test and prevent the strap from extending. Under normal movement the strap will extend and retract as required.

### **7.27 BAGGAGE AREA**

A 24 cubic foot baggage area, located behind the rear seats, is accessible either from the cabin or through an outside baggage door on the right side of the aircraft. Maximum capacity is 200 pounds. Tie-down straps are provided and should be used at all times.

#### **NOTE**

It is the pilot's responsibility to be sure when the baggage is loaded that the aircraft C.G. falls within the allowable C.G. Range (refer to Section 6 - Weight and Balance).

### **7.29 STALL WARNING**

An approaching stall is indicated by a stall warning horn which is activated between five and ten knots above stall speed. Mild airframe buffeting and gentle pitching may also precede the stall. Stall speeds are shown on graphs in the Performance Section. The stall warning horn emits a continuous sound and is activated by a lift detector installed on the leading edge of the left wing. During preflight, the stall warning system should be checked by turning the master switch "ON," lifting the detector and checking to determine if the horn is actuated.

### **7.31 FINISH**

All exterior surfaces are primed with etching primer and finished with acrylic lacquer.



### 7.33 AIR CONDITIONING\*

The air conditioning system is a recirculating air system. The major items include: evaporator, condenser, compressor, blower, switches and temperature controls.

The evaporator is located behind the left rear side of the baggage compartment. This cools the air that is used for air conditioning.

The condenser is mounted on a retractable scoop located on the bottom of the fuselage and to the rear of the baggage compartment area. The scoop extends when the air conditioner is "ON" and retracts to a flush position when the system is "OFF."

The compressor is mounted on the forward right underside of the engine. It has an electric clutch which automatically engages or disengages the compressor to the belt drive system of the compressor.

An electrical blower is mounted on the aft side of the rear cabin panel. Air from the baggage area is drawn through the evaporator by the blower and distributed through an overhead duct to individual outlets located adjacent to each occupant.

The switches and temperature control are located on the lower right side of the instrument panel in the climate control center panel. The temperature control regulates the desired temperature of the cabin. Turn the control clockwise for increased cooling, counterclockwise for decreased cooling.

Located inboard of the temperature control is the fan speed switch and the air conditioning "ON-OFF" switch. The fan can be operated independently of the air conditioning. However, it must be on for air conditioner operation. Turning either switch off will disengage the compressor clutch and retract the condenser door. Cooling air should be felt within one minute after the air conditioner is turned on.

#### NOTE

If the system is not operating in 5 minutes, turn the system "OFF" until the fault is corrected.

The "FAN" switch allows operation of the fan with the air conditioner turned "OFF" to aid cabin air circulation if desired. A "LOW," "MED" or "HIGH" flow of air can be selected to the air conditioner outlets located in the overhead duct. The outlets can be adjusted or turned off by each occupant to regulate individual cooling effect.

The "DOOR OPEN" indicator light is located to the left of the radio stack in front of the pilot. The light illuminates whenever the condenser door is open and remains on until the door is closed.

A circuit breaker located on the circuit breaker panel protects the air conditioning electrical system.

Whenever the throttle is in the full throttle position, it actuates a micro switch which disengages the compressor and retracts the scoop. This is done to obtain maximum power and maximum rate of climb. The fan continues to operate and the air will remain cool for approximately one minute. When the throttle is retarded approximately 1/4 inch, the clutch will engage and the scoop will extend, again supplying cool, dry air.

\*Optional equipment

### 7.35 PIPER EXTERNAL POWER\*

An optional starting installation known as Piper External Power (PEP) is accessible through a receptacle located on the right side of the fuselage aft of the wing. An external battery can be connected to the socket, thus allowing the operator to crank the engine without having to gain access to the airplane's battery.

### 7.37 EMERGENCY LOCATOR TRANSMITTER\*

The Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) when installed, is located in the aft portion of the fuselage just below the stabilator leading edge and is accessible through a plate on the right side of the fuselage. This plate is attached with slotted-head nylon screws for ease of removal; these screws may be readily removed with a variety of common items such as a dime, a key, a knife blade, etc. If there are no tools available in an emergency the screw heads may be broken off by any means. The ELT is an emergency locator transmitter which meets the requirements of FAR 91.52.

A battery replacement date is marked on the transmitter to comply with FAA regulations, the battery must be replaced on or before this date. The battery must also be replaced if the transmitter has been used in an emergency situation or if the accumulated test time exceeds one hour, or if the unit has been inadvertently activated for an undetermined time period.

#### NOTE

If for any reason a test transmission is necessary, the test transmission should be conducted only in the first five minutes of any hour and limited to three audio sweeps. If the tests must be made at any other time, the tests should be coordinated with the nearest FAA tower or flight service station.

### NARCO ELT 10 OPERATION

On the ELT unit itself is a three position switch placarded "ON," "OFF" and "ARM." The ARM position sets the ELT so that it will transmit after impact and will continue to transmit until its battery is drained. The ARM position is selected when the ELT is installed in the airplane and it should remain in that position.

To use the ELT as a portable unit in an emergency, remove the cover and unlatch the unit from its mounting base. The antenna cable is disconnected by a left quarter-turn of the knurled nut and a pull. A sharp tug on the two small wires will break them loose. Deploy the self-contained antenna by pulling the plastic tab marked "PULL FULLY TO EXTEND ANTENNA." Move the switch to ON to activate the transmitter.

In the event the transmitter is activated by an impact, it can only be turned off by moving the switch on the ELT unit to OFF. Normal operation can then be restored by pressing the small clear plastic reset button located on the top of the front face of the ELT and then moving the switch to ARM.

A pilot's remote switch located on the left side panel is provided to allow the transmitter to be turned on from inside the cabin. The pilot's remote switch is placarded "ON" and "ARMED." The switch is normally in the ARMED position. Moving the switch to ON will activate the transmitter. Moving the switch back to the ARMED position will turn off the transmitter only if the impact switch has not been activated.

\*Optional equipment

The ELT should be checked to make certain the unit has not been activated during the ground check. Check by selecting 121.50 MHz on an operating receiver. If there is an oscillating chirping sound, the ELT may have been activated and should be turned off immediately. This requires removal of the access cover and moving the switch to OFF, then press the reset button and return the switch to ARM. Recheck with the receiver to ascertain the transmitter is silent.

#### **CCC CIR 11-2 OPERATION**

On the unit itself is a three position selector switch placarded "OFF," "ARM" and "ON." The ARM position is provided to set the unit to the automatic position so that it will transmit only after impact and will continue to transmit until the battery is drained to depletion or until the switch is manually moved to the OFF position. The ARM position is selected when the transmitter is installed at the factory and the switch should remain in that position whenever the unit is installed in the airplane. The ON position is provided so the unit can be used as a portable transmitter or in the event the automatic feature was not triggered by impact or to periodically test the function of the transmitter.

Select the OFF position when changing the battery, when rearming the unit if it has been activated for any reason, or to discontinue transmission.

#### **NOTE**

If the switch has been placed in the ON position for any reason, the OFF position has to be selected before selecting ARM. If ARM is selected directly from the ON position, the unit will continue to transmit in the ARM position.

A pilot's remote switch, located on the left side panel, is provided to allow the transmitter to be controlled from inside the cabin. The pilot's remote switch is placarded "ON," "AUTO/ARM" and "OFF/ RESET." The switch is normally left in the AUTO/ARM position. To turn the transmitter off, move the switch momentarily to the OFF/ RESET position. The aircraft master switch must be ON to turn the transmitter OFF. To actuate the transmitter for tests or other reasons, move the switch upward to the ON position and leave it in that position as long as transmission is desired.

The unit is equipped with a portable antenna to allow the locator to be removed from the aircraft in case of an emergency and used as a portable signal transmitter.

The locator should be checked during the ground check to make certain the unit has not been accidentally activated. Check by tuning a radio receiver to 121.50 MHz. If there is an oscillating sound, the locator may have been activated and should be turned off immediately. Reset to the ARM position and check again to insure against outside interference.

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