

Demystifying Chris Craft Hull Numbers

How to interpret hull numbers of our Commanders is re-occurring question from members in our discussion forum. Below are a number of quotes from some of the answers delivered primarily by hull number guru and ex. Chris Craft employee Jim Wick.

CC Hull Numbering in General

The following text was originally posted by Jim Wick of LPX-Sales on April 29 2004 to the Chris Craft Commander Club mailing list.

CC had their own method of hull numbering. These letters and numbers and letter were good ways of keeping track of what boat was what.

After WWII the hull numbering system listed a letter or two followed by the size and then the production number. These went from 001 to 002 and on to the last hull built in this model. There were no year designation. Looking in the hull list at a C-30-001 thru 240, the years of production were from Aug 1947 to August 1950. If someone had number 120, it would be hard to figure out the model year.

Then in 1960, (maybe new owners) the letters went from 1 or 2 to 3. These coded model and the "generation" of the run. If there was a big change in the decor or layout, the last letter would change from A to B and the third change would move it to a C and so on. These letter changes sometimes indicated a year change, and sometimes they did not. Take the 38' Commander Express, FXA was used from '64 through '68. Then a major change in decor instigated the FXB for '69. Then next year it went to FXC where it died.

Another example the 47 Commander Double Stateroom that had the letters FAA from '66 to the end of '68 while the Single stateroom was FAB during those years. Cockpit was FAC for 2 years, then interior decor changed them to FAD, FAE, and FAF etc.

So if a model went basically unchanged from one year to the next, the second year started out with 2001.

So that takes us up to the 1970 disaster. New owners, lots of new ideas, major restyling changes. And they couldn't give the things away. Our new auto industry imported executives pushed for major production. Sales didn't sell, and the factory yards across the company were full to overflowing with completed boats. These 1970 model boats were built in '69 and '70 and were still being sold for new in 1972.

And the Coast Guard stepped in and said there had to be a universal and easily readable hull number that gave the year and quarter of the year that the boat was started. So, 1973 or '74 CC had to comply with the new system. CC kept their old system and grudgingly complied with the external Coast Guard numbers. So, up to about '78, you will find one number on the transom and a totally different looking number inside. Actually, they do tell the same things. I would love to have a \$ for each time I have had to make the translation for a surveyor, Coast Guard, bank, or boat owner who is confused.

For example, a 41 Commander will have the FAA letters in the CC hull plate and on the transom

will be CCHSA and then the hull number (56 for example) followed by codes for the year and time. One more point of interest, the 3rd letter designated the plant where the boat was built, as in the example H would be for the Holland Michigan plant. In the CC hull number, the H was the last letter after the size and hull number.

In the '80's, the only hull numbers were the Coast Guard ones. However, to make things look better, hull #1 might be #215 and go up from there. Not exactly the way it was done in the past.

Totally confused? Just ask. Don't spend too much time analyzing. With out the lists and cross reference sheets, I couldn't tell much either.

[Jim Wick, LPX-Sales](#)

31' Commander Example

The following illustration comes from CCCC Webmaster's personal boat site and illustrates decoding of 31' Commanders

Web Commander carries the hull number FXA-31 2013H. As in most cases the hull number tries to tell you story. The letters "FXA" and the number "31" simply states that it is Chris Craft 31' Commander. The "2" indicates that the boat was built the second model year (=1967). The number "013" means it is hull number 13 of this model year. Finally the letter "H" means that Web Commander was built at Chris Craft's plant in Holland, Michigan. It is interesting to see the difference between model year and actual manufacturing year. According to official records at Mariner's Museum Web Commander was shipped out of the Holland plant to a dealer in Kentucky August 11 1966.

[Alarik von Hofsten](#)

Finding your Hull Number

For those who may still be looking for their hull number, Carl Nicotera 18 September 2006 told members he found serial number of his 31' Commander Express in the following places.

Bow:

o Hull interior, inside chain locker, port side.

V Berth:

o Curved wood trim (6 ft long) holds plywood top against hull, port side.

o Curved wood trim (6 ft long) holds plywood top against hull, stbd side.

o Plywood under V berth cushion.

o Center wood trim (12 inches long) separating glass facing forward, directly over water tank.

Main Cabin:

o Main floor board directly under dinette table.

o Plywood panel directly under dinette table, where the hull meets the floor.

Head:

o Main floor board.

o Floor board under toilet.

Wheelhouse:

o Center Engine Hatch, etched metal plate.

o Firewall above fwd part of port engine.

Galley:

o Plywood covering hull, to the left of dish storage rack.

o Bottom (floor level) shelf directly under sink.

Note: Numbers on wood surfaces are found on the unexposed side and require removal of the wood piece in order to inspect it. Excluded: Any hand written numbers (e.g. pencil or marker).

Carl

FXA 31 3098T

41/410 Commander Hull Numbers

30 January 2008 Jim Wick posted the story below as a response to a discussion on how to interpret the hull numbers of the the 41 Commanders/Flush Deck/410 Commander Yacht/410 Constellation.

In '72 the 41 Commander was built at the Roamer plant (R) and the Chris Craft hull numbering system was used: F as in fiberglass Commander, A for aft cabin, A for 1st incarnation of this mode, 0001 thru 0055 were the first year of production. FAA 41:0011-R for example.

Then, in '73 the production was moved down the street to the Holland CC plant, and because the Coast Guard was mandating new hull numbering systems, CC kind of used both systems and we can cross reference them. Boats after that time usually had both hull numbering systems on each boat. One change from the old way, was to drop the change of the 1st hull number change to reflect the model year. So, a '73 or '77 would have the CC hull number of FFA-41-0056-H thru 0166.

In '78 CC started using the Coast Guard numbering system only, and the 1st number of the hull number reflected the year. For example, a '78 would have the hull numbers of 8167 and the CG letters of SA and then the month/year codes.

In '79 the model code changed to DK and it stayed that way and was built only in Holland MI plant until '86 when production was moved to North Carolina and the name was changed to 410 Constellation Motor Yacht. Last year was 1987 with few units built that year.

I do not have number of hull built during the '80's. I know (because I was there) that we were building them at 1 a week, or 50 units a year from the '82 model thru the '85 model. So, the last of the hull #'s in my book start 1980 with hull number 208. The 2 years of '80 and '81 were NOT good years for CC and I don't think many were built those years. But, starting Dec. 1981, new ownership and good sales made a real re-surface on these and we were building and selling as many as we could produce. (1982 models)

Bottom line, I think there were more than 400 of the 41's built. Anyone in the club with a '86 or '87 and could give us their Hull number so that this could be verified?

[Jim Wick LPX-Sales](#)

410 Commander Example

Fellow member Fred Catcott illustrated how the numbering works for his 410 Commander in a post 29 January 2008.

Good afternoon from the Lake of the Ozarks. The break down of your 410 Commander hull ID #.

*P M S "Pack My Stuff"
Chris Craft 410 Commander
Hull ID# CCHDK308M83J
Documentation# 659633*

*CC Chris Craft
H Holland Michigan Plant
DK 410 Commander Designator
308 Hull Sequence number - Started at #1 in 1972 for 15 years
M83 Model Year 1983
J May - Month of production*

Fred Catcott

Distinguishing (H) and (R) Plants

Chris Craft had two plants in Holland, Mi. In the Hull numbers one is denoted with an H the other with an R. Jim Wick told this story about the difference.

The Roamer (R) plant in Holland, Mi. Roamer Plant built steel and aluminum hulls until '76 when they moved the operation to Pompano Bch, Fl. However, the first year of the Commander line, the 38's were built at the Roamer plant, as were many other 38, 42, 41, and even ten 47' Commanders.

Why? The Roamer plant had a younger work force at that time, compared to the CC Holland plant. The union was a lot more flexible. (AFL-CIO vs. The Christian Labor Association). I kid you not. As I have stated before, the Roamer plant was pretty free in doing things a little out of the ordinary, be it edicts from CC headquarters or job descriptions/union problems. This probably was a plus in our favor when new things were done. We built the biggest boats CC ever made.

[Jim Wick, LPX-Sales](#)

Using Hull Number for Research

Once you found your hull number it can be used to retrieve lot's of information about your specific boat from the Chris Craft archives at the Mariners Museum.

[Visit the museum](#) and order copies of drawings, brochures, price lists etc.