

Alexander Flyabout

An R/C Stand-Off Scale version of a little lightplane that was a victim of the Depression in the early 1930's/**Al Wolsky**

A little known lightplane of the early 1930's that became a victim of the depression was the Flyabout. The stockmarket crash of November 1929 had affected all business, the Alexander Aircraft Co. of Colorado Springs, Col. was no exception. Their Eaglerock biplane had been a popular plane during the late 1920's, also a low-wing four-place new design the Bullet had just recently gone into production when sales took a nose dive. These airplanes had been selling in the price range of \$5847 for a Wright J-6 Eaglerock, to \$8888 for the Bullet. It was quite clear to the company management that in order to stay in business they would have to design and market a lower priced lightplane. Available for power were small, economically priced low horsepower engines, namely

the Szekely with 45 h.p. and the Continental A-40 with 38 h.p. In early 1931 their new design the Flyabout was flying. With a selling price of \$1465 to \$1590 here seemed the ship to help them survive the economic climate of the times. However as sales did not develop as had been hoped, the company closed down in 1932 after fewer than 20 were made.

With a wingspan of 37'10" and a length of 21'6", the model D1 was powered by a 38 h.p., 4 Cylinder Continental A 40 engine. The D2 had a 3-cylinder 45 h.p. Szekely. High speed performance in Models D-1 and D-2 respectively was 80 and 93 miles per hour. Cruising speed 70 and 80 miles per hour. Gasoline capacity for both was 7 gallons.

The model is in the stand-off scale category



and is scaled at 1 1/2" equals 1'. This resulted in a model of 56 3/4" span, and needs no more than a .15 for power. In my research on the Flyabout I used a 3-view drawing that appeared in a Nov. 1931 issue of Aero Digest and also referred to photos the company used in their advertisements during the period. The model is not too difficult to build and should present no problems to you in building or flying.

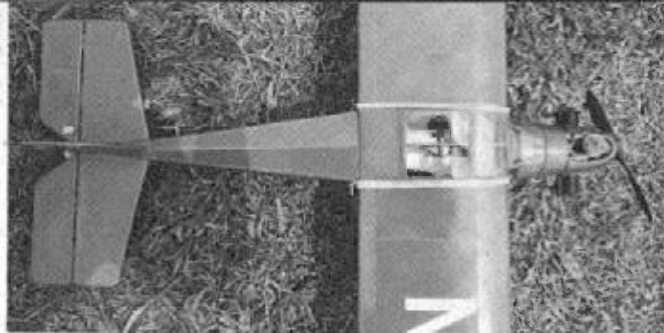
Fuselage

Get five lengths of 1/4" sq. balsa, which is all you will need for the stick frame. Build one side over the side view, when this is dry remove the pins and cover this first side with a piece of plastic kitchen wrap. Now build the second side directly over the first side. In





Details of the removeable gear and the control linkages (above). Plenty of rudder and elevator area is apparent here (below).



The top view shows the radio installation through the wing bay (above). Two dummy cylinders and a detailed prop add to the scale look (below).



doing this both sides should be identical. One thing to note is the $\frac{3}{16}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " diagonal braces of each side should favor what will be the outer face of each side. You will also, in the case of the bottom longeron, be forced to cut it partly through at two places to get it to conform to the shape required. This will also be necessary when joining the sides together over the top view, glue can be worked into these breaks to restore strength to these spots.

Cut two sets of cross pieces from the top view. Shave away the inside of sides at the rear to reduce the thickness to $\frac{3}{16}$ " at end when glued together. Start in the cabin area joining the sides together working to the rear. The firewall can be epoxied in place and angled pieces be used behind this to beef up this area, along with $\frac{1}{8}$ " sheeting as shown. The gear is held in place at the rear by small clips and screws to the plywood floor. At the

front leg, use small rubber bands on each side to hold it in place at the $\frac{1}{8}$ " dowel which is through the fuselage. This allows the gear to pivot and allow movement in use. The former F-1 is of $\frac{1}{8}$ " ply, planking of $\frac{1}{8}$ " sheet finishes up this area. The stringers at top and sides are of $\frac{1}{8}$ " sq. wood.

Wing

Cut out all ribs, tips, dihedral braces and trailing edge pieces as required. The two $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " hardwood spars are cut at their centers so that one half is on the building board and the other half is angled up 2" (total dihedral) at a point $27\frac{5}{16}$ " out from the center joint. The two ply dihedral braces are then epoxied in place, this should be done with accuracy. The portion of the spar which will be extending below the braces should be trimmed flush with the ply braces. Now to complete the wing pin spar and lower trail-

ing edge over plan, glue the ribs in place, follow with the balsa top spar then the leading edge and top trailing edge. Repeat this on the other half of the wing, then add the leading edge sheeting and sheet the center area as required, also add tips and the four strut mounting plates.

Finishing details

Sand all frames smooth to remove dried glue, also slightly round off all edges. The wing is held to the fuselage by rubber bands. At this time mount your engine in place and pin the tail assemblies in place. Lay your three servos battery pack and receiver in the fuselage and shift them around until you can balance the model with the wing in place at the point indicated on the plan. If anything, the model will end up slightly nose heavy. When you do get it balanced, epoxy the servo mounting rails in place. Mount the servos and make up the push rods to the rudder, elevator and motor control system. You can then proceed with the covering. On my plane I used Silray and dope. Four coats of clear were brushed on sanding slightly between coats. The color is up to you but keep it simple, I would say any solid color such as red, yellow or blue would be authentic. I sprayed on three coats of bright red and polished it to a luster with rubbing compound. The real plane did not sport a fancy paint job. Finish with detail like the two dummy cylinders. Wing struts and license numbers add to the scale appearance. The wing struts are held in place by small screws to the wings, the wire ends slip into pieces of plastic tubes that are epoxied into the fuselage in four places as shown on the plan. The license numbers are of Monokote trim film.

Flying

Make certain you have an engine that runs reliably, and that all the controls work freely. With no more than a .15 for power and the model balanced as per plan it is an easy and forgiving trainer type ship. Good luck and have fun with your Flyabout.