

# MIDWEST PRODUCT'S "BEERCAT"



The author poses his model in front of Bobby Speed's full-size Beercat. Midwest's kit produces a biplane that will provide you with "good old-fashioned fun"!

**I**N 1970 there was an EAA display in a local shopping center here in Amarillo, Texas. I remember that the best looking plane in the show was a little staggerwing biplane called "Beercat," and I thought to myself that it would sure make a nice model!

Some time ago I was looking through *M.A.N.* and saw an ad from Midwest Products for a Beercat. I called my favorite hobby dealer and had him send me two kits and two O.S. .40 FSR engines. When the kits arrived, I called Bobby Speed, the owner of the real Beercat, and told him what I had. He was surprised and wanted to see the model. We talked about the big and little Beercats, and decided that when I got the model built, we would get both of them together for some picture taking. With this in mind, I got started on the project.

While I was sitting there looking over the plans and instructions, I thought to myself that Hal "Pappy" deBolt would like some pictures of the real Beercat also, since he had designed the model. I hadn't seen or talked to Hal in years so I called him up. He was surprised that the real Beercat was still flying and that I lived so close to it. He said he would like some pictures also.

—by Bill Dennis—

**A complete and detailed kit that produces a Beercat biplane to give the builder some old fashioned fun.**

Then, one day a week or so later I had to call *M.A.N.* on another matter and hap-



The moment of truth always comes on that first test flight—it went very well!

pened to mention the Beercat saga to Art Schroeder. Art said, "Let's kill two birds with one stone and do an F&B." That is a thumbnail sketch of how I got into this mess; now I will try to do it some justice.

This kit is from a series of four (Champ, T-Craft, Pattern Master and Beercat), and I truly feel that Midwest is giving the modeler his money's worth. The kit itself is very detailed and complete. When you open the box, the quality and completeness is evident. After looking through everything, I recommend that you take the instruction book and read it for about two hours. After you have done this, turn to the back of the instructions and check the list to see that every piece is in the kit. Mark each piece on die-cut sheets per the drawings. Now that you have done this, read the instructions again and study the plane for another hour. You should now be thoroughly familiar with your kit and ready to start construction. If you follow the instructions carefully, you can't help but end up with a good-looking and nice-flying model.

**CONSTRUCTION.** I am not going into detailed construction, but, rather, will hit the high spots. Get some clear white pine or plywood board as called for. The final

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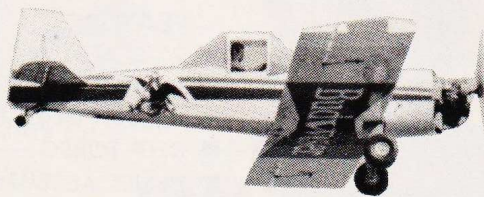


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## F&B: BEERCAT

results of your Beercat will depend on how well you construct the jigs included in your kit, so use care in assembling the wing and stab jigs.

The wing construction is very fast and true. With all the good die-cutting of the wing parts you should be able to use Super Jet throughout because the joints are tight. The stab, elevator, rudder and fin just fall together if you follow the instructions.

The fuselage is going to take a little more time than the wings and tail. It's not that the fuselage is that hard, but you'll spend more time jiggling the firewall, bulkheads, etc.

The fuselage and wing isometric sheet is one of the most helpful tools provided. Take this isometric and keep it handy during construction. The reason I didn't send any construction photos with this article was that the plans, isometric and instruction manual are so well done that any pictures of construction would not do justice to the package. There are five very good and helpful photographs of the finished

**"The Midwest Beercat really gives the modeler his money's worth."**

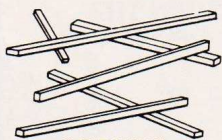
model on the plans.

Now that the component construction is complete, turn to the final assembly section in the instruction manual. The final assembly has 20 steps that should be completed in the order shown. These 20 steps are the payoff to having a good flying Beercat.

**FINISHING.** Now that you've gone this far, you are ready to cover and paint your Beercat. I am not going to take issue with anybody on covering and finishing because whatever works for you, you should use. The instruction manual describes a very good method that I have used myself that you might want to try.

I have tried most of the covering and finishing methods that have shown up on the market in the last 20-25 years. Almost all of them are very good, but I have gone back to the "horse and buggy" covering and finishing method, and it might be worth your while to take a look at this old method as compared with today's material prices and time spent in application. The old method is called "silk and dope."

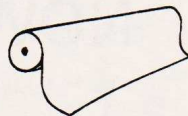
I found with the Beercat that silk and dope cost 18% less than iron-on film and 37% less than iron-on fabric and epoxy paint. Also, silk and dope can be patched and you'd have to look hard to find where. I can't say this for the films or epoxy type



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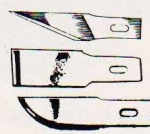
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finishes.

The Beercat was finished in the following manner. I sanded all surfaces smooth and filled any dings with Dap. Then I brushed on two coats of clear dope full strength. When it was dry, I sanded it with 220-grit sandpaper to take the fuzz off. That took care of the preparation and the total time elapsed was 40 minutes.

Next I put the silk on using an atomizer filled with water to make the silk conform to all curves, and thinned (about 50/50) dope to make the silk adhere to the model (total time—1½ hours). After this was dry, I took clear dope and put some talc in it to make a sanding sealer. I brushed on 3 coats of this and let it dry for a week (total time to put 3 coats on—30 minutes).

After it had dried, I sanded with 180-grit paper until everything looked dull (total time—1¼ hours). Then I sprayed on 3 coats of 50/50 clear and let that dry for a couple of days (total spraying time—30 minutes). I sanded again with 280-grit paper to dull the finish and sprayed everything silver (total time—35 minutes). After this was dry (1 or 2 days), I sanded with 320-grit wet-or-dry paper used wet, then sprayed another coat of silver on the entire model (total time—10 minutes). The reason I used silver is because it makes such a good base for final colors.

**“For covering and finishing, I used the old silk and dope method.”**

Also, the windows can be masked off at that point. Actual work time so far had been 5 hours and 16 minutes. Not bad!

Finally, I sprayed on the base color (2 coats) and let it dry for a couple of days. I masked off the striping, covered the rest of the plane with newspaper using masking tape to hold it in place, and sprayed on the striping. I removed the newspaper and masking carefully, and set the plane up to dry (2 or 3 days). Then I put 4 coats of 50/50 thinned clear to seal everything, and let the whole thing dry a week. The end result was a very durable, good looking aircraft that required only 7 to 8 hours of actual working time.

Now I know that there are a lot of people out there who will say covering with silk and dope isn't that easy. My only comment is, “Don't knock it until you've tried it!”

**RADIO.** My friend Dave Shadel of Airtronics sent me a 6-channel XL radio for this F&B. I have been flying with Kraft radios since 1959, so this was somewhat of an experience for me. The radio arrived and I opened it immediately. I found the unit to be very attractive, and it worked very well on the bench.

The servo centering is excellent. Servo reversing is on all 6 channels and comes in handy. I liked the ratchet trim levers.

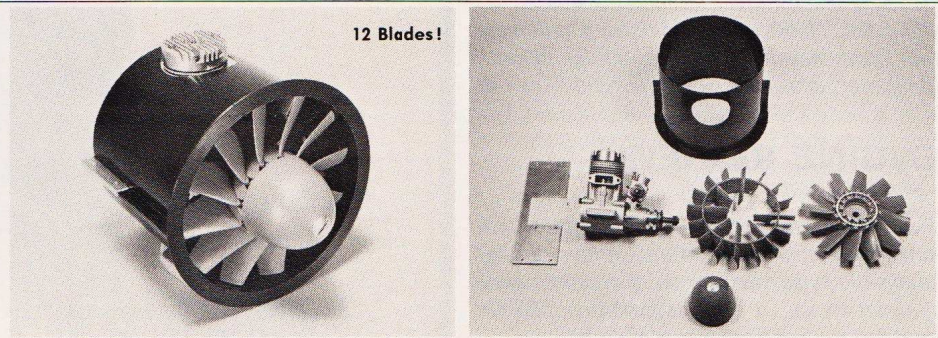
Being an old timer, I don't think I would ever use the exponential, but I can see where it would come in handy for Mode II fliers. This feature allows one to check flight package voltage without taking the plane apart at the field.

Since I have started this project, I have put about 125 flights on this radio, and I cannot find fault with it. There are radios with more options and there are radios with less, but I feel for the money this radio costs, you can't buy any better.

After bench-checking your radio, it's time to install the unit in the plane. If you followed the instructions well in building, the radio should just drop right in. Now that that's finished, check the CG and

lateral balance, and make sure all the control surfaces are moving in the right direction.

**FLYING.** Finally the big day arrived when I was to fly the Beercat. I got up early, packed the airplane and the radio, and off I went to the airfield. Bobby Speed met me there with his full-size plane, and we took a lot of pictures of the big and little Beercats. After the picture taking, Bobby said, “Let's fly the little one now.” I had put it off as long as I could, the time had come to get it in the air. I filled the tank, primed the engine, hooked up the glowplug, turned the radio on, flipped the prop, and bingo! That good old O.S. 40 FSR started right up. I checked the idle



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and controls, everything was OK.

For the first time in my life I was nervous about flying a model, but I taxied out, turned into the wind and started my takeoff roll. Everything was going just fine and straight. I got to half throttle and the beercat took off very nicely. The flight was one of the most pleasant model experiences I have had to date.

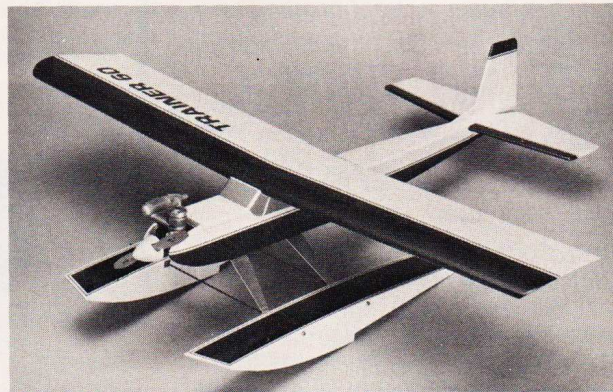
Rather than go into a bunch of details about flying, I think you should treat yourself to a Beercat and have some good old-fashioned fun.

I would like to thank the designer of the real Beercat, Bobby Speed, for his time and effort on this project.

For more information on the Beercat, contact Midwest Products Company, 400 S. Indiana St., Hobart, IN 46342, and tell them you read about their product in Model Airplane News. ■

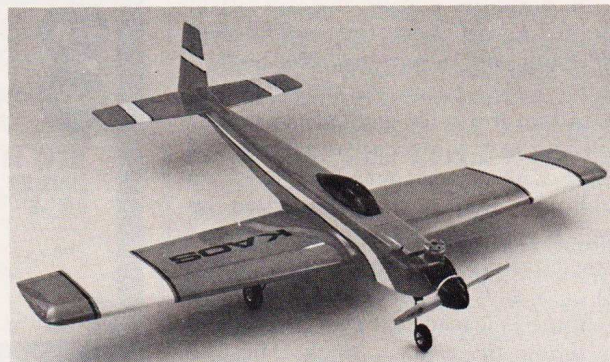
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