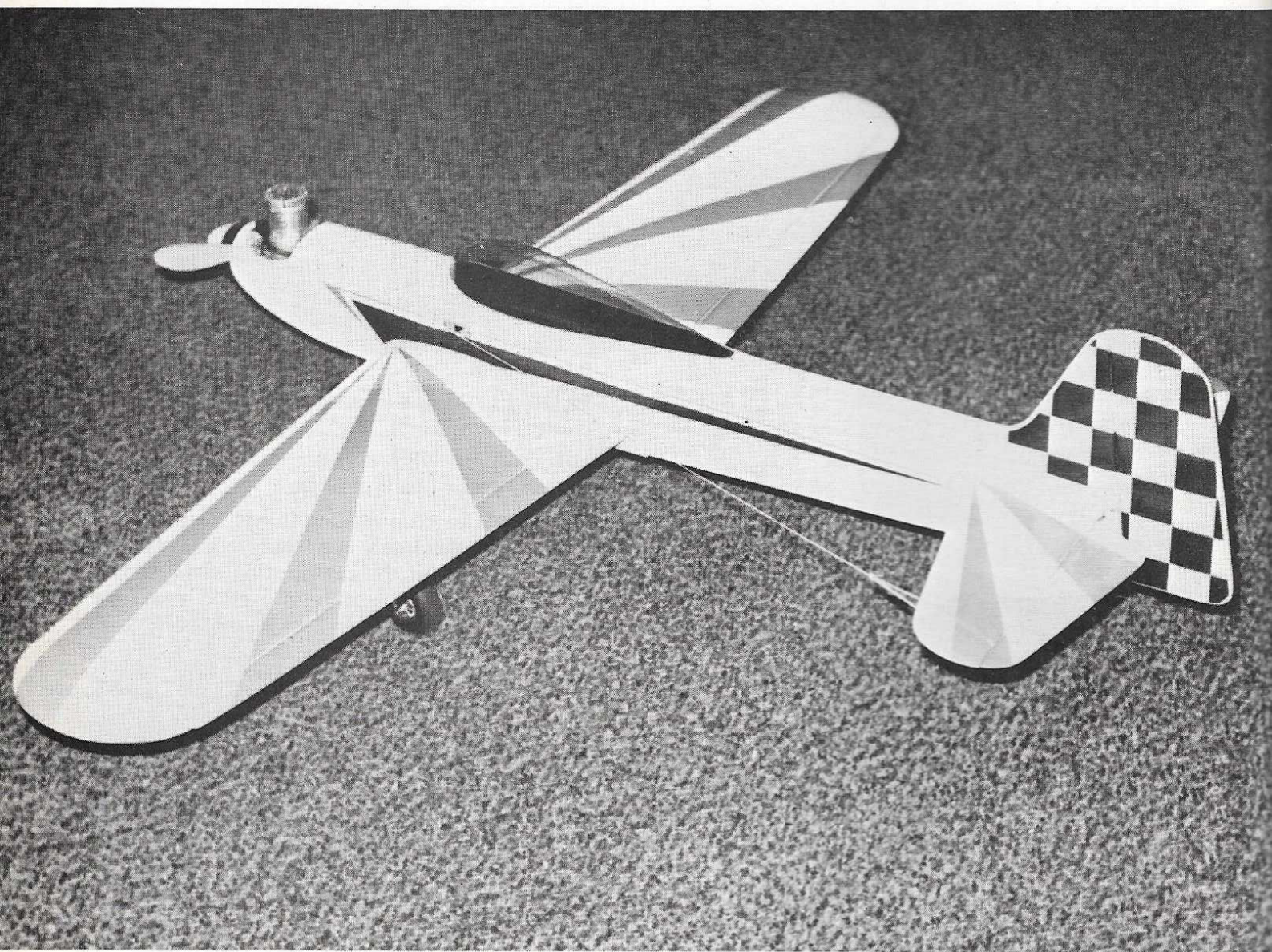




Little Bird



"A RELATIVELY SMALL AIRPLANE WITH AN APPETITE FOR LARGE ENGINES."
AUTHOR LIKES IT WITH AN ST 71. YOU JUST MIGHT PREFER A BIT LESS BHP.

by LYN GALLUP

The Little Bird is a relatively small airplane with an appetite for large engines. Even though its size belies the fact, the plane is built around the 60's and 71's. Most certainly, it will fly with the 35's and 45's, but the biggest mills give optimum performance characteristics. They allow exceptional climbing ability and remarkable penetration on windy days. The big engines also give the plane constant momentum. For example, maneuvers that greatly reduce air speed, such as snap rolls or Lomcovaks, can be immediately followed by power maneuvers like extended loops, vertical eights, or Immelmann turns, without having to worry about picking up sufficient air speed to carry through the specific maneuver. The brute force of the Supertigre G.71FI allows the plane the indulgence of constant momentum for all maneuvers. Under full throttle there isn't time for second guessing, so the plane depends upon the pilot's ability to react quickly for survival.

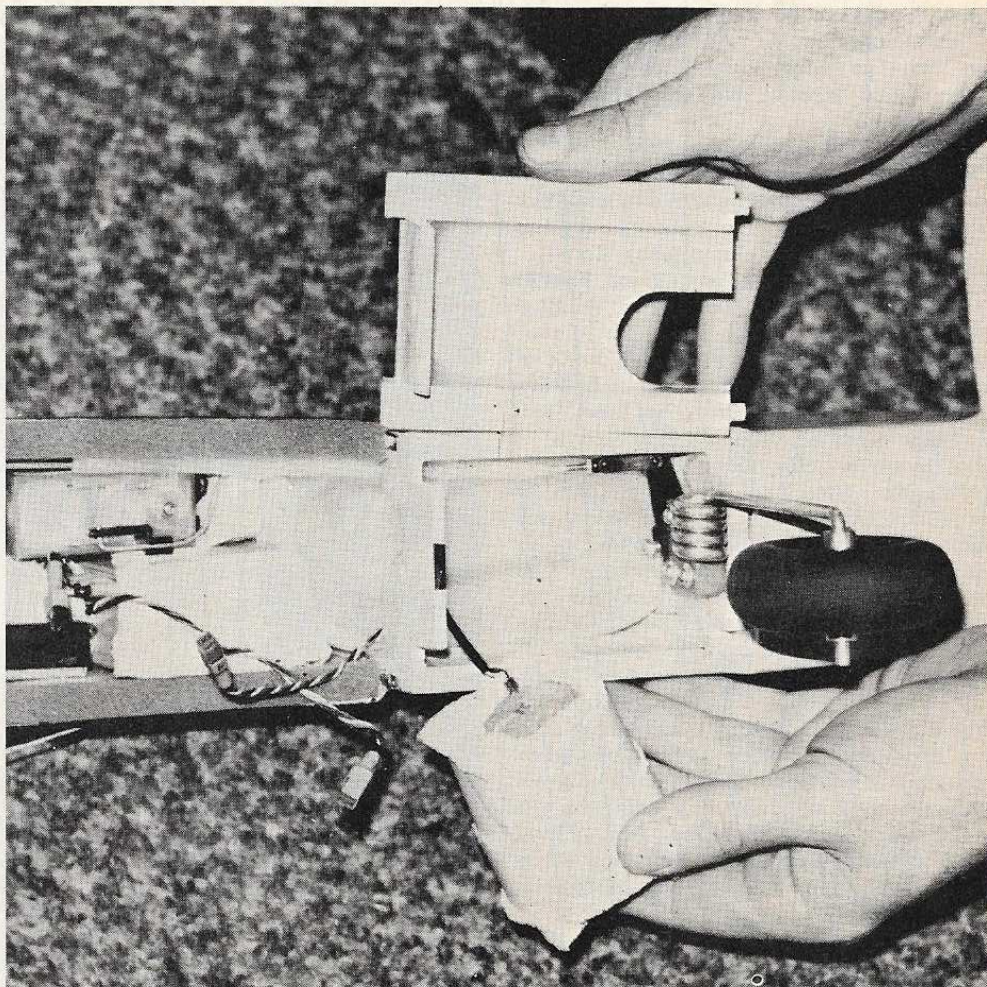
This model is the culmination of a series of modifications that began when the prototype first took to the air in the spring of 1969. The original flew well, with the exception of one problem—its overall pitch stability was not quite adequate. To correct this situation, a degree of incidence was added to the wing which put it at a "constant" angle of attack, thus eliminating the searching effect of the pitch axis. This, coupled with slightly increasing the nose moment and decreasing the elevator areas, enabled the plane to then groove in a proper manner.

From its inception, it was decided that all unnecessary drag on the design would be kept to a minimum. The fuselage is quite narrow, being only 2¾" wide, and the wing is thin and laminar at the root. An original 14.7% section is employed, progressing out to a conventional 17.7% section at the tip. A lengthy root core allows the wing to remain thin at 14.7%, and the taper makes it thinner yet at the tip, even though the percentage is greater. This greater percentage at the tips gives more lift; due to the taper, it creates less drag. This feature, along with the gracefully tapered tips which reduce turbulence and increase tip efficiency, makes the wing resistant to tip stalling. To achieve better symmetrical balance, the design has opted for a mid-wing type configuration, which allows it to perform smooth rolls with little, if any, fussing with the elevator.

The Little Bird has a very large rudder; every inch of it is necessary if the plane is to sustain true knife-edge flight. It also adds considerably to the overall aerobatic capabilities of the airplane when rudder control is necessary for the proper execution of a maneuver.

This plane should be built with the thought of not sacrificing strength to save weight in mind, as it must be able to withstand high speed maneuvers without coming apart. 5¼ to 5½ lb. is ideal for all around performance, for it gives the plane strength and makes it very nice to handle in the wind. At 5½ lb. the plane has no undesirable sinking characteristics, due to its efficient airframe.

(Continued on page 92)



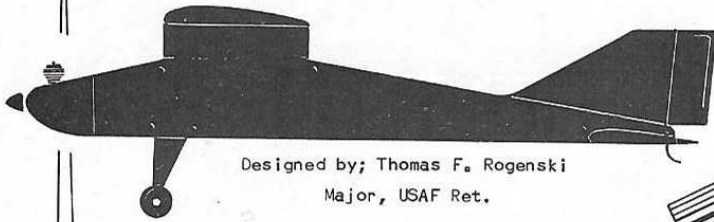
Bottom hatch is neatly held in by the wing dowels. Note tank extends behind the bulkhead.

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Designed by; Thomas F. Rogenski
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Little Bird

(continued from page 21)

Because of the narrow fuselage, the radio installation can present problems unless the more recent equipment is used. Any of the RC gear made before 1969 probably will be too tightly cramped to allow a suitable arrangement, so for the best results, the smaller, more recent systems are recommended.

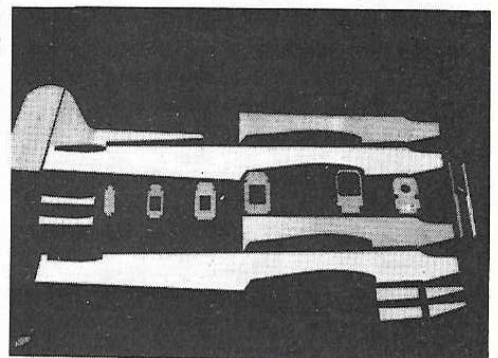
Construction

Carefully trace the fuselage sides onto 1/8" balsa with carbon paper, marking the former locations. Do the same with the 1/32" plywood doublers, making sure they follow the outline of the body sides, but end in front of former "C". Epoxy the plywood doublers in place, using a liberal amount to insure strength, then wipe away excess. Trace and cut out the body formers, the 1/16" balsa doublers that are placed beneath the motor mounts, the balsa stab saddles, and the motor mounts. Drill for and install nose gear mount to former "A" (firewall), and drill hole for throttle linkage. In one operation, epoxy in place the motor mounts and "A" and "B", holding the structure straight and secure with masking tape. Make sure motor mounts are at zero. After the assembly has set up, install the remaining formers "C" through "F" and add the floating former. Pin a piece of 1/4" square balsa between butt ends of fuselage, checking for straight, true alignment. The 1/4" square balsa is removed when the fin is installed.

After the structure has set up, install the 1/4" square balsa stringers, the stabilizer saddles, and the 1/16" balsa doublers under the motor mounts. Install the fuselage sides and top. Cut out slots for elevator and rudder linkage exits, and make sure the pushrods will be able to work smoothly and freely. Install the rear bottom fuselage. Fuelproof underside of engine cavity area, and install bottom nose block. Build hatch block (plan isometric shows appearance). Install dowels for front of hatch block, and slot in the 1/16" plywood bearing plates (drill holes in them before gluing in place), and epoxy the plates to nose block. This operation is done coordinately, which makes sure of proper dowel alignment of hatch block.

Now fashion an appropriate engine cavity. Add 1/8" plywood hold-down plate to rear of hatch block, and laminate bottom and sides of hatch block with epoxy and cloth. Mark center of former "B", locate wing dowel entrance, and drill a 1/4" hole for wing dowel. Have hatch block in place during this operation, so the hatch hold-down plate will also "catch" the drilling of this hole, thus insuring proper alignment. Razor plane and sand the

Fuselage is uncomplicated, quick to build.



BEST IN KIT DESIGN

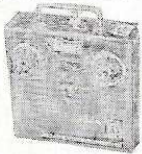
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entire fuselage structure smooth, with hatch in place to insure a neat fitting.

Make accurate templates for root and tip of wing from 1/8" plywood, and sand edges to a very smooth texture. Cut foam wing cores. Locate and slot for 1/16" dihedral braces with a small saw blade. Glue on top skins with a good contact cement that will not attack the foam cores. Trim and carefully sand balsa skins (Sig skins recommended) at leading edges and all four ends. Do not yet trim trailing edges. Check for a straight, even-fitting leading edge on each panel, then glue on bottom skins. Make sure of firm contact of skins, especially at the leading and trailing edges. Trim bottom skins to match top.

Locate and dig out cavities for landing gear blocks and reinforcing dowels, then glue into place. When epoxy has set up, drill appropriate holes to accept the five 1/32" landing gear wire. Now is a good time to bend and properly fit the main landing gear wires. Carefully cut out ailerons, making sure the "cut" lines indicated on the plans are the lines that are followed. Reduce leading edges of ailerons by 3/4". Contact glue 3/8" wide balsa strips to trailing edges of wing and leading edges of ailerons. Razor plane and sand to proper fit. Make template of actual aileron. Align and pin it to the aileron(s), and trace off and cut the ailerons to the proper shape. Reduce the ends to allow for the 1/16" balsa that seals off the small areas of exposed foam.

Laminate two 3/4" thick balsa blocks together for the wing tips. Rough cut the wing tips to the proper size, hollow them out a little bit, and glue them to each panel. Shape them with the ailerons temporarily attached to the panels with masking tape. Cut or sand

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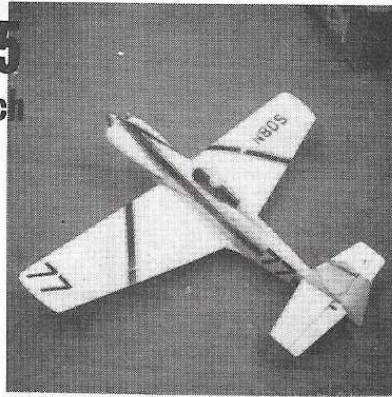
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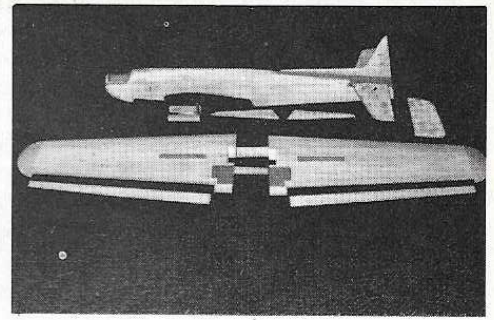
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proper dihedral angle. Slot out wing skins for 1/16" plywood wing bolt plate bearers and install with epoxy or contact cement. Then cut out servo compartment. Join wing halves and make final wing sanding and cover. Slot out for aileron torque arms, then install them in a neat and straight manner, checking to insure free movement as epoxy sets.

Make templates for stabilizer airfoils out of 1/16" plywood, and cut the two foam panels required. Cover the top and bottom of each with 1/16" balsa, much in the same manner as the wing. Trim and sand the overlapping areas to correct size, and glue the two panels together. Add the leading and trailing edges and the tips. Rough sand to proper shape, being careful not to round off the trailing edge of stabilizer. This edge and the trailing edges of the wing and vertical fin are left flat so the respective control surfaces may "duck behind" them. Cut out elevators and sand to proper taper, which are 1/8" thickness at trailing edges. (All trailing edges of control surfaces and tips are 1/8".) Attach elevators to stabilizer temporarily with masking tape and sand entire unit until neat and uniform.

Next, trace and cut out vertical fin, dorsal fin and rudder. Make sure the bottoms of the fins follow the outline of the stabilizer on the plans. Glue dorsal fin to vertical fin. Sand to proper shape and contour, making sure of proper fit to fuselage when stabilizer is in place.

Cover fuselage and tail pieces and install the stabilizer. Insert the 1/8" plywood tailpost into the vertical fin. Lap each side of the tailpost that is inserted into the fuselage with 1/16" balsa to achieve a proper fit. The 1/4" square balsa strip temporarily inserted at the

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butt end of the fuselage earlier should have insured this proper fit. Install the vertical fin, making sure the dorsal fin is centered and straight. Fill the open gap at the bottom of the butt end of the fuselage with scrap balsa. This will allow easy slotting to accept the bottom hinge for the rudder later on.

Install wing bolt blocks. Locate and drill a 1/4" hole in leading edge of wing for the hold-down dowel, however do not glue in at this time. Screw the wing bolts down through the hardwood blocks until flush, then place wing in the proper position and press down to get indentations from screws onto the wing. Drill 1/4" holes at those two points. Now glue in the leading edge dowel and bolt down wing and let dry with hatch block in place. Build the fuselage bottom onto wing with wing fastened in place. Tack glue it only, and when finished and sanded to fit, remove it and cover. Cut holes for wing bolts, add doweling, then epoxy to wing permanently, holding down with weights if necessary. The wing bolts must be 1 1/2" in length to properly secure the wing. Bend and install the elevator control horn wire behind the stabilizer. Add fillets and fairings to tail and wing areas and then paint the airplane.

Attach the control surfaces, being careful to insure they are all secured so they cannot come off during violent maneuvers. DuBro hinges, with six small holes drilled in each and secured with epoxy, are recommended. Install the radio gear, but use care. A plane this size with the large engines can quickly damage the radio equipment if it is not carefully buffeted against vibration. Do not balance the plane behind the CG specified on the plans.

Flying

It's a good idea to set the Little Bird up so that the initial flights are made with conservative aileron and elevator control. This will help desensitize the plane until its responsiveness becomes familiar.

If the recommended maximum size engines are used, it isn't necessary to go beyond a quarter to half throttle on the first few flights—unless the plane is flown off grass fields. Then full throttle will help get the plane quickly into the air. On asphalt or paved strips, half throttle will get the plane moving very quickly, and a slight amount of up will lift it off.

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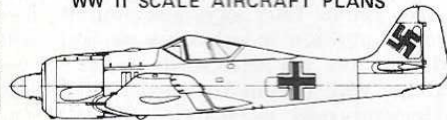
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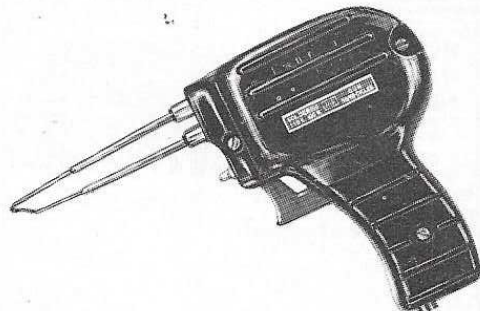
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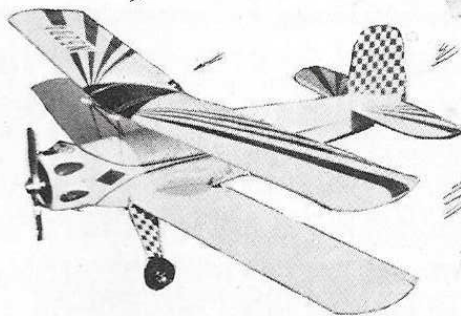
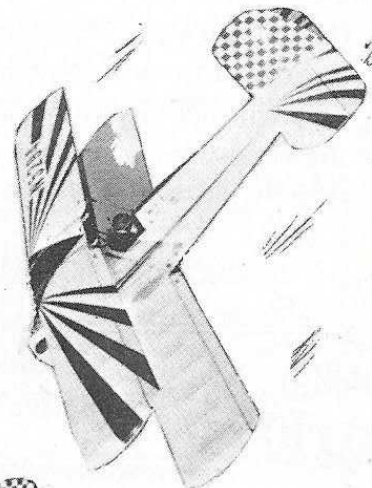
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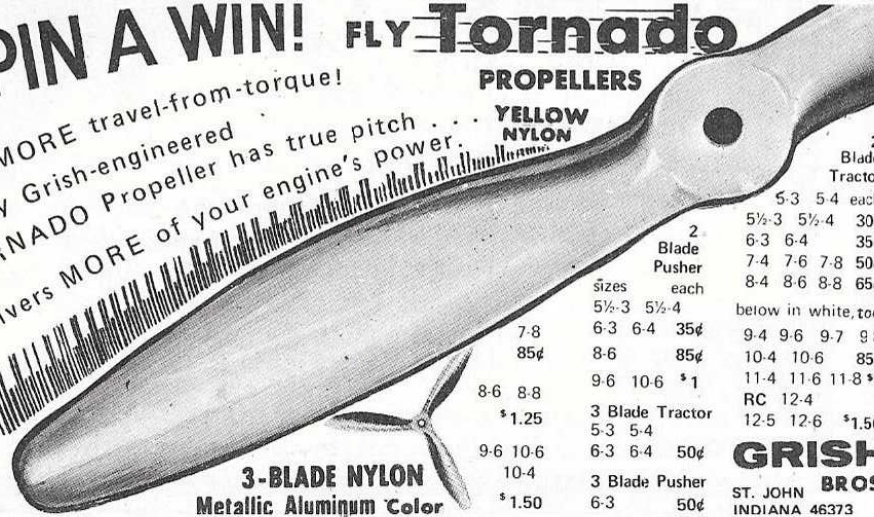
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The quickness of the Little Bird makes it an exciting airplane to fly. It can do lengthened or tight maneuvers without any undesirable tendencies; yet if various high speed stalling and roll-out maneuvers are wanted, just cinch up on the control surface movements, and the plane will perform these as well, if the pilot wants to really push the sticks around. Recoveries from all maneuvers are immediate and resolute.

Landing the plane is no problem if the pilot gives it a chance to slow up before committing it to the final. A long, shallow approach allows very slow, docile landings. It is helpful however, to make sure a 60- or 71-powered Little Bird is allowed a slow idle from the engine, or else it has a tendency to keep flying because of its low-drag profile. Fortunately, the Perry carb has made this slow, dependable idle a reality, and a Perry should be used if possible. The Mag throttle that comes stock with the Supertigre 60's and 71's will also give a nice idle.

If ready-made foam wings and stabilizers, planked or unplanked, are wanted for the Little Bird, they can be purchased from Foam Flight, 628 West 6th St., Mankato, Minn. 56001.

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