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The first of the line was a C-2 which was a single-placer, but the larger-fuselaged C-3, with its side-by-side seating was more popular.



# THE AERONCA C-3

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**The Original Flying Bathtub Of The  
Thirties, Still In Demand By Antique Buffs.  
Makes A Fine-Flying R/C Model**

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By Norm Goyer, with plans via  
Bob Holman Plans Service

**T**he very first time I saw an Aeronca C-3 was a memorable occasion . . . the dedication, in the late thirties, of the Northampton Seaplane Base, back there in Massachusetts. I had read all about it in our local newspaper, and when the day arrived, I got there by pedaling the three miles to the Connecticut River on my treasured Iver-Johnson balloon-tire bike. (My father had worked overtime, cutting meat at Armour & Company, a long time so that Santa Claus could bring me that bike I'd asked for.) After riding through the onion, potato and tobacco fields, I crested the last rise and saw a long flight of wooden steps leading down to a floating dock. There, tied to an oil-barrel-supported planking, was a beautiful sight . . . two new seaplanes: I recognized an Aeronca C-3 on Edo floats and a Beechcraft Stag-gerwing, also on Edo floats.

I clambered out on the dock and started drooling over the bobbing aircraft. Then I heard magical words from the pilot: "Hey, kid, want to

go for a ride?" (Come on, now . . . Does John Derek marry beautiful women?) You bet I did! In a flash, I was crawling into that small wire-braced monoplane. The pilot's helper propped the Aeronca two-cylinder engine, and we turned into the wind with much splashing, as the mini-wavelets broke over the tips of the floats. The small, open-sided sport plane chugged into the waves and the wind, and, after a long run, accompanied by much porpoising, we broke free, and, we were *in the air!* It was on that day that I discovered the sheer exhilaration and joy of floatplane flying.

And, just as soon as I could, when I had earned enough money, I found an instructor with a seaplane, and obtained a seaplane rating on my ticket. Since then, through the years, I've owned a T-Craft on floats, and two Lake Bucaneers. Although I don't have a seaplane at this time, the love of this kind of flying is still very strong, and I'll go float flying any chance I get.

(My love of seaplanes has carried

over into my other hobby too . . . my favorite form of model flying is 1/4 scale Cubs on floats, along with my two Lake Amphibians, one of these from a Pilot Kit, and the other, scratchbuilt from Flying Model Plans, many years ago.)

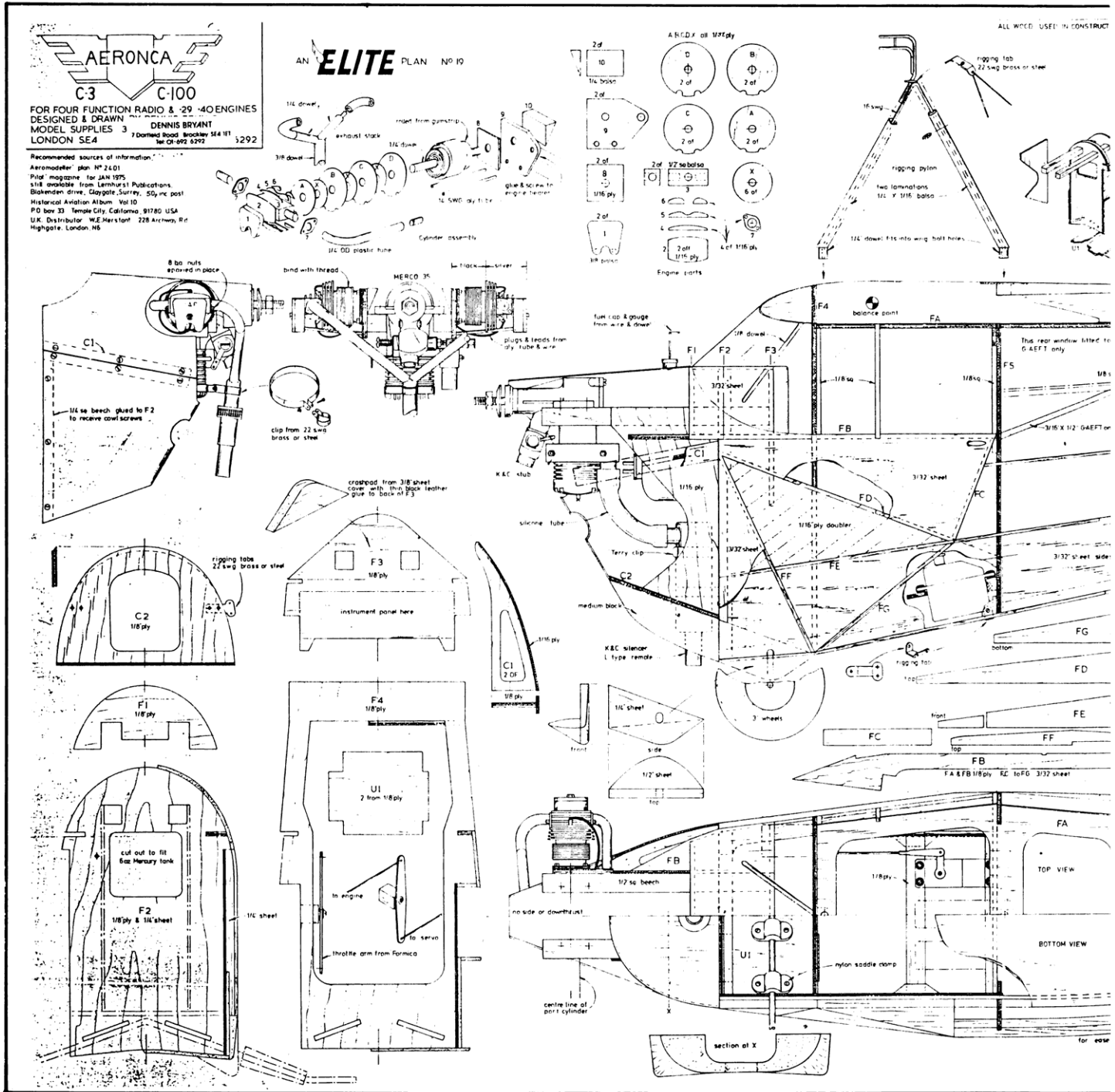
I've also been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to fly an Aeronca C-3 with doors, and I even flew an Aeronca K once. But just where did these fine little aircraft come from?

The first regular-production ultra-light-type lightplane, the Aeronca C-2, was built in the late twenties, right here in the U.S.A. It was similar in design to a 1924 Home-built designed by J.A. Roche, of the Army Air Corps Engineering, at McCook Field, the air base destined to become Wright Field, and now Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum.

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The Aeronca C-3 of the mid-thirties was a very light-weight, inexpensive, wire-braced, two-seat monoplane . . . a very successful aircraft for the new Aeronca factory.





R/C Plans are from the Bob Holman Plans collection of English R/C ships. English markings are authentic, because Aeronca C-3s were built, for a time, under license in England.

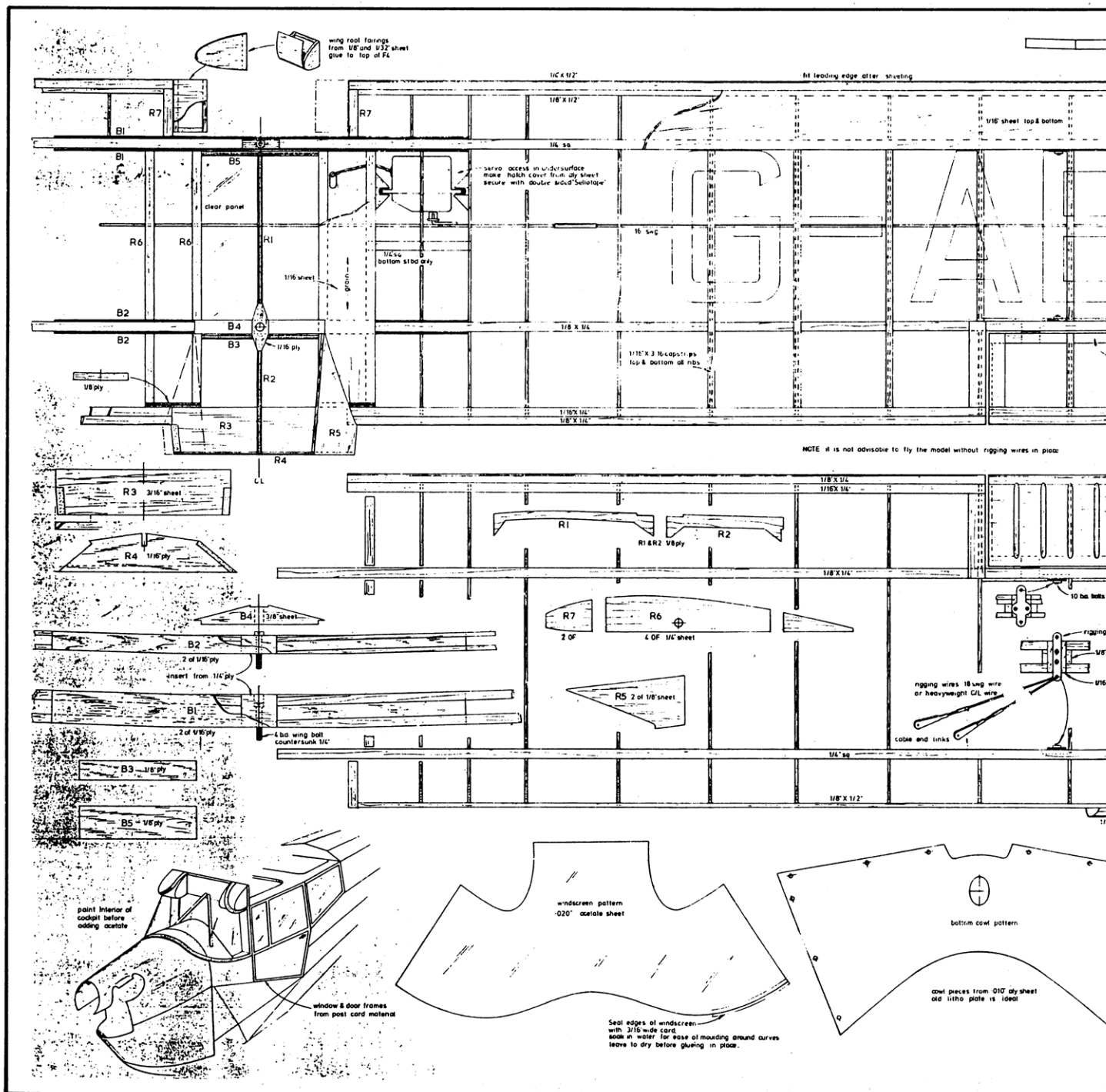
(You can get lost in that place for days at a time!)

Upon leaving the service, J. A. Roche joined the Aeronautical Corporation of America, located in Cincinnati, Ohio, and that, dear friends, is where the name Aeronca comes from. Now, about that name . . . it seems that the Mississippi divides the country in more ways than one . . . on the east coast, pilots call it the Aeronca; but west of the mighty Mississippi, most flyers

pronounce it Aeron-i-ca (rhyming it with Veronica)! For the first ten years of my California residency, I tried to tell the west coasters that they were pronouncing the name of this airplane wrong, but the practice was so ingrained and widespread that I finally gave up on it. Now, if anyone out there knows how this got started, I'd certainly love to hear from you.

Meanwhile, back to the airplane . . . The C-2 was powered with an





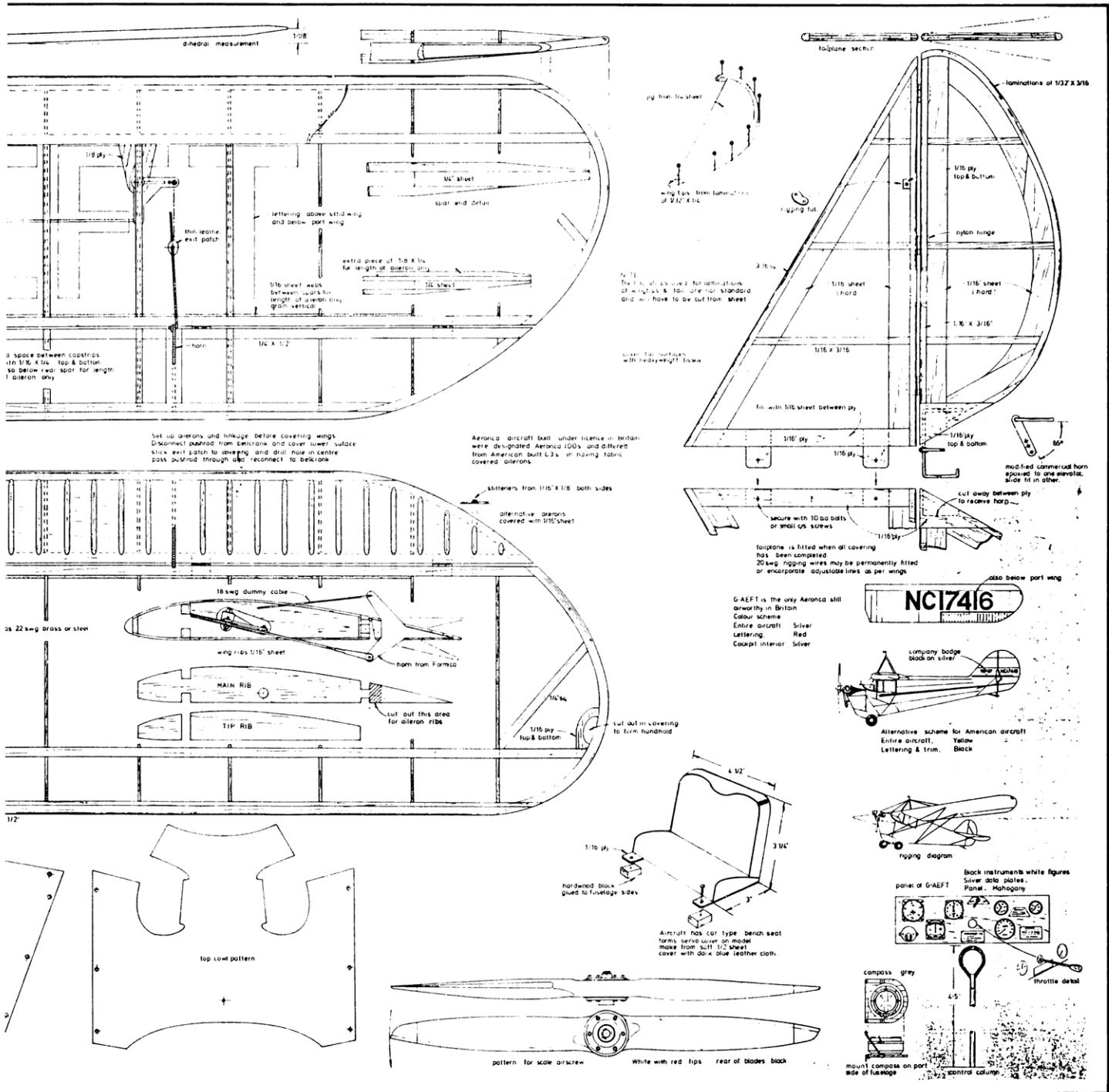
on, so the pre-flight on the engine was simple . . . if it ran and reached the necessary static rpm, you went! And if the crankshaft didn't break, you had a successful flight! The last change in the structure was in 1935, when the cockpit was widened, and rounding formers and more stringers were added, eliminating much of the "razorback" look. And, oh yes, they finally put real doors on this model too. I believe that this is the only

airplane ever, that, because the designers had so increased the aerodynamic efficiency by rounding out the fuselage . . . they needed to lessen the rudder area!

It was during this time period that Aeronca had the distinction of being the producers of both, the ugliest airplane, the C-3, and one of the very prettiest, the Aeronca LC, the low-wing, strutless beauty of the skies.

However, as a model, the lowly C-3, with all of its variations, makes a good-flying trainer-type aircraft. And, because there are so many choices of documentation, you can build yourself a unique variation, or paint it with any number of designs which have appeared on Aeronca C-3s over the years.

These plans come to us courtesy of Bob Holman Plans. The medium-size scale model is very popular be-



cause it's *less expensive* to build than those huge quarter-scalers, and also because many modelers just don't have the room for those super big birds either on their workbenches or in their cars.

This 81 inch C-3 is easy to build, will fly on rudder only, and it can be powered with engines ranging from .29 to .40. It's an ideal scale trainer which can also earn you lots of points at any scale contest. The

plans show English markings, as the C-3 was also built under license in England for several years.

Bob Holman offers a large variety of very good plans both from here, and from abroad, and they're in stock and ready to ship. In some cases, there are even glass fuselages and partial kits available for the aircraft.

You may send for the *complete* catalog set of Bob Holman Plans which include the grouping from

England for only \$5.00. (It makes a great "wishing" book.) The booklets are available separately for \$3.00 and \$2.00. Address is:

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