



Our author concentrating on one of the tough jobs, attaching the canopy — somehow the things that add the most are the hardest to accomplish.

AKROMASTER

BY PHIL BORETTO. . . looking for the scale subject that has a little extra pizzazz to impress the judges and also impress your fellow Control Line Stunters? Then this Spinks aerobatic plane is the answer!

• If you're like most scale modelers that I know, you spend your free time (that's the time *not* spent building, flying or messing around with models) thumbing through various aircraft magazines looking for scale model subjects or hoping to find out more information about some that you have already started.

It was during one of these free(?)

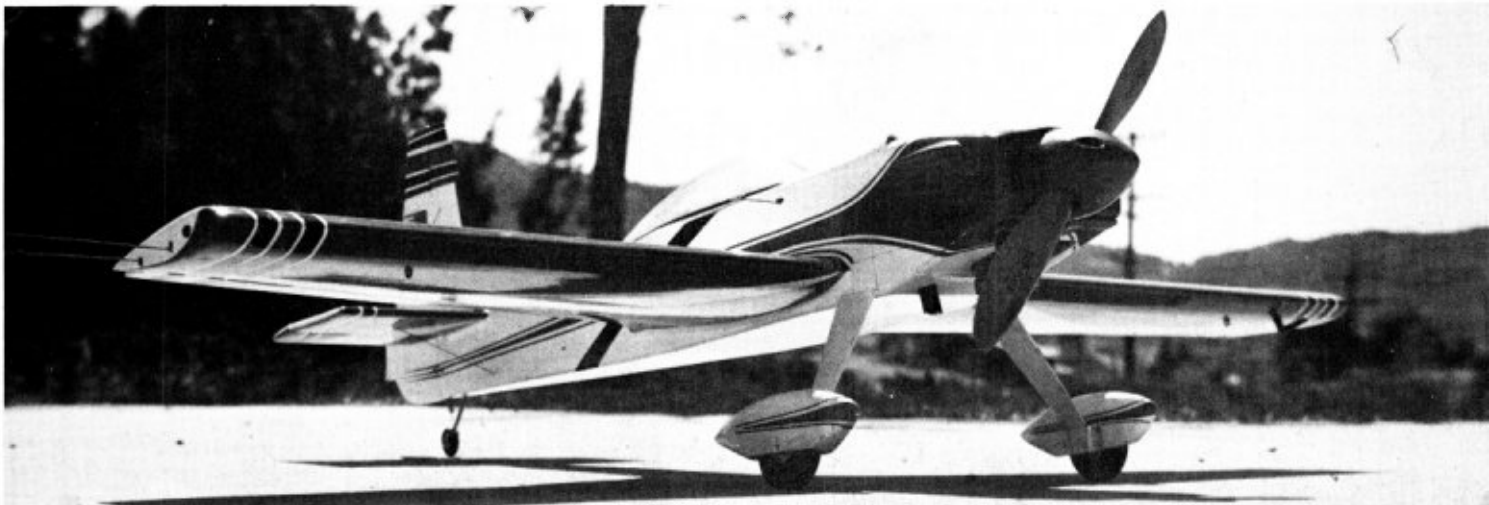
periods that I was relaxing with a copy of the December 1968 Air Progress. Starting from the back as I always do, it wasn't till the end of the book, which is really the front, that my eyes caught my first glimpse of the Spinks Akromaster. I immediately wondered what a model airplane was doing in Air Progress.

Now the smarter and smaller part of

my cranium told me this couldn't be, but reading the small print under the picture proved I was wrong. "The Spinks Akromaster," the caption said. Well, you could have fooled me. I thought it was a Zilch or something. It sure was a pretty little bird.

I decided to cast a closer look at this multi-striped ballerina. It definitely was
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Author calls his Akromaster "dainty"; we would call it an attractive and very businesslike machine that can do all the things it was designed to do.





Close-up of tail section showing spring-loaded rudder, amount of elevator travel, bracing.

an eye-pleaser with its varying-width stripes, sun-burst wings, smooth spinner and wheel pants. My other eye also noticed the hard-to-duplicate features that were missing: sliding canopy, retracting landing gear, flaps, etc. This was a welcome sight as I'm always looking for a simple scale subject.

Also, this airplane had one big "plus" going for it. I knew I had never seen or heard of anyone building a model of this one before. I had always wanted to build the first model of a plane that no one else ever had . . . here was my chance.

With my mind made up, I shot a letter off to Air Progress to get the address of the company that built them. Within a week I was writing to the Spinks Aircraft Corp. in Fort Worth, Texas, seeking the all-important three-views and every bit of information that I could get from them concerning the Akromaster.

Reggie Ward, public relations director of the Spinks Aircraft Corp., dampened my initial enthusiasm by telling me that no three-views existed on the Akromaster because it was a one-of-a-kind aircraft and was undergoing constant modifications. But he did enclose five pictures of the Akromaster in flight and three of it on the ground.

Well, I had never been too great at drawing my own plans, but I figured I had to start sometime and this was it. Armed with compass, dividers, ruler, T-square and a magnifying glass, I poured over those pictures as if they were Raquel Welch instead of the Akromaster.

A week later I gazed proudly at a maze of scribbled lines, erasures and a jillion footnotes. I have to admit they looked like the face that only a mother could love, but I was proud of them.

They incorporated movable rudder, movable control stick, movable ailerons, spring-loaded tail wheel, hidden fuel tank lines and a little goodie—a working throttle in the cockpit that was linked to the engine throttle.

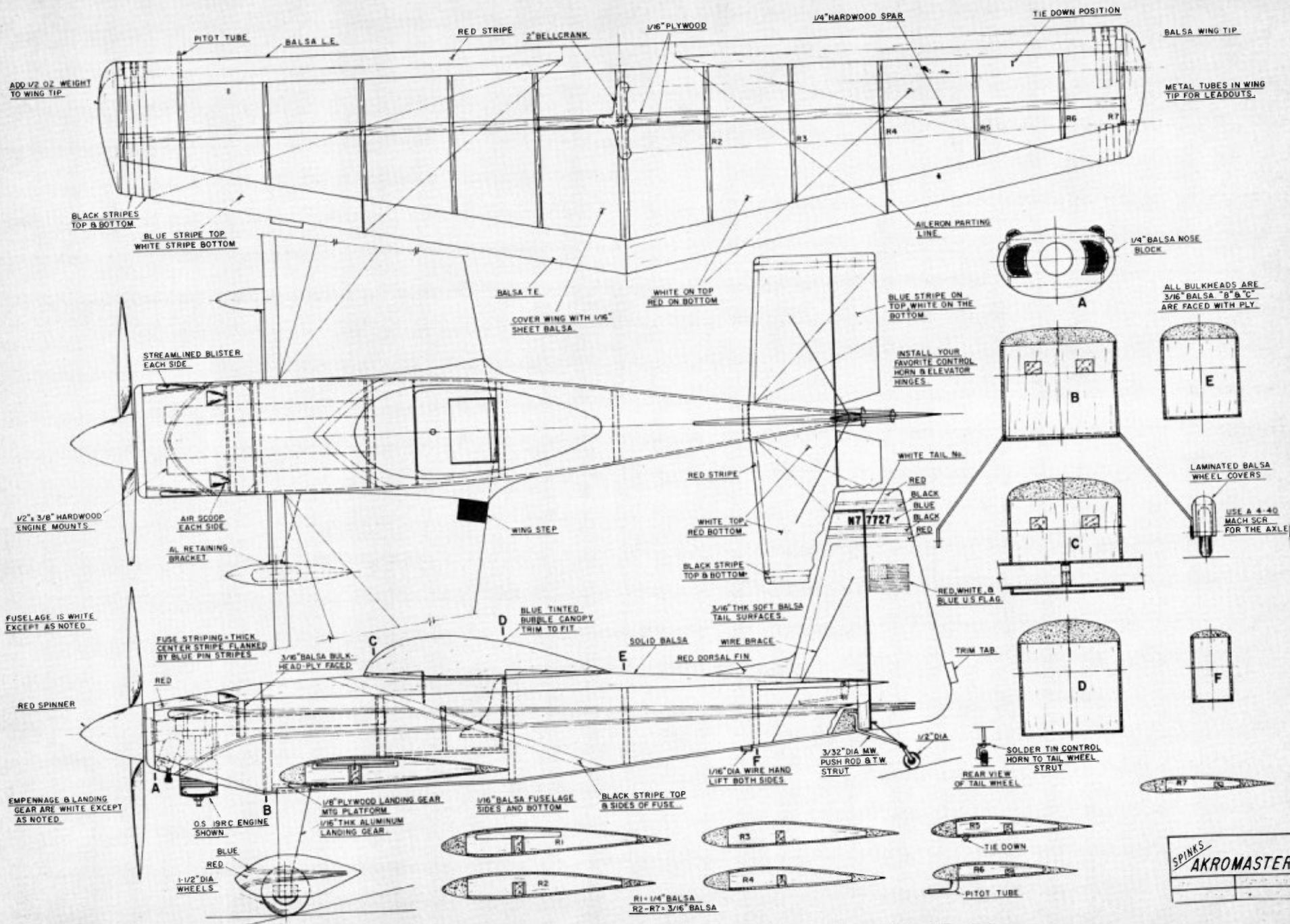
So, with my questionable drawings, I
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The Boretto Team Manager, Shirley, holds the Akromaster. She also builds and flies scale.



Phil checks location of lettering, while retaining a firm grip on the painted Akromaster.



FULL SIZE PLANS AVAILABLE - SEE PAGE 84

Akromaster

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started to gather supplies and cut the wood for an Akromaster.

Since my scale building ability does not match my enthusiasm for this phase of the hobby, you will find the building instructions simple and straightforward.

If you've decided to build one, then let's proceed.

CONSTRUCTION

If you're looking for the "glue-part-A-to-part-B" type of instructions, you won't find them here. I very seldom follow building article instructions and I doubt that anyone else does. The plans are self-explanatory. If you've ever built a couple of Ringmasters or Flite Streaks, then you can build the Akromaster.

I will give you some general hints and tell you some of the methods I used. Other than that, good luck.

The fuselage is a simple box. Build it light in the rear as this model has a long tail moment, and extra weight in the tail will kill you.

The wing is built just like a Ringmaster's except that it is planked and the ailerons are cut out. The real Akromaster had five degrees of dihedral.

Rudder and elevator are simple but keep light. Real Akromaster had a cantilevered elevator on the right side only.

The canopy is a cut-down Dubro that is tinted light blue.

Neat, clean rigging for the tail is done by inserting 1/16" o.d. aluminum tubing and sanding flush with surfaces. After model is completed, rigging wire is inserted. This way the wire never cuts into the model.

Landing gear must be solid. Don't skimp here. Build the wheel pants *strong*; they must take a beating. Aluminum wheel hub covers on pants are .007 made from printing offset plates. Attach to the pants with jewelers' screws.

Rudder and ailerons are attached after

model is completed. I use Tatone hinges that I have stiffened so that they can be moved.

The fuel filler line is located in front of the cowl opening and the overflow line is routed out the scale exhaust between the landing gear.

A word of caution on the paint: *plan ahead*. Study the color scheme carefully. *Take your time*. This is the only difficult part of this model. Colors are Aerogloss Curtiss blue, Swift white, Jet black and Stearman red. The bottom of the wing and stab have a white sun-burst on a red field. The lettering is Lettra-Set.

A complete list of specifications and excellent photographs of the Akromaster can be found in the February 1970 issue of *American Aircraft Modeler*.

The model was powered by a Veco .19 R/C, and, ready to fly with Tatone muffler, weighed 1¾ lbs.

The first flight with any model is always a little scary but with a scale model it's downright heart-stopping. Mine went quite smoothly except that it flew dumpy because of the short nose and long tail moments. A degree of downthrust and one ounce of weight in the nose made it fly better but it still demands that you keep your mind on flying it.

An important word here: this model is of the Akromaster as it appeared in October, 1968. The real plane has undergone many, many changes since that time; the most noticeable is that the "droop" has been taken out of the nose, making the top of the fuselage straight, and the nose has been lengthened 10 inches.

I got a chance to see the real Akromaster first-hand during the 1969 Reno Air Races. I was a little disappointed as the dainty craft was starting to show the many hours of tumbling about the sky. The air scoops had long been removed, the exhaust stack was no more; a smoke chute was added under the canopy on the starboard side, and she looked ready for a new paint job.

Perhaps it was because she had never fulfilled the dream of her designer, Pappy Spinks. She placed fourth at the 1970 World Aerobatics Championship — the event she was supposed to have captured.

My model has done a little better, with two firsts, two seconds and a third to its credit in WAM competition. I retired it last year to concentrate on building a series of Daytona-Wright RB-1 air racers.

But *that*, my friends, is another story. ■