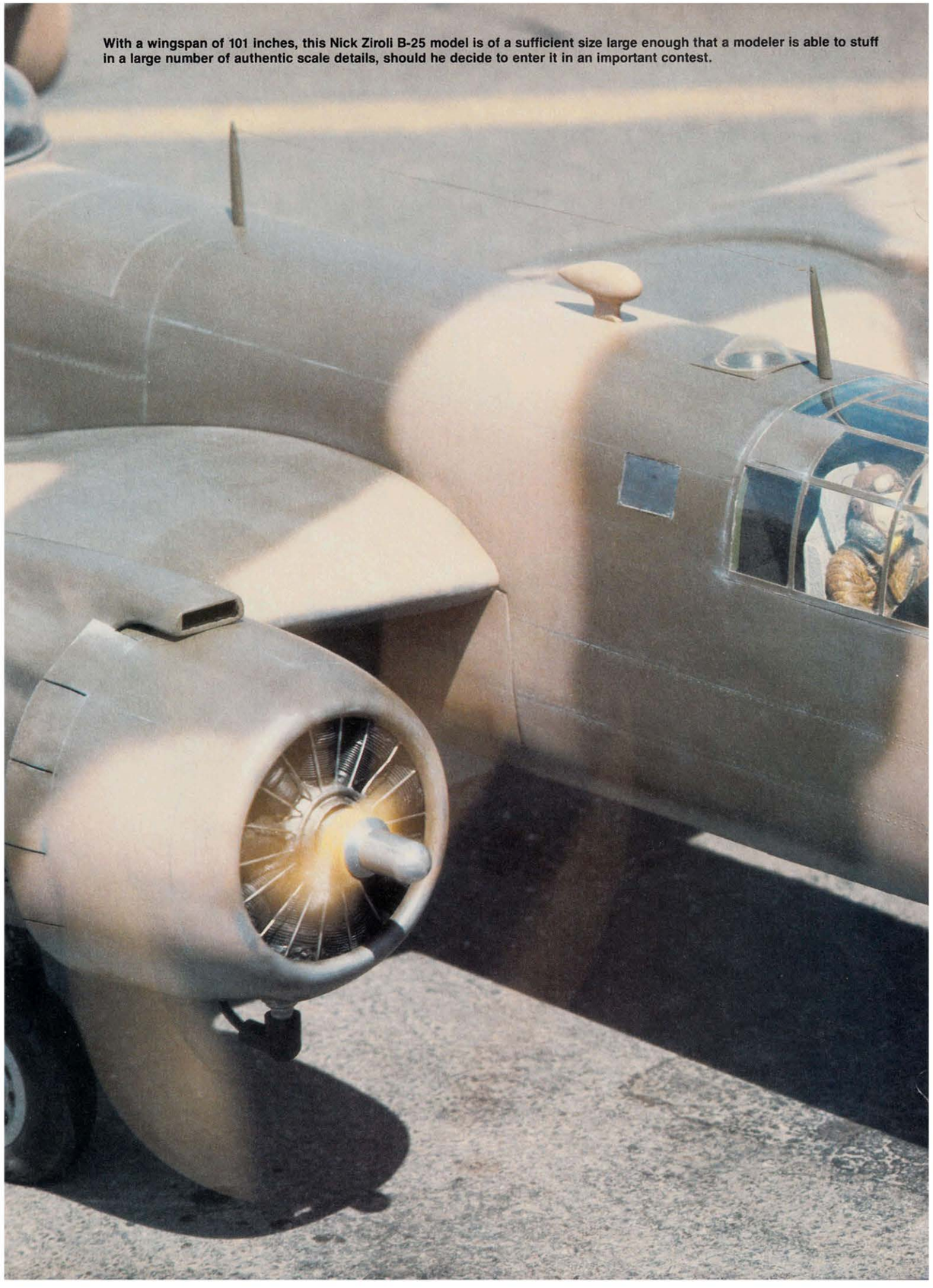
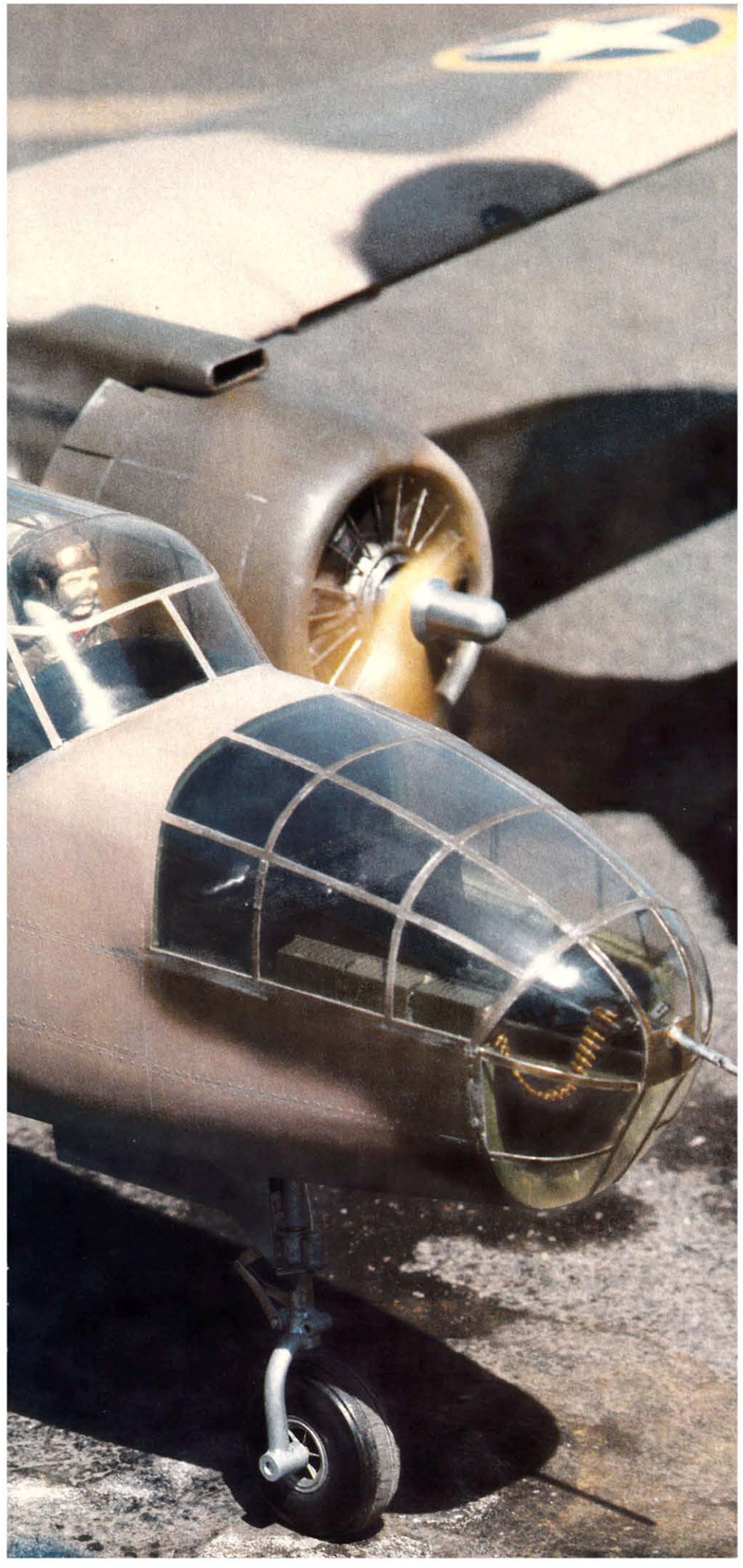
NICK ZIROLI'S NEW B-25



The large aircraft flew very well and displayed excellent ground-handling characteristics.

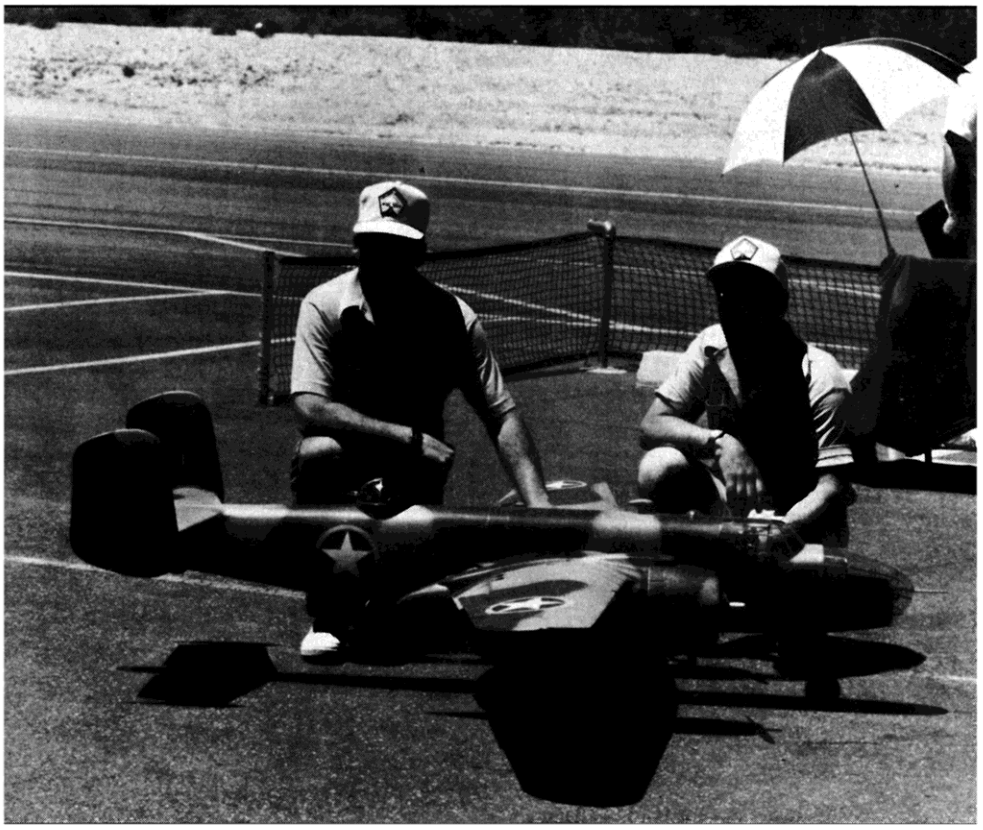
With a wingspan of 101 inches, this Nick Ziroli B-25 model is of a sufficient size large enough that a modeler is able to stuff in a large number of authentic scale details, should he decide to enter it in an important contest.





THE FIRST LARGE SCALE MODEL OF THE MITCHELL BOMBER PROVES TO BE A GREAT FLYER

BY NORM GOYER



With two G-23s installed, the B-25 model has a very good power-to-weight ratio.

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that one of the outstanding medium bombers of WWII was the B-25 Mitchell. The B-25 was seen in all theaters of operation and was used by every branch of the service including the Army, Navy and Marines, besides being seen in operations of all our allies throughout the conflict. The number of B-25s being built assured aviation buffs that, hopefully, there would be at least a few of the 11,000 Mitchell bombers showing up at airshows throughout the next decade and, optimistically, into the next century.

Originally designated as the NA-40, the Mitchell was built with North American's own financial resources in order to obtain a lucrative military contract. This is one of the few aircraft during this time period which did not have an "X" version for flight testing. North American delivered the new twin-engine shoulder-wing, tricycle-gear, three-seater bomber to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio for testing in March 1939. The original B-25s were powered with Pratt & Whitney R-1830-56C3-G radials of 1100 hp each, but did not yet have the semi-gulled wings.

After viewing the B-25's test flights, the military saw much potential in the design and ordered further development, with a few changes such as side-by-side cockpit seating, a larger bomb load and a 50-caliber machine gun in the tail. After approving the mock-up of the new version, the Army ordered 184 in September of 1939. Deliveries began in August of 1940. Flight testing of the first B-25 off the line revealed that the large dihedral angle had to be reduced to cure the aircraft's directional stability problems. The dihedral was reduced just beyond the engine nacelles, then giving the bomber its now-familiar gull-wing look.

Soon, the air battles in Europe began to influence the designs of new aircraft. Armor protection for the crew and self-sealing fuel tanks to lessen the possibility of fire from machine gun and cannon bullets were added to the B-25. The first B-25s were delivered to McCord Field near Tacoma, Washington for use by the 17th Medium Bombardment Group. First blood was drawn by this group when it sunk a Japanese submarine off the West Coast on December 24, 1941.

The next B-25 was the "B" model which had a Bendix turret added to the rear of its fuselage. This turret had two 50-caliber Brownings installed, giving the Mitchell an added punch in the rear. Aircraft with the new Bendix turret had the manually operated tail guns removed.

As soon as it was possible, B-25s were also assigned to Australia to assist that country's air force in their heroic stand against the Japanese intrusion into their area.

The 3rd Bombardment Group went into action against the enemy in the Pacific in April of 1942, and it was at this time that Lt. Colonel Jimmy Doolittle launched his 16 B-25s from the USS Hornet for the first attack against the Japanese mainland.

B-25s continued to pour off the production lines both from the Inglewood plant and North American's new plant in Dallas, Texas. The new versions were the similar C and Ds. They had increased fuel capacity, R-2600-13 engines and their wing racks carried eight 250-pound bombs. The bomb bay was altered so that it could carry a larger number of bombs, and provisions were made so

(Continued on page 76)

(Continued from page 43)

that a torpedo could be externally attached under the fuselage, but very few torpedoes were ever actually carried into combat. Each month saw new combat needs for the Mitchell, and North American kept upgrading the aircraft to meet these new military needs.

The B-25-G was the first Mitchell to mount the dreaded 75mm cannon. The Japanese lived in fear of these cannon-firing B-25s because those bombers would come in at tree-top level to attack enemy airfields and shipping. But still more punch was needed to sink lightly armored Japanese shipping, so a 75mm cannon, firing 15-pound shells was added. The M-4 cannon on the B-25Gs had the weapon mounted in the left of the nose compartment and it could carry 21 shells. Unfortunately, field testing failed to reveal the problems which would later show up with this weapon under actual combat conditions.

The new B-25 was the H model which was much more successful. Over 1000 H models were made, with a lighter T-13E1 75mm cannon in the nose, in combination with four 50-caliber machine guns. Four other 50-caliber machine guns were added to the nose in the form of blister packs. The turret was moved to a forward position behind the pilots. In this configuration, the B-25H was now equipped with incredible forward-firing armament capable of sawing a ship in half. Once again the engines were upgraded, this time to R-2600-13 and dash 29 engines.

Next off the line was the B-25-J which had the bombardier's glass nose and retained the tail turret with its two 50-caliber machine guns. About 4000 of the J models were produced and shipped to the South Pacific. Once again, actual combat conditions dictated a change in aircraft configuration, and troops in the field cut off the bombardier's glass nose, attaching a new solid nose with eight 50-caliber machine guns, for a total of 18 machine guns in all. This version became the most deadly B-25, and production lines in Kansas were altered to start installing this variation at the factory, rather than in the field. The B-25-J was the most widely produced and used B-25 of them all.

A group of pilots formed the B-25 Air Apaches — a company of combat officers who specialized in decimating Japanese shipping and airfields. These very low-level attacks, even though the Js were heavily armed and very fast, left many B-25s and their crews victims of the Japanese defenses. Some of the B-25s were equipped with five-inch rockets on underwing stubs for ground attacks. Some pilots also perfected the technique of skip bombing across the top of the ocean into the sides of Japanese ships with great effectiveness.

After the war, thousands of B-25s were scrapped while others went into the private sector, being used for executive and utility transport, fire bombers, crop dusters, and anthracite bombers in Alaska. Many left in the military were turned into multi-engine trainers, while others were converted to radar classrooms. The last of the breed were the B-25-Ls and B-25-Ns which were J models converted to the above uses.

Modelers have always loved North American Aviation aircraft and over the past 45 years, thousands of P-51s have been built. North American Texans are also very popular with modelers since the advent of the retracts from Robart and the semi kit from Nick Ziroli. But it was not always that easy to build one of the Mitchells, however, the B-25.

Royal Models had a B-25 kit for many decades, and this well designed and kitted aircraft was conceived when smaller aircraft were in vogue. Many modelers all over the world have built and flown them very successfully for a long time. I can recall one B-25 flight in particular. It happened about 15 years ago, when I was flying models with a club in Rialto, California.

On one sunny Saturday afternoon, one of the members, an enterprising modeler, reminded all his fellow club members to be sure they didn't miss the flight of his B-25 which he was planning for the following day — a Sunday morning. This modeler worked at a local fireworks plant and could always be counted on to make life interesting, that is, if you didn't place too much value on life and limb.

Sunday morning came, and we were all out there to see what he was up to. When it was his turn to fly, he had his friends mark out a circle on the runway with lime. That was to be his target. We all knew him well, and so, when he called out that we should stand way — way back, it didn't take much persuasion to get us to do so. The two O.S. 40s in his bomber came to life, and the B-25 taxied out and took off. The mad modeler made a few teasing passes over the runway, where he'd open the bomb bays of the B-25, and then close them, making another go-around, each time adding to the tension.

Finally, he made this dead-on pass down the runway, opened his doors, and this rather large bomb-shaped object fell out and landed right on target. "Hey, that's neat!" someone yelled. Then the "bomb" really went off! And I mean *it went off*! The explosion was so powerful, it even blew a hole in the runway and scattered dirt and rocks over all the place. The modeler was so surprised by the power of the blast that he dropped his transmitter and the "bomber" dove into the ground beyond the end of the runway. As you may have guessed, someone who lived in a house adjacent to the field called the police and they arrived a few minutes later, quite upset. I knew better; the minute that "bomb" went off, I jumped into my car and split! I wanted no part of a scenario which included dropping a bomb on Sunday morning, model or not.

About 15 years later, I saw some other B-25s dropping bombs on Japanese shipping, and flying low-level past the raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi. I also saw the mid-air collision between two B-25s there, with one of the bombers making a remarkable emergency landing, one wing flapping. The place *wasn't* the South Pacific; it was Byron Originals' Fighting Back Spectacular at Ida Grove, Iowa, and his fleet of three 13-foot-wingspan B-25s were 1/5 scale to match the rest of his 1/5 Air Force.

It seems that 1/5 scale is the magic size for this bomber model. When you see it flying, especially with the smoke and sound effects at Byron's Expo, it's so realistic that you practically can't tell whether or not it's a full-size bomber. The illusion is incredible. Of all the multi-engine models I've seen, I like the B-25 best.

This year at the Top Gun Invitational in Phoenix, Nick Ziroli flew his beautiful new B-25 which had been built by Bill Steffes. Pilots who have operated the full-size B-25 will tell you that it's an easy aircraft to fly. Well, Nick's expert flying made it look just as easy for him to fly his *model* B-25!

Nick's over 100-inch B-25 model was completely scratch-built and was powered with two Zenoahs. After seeing how well this model flew, I'd advise any modeler who's looking to build a large B-25 to

order a set of plans from Nick Ziroli for this one.

As we've often said in past issues of *Scale R/C Modeler*, we feel confident in recommending Nick's aircraft to our readers because they're all fully tested, then revised and tested again and again, until they're excellent-flying models (if built according to the specifications on the plans, of course).

For those of you who'd like more information about B-25s, please contact: Nick Ziroli, 29 Edgar Drive, Smithtown, NY 11787; (516) 234-5038, or: Royal Products, 790 W. Tennessee Avenue, Denver, CO 80223. ●

