

Little Time to Spare?

The lazy man's way to get into Stand-Off Scale.
by Hank Cohan

Monty Groves' account of his daredevil mission with Nick Maire in the militarized version of the J-3 stirred me to build a Stand-off Scale version of the L-4. Being the usual lazy modeler, I couldn't really see starting from scratch, so I pecked around for some shortcuts.

My military logic told me that if the Army (also noted for its shortcuts) could start with a production J-3, I could, too.

It didn't take much searching to find a Sig kit on my dealer's shelf. I really wasn't going to buy it right off; but, by the time I had penciled (lightly, of course) all over the cabin area on the plans, the dealer "persuaded" me that I had bought it. He helped, for my laziness is so profound that he'd still have a kit with smudgy plans, and I'd still be dreaming of building this bird.

I was surprised at how quickly the mods were accomplished. As can be seen by the accompanying sketch, only two new bulkheads, some spruce, basswood and plastic are needed to take the kit's two-door, tandem

cockpit and change it into the 360° visibility greenhouse of the L-4. The landing gear takes only some simple wire-bending, and it's shock absorber rigged, to boot! The plans for this modification are drawn so that they overlay the Sig kit plan sheet, which makes the whole task simple enough for even the laziest of builders.

As might be expected, the L-4 really draws some complimentary comments from the crowd at the field. Most of my fellow fliers think it's a scratch-built project and I, of course, don't really strongly deny it. But, frankly, the flight performance is the big giveaway. It flies great, like the Sig product—a docile kitten that will almost steer itself around the sky (I'm also a lazy flier).

I took some pains to duplicate the color scheme of Nick's "Warbird," since the potential for this model in Stand-off Scale contests is really great. The olive drab paint scheme is easy to duplicate, and the D-Day invasion stripes really make it distinctive. In a pinch, olive drab monoKote would fill the bill. The decals from the kit will work fine. The Three-view is all the documentation you need.

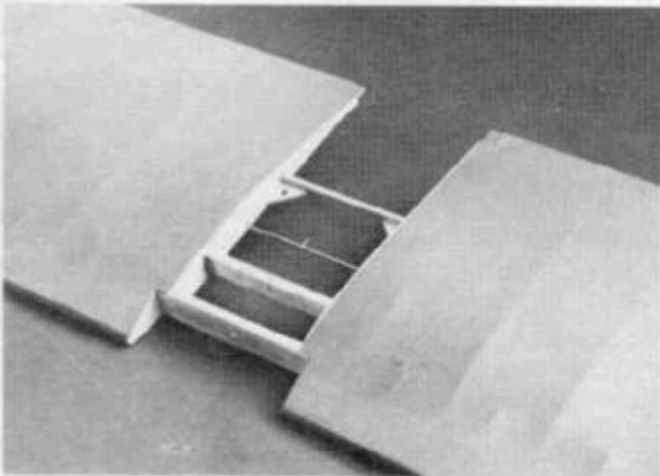
If you decide to go the competition route, remember that the huge expanses of cabin glass, even from a



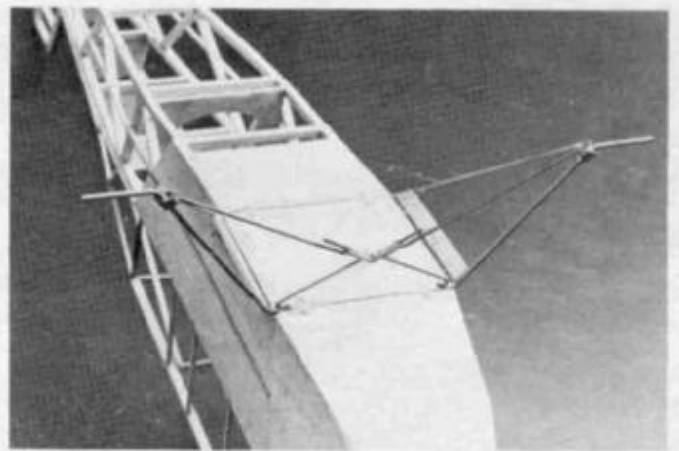
MODIFY A KIT



The fuselage canopy area is where most of the major mods occur. Simple enough for even the laziest modeler.



The wing center section before installing the skylight.



The landing gear mods yield a set of struts that are shock-absorbing and scale.



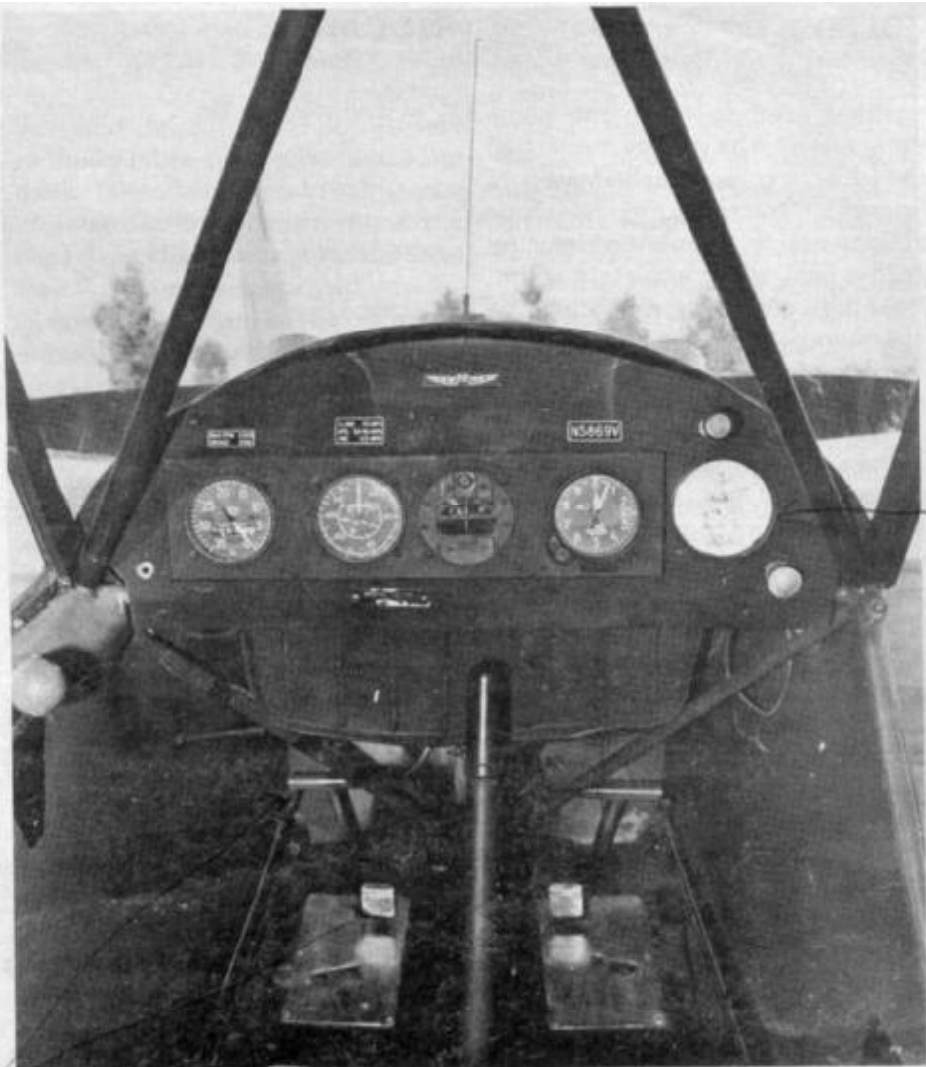
distance, will reveal some of the internal structure. The wing loading won't suffer if you throw in an impromptu cockpit. It need not be anything elaborate, but it should give a visual impression of a full interior. Come to think of it, the full-scale L-4's interior is so spartan that it could be done complete with a minimal time investment.

To pick up operational points, the creative contender could do anything from dropping leaflets, bombs or parachutes, to mounting some launchable rockets on the landing struts. Since the L-4 did so many tasks in the military theatres, almost any working gadgetry that you can devise will be worth points.

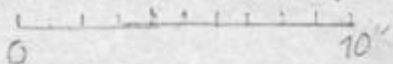
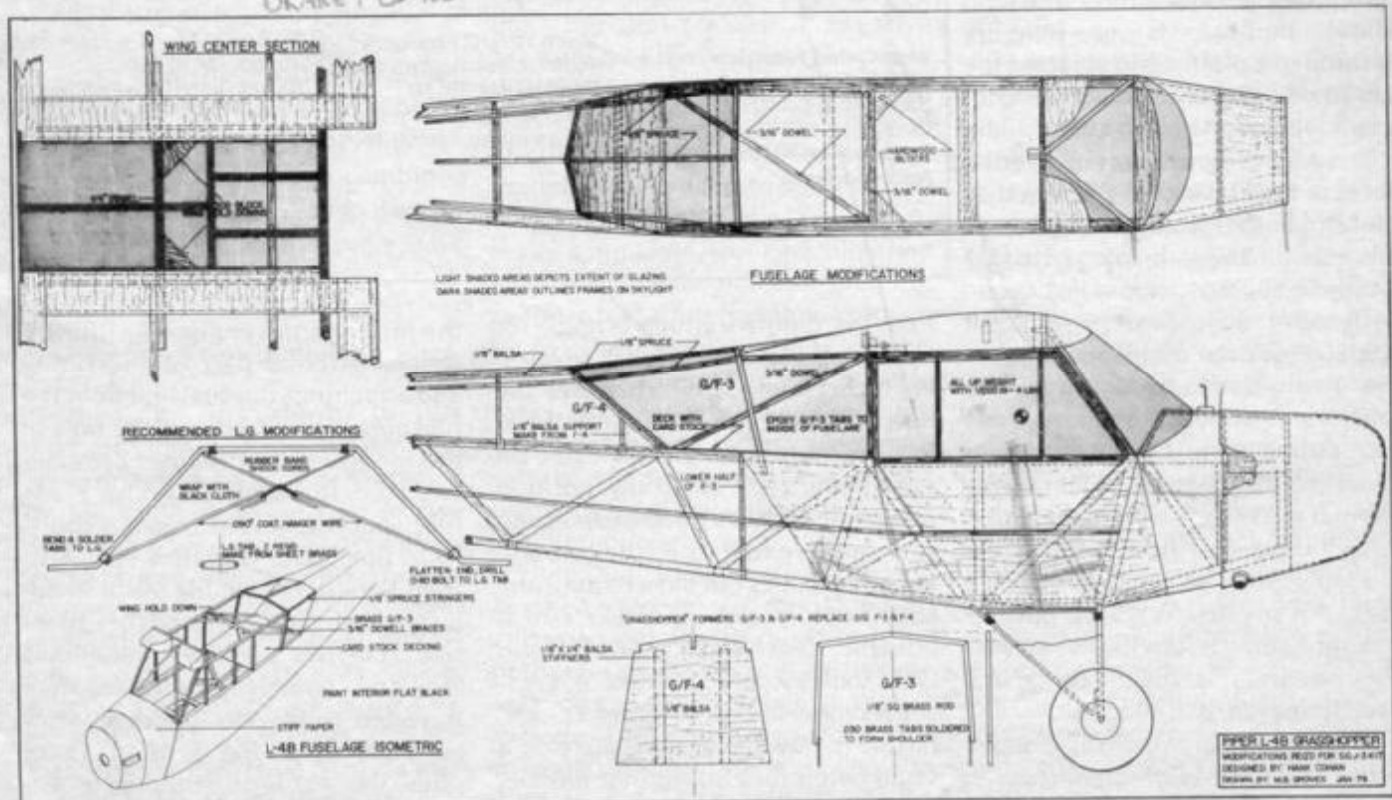
For something unusual, yet simple to build, the L-4 modification is a fine middle-of-the-road approach. If you've never done anything but build out of kit boxes, I'd highly recommend this "transition" to some of the complex, scratch-built projects available from magazine plans. The flight performance is guaranteed, and the extra effort is minimal. I may never achieve the excitement with my L-4 that Nick and Monty did, but I'll always feel their thrill, in my own way, every time I advance the throttle.

RUBBER PEDALS

BRACE PEDALS

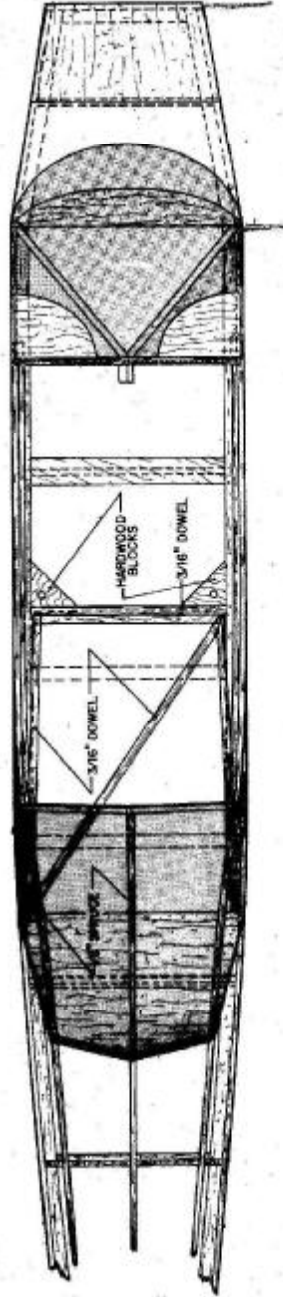
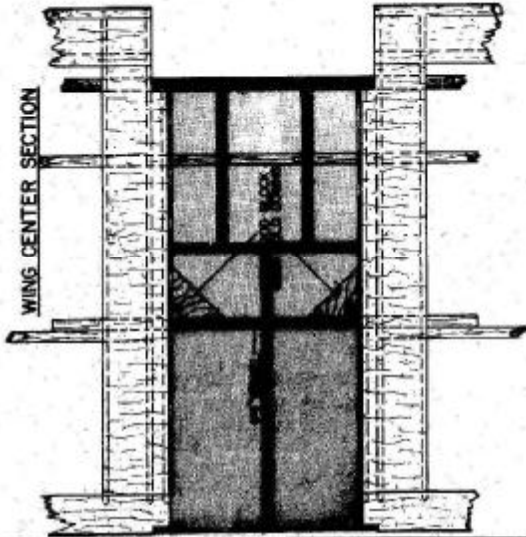


For maximum points in Stand-off Scale, this easy-to-reproduce instrument panel can be installed. This is, of course, the interior of the full-scale L-4.



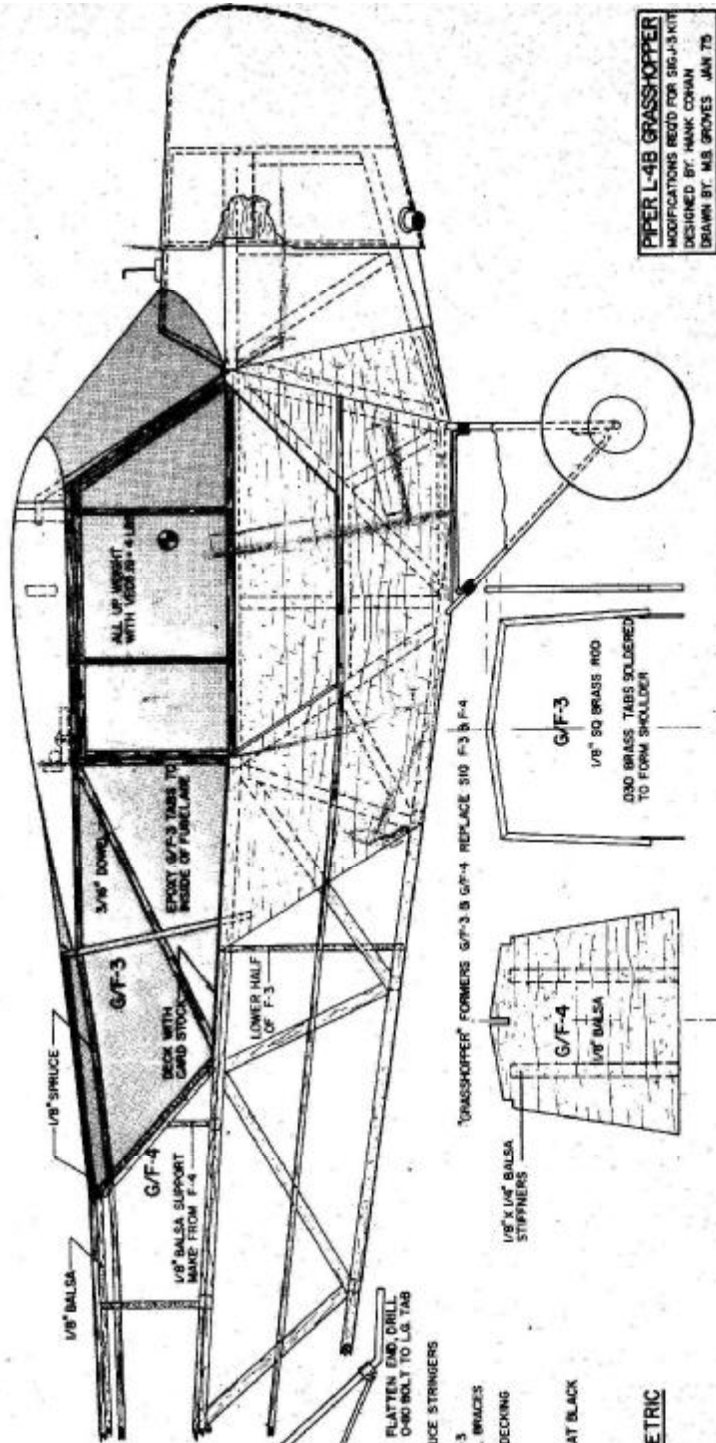
MODEL L-4B GRASSHOPPER
 MODIFICATIONS LIST FOR S&A
 DESIGNED BY MARK TOMAN
 DRAWN BY M.B. SPENCER JAN 78

WING CENTER SECTION

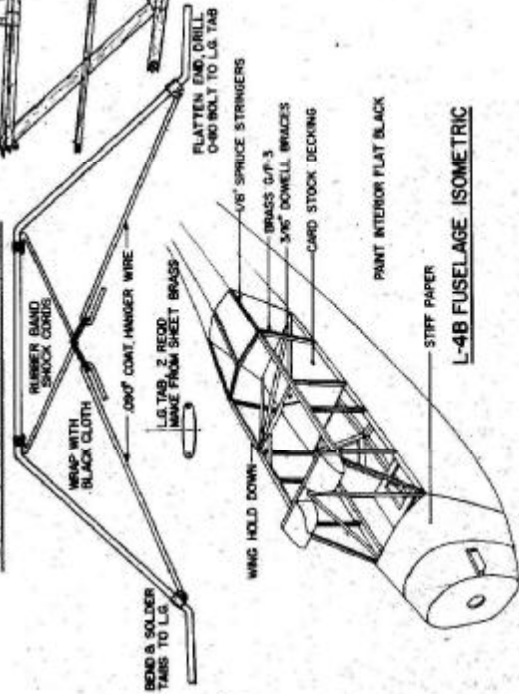


FUSELAGE MODIFICATIONS

LIGHT SHADED AREAS DERICTS EXTENT OF GLAZING
DARK SHADED AREAS OUTLINES FRAMES ON SKYLIGHT



RECOMMENDED L.G. MODIFICATIONS



PIPER L-4B GRASSHOPPER
MODIFICATIONS REC'D FOR SIG-3,5 KIT
DESIGNED BY: MARK CONAN
DRAWN BY: M.S. GROVES JAN 75

