



Chris, Andy, and Bill Sargent, with a whole bunch of "Yankees". Big ship is manufactured by Grumman American Aviation Corporation.

AMERICAN "YANKEE"

A multi-purpose model for young and new C/Lers, the Yankee can be used in 1/2A Profile Proto Speed, 1/2A Speed, has been flown as a Junior entry in AMA Flying Scale. By BOB SARGENT.

The real-life "American Yankee" aircraft, and models of it, have scored big in the appeal department. For many, the smart appearance, compactness, bright performance, agile responsiveness, and relative low cost aspects of the real plane will carry over to the model. The model "Yankee" differs from the conventional control line model in terms of appearance, construction, and performance and yet it fits the bill for the novice or "pro"-type aeromodeler. The model can be flown for strictly sport, or in class competition. The durability of the model allows it to serve as a trainer as well as a multi-season contest ship.

The tricycle gear will save many a propeller, but more important, it allows the true novice flyer a chance to make a slow (gradual), even takeoff in a level attitude without calling for up elevator... avoiding the painful first flights which are usually that "half lap over the top and straight in" type of trip. As a competition model, the Yankee meets the AMA specifications for Half-A Profile Proto Speed for Juniors and can be flown in Half-A Speed and does quite well for itself in both events. It has been flown as a Junior entry in AMA Flying Scale and has been entered in Static Shows in both Scale and Sport

categories.

In December of 1969, the manufacturers of the real airplane... then American Aviation Corporation and now, through recent merger, the Grumman American Aviation Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio... made three-view drawings of the American Yankee available to modelers. The Yankee parents had sponsored trophies for the best American Yankee entries in the 23rd National Plane and Space Model Show, which was held in April of 1970 in Cleveland. Our flying club (plug for the Skylarks) had recently toured the American Aviation plant and had been witnesses to the real ships coming out of their "nest". The tour had been stimulating, the receipt of the three-view was inspiration, and the contest provided the motivation. My boys (then 14, 11 and 7) were hooked, and so was the old man; it better suited our budget and was (I still believe) a good teacher. I was still trying to keep junior birdmen interested in Half-A flying. The first Yankee (our little N5900L) rolled off our miniature production line in time for the show and made its static, fledgling appearance. The hardware it brought home was won in both Scale and "Yankee" Classes and was much larger than the model.

Three more Yankees came off of our line to make their flying debut in the first Cleveland flying contest in 1970 at Cleveland's "Control-Line-Modeler's-Dream" Flying Field. Yankees they were; one red, one white and one blue. With all three boys flying in the Junior age group that year, the contest really tested them and the birds. Between them they managed to bring home trophies for Cleveland Sport, AMA Half-A Profile Proto Speed and Half-A Speed. Not for the lack of competition either, the models really "turn-on" and made a good showing for themselves even in the hands of a novice. Flying on a pair of 42 foot .008 lines, the plane held well on the ends of the lines and handled fine for the boys. The first flights, naturally, were "right-off-the-board" official flights in competition without any preliminary, practice, and trim flights. This is not the best practice for any modeler, but even us "good" modelers (on white horses) will admit that occasionally our best intentions go afoul and we find ourselves building by candlelight just before a contest... even though we may have known about it for a year! (Now this is strictly against AMA Safety Code and not recommended by any of us... we have "told it like it is"!)

AT 8742.

The balance of the 1970 contest season saw much work on engines and practice flights... no modification to the planes... and they kept on winning more of momma's favorite dust collectors. Competition improved... with more Yankees being built and flown. Johnnie Smith (THE John C. Smith, the "Smitty" of old-time speed fame, the guy who now dispenses tomatoe juice... wow!, "it sure don't taste like it", certain ethnic background type jokes (?) and quick-fix resins at speed bashes in his "golden years"), his wife and his boys tried a few for practice and competition. Their trophy collection enlarged (they're thinking of adding a trophy room!).

John went exotic on us and, with Dale Kirn's help and a little assist from Bill Keller, smuggled in some left-hand engines. The left-hand engines *do* make a difference. During the 1970 season, John's youngest was still able to be tucked into a pop-cooler basinette at a contest, but his next youngest was an able competitor with a Yankee and also flew one in front of 20,000 people in the grandstands at the 1970 Cleveland National Air Races... before his 6th birthday! The helpful torque of the left-hand engines actually works for you in takeoff and flight... the tall grass on gentleman farmer Smith's estate caused enough line snags, resulting in ground loops and broken fins and rudders, that John just left the fin and rudder off one Yankee and it flew quite well without them! (If you're using the conventional, right-hand engine, we would suggest you set the fin and rudder at an offset as shown, and keep the tip weight.)

My oldest son, Chris (who now states he was never as young as he looked in the pictures with this article), placed his model with the winners in the Cleveland Sport Race event at the 35th Annual Cleveland Junior Air Races in 1970 (Bill, the middle-aged son, placed in the Half-A Profile Proto Speed event and Andy, the youngest, placed in Junior Half-A Speed with Yankees), and won; in addition to his trophy, a flight in a Cessna 180 which had been donated by a local sponsor. Word of this did reach the management of the (then) American Aviation Corporation and it didn't seem right to them to win a ride in a (BEEP)-180 with his Yankee. Chris was invited to visit American Aviation at their plant. He packed along his plane, lines, fuel, and battery just on the chance that someone out there would like to see it fly. (Bill and Andy managed to stow themselves and their planes in the trunk for the trip also.)

Yankee production was slightly interrupted that afternoon when Chris flew his model for the management out on the concrete apron behind the plant. It was a command performance for the little ship, in front of many of its

bigger cousins, and the little bird seemed to sense it as it sang through the air. Poppa was more than just a little proud of his brood that day, and must have gotten something in his eye about the time Chris picked out the only patch of depressed dirt and grass around the apron to grease little N5900L in for a hot landing... the nose wheel is still out there somewhere as a memento to this page in history. Mr. R.W. Myer, Jr., President of Grumman Aviation Corporation, was to be given a chance at the control handle on the next flight, but, instead, Chris had to show the Yankee's versatility by flying it as a tail-dragger!

Big N5900L was brought from around the corner that day, to our surprise, and Chris was so happy he could hardly reply when Mr. Myer asked him if he would like to fly in a Yankee with the company test-pilot. When asked if they would like to go along as "baggage", Bill and Andy were not so awestruck... they ran in a dead heat to beat Chris to the plane. Aviation meant a lot in their lives before that day, but it took on a greater, lasting meaning from that day on. No plane in the sky has as much vital meaning to them as a Yankee. Grumman American is readying three-views for modelers of the Yankee's big brother... the new four-place AA-5 "Traveler"... and the boys are waiting to start building.

Construction of the model, for the beginner, tenderfoot or novice, should be accomplished with some help and supervision (more like an advising eye and second pair of hands) as some of the materials and techniques of building which are required may not yet be in his bag of tricks. The advanced novice or junior builder should find this model a pleasant challenge. The seasoned builder should find it just plain fun with satisfaction as a reward.

We have incorporated into the new plans an improved nose gear. Originally the nose gear was mounted in such a manner that it could pull out easily in a hot, nose-low landing. This is not the type of landing you should execute with any "trike", but it can happen and we think we have beefed it up so the gear will stay with the plane. We wiped out many a nose gear on the original models (and the boys would finish an event with a tail-dragger by bending the main gear forward). The new gear mount may bend and have to be helped back into shape after a hard landing, but we don't think it will pull out unless you seriously try to re-kit the plane when you bring it in.

On the plans, we have written a suggested sequence of construction. We recommend that you follow these suggestions. Don't wait until nothing else works... read the instructions first! There is one stage of assembly where everything goes together all at once, and

if you've followed the instructions and suggestions you'll be ready for it. If not, we wish you luck on your next one.

Real Yankees are built with rivetless aluminum skin (would be a separate, informative article in itself) and your model can have a sleek, mirror finish and still be scale. Revolution Red, Pioneer Buff, Pilgrim White, Heritage Yellow, Minuteman Green, Patriot Blue, Frontier Rust and Enterprise Orange were stock colors on the real Yankee, but no one would complain if you were to finish yours in Buffalo Brown or Williamsburg Pink, or whatever.

Most experienced modelers and control line flyers will admit... for several reasons... Half-A control line models are more difficult to fly than their larger cousins (A's, B's and C's). Though this model is one of the best handling Half-A's we have flown, it is still a small airplane with a small powerplant on the ends of two long lines. Joints must be kept neat and strong to help make the ship durable enough to withstand an unusual or "fall-out" type landing if the engine quits on the upwind side of the circle. Stress trim, balance and control freedom after you have employed your "eagle-eye" in proper alignments. Minimize weight and drag by your choice of materials, technique and finish.

On your first flight pick a site where you can turn a lap or two on the ground safely, though we doubt if you will be able to keep it on the ground with neutral elevator. We're confident that you'll find that the model will groove well just where you put it and that it will be very responsive to control. Try the stiff-elbow, arm-extended flying position and then only raise and lower your whole arm for up and down control. Go real easy on the controls! As with most control line models, the Yankee will take the "great circle route" overhead if over-controlled... once you've lost line tension you will have only a few moments to say good-bye to your ship before it augers in. These ships are durable, but they are not indestructible. We recommend the 42 foot lines to minimize a rather impressive speed... 35's will magnify the speed, disturb your equilibrium, and screw you into the ground.

Incidentally, if you're concerned about the main gear holding, don't worry: All of our Yankees have been built with the gear mounted in the wing that way... no reinforcing tape or cloth... and we have yet to crack the paint around the spar or gear even though the original models have flown 'till they're tired and one was demolished in a crash due to a broken control line. The name of the game is fun, and we're sure you'll be pleased to have something different to fly... something smart and contemporary. You'll be proud of your "American Yankee."