

ED MAHLER'S TJ-295



HERE'S A ONE-OF-A-KIND
AEROBATIC BIPLANE
WITH A VERY UNIQUE
PAINT SCHEME

BY JOHN TANZER

I've always admired the full-scale flying of the late Ed Mahler and his TJ-295. Ed Mahler learned to fly in 1953 at the age of 19. He began his airshow career in 1961, flying a North American Texan, but he soon realized that, even though he loved the big Texan, it couldn't perform the type of airshow routines he wanted to do, so he and a friend, Lee Weber, decided to use the first PJ-260, designed by Nick D'Apuzzo.

After many years of practice and airshow flying, in 1968 Ed Mahler won the





Originally designed by Nick D'Apuzzo with a 260 hp engine, Mahler upgraded the aircraft for airshow work.



The brightly colored biplane is a natural for a giant scale aerobatic model. Plans are available — see text for details.



Ed Mahler was killed while performing for newsreel cameras on September 22, 1977. No other PJ-295 exists at this time.

National Unlimited Aerobatic Championship of the EAA.

During the course of his airshow years, Ed replaced the engine of his TJ-295 with a big Lycoming 295 horsepower engine. He was also the originator of the maneuver he called the "Vertical Skin Bracer Roll." In this maneuver, he stood the aircraft on its tail going straight up, while executing a complete vertical slow roll. He then pushed outside, to nose the biplane toward the earth, doing an outside, downward, snap roll — finally

pulling out at ground-shaving altitude.

For many years, Ed Mahler was one of the top performers with the famous Bill Sweet Airshows, operating out of Sky Manor Airport in Pittsdown, New Jersey.

Mahler also flew the airshow circuit sponsored by the Mennen Company for Mennen Aftershave, and his aircraft bore several unique markings, including Mennen's famous line, "Thanks, I needed that!" emblazoned on the top wing. But the unique feature of Ed's routine occurred when he turned his smoke system

on, and the smoke actually smelled of Mennen's Aftershave Lotion.

Ed Mahler was one of the world's top ten airshow performers. He was killed on Friday, September 22, 1977, while performing a preview of his next day's airshow for the press. The aviation airshow community has sorely missed this dynamic showman ever since.

What prompted me to model Ed Mahler's plane? I guess it was the rareness of the TJ-295, and its pretty lines which prompted me to build this large scale



Ed Mahler's TJ-295 was sponsored by The Mennen Company, with that firm's advertising slogans painted all over the aircraft. Flying sequence featured Mennen Aftershave-scented smoke exhaust.

model of Ed's famous aerobatic airshow aircraft.

I scratch-built the plane with conventional balsa, spruce and lite ply, and covered it with Ultracote, trimmed with Hobby Poxy. Lettering was hand-cut from vinyl sheeting.

Powered with a Saito 270 4-stroke engine, my model is controlled with a PCM 9-Channel radio from JR.

The large 81-inch span biplane weighs 20 pounds.

Not only does the TJ-295 handle very well on the ground; in the air, it flies beau-

tifully — a lot like a Pitts or an Eagle. Also, it's different enough that you and your model will stand out in the crowd.

If you'd like to build your own TJ-295, you may write to me for the full-size plans. Priced at \$30 (postpaid), they'll come to you rolled, in a tube. Fiberglass cowling and wheel pants for the TJ-295 are also available from Fiberglass Master.

For more information, just contact me:

John Tanzer
166 North Lehigh Avenue
Cranford, New Jersey 07016