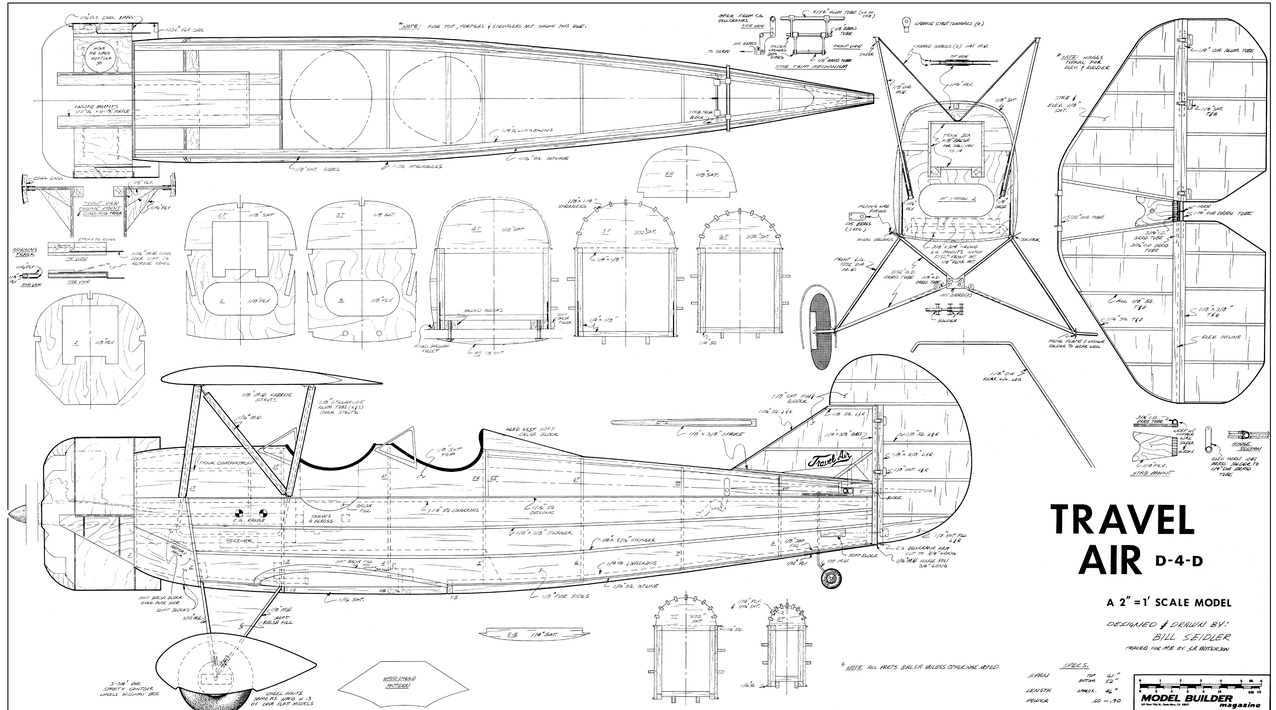
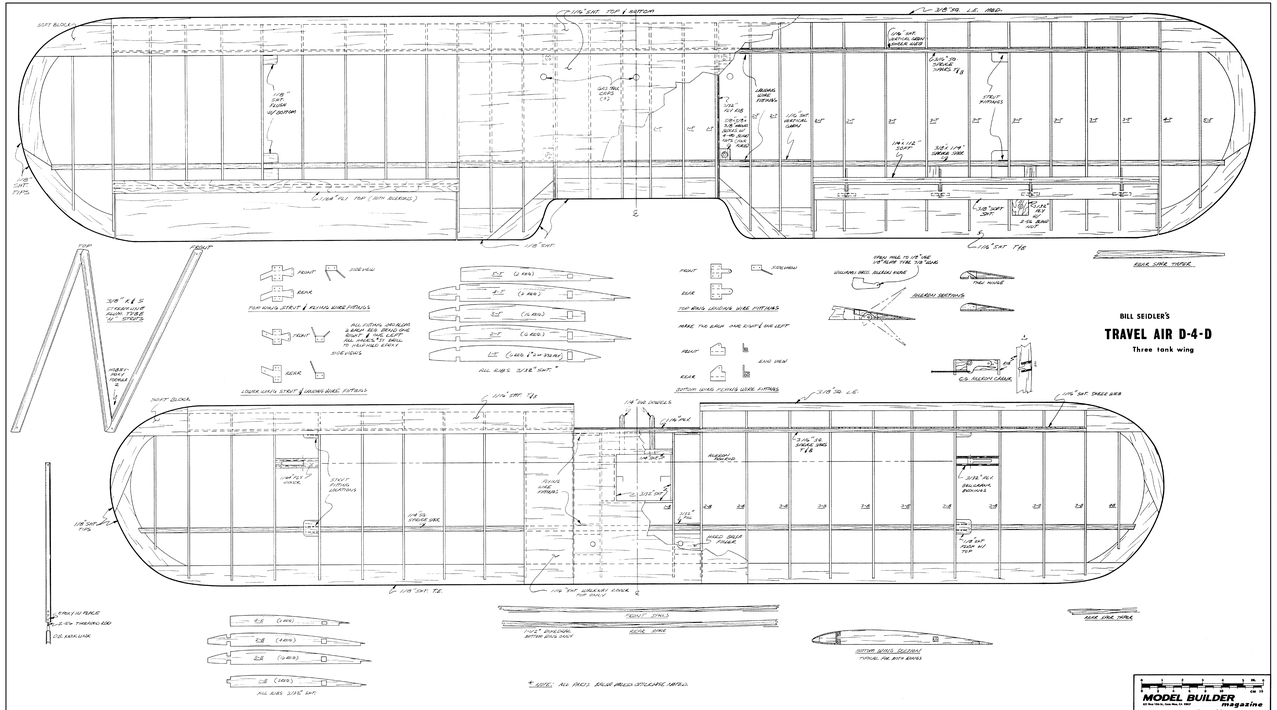

TRAVEL
AIR D-4-D
A 2" = 1' SCALE MODEL
DESIGNED & DRAWN BY:
BILL SEIDLER
TRACED FOR MB BY: D.R. BOTSFORD
SPECS:
SPAN: TOP 41", BOTTOM 32"
LENGTH: APPROX. 26"
POWER: .60 - .90
1 of 2
MODEL BUILDER magazine
Plan No: 1781-B


BILL SEIDLER'S
TRAVEL AIR D-4-D
Three tank wing
MODEL BUILDER magazine
Plan No: 1781-B
2 of 2

TRAVEL AIR D4D

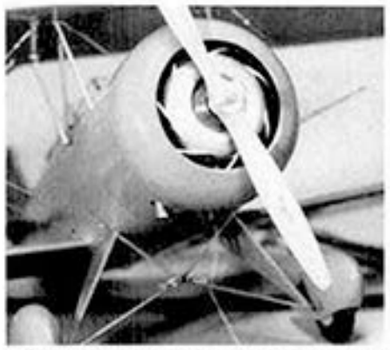
By BILL SEIDLER . . . One of the sexiest looking biplanes out of the Golden Era, and a natural for modeling. The author is quite familiar with the design . . . he restores the full-size machines!!

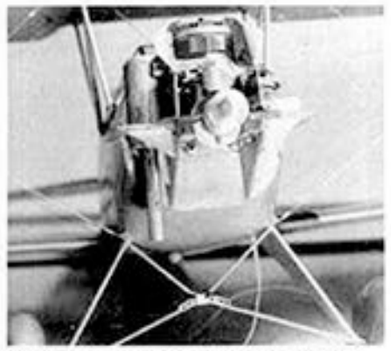
• "Travel Air" is a name that means an instant trip back into the past, into a network of wires and cabanes, a wide front cockpit and pilot behind. It was quite conventional, and it met the requirements of the goggled, helmeted pilots of the day who thought fliers had to sit in the open air. The Travel Air Manufacturing Company, of Wichita, Kansas, was incorporated early in 1925, with Walter Beech, Clyde Cessna, and Lloyd Stearman as the principal directors. (Those names may be familiar to you!)

The Travel Air series of biplanes established Wichita as the first main center of aviation in the United States. They were used for mail planes, dusters, and the like. In the movies, as Fokker D-VII's, they were called "Wichita Fokkers". Travel Airs played both sides in war films in the 20's and 30's; they were in "Hell's Angels" and "Dawn Patrol". They were very popular with the early Hollywood set. Both Wallace Beery, aviator/actor, and Robert Montgomery, another MGM actor of great fame, had Travel Air 4D's. It was a very strong and sleek airplane, perhaps one of the main reasons they were so popular. Wiley Post had his first job as an executive pilot for F.C. Hall, the Oklahoma oilman, in a 1928 Travel Air 4000. I haven't adequate words to describe their airplanes and the lasting effect on the pilots who have flown them.

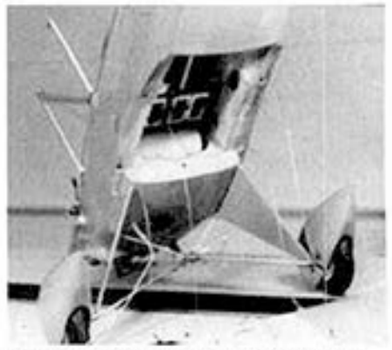
I received my license back in 1937 in a Travel Air B4000, NC174V, with a 220 hp-J5. It belonged to my high school teacher, Mr. Matty Mack, of Haaron High School, in New York. When I saw pictures of Wendell Reid's Travel Air D4D, in an old *Air Progress* (October 1969), the need for me to build a model of it was overwhelming. The easy part of it was data and blueprints, which I have used for the restoration of full-size Travel Airs. All I had to do was scale it down to 2 in./1 ft. Here is some information on Travel Airs that should help a scale builder.

The Travel Air biplane was designed in 1924 by Mr. Lloyd Stearman, and he did such an excellent job of designing that, throughout its life, the basic dimensions of the fuselage were never changed. An outrigger gear was added later to the B4000, BM4000 and D4000. Standard and Speedwing versions, both with Frieze ailerons, and a larger steel tail section for the outrigger gear models, were manufactured. All of these wings and tail sections were interchangeable with all fuselages. The Standard wings, with balanced ailerons ("elephant ears"), installed on the fuselage, have an upper wing span of 34 ft. 8 in., a lower wing span of 28 ft. 10 in., an upper wing chord of 66 in., and a

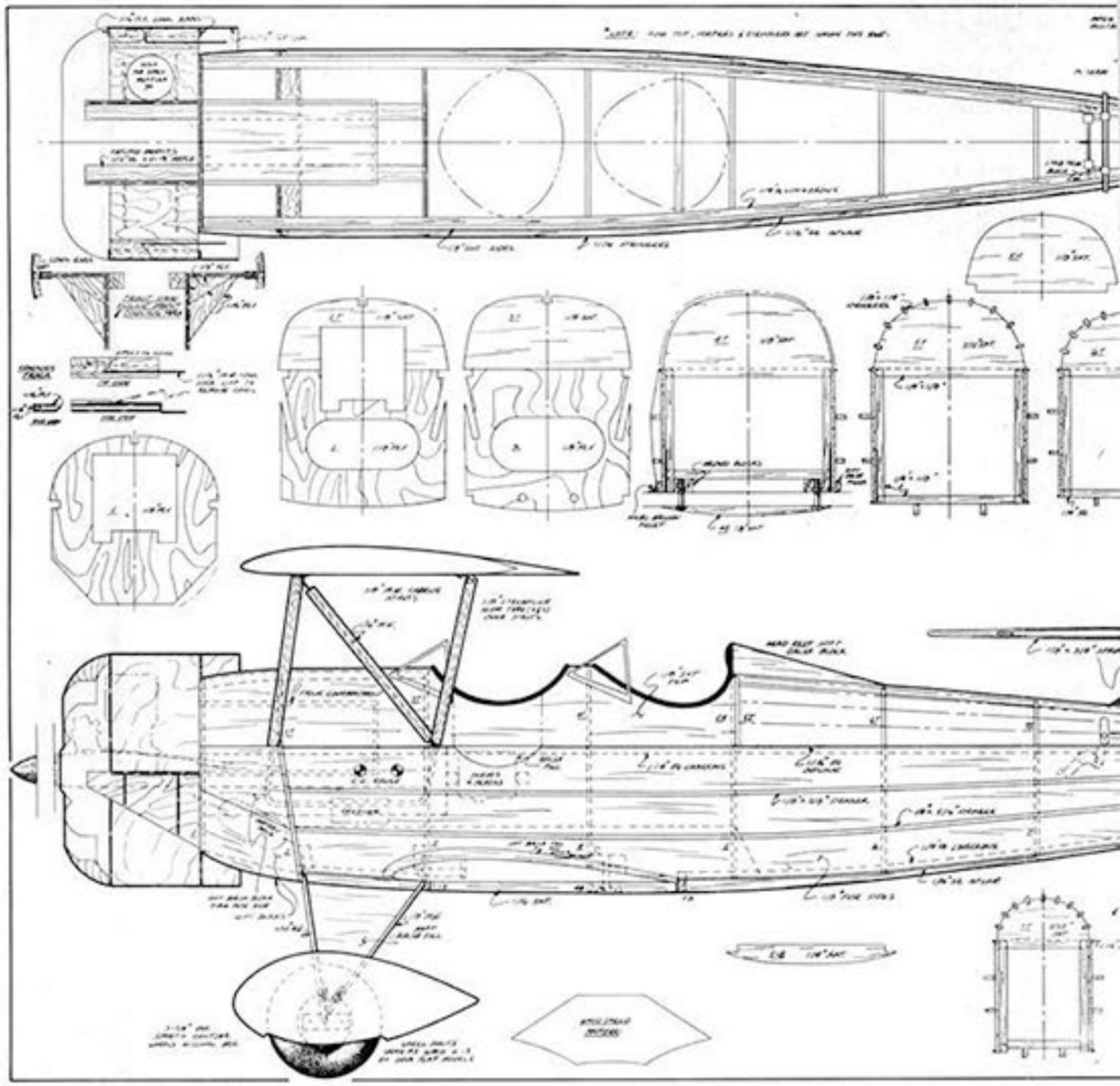




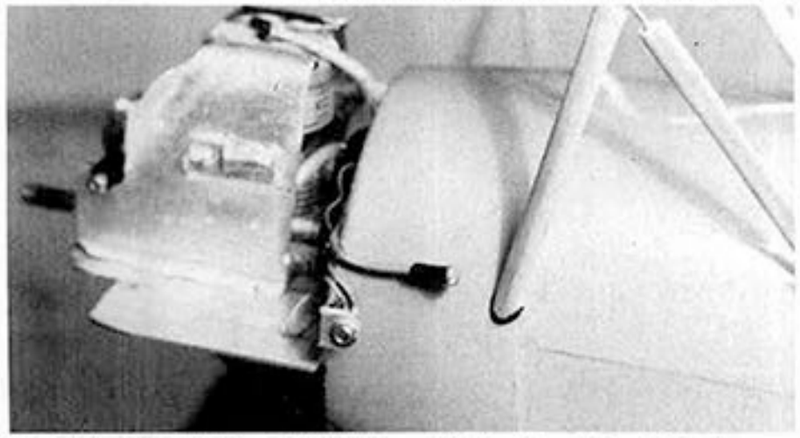
Even though cowl and exhaust collector ring completely cover the Webra .90, the aluminum shroud forces cooling air around cylinder.



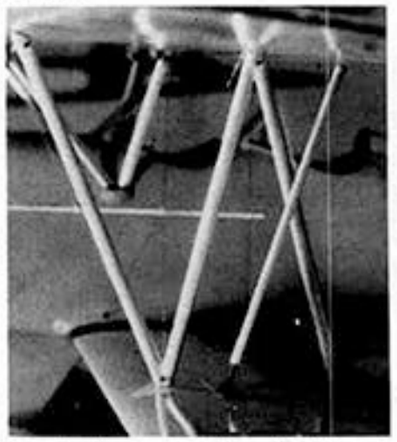
Plenty of radio access through bottom wing opening.



FULL SIZE PLANS AVAILABLE – SEE PAGE 144



Glow plug leads come to battery jack which is accessible through cowl. Gas tank filler line just clears cowl.



Top-only aileron actuated by pushrod from bottom wing, per scale.

MODEL BUILDER

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