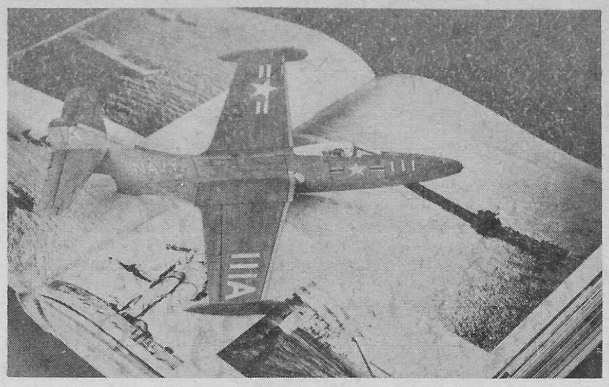

There's Bill, working on the real ship; and above is the model on the USS Kearsarge Cruise Book.

PANTHER JET

SAMM COLOR-UP MODEL

BY BILL HANNAN

This month's COLOR-UP model is a Grumman F9F-2 "Panther", as flown by Squadron VF-721, during the Korean conflict. The author served as a jet-engine mechanic for these aircraft, at that time, aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kearsarge. This "Panther" was powered by a Pratt and Whitney J-42 centrifugal-flow engine, and was a sturdy dependable airplane which was very popular with its pilots.

Our little caricature model is easy and inexpensive to build, and interesting to fly. More on that subject later in this article.

CONSTRUCTION: Begin by coloring the two fuselage side drawings with colored pencils or felt tip markers. Cut out one of the sides, and fasten it to a sheet of medium weight 3/32" thick sheet balsa. Rubber cement (obtainable at an art or stationery store) or clear dope may be used as an adhesive. Carefully cut the fuselage out of the balsa sheet and sandpaper the edges to a smooth finish. Be sure to cut out the slots for the wing and stabilizer. Next, glue on the opposite body side drawing.

The raw edges of the balsa may then be colored with a marking pen, or, if you used colored pencils on the fuselage sides, rub in some colored chalk. Most art stores carry chalk in a wide range of colors.

The wings are made from medium-soft 1/16" sheet balsa. Note that the rear portions of the panels are made from separate pieces, with the grain running as shown on the plans. After cutting the wings to shape, give them a light sandpapering, to add to that "old world craftsman" look. The tip tanks may be cut from 1/16" sheet balsa, using the paper patterns as guides. Note that the tanks are slotted to fit on the wing tips. The stabilizer is cut from 1/32" sheet balsa. Using either the marking pen or colored chalk, color the wings, stabilizer, and tip tanks. The various lines representing the separation lines of the ailerons, elevators, trim tabs, etc. are optional, but add a lot of sparkle to the model, and may be quite easily drawn on, using a fine tip black marking pen and a ruler.

Give each finished part a couple of LIGHT coats of clear dope, using a spray can. This is particularly important if chalk has been used for coloring, because the clear dope will seal the chalk to the balsa wood. CAUTION: Do not get carried away with the clear dope, as excessive amounts will cause warps.

After the dope dries, you may apply the wing stars and numbers. An extra star is given on the plan, which is for the lower side of the right wing. The leading edges of the wings, fin, and the noses of the tip tanks may be given a coat or two of silver dope, if desired, to simulate the natural aluminum color of these areas on the real aircraft.

ASSEMBLY: Glue the wings onto the fuselage, being careful to block up the tips to obtain the correct dihedral angle (1/2" under each tip). This wing/fuselage joint must be strong, so don't spare the glue. Be sure to allow plenty of time for it to dry (overnight is best).

Glue the stabilizer into its fuselage slot, checking to see that it is correctly lined up, as viewed from the front and top. Add tip tanks. After everything has thoroughly dried, check for warps. If you find any, remove them over a steaming tea kettle, by twisting the warped section the opposite way, and holding until cool.

Make the launching hook from a small piece of music wire, or a pin, and glue into the fuselage as shown on the plans. Finally, drill a small hole in the fuselage nose, and insert a piece of solder cut to length by trial and error, until the model balances about where shown on the plans.

FLYING: This model has rather unusual flight characteristics, to say the least. It is guaranteed to offer a change-of-pace from the usual gliders. The main reason for the peculiar flying qualities is the large amount of fuselage area forward of the wing. As long as the model can maintain adequate flying speed, it is a good performer, but, if for some reason (such as a poor launch, or a tail-heavy condition) the model loses flying speed, it will come down "like a handful of grass", to quote Flightmaster Bob Moncrieff. Actually, even when this happens, the flights are still rewarding, and certainly very instructive. By balancing your "Panther" a bit on the nose-heavy side, the effect can be minimized, but then, you may find as I have, that it is fun to remove a pinch of weight, in order to watch its strange antics.

If the model "falls off on one wing" (always banks too tightly in the same direction), try adding a small piece of modeling clay to the OPPOSITE wing tip.

When you are reasonably satisfied with the glide pattern, try a catapult launch. (After all, that is the way the real ones took off from the aircraft carrier!). The catapult is a cinch to make, using a length of hardwood dowel as a handle, and a large rubber band as motive power. Best bet is to bank the model before releasing. CAUTION: The "Panther" really moves out when launched in this manner, so look out for innocent bystanders!

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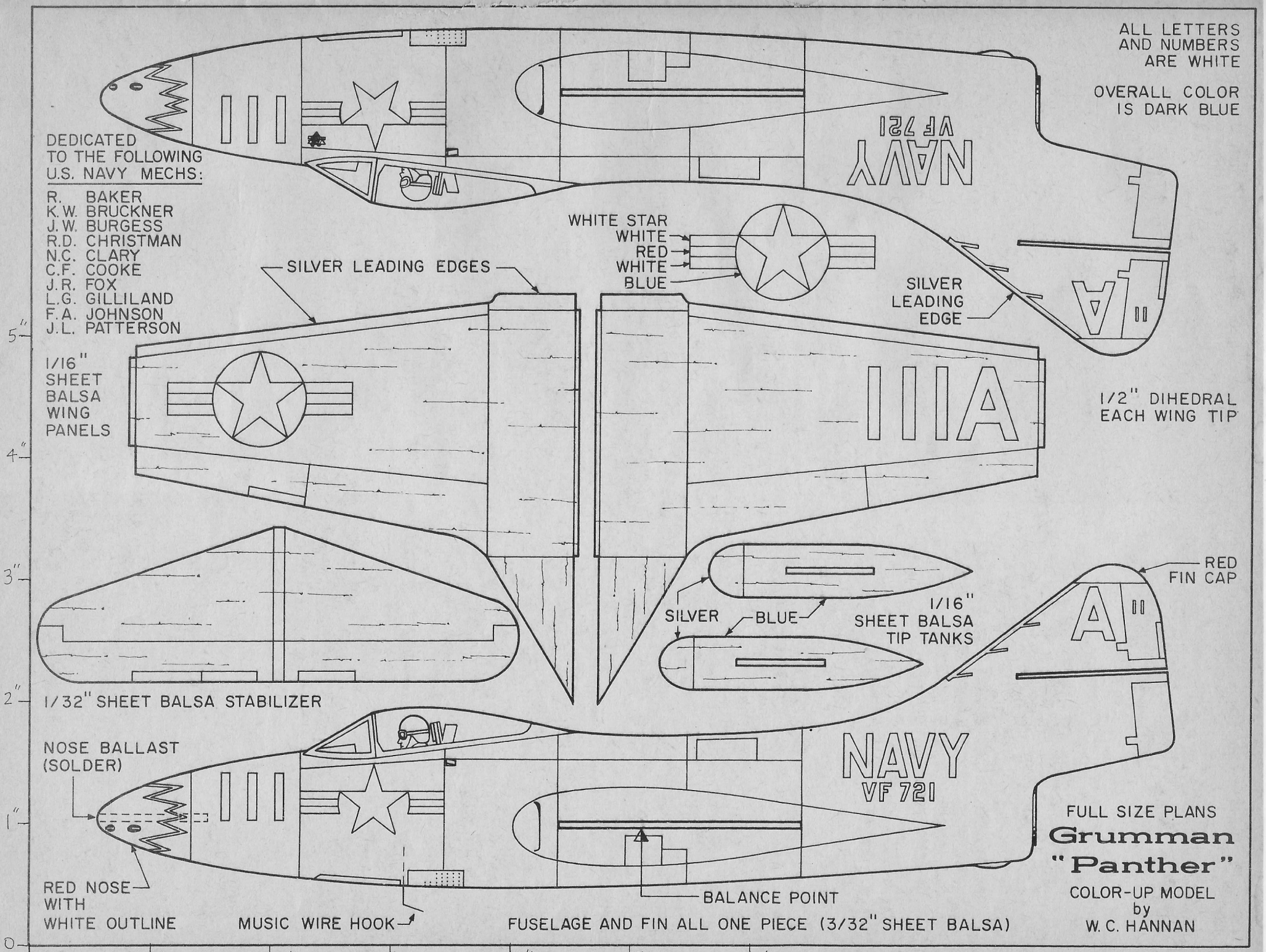
ALL LETTERS AND NUMBERS ARE WHITE
OVERALL COLOR IS DARK BLUE
DEDICATED TO THE FOLLOWING U.S. NAVY MECHS:
R. BAKER
K.W. BRUCKNER
J.W. BURGESS
R.D. CHRISTMAN
N.C. CLARY
C.F. COOKE
J.R. FOX
L.G. GILLILAND
F.A. JOHNSON
J.L. PATTERSON
WHITE STAR
WHITE
RED
WHITE
BLUE
SILVER LEADING EDGES
SILVER LEADING EDGE
1/16" SHEET BALSA WING PANELS
1/2" DIHEDRAL EACH WING TIP
RED FIN CAP
SILVER
BLUE
1/16" SHEET BALSA TIP TANKS
1/32" SHEET BALSA STABILIZER
NOSE BALLAST (SOLDER)
RED NOSE WITH WHITE OUTLINE
MUSIC WIRE HOOK
BALANCE POINT
FUSELAGE AND FIN ALL ONE PIECE (3/32" SHEET BALSA)
NAVY
VF 721
FULL SIZE PLANS
Grumman "Panther"
COLOR-UP MODEL
by
W. C. HANNAN
0
1"
2"
3"
4"
5"
6"