

THE AIRPLANE

THE PERFORMANCE

THE PILOT

The Grumman Bearcat first flew in 1944, in response to a Navy request for "the ultimate" in a carrier-based, prop-driven fighter. It is that; highly maneuverable, with a fantastic rate of climb — the Bearcat was a legend when WW II ended.

But that is all it achieved in WW II, for Bearcats never fired a shot in anger! F8Fs were just moving into operational squadrons on V-J Day. So the 'Cat was too late for the dogfight. Still, development continued. After the 208 F8F-1s made during 1945, another 1,058 Bearcats followed, including 293 F8F-2s with even more power, a redesigned cowling, and a modified stabilizer. Professor Hanson's '2' was manufactured in 1948.

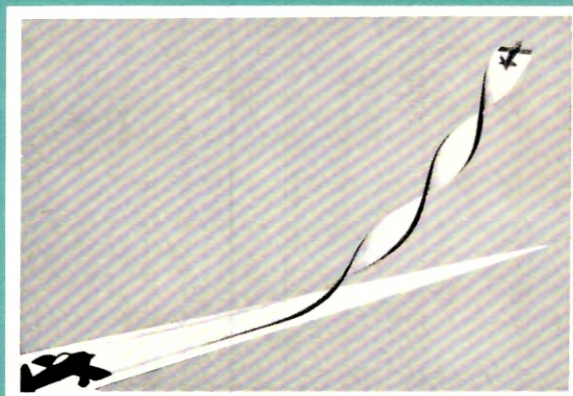
A small fighter, its 5 tons are packed into a 35' wing and a 27' fuselage. The F8F turns a 13' four bladed propeller, which can yank it from a standstill to 10,000' in 81 seconds! Against jets and turbo-props the Bearcat held the world's record for the fastest climb to 10,000' until 1954.

5555H has been extensively reworked by Professor Hanson. Besides stripping away ½ ton of military 'iron' (catapult and arresting hooks, armorplate, 4 cannons . . . etc.), a Mustang spinner has been fitted, along with 'goodies' of contemporary vintage (radios, beacons, tip-plates . . . etc.).

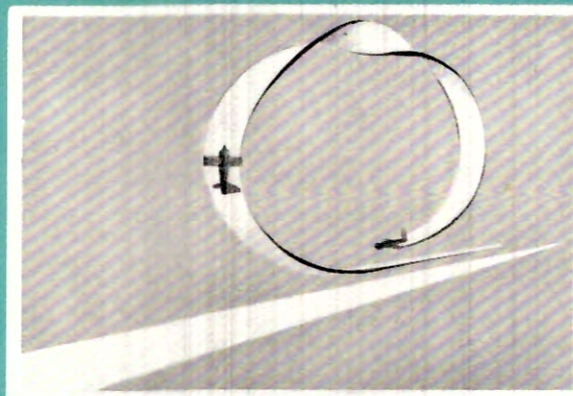
Experienced in most WW II fighters — Mustang, Thunderbolt, Corsair, Hellcat, Buffalo, Spitfire, Hurricane . . . etc. — Hanson feels that only the Bearcat provides power and performance required in his half-hour demonstration. This is the 'plane that won the National Air Races at Reno in 1964 and 1965; it was selected by the great Al Williams as his "Gulfhawk II"; and it is remarked by one of Grumman's senior test pilots, to have been "the finest fighter Grumman ever made."



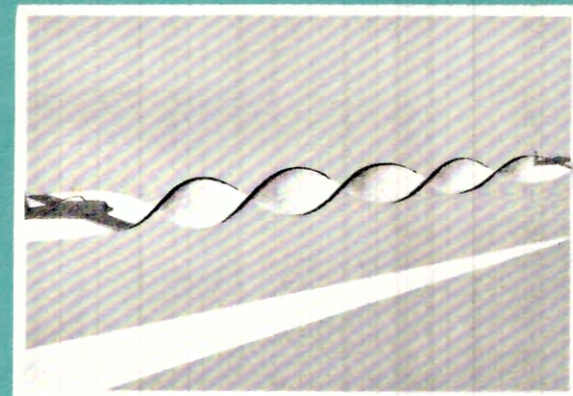
PHOTO CREDITS: "FLYING" MAGAZINE



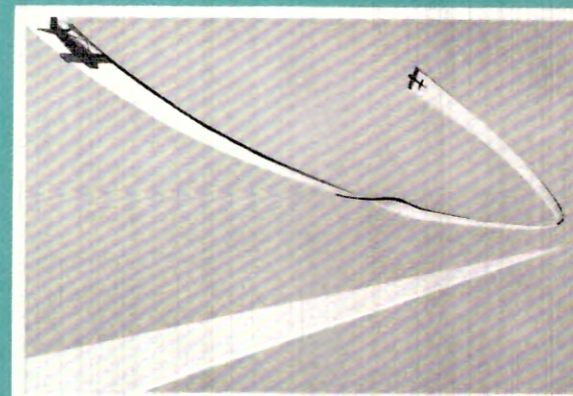
1 TAKE-OFF AND 3 CLIMBING ROLLS



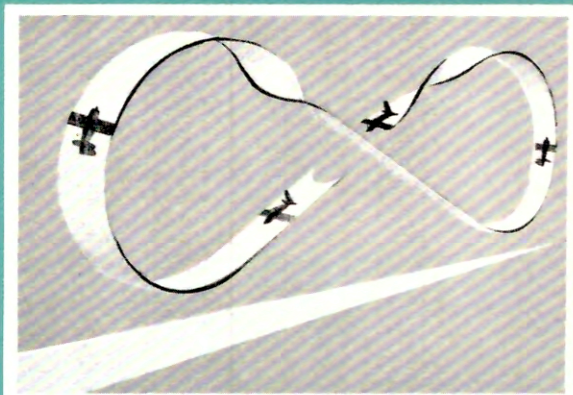
4 LOOP WITH ROLL ON TOP



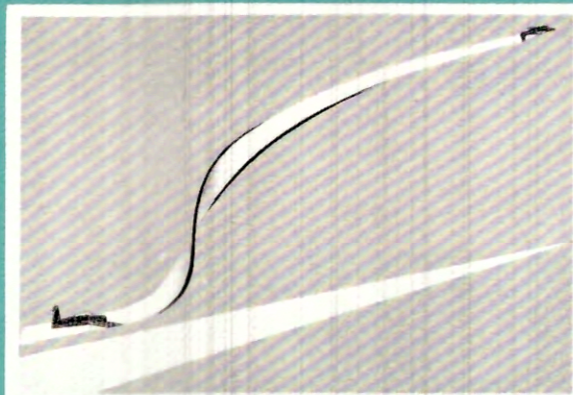
7 5 AILERON ROLLS



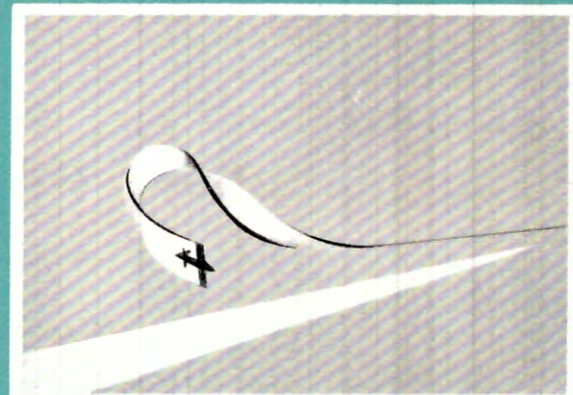
10 INVERTED CHANDELLE



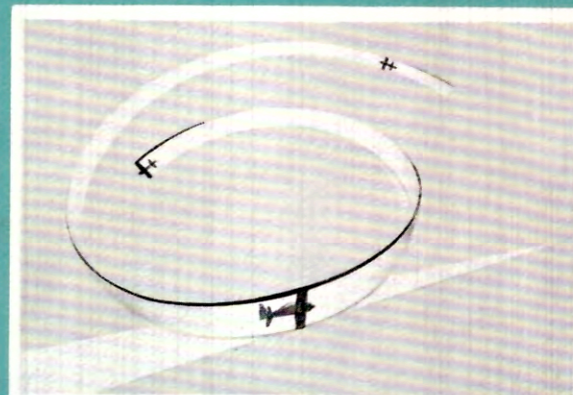
2 CUBAN-8



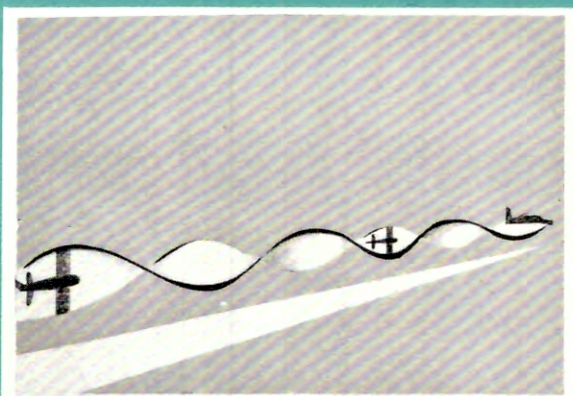
5 INVERTED CLIMB OUT



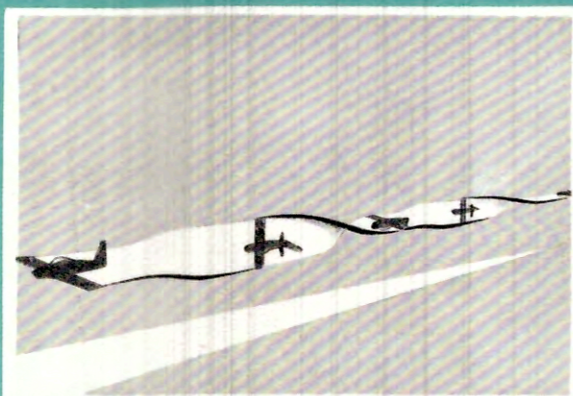
8 JELLY ROLL



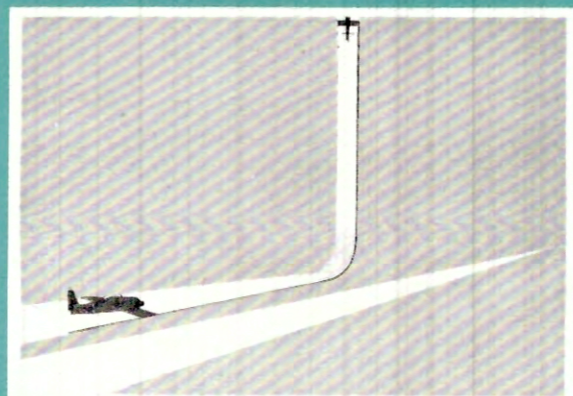
11 FAST 'GOODBYE' CIRCLE



3 DUTCH ROLLS (LOW OVER RUNWAY)



6 4 POINT ROLL



9 VERTICAL CLIMB UP



12 CARRIER PATTERN AND LANDING

Norwood Russell Hanson, B.A., B.Sc., M.A., B.Phil. (Oxon), D.Phil. (Oxon), Ph.D. (Cantab), is not the ordinary aerobat. Although a pilot for 25 years, he does other things too. Professor of philosophy at Yale University, Hanson has also taught at Indiana, Minnesota, Colorado, Cambridge, Oxford and Columbia Universities. As a guest lecturer at most major institutions, he is sought after in the fields of philosophy and history of science. A Fellow of Pierson College (Yale), Professor Hanson received a Distinguished Service Alumni Award from Columbia University, was Harris Foundation Lecturer at Northwestern, was a Fellow of St. John's College in Cambridge University — and has held many scholarships and research grants, one of these latter concerning the writing of a book on the history of aerodynamic theory. His aeronautical interests were stirred at Roosevelt Airfield (Mineola, L.I.) in the 1930s — when Al Williams amazed crowds with unbelievable 'stunts.' Al actually shook young Hanson's hand, an event which 'hooked' Russ forevermore. Models, airports, reading and study of aviation — all this led to the U.S. Marine Corps in WW II wherein, as a Corsair fighter pilot, Russ Hanson flew from several aircraft carrier-decks into combat over Japan. It was a long, hard war. Every inessential moment aloft, however, was even then given over to emulation of Al Williams's feats; by armistice-time Hanson had a small reputation as a 'hot' pilot. Thence abroad for many years — to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Flight time in England was hard to come by; still, some hours in famous British fighters found their way into Hanson's log book. Returning stateside in '57, the 'itch' got Russ. Texan, Mustang, Corsair and Bearcat flight time began to come his way, and the serious effort to construct an airshow 'act' commenced. FLYING magazine covered 'Hanson's Bearcat' back in February 1964, and again in early '66. With his machine and his timing both in top form, the "Flying Professor" sees no reason why he and his Bearcat should not continue to gether for many years to come.



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