

Thorp's two-seater is a flying 'Tiger'

This little beauty combines sleek looks, zippy performance and easy construction

By **SHELDON M. GALLAGER** and **HOWARD LEVY**

Photos by Howard Levy

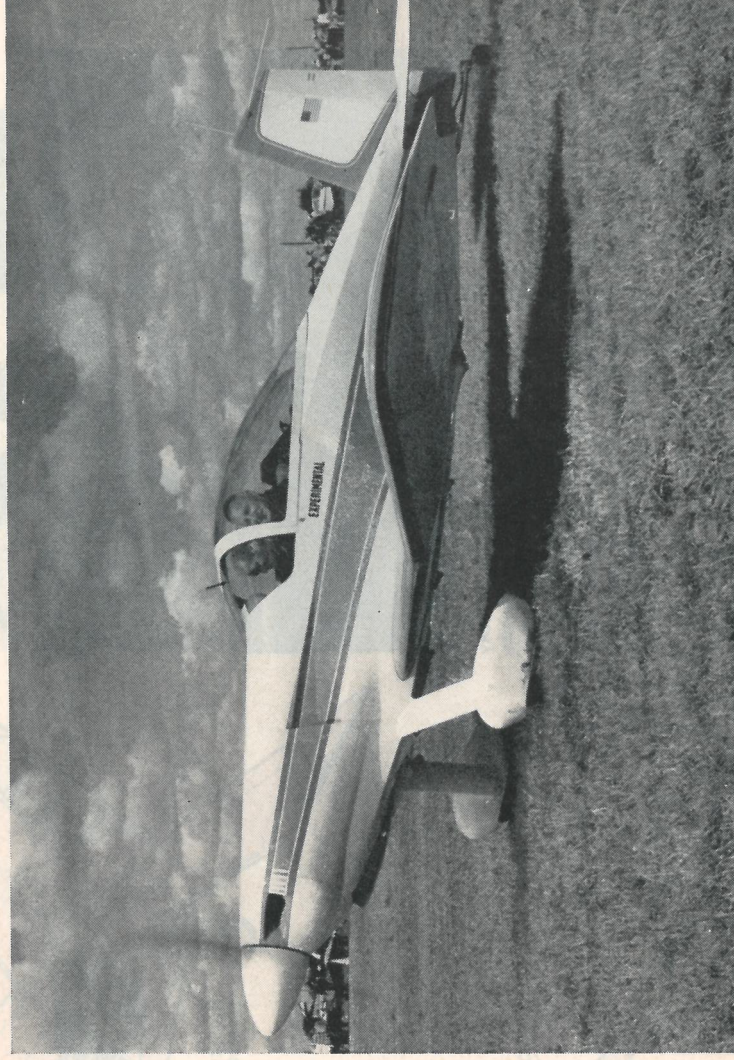
ONE THING YOU CAN SAY about the Thorp T-18 *Tiger*—it really gets around. Ninety of the popular home-grown two-seaters have already been built and flown, and more than 100 more are reported under construction. Nine are operating in rugged Australian and Canadian bush country, and others are flying far and wide throughout the world. One doctor uses his T-18 to make house calls in the vast, remote regions of rural Nebraska.

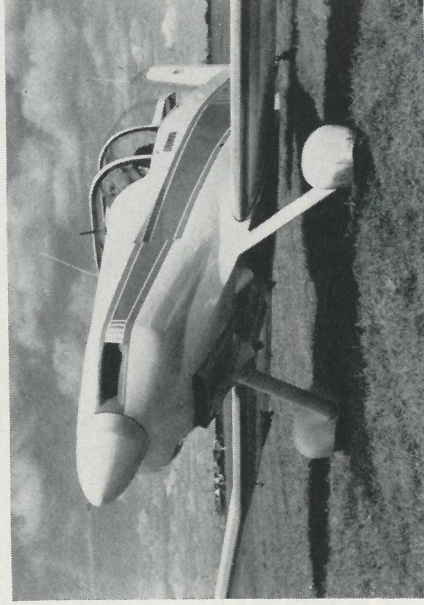
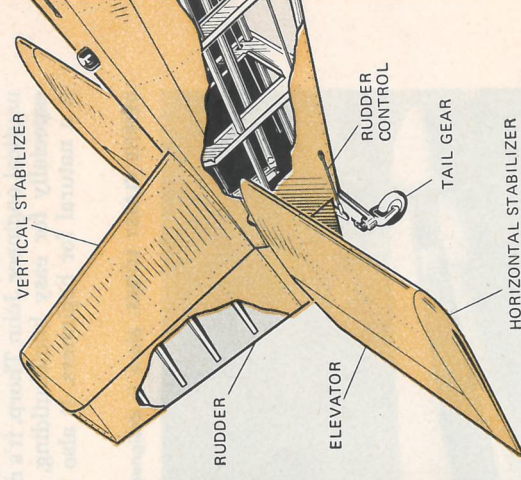
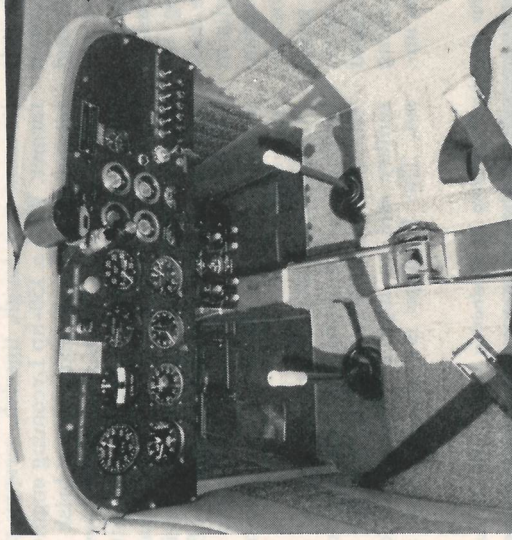
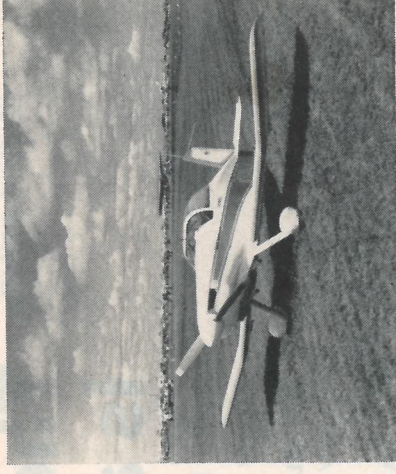
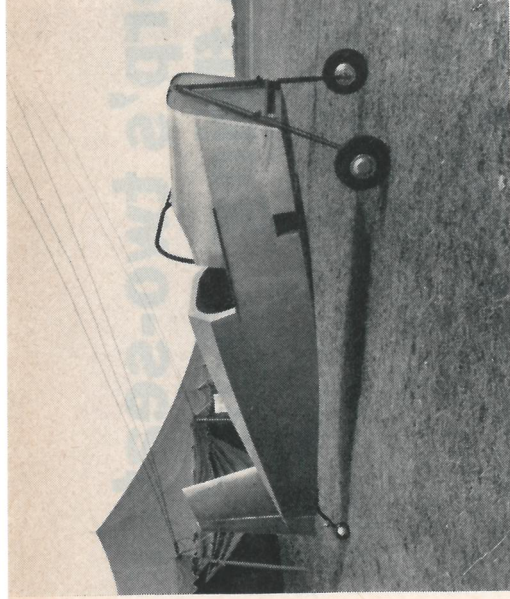
There are reasons for the praise and affection homebuilders have for this gutsy little low-winger. Developed by aeronautical engineer John Thorp, it's designed especially for easy homebuilding, making it a natural for beginners. It also has im-

pressive flight characteristics, living up to its name as a tough, tigerish, scrappy performer. With a 150-hp Lycoming engine, it hits up to 190 mph, cruises at a brisk 170 and climbs 2000 feet a minute to a service ceiling of 18,000 feet—that's really getting up in the wild blue yonder! It has a range of 550 miles on a 29-gallon tank, weighs 1450 pounds fully loaded and takes off in 800 feet. Its dual controls are handy for sharing flying chores with a companion on long hops.

Underneath the deceptively sleek exterior is a surprisingly simple airframe. The all-metal parts need no jigs for assembly and go together like an Erector set. The fuselage is straight-sided and

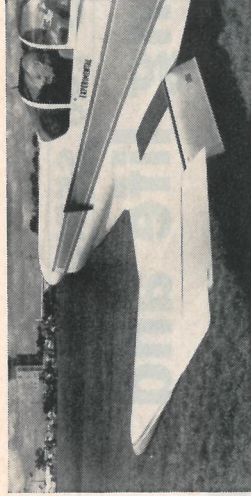
DESPITE CLASSY LOOKS, plane is designed for easy home building by eliminating tricky compound curves



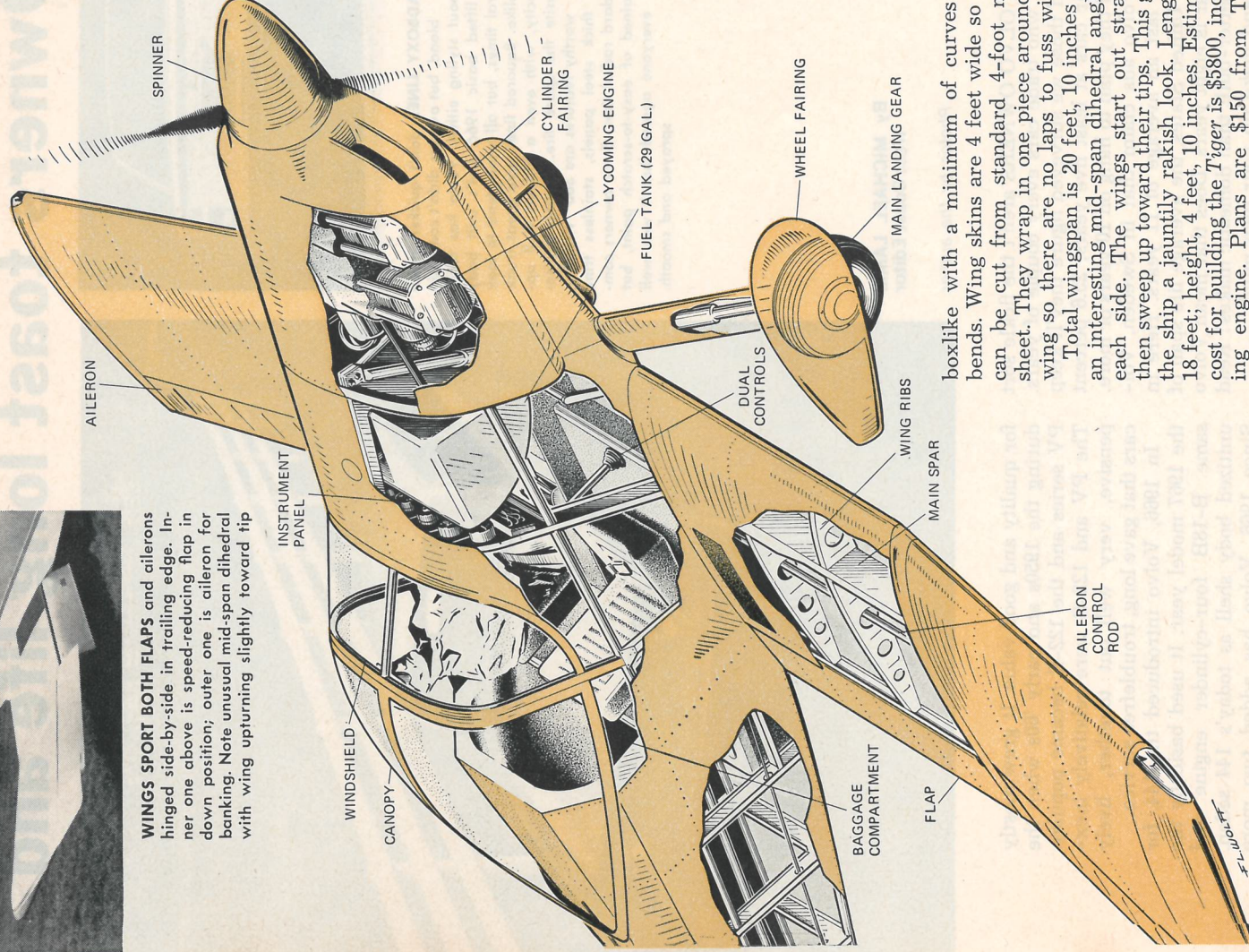


SIMPLE FUSELAGE (top photo, left) shows why T-18 is so easy to build. Ship is slab-sided with minimum of curves and bends. Streamlined nose cowling, prop spinner, wheel pants and other smart touches are what turn this plain Jane into the jazzy-looking little beauty shown at bottom. Cockpit view (center photo at left above) shows dual joy stick controls and elaborate instrument panel. Powerplant is a 150-hp Lycoming engine, giving the fleet-winged Tiger an impressive top speed of nearly 200 mph

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WINGS SPORT BOTH FLAPS and ailerons hinged side-by-side in trailing edge. Inner one above is speed-reducing flap in down position; outer one is aileron for banking. Note unusual mid-span dihedral with wing upturning slightly toward tip



boxlike with a minimum of curves and bends. Wing skins are 4 feet wide so they can be cut from standard 4-foot metal sheet. They wrap in one piece around the wing so there are no laps to fuss with.

Total wingspan is 20 feet, 10 inches with an interesting mid-span dihedral angle on each side. The wings start out straight, then sweep up toward their tips. This gives the ship a jauntily rakish look. Length is 18 feet; height, 4 feet, 10 inches. Estimated cost for building the *Tiger* is \$5800, including engine. Plans are \$150 from Thorp Engineering Co., Box 516, Sun Valley, Calif. 91352. ★★