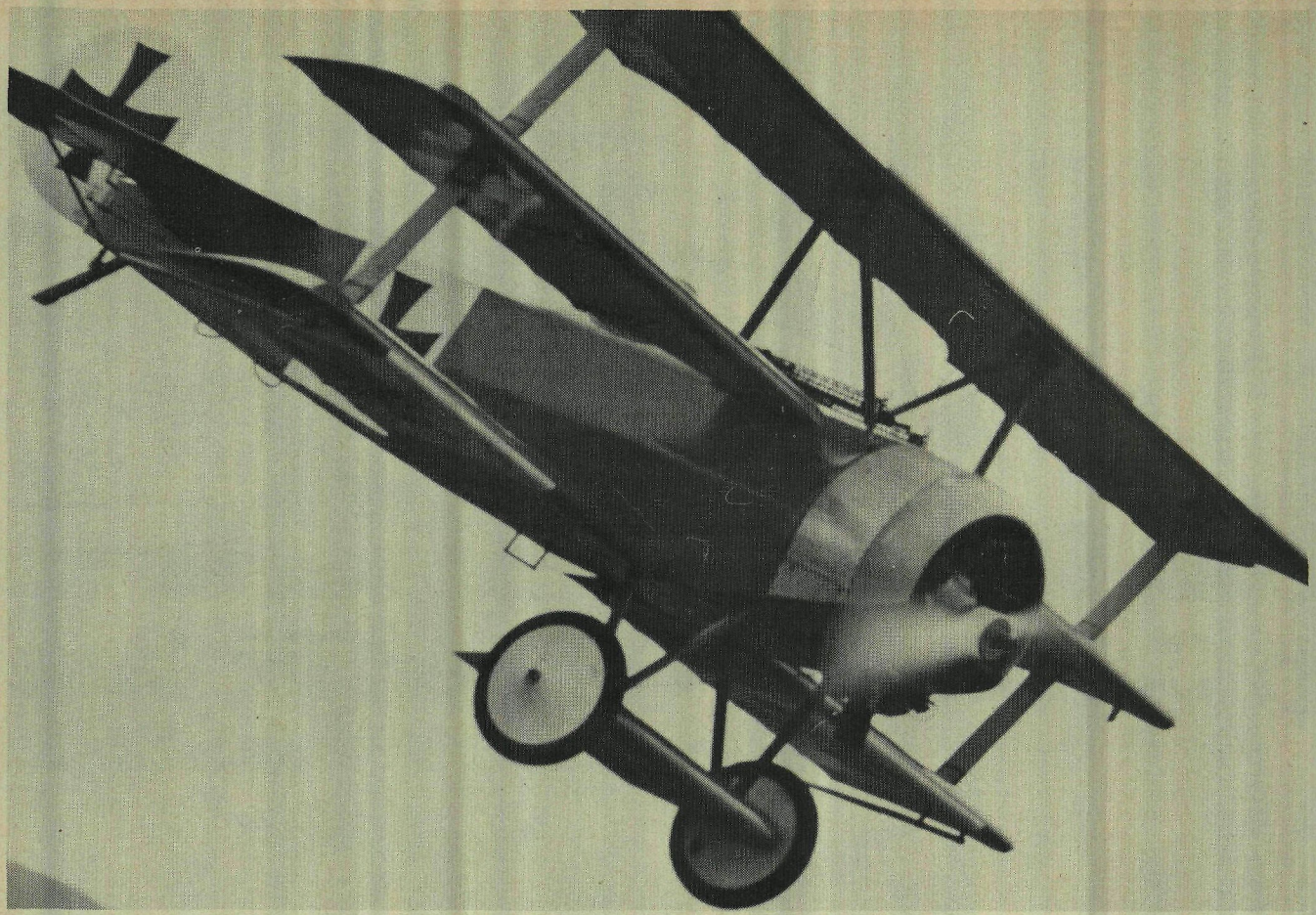

frightened yourself with it a couple of times, however, you learn to roll on the bank gently whilst using *bottom* rudder pressure to prevent the nose rising up of its own accord and tightening the slip angle. The landing itself presents no problems so long as you are, once again, exactly into wind. The Camel sits down on three points at around 37 m.p.h. and if you have elected to make a wheeler landing (which is by far the safest in any sort of wind or turbulence) she stays on the ground in almost any attitude, providing you make a very slight check forward at the moment of touchdown. The rubber bungee-cord suspension soaks up surface bumps very well, and although I always have the feeling throughout the roll-out that the device is going to ground-loop at any second, it never actually has. (Yet.)

Getting out of the Camel and into the Fokker, you will notice first the appalling lack of forward visibility. The Camel's in-flight visibility is less than inspiring, for thanks to the short-barrelled engine-guns-pilot-fuel layout you are handicapped by sitting more or less between the wings, but at least you can see something when sitting on the ground. In the Triplane you can't see *anything*: the mid-wing is a few inches in front of your face and exactly at pilot's eye level, so that, crane your neck as you may, the entire forward vista consists of a thick line of scarlet with a scalloped trailing edge. As you taxi out and your wing-men point you in the take-off direction (exactly into wind again) you sit there wondering how on earth you are going to keep straight when the only bit of landscape you can see is the good earth ten feet in front of the lower (or should it be lowest?) wing.

Your fears are not unjustified. In the first seconds of the take-off roll you discover that the pilot of a departing Fokker Triplane has to be very much on his toes, both literally and figuratively. The basic problem is that the silly little all-moving 10p piece of a rudder turns out to be incredibly effective as soon as you open the throttle. It is also utterly lacking in feel and not connected to the tail-skid in any way, so that you inevitably over-control and end up dancing on the bar in a series of over-corrections throughout the take-off. Once the tail comes up the forward visibility improves from non-existent to merely abysmal, but by this time the damage is done. Every pilot's first departure in the Triplane ends up as a tail-wagging exercise—like a goldfish under maximum acceleration.

Once airborne there is time to take stock. The speeds and performance turn out to be remarkably similar to the Camel's and the lack of control harmony is the same, only worse. Throughout the performance envelope the rudder remains fantastically light and twitchy, whilst the ailerons are enormously heavy. So heavy, in fact, that you soon realise why the original Fokker had all its engine and gun controls mounted on the stick: in combat, the pilot *had* to be able to use both hands on the pole at all times, or else! In the replica, loops are easy, barrel rolls are possible but slow rolls are only just barely on at all: even starting at just under 120kt (V_{NE}) and using both hands, you find the roll-rate to be so slow that "dishing out" is more or less inevitable. The Triplane's real forte is stall turns and slow flight: you can haul the nose up and fly her deep into the mush with the airspeed around 30kt indicated, confident that when the stall does catch up with you the break will be gentle and the recovery instant. Spins, similarly, are Tiger-like and straightforward on the recovery.

In simulated combat conditions, the Triplane and Camel are pretty evenly matched. Both have a best rate of climb of around 65 m.p.h., giving 900-1,000ft/min, and both will achieve 100-105 m.p.h. flat out in level flight. The Camel's V_{NE} in a dive is 165 m.p.h. against the Triplane's 138, but these figures are necessarily somewhat arbitrary on aircraft of this nature. If them thar guns were loaded we would probably find the Triplane's ultimate velocity down-