MEGATECH
Wright Flyer

READY TO FLY

by Jef Raskin

Out of the box fun!

SPECS

PLANE: Wright Flyer
MANUFACTURER: Megatech
DISTRIBUTOR: Megatech
TYPE: Twin Electric semi-scale sport flyer/trainer
FOR: Beginner to advanced pilots
FLYING WEIGHT: 2.9 oz.
LENGTH: 12.5 in.
WINGSPAN: 15.5 in.
WING AREA: 64 sq. in.
WING LOADING: 6.5 oz./sq. ft.
RADIO: Megatech 2-channel 27 MHz band dedicated transmitter, Megatech 2-channel dedicated motor driver receiver
POWER SYSTEM: NiMH 7.2V 130mAh (two packs provided)
FULL THROTTLE POWER: 2.5 amps, 18 watts; 6.2 W/oz., 99 W/lb.
TOP RPM: 18,700
DURATION: 4 to 5 minutes
MINIMAL FLYING AREA: 1/2 football field (beginner) basketball court (advanced)
PRICE: $100
COMPONENTS NEEDED TO COMPLETE: 8 AA alkaline cells

SUMMARY

The Megatech Wright Flyer is a nifty, ready-to-fly 2-channel sport-scale twin that is controlled by differential throttle. It handles well in the air. The included historical booklet about the Wrights and their achievements is accurate, well-written, and has great detail photos that show how the Wrights succeeded. The price is right.
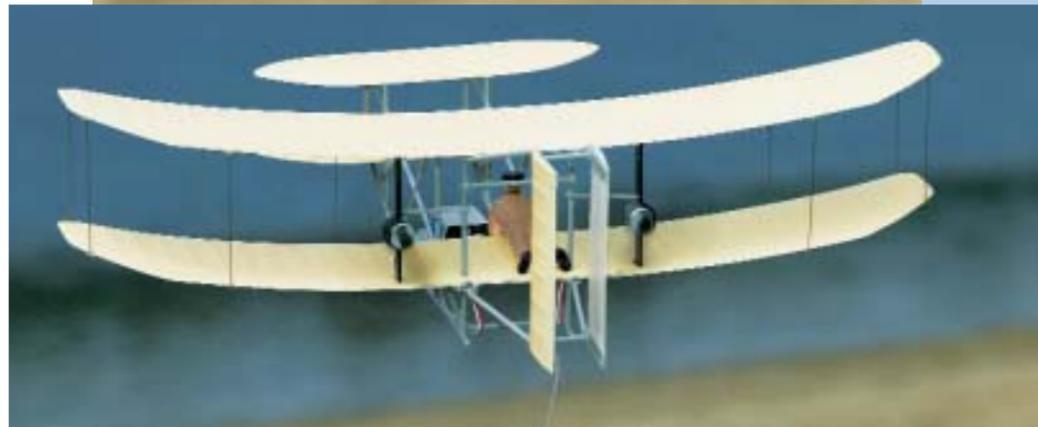
Because December 2003 was the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' first successful powered flight, many kits of their now-famous "Flyer" have come out. Recently, Megatech tossed its hat into the ring with what the box said was a Ready To Fly (RTF) model that spanned a tiny 15.5 inches and weighed all of 2.9 ounces. I know from experience that few models of the Wright Flyer fly well, that tiny

motors with skimpy props rarely do a good job, and that models whose only controls are motor speed (with no moving aerodynamic surfaces such as rudders or elevators) are often not very satisfactory. I also know that RTFs are often a lot more difficult to get ready than they say. I was in for several pleasant surprises.

As much as I doubted its flyability, I have to admit that it is a good-looking model. Before sacrificing it to

the sky gods, I put it on its cute stand and took a photo. The Megatech Flyer is a true RTF. There is NO building: you just lift it out of the box, charge the batts, and it's off for the wild blue yonder. I measured and weighed it: everything was exactly as promised.

Like the tiny $1/64$ scale cars, the NiMH flight batteries charge from the transmitter. A neat wrinkle is a little dot on the 6-cell battery pack that changes color from yellow to a distinct orange when the battery is charged (it gets warm, and the dot is temperature sensitive). I followed the clear and complete instructions: the battery got warm, the dot changed color. I also watched the clock and found that it did not go over their charging time limit. As instructed, I charged and discharged the battery twice before attempting flight.

AIRBORNE

It was a beautiful and windless day at a local schoolyard for my first attempt, so I turned on the transmitter, plugged in the still-warm battery, did a range test as advised, and with images of the pretty little thing lying in shards at my feet in a few seconds, tossed it into the barely detectable breeze. Here's where all my years of experience with designing, building, and flying models came in: I had been wrong on every count.

The model not only *didn't* crash, but it flew very well. It climbs with great authority, has nice banking turns, and is very controllable. On one charge I had three flights of 1.5 minutes each. By the third flight of that charge the rate of climb was more realistic, but it had no trouble climbing. On a full charge it heads for the clouds pronto. The tiny motors are very powerful, and sound as if they could grind coffee...maybe rocks.

On another day the wind was a bit gusty—conditions under which the instructions say not to fly. Disobedient me flew it twice anyway, and while it was a handful, it had enough control to fly where I wanted it to go and to land without damage on the runway. The recommend landing is on pavement; a good idea.

IF YOU ARE A BEGINNER

A beginning pilot should follow the instructions in all respects. As the book says, fly open patterns in a large space. But an expert will find that the Flyer can be maneuvered in tight places. The left stick turns the motors on or off, and the right stick turns the craft by making the motors go at unequal speeds, or if the motors are off, by turning only one on. It is not that different than controlling a conventional rudder-only model with a standard American Mode II transmitter. Throttle is on the left stick, turning is on the right.

The Megatech Flyer is a sport-scale model in terms of scale accuracy, and is better than some others. I was glad to see that it comes with extra props, canards, and fins—just in case. Beginners, learning on their own, would run through a lot of spare parts. It flies long enough to be useful for training. An instructor remains a good idea.

CONCLUSION

I have rarely been more wrong about a model's potential.

Megatech has a nifty Flyer. Even the historical booklet about the Wrights and their achievements is accurate, well-written, and—along with the photos you expect—

The battery charges from the transmitter in about 3 minutes. When the dot turns from yellow to orange, as shown here, the Wright Flyer is ready to go.

has great detail photos that show how the Wrights succeeded. The list price of the Flyer is $140, but I've seen it advertised for $80. It's a good buy—keep in mind that it is complete and fully built. Just put 8 AA alkaline batteries into the transmitter and you're good to go. Removing Wilbur (or is it Orville?) cured a slight (very slight) left turn it had in the glide.

Once you are done flying, you can put the transmitter you can put the plane, transmitter, and all else in the sturdy box where the Flyer is well protected as it waits for its next outing. My hat's off to Megatech on this one; if you want small, this is definitely the right Wright. ✪

This flying model is handsome enough to grace a desktop.

Links

Megatech, www.megatech.com, (201) 662-8500.

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 161.