

Dakota Hawk Progress Report

Story and Photos by Allan Leppanen

Some of you readers might be interested in a progress report on the construction of my aircraft, a Fisher Flying Products (F.F.P.) Dakota Hawk that I'm building from plans.



Completed example of a Dakota Hawk

In the May issue of UPAC News, I gave a bit of a description of the Hawk, my reasons for choosing it, my progress at that time, and stated that I would be registering the plane as Amateur built. Since that time I've decided to go the Basic Ultralight route. I won't be taking any short-cuts with materials or methods, but I will be saving the cost and apprehension of inspections, have less mandatory equipment to install, and will have vastly reduced paper work to struggle with.

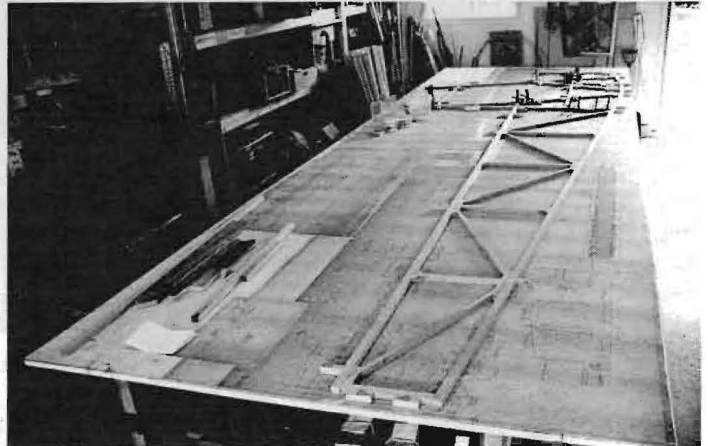
Of course I won't be able to carry non-pilot passengers, but I can live with that as a lot of pleasure flying is done solo anyway. I probably would have been happy with a single seater but the two seater, flown solo, should have good performance and I'll be able to carry lunch, camping gear, or some such stuff.

Since the last report I've completed the wings and hung them from the garage ceiling (to give them some early air time) and worked on the fuselage which is now about 90% done, wood-work wise.

The sides were framed out on the work table over the full size plans, stood up side by side, and joined with various cross members, bulkheads, spar carry-throughs, the instrument panel, and so on. All very familiar to any model plane builder! The longerons are $\frac{3}{4}$ " square spruce, and most of the diagonals are $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Lots of blocks and gussets are epoxied in place. The sides will have $\frac{1}{8}$ " ply applied full length, but I'll leave this off for now, as well as the firewall, to make for easier access to install the controls,

seats and instruments.

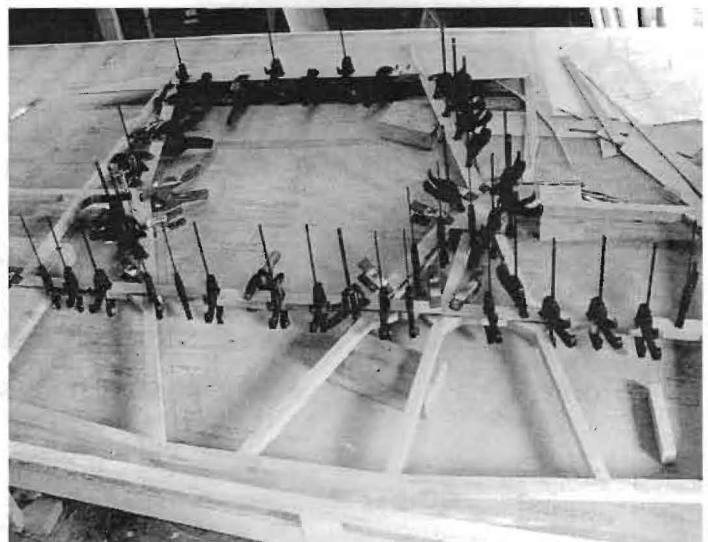
I've followed the plans quite closely except for raising the rear of the top center stringer to give a bit of a razor-back appearance, and changing the parcel shelf area a bit to allow larger, more rounded, side rear windows. I've offered up one of the wings to the fuselage, and it looks like they'll mate up alright. The cowl mounted fuel tank came from F.F.P. in Woodbridge as did the



One fuselage side being constructed on the full size blueprint.

one wing tank.

The plans include full size prints for everything except the assembled wings. No photos are included in the instructions, but help is available from Paul at F.F.P. and through the active Yahoo group for all the various F.F.P. planes at ffphomebuilts@yahoo.com.



Fuselage side at the door area.

I'm still enjoying this project, especially now that it "looks more like an airplane", and according to my log book I have enjoyed about 1050 hours of it so far.

Total expenditures to date are about \$8,800 which includes a half-time Continental A-75, plans, all wood, T88 Epoxy, two welded aluminum fuel tanks, used V.F.R. instruments, and miscellaneous "hardware". Major expenses to come will be the propeller (probably Warp-Drive), wheels and brakes, covering, and paint, but it still should come in under \$20,000.

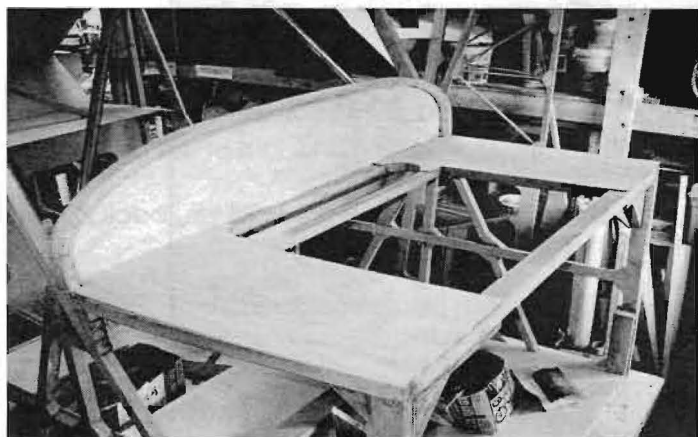
If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at alepp@sentex.ca. In my last report I managed to put my own e-mail address in wrong! My apologies to anyone that tried to contact me. Allan Leppanen`



Symmetrical Fuselage. Horizontal stabilizer and elevators are just resting in place.



Fuselage outside for the first time showing meticulous craftsmanship.



Gas tank location and instrument panel.



Front View of fuselage with gas tank set in place.