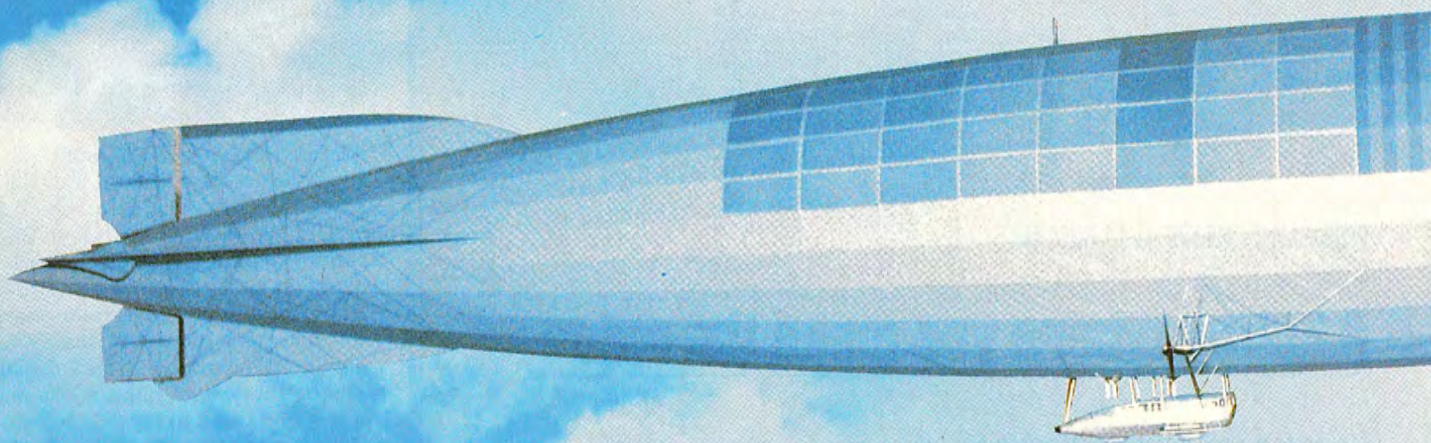


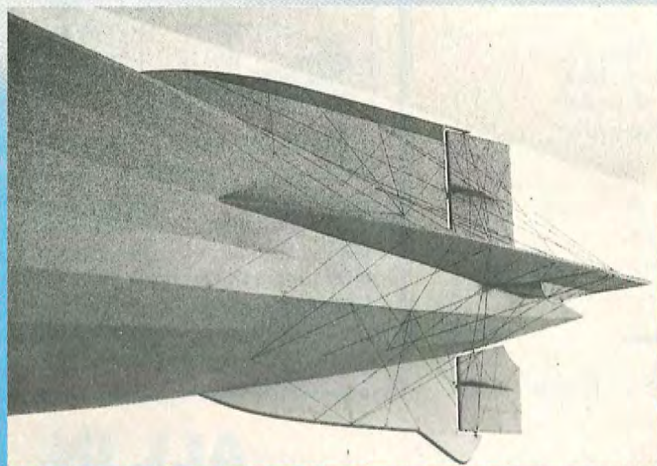


The rear gondola powered a propeller at the rear and two outriggers on the side of the envelope.



## FSM SHOWCASE SPECIAL FEATURE **Matt Hargreaves' huge**

*Even in 1/72 scale this scratchbuilt*

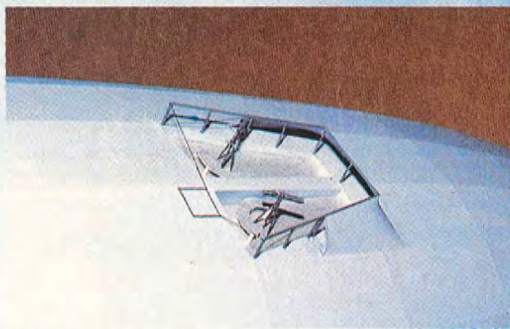


The rigging on the Zeppelin's cruciform tail is a spider's nightmare!

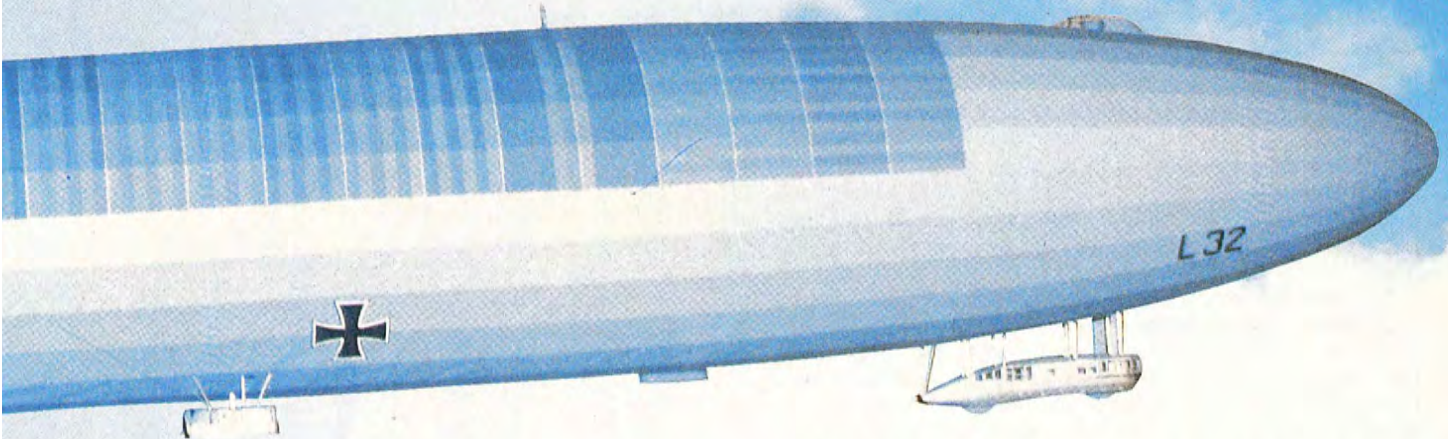
**M**ATT HARGREAVES considered building a 1/72 scale World War One German airship as far back as 1982. After consulting with several of his friends (who thought he was crazy to try it), he began construction. He started off finding ways to produce vacuum-formed kits of the huge airship, but eventually decided on rib-and-skin construction.

One of the first steps was to locate scale drawings. William Kerka, president of The Lighter Than Air Society, supplied Matt with drawings which chronicled the modifications of the airships during the war. The drawings, plus Douglas Robinson's *The Zeppelin in Combat* and Ray Rimell's *Zeppelin!*, provided the information Matt needed to build the model.

To start, Matt determined the size of the circular formers then made them from .060" sheet styrene. Connecting the formers are sheet styrene ribs. All this was built on a core of 2 1/4"-diameter PVC plumbing pipe which was removed once the assembly set. The fins were fashioned from 1/8" Plexiglas and fit into slots in the formers.



The bow machine gun nest must have been an exciting spot during a fight with Allied fighters.



The huge Zeppelin model hangs by wires from Matt's ceiling. The different-colored panels on the top are thought to be unpainted fabric to allow leaking hydrogen to escape the envelope. (Photos by Thom Walls)

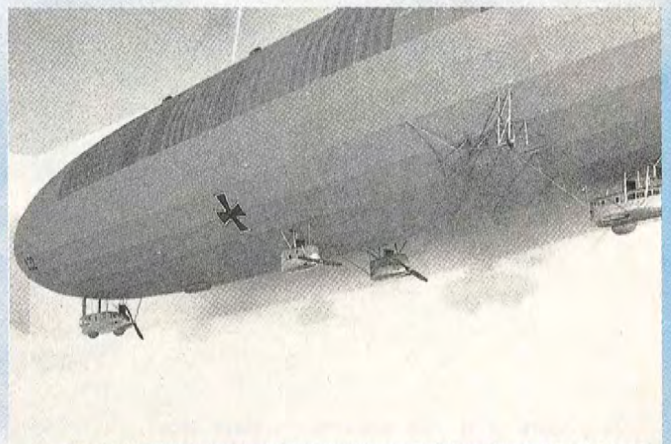
## German R-class rigid airship

*masterpiece is nine feet long!*

Matt originally covered the model with Monokote, a lightweight Mylar covering for flying models. However, Monokote is designed to shrink when heated and adhere to balsa. As Matt heat shrunk the covering, disaster struck. "The material shrunk, but when it cooled, it expanded again and looked terrible," he said. "A week later I attended a radio control model meet and talked with a representative of Top Flite Models Inc., the manufacturer of Monokote. The rep told me I should use Econokote, which shrinks at 250 degrees Fahrenheit (as opposed to 400 degrees for Monokote) and adheres to plastic. I stripped the Monokote and applied the Econokote — it worked!"

To paint the Zeppelin, Matt enlisted the aid of an auto body paint shop. "I prepared the surface with a Scotch-brite pad to provide tooth for the paint," Matt explains. "Since the Econokote surface was thin and flexible, I had the shop crew use a gray paint that contained flexing agents. The paint caused the tightly stretched Mylar

*FSM Showcase continues on page 26.*



Six propellers churned to move the giant Zeppelin through the air. Bumpers on the bottom of the forward and rear gondolas cushioned landings.



To get an idea of the size of this model, Matt posed the partially built envelope with a 1/72 scale Heracles and Spad (on white card).

skin to relax a little, but when it set the skin returned to normal.

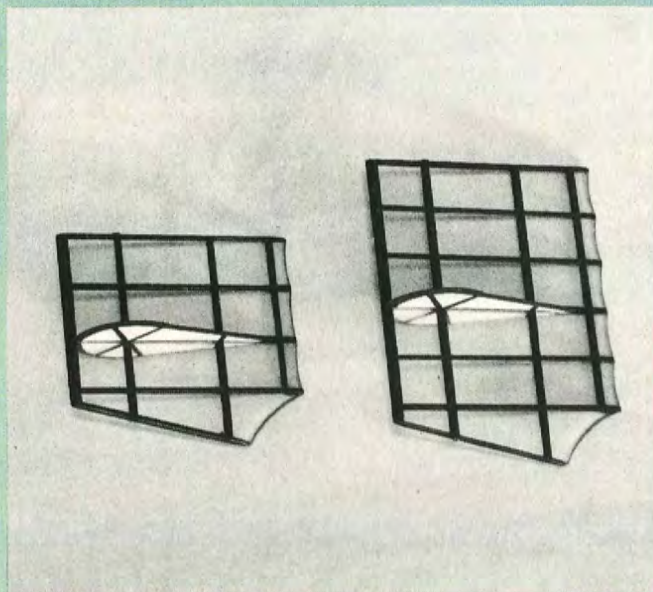
"The different colored panels on the top of the airship's envelope may have been unpainted fabric to allow flammable hydrogen that may have leaked from the gas bags to escape. I used four shades of gray enamel to paint this area."

Matt carved the gondolas and engine pods from wood, then had vacuum-formed styrene copies made by Airframe Models in Canada. Then he installed interior details and acetate windows. Contrail strut stock mounts the gondolas and pods to the envelope. An unusual feature of large combat airships were gun emplacements mounted to the envelope. Matt used model railroad corrugated foil on the floor of the gun stations and Aeroclub white-metal guns.

Matt's airship was a star attraction at the 1986 IPMS/U. S. A. convention in Sacramento, California, and it captured a trophy for best small-scale scratchbuilt aircraft. Small in scale perhaps, but huge in size—Matt's creation hangs from two swag hooks mounted in the ceiling.

**FSM**

[Matt is grateful to John Tarvin and Thom Walls for their assistance in the Zeppelin project.]



The fins were fashioned from Plexiglas and inserted in slots in the envelope formers.



The man and his monster—Matt Hargreaves and his R-class rigid airship.