CHECKALA ROMA

by DAVIS AND MAY SLAGLE
Member A.M.A.

1946 NATIONAL STUNT CHAMPION AND WINNER
OF A MOST IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF TROPHIES

DAVE SLAGLE got into model plane flying by the same means that seems to capture the interest of most other newcomers, that is, by hanging around the flying field watching the activities, and asking innumerable questions of anyone who could be badgered into answering them. His first ship was a big, old Skybaby built by Bob Palmer, which Dave's Dad and Mother acquired for him in October, 1944, along with a small stunt job which speedily proved to be practically useless.

Dave got the big ship off for his first flight like a real veteran and brought it in for a perfect landing on the very first try. The flight itself was not too smooth, but it was a good beginning.

But such luck without practice was too good to last, and on the second flight he must have given it "down" instead of "up," for it plowed majestically into the cement. The ship itself was not damaged much, but the cylinder of the old Dennymite was broken completely across the bottom. However, Dad came through in the clutch with a friend who silver-soldered the pieces so well that the engine was hotter than ever!

Dave was soon flying again, to such good purpose that he entered an LERC (Lockheed Employees Recreation Club) sponsored meet and captured the first trophy for his collection, a Tiger Shark kit. Bobby Thomas, another eleven-year-old, was the only other junior present, and he, too, carried off a prize. Shortly after this meet Dave was invited to join the Burbank Model Club, where the lower age limit of fourteen years had to be relaxed considerably to allow eleven-year-old Dave to enter. Most of the older fellows were great at encouraging and helping the younger members, and Dave gave up the Cub Scouts in order to attend the Tuesday night meetings of the Model Club. Pretty soon the Skybaby had acquired the name of "Bulldozer," and had most of the local model flyers shudder in their sleep at the close shaves it got while performing some of the antics Dave demanded of it.

On his twelfth birthday the elder Slagles came through with an Ercoupe, which Dave proceeded to power with a Cyclone bought with money acquired from the sacrifice of a treasured electric train.

Unfortunately, however, the Ercoupe came to grief in its first contest, breaking the wing in an inverted dive. Later it was discovered that the control rod was bending because of the lack of leads in the bulkheads, but for this contest Dave had to fall back on old Bulldozer, which performed in storybook fashion to save the day.

From then on Bulldozer went to every contest, regardless of what newer ships might be in flying commission!

One day, Reginald Denny saw Dave fly at Santa Monica and was so impressed that he promised the youthful modeler the very first engine to come off the production line after the war, a promise which was fully kept. Dave is very proud of this little powerplant.

About this time Dave began dreaming of a ship for inverted flight, and after much consultation, study, and burning of midnight oil "Chickery Chick" resulted. The first flight was again a big success, but the second ended in one of those really superior-type crashes in which the engine gets relocated in the rear of the fuselage. Nevertheless, inverted flying was soon resumed, with dozens of experiments with gas tanks and engine mounts of weird and wonderful design. Chickery Chick began to show signs of wear and tear, so "Chala Chala" (wonder where these names come from?) was cooked up as a successor, but an overly thin rib section which made the ship fast but tricky on control was unsatisfactory to the piloting member of the family.

Dave soon started the "Checkala Roma," with thicker, wider ribs and a wider elevator.

Checkala Roma's large wing area and tail surfaces allowed for much of its "hardware"-getting performances.