



Coming in to land.

The SOARING TEST PILOT

FLIES THE FRANKLIN PS-1 UTILITY GLIDER

It seems fitting to open this series with my flight impressions of the best known and most popular general purpose glider in America. R. E. Franklin, who designed it, and whose name it bears, gave us the utility when he built a glider with low wing loading and safe flying qualities that could be used both for primary training and preliminary soaring. When the first of the fifty-one Franklins, which have been built so far, came out of the Ypsilanti, Michigan, factory eight years ago, it represented a real contribution to motorless aviation, with its rugged, welded steel tube fuselage, landing wheel with brake, and wings braced with streamline metal struts.

Climbing into the latest Franklin the other day, I found the new sliding cockpit cover a great convenience. It opens on the left side and slides forward and then around to the right. I slipped into the canvas "lazy back" seat and found that it can be replaced by a removable aluminum bucket seat placed further forward and holding the student in an upright position for training. This also gives the necessary nose heavy condition for protection against spinning in a stall. Putting my feet on the rudder pedals, I noticed that they are equipped with handy heel guards to keep your feet from slipping off. Reaching to right and left, I brought the webbed safety belt around my middle and fastened it in place with the simple clasp and snap.

Closing the cockpit cover, I took hold of the stick with my right hand and moved it all around, to test the freeness and proper working of the controls. Here I noticed, immediately, the smoothness made possible by ball bearings in this latest model. As I moved the ailerons and flippers, I also pushed my feet to and fro, to test the rudder. I next looked down for the brake and release controls. Here, again, I found evidence of R. E. Franklin's practical inventiveness. For the brake control there is a short bar, Brake—bar—B, and for the release there is a ring, Release—ring—R. The idea is to make it so simple and clear as possible, so you won't pull the wrong one in an emergency. Both bar and ring are fastened to cables protected by tubes. The first goes to a brake shoe working directly on the airwheel, which constitutes the landing gear. The second leads to the special Franklin release, which uses a 2 inch ring on the

EDITOR'S NOTE: Several years ago, we helped inaugurate the "Sportsman Test Pilot" series in the *Sportsman Pilot* magazine. We flew a new type of airplane each month and gave our opinion of it, sometimes incurring the wrath of the manufacturers, but always stimulating the readers' interest so that this department still continues under the able direction of Franklin T. Kurt. By permission of Charles Hanson Gale, Editor of the *Sportsman Pilot* and member of the Executive Committee of the S.S.A., we herewith inaugurate a Test Pilot series for motorless aircraft.

towline and has the advantage of being closed by someone standing in front of the ship, without reaching in the cockpit to pull the ring. This will be replaced in future models by the D.L.V. release.

A fellow club member inserted the tow ring, I pulled the release to make sure it was working properly, and he again clicked it in place. I did not need him to hold the wing tip level, as this ship is equipped with the wing skids developed for the Navy, which make it very easy to pick up a wing soon after you start moving. As the rope became taut, I moved the rudder from side to side as a signal that I was ready to take off. With left hand on the release ring, my right hand held the stick in neutral as we began to move.

The pick-up of the V-8 was very fast and, with a steady breeze blowing, I found myself off the ground in about sixty feet at an airspeed of about twenty-five m.p.h. Almost immediately I had sufficient aileron control to keep the wings level. At first I held the stick a bit forward, so that the rear skid would not rub on the grass and the wheel could entirely support the ship until flying speed was reached. Then a slight pull on the stick and the ship lifted easily into the air.

On the climb, I found the elevator control was such that I had to hold the stick only part way back and without much pressure. The first part of the climb was gradual, to allow for any possible breakage of the towline, and then I pulled it up quite steeply, still without much backward pressure on the stick. It climbed very rapidly, as the airspeed needle hovered between 35 and 40. In short order, I was up over 500 feet and, as I saw the tow car getting close to the corner of the field, I nosed down a bit and pulled the release.

The field was close to a ridge and the wind was blowing at right angles to it, so I immediately swung around to the right to see if I could catch the updraft before I lost too much altitude. The ship banked as I pushed the stick to the right and kicked some rudder, but not quite as rapidly as I had grown to expect after flying airplanes and the latest sailplanes. This ship flies at a slower speed, so the control is, naturally, not as instantaneous, but it felt sure enough. (Cont. on Page 12)