

The SOARING TEST PILOT FLIES THE "KOMAR BIS"

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Despite my frequent trips to various parts of the country to promote interest in gliding and soaring, there have not been too many opportunities of flying new ships. So it was with real pleasure that I accepted an invitation from the Falcon Glider Club of Pittsburgh to fly their new Polish sailplane, Komar Bis, described in the November SOARING. The club was anxious that I come to Pittsburgh during the visit from Poland of Tadeusz Derengowski, Silver C pilot, who spent a few weeks with them giving them instructions with the new ship.

The Komar Bis is a very good looking sailplane painted entirely dull cream or buff color. For an intermediate sailplane designed primarily for training, it has unusually pleasing lines. The large 52 foot span of its tapered wing gives it the appearance of high performance design, until you notice the high lift wing and type of construction.

As a couple of club members pushed open the doors of the hangar, three more made ready to carry the ship out. Opening two metal doors on each side of the nose, they slid through a bar with which they lifted it outside. From here it was pulled by car across the airport. After



Falcon Glider Club on Bettis Field *Walter Ganserwitz*

the arrival at the take-off position, I stooped under the wing to take a close look at a strut which is a round steel tube with fairing. Examining the empennage and the tail, and seeing the pendulum elevators, I remarked to Derengowski that we prefer a fixed stabilizer with hinged elevators, and he told me that this type is now required by Polish regulations which have banned the pendulum type. Walking on around the balanced rudder of pleasing shape, I went for a look in the cockpit.

Painted gray with cloth map cases of the same color on either side, the cockpit gives a very finished appearance. The wide windshield, held in by two slip-in fittings on either side and a spring with release in the center, was removed. Gromada helped me on with an Irvin type back pack parachute, manufactured under license in Poland. As I prepared to step in, he showed me the leather headrest, which comes off and forms the cover of a convenient barograph compartment.

Slipping into the comfortable curved seat and putting my feet on the rudder pedals, I was surprised to find so much room for someone as long as I. Moving the rudder with my feet, and the stick with my hand, I was pleased to find that the controls are mounted on ball bearings throughout. The release I found on the left, under the instrument board. It is in the shape of an enclosed metal handle, through which you slip your hand for a good grip. The release mechanism itself is very simple, being a curved hook disappearing inside the fuselage when open and curving against the forward part of the shock cord hook when closed. This leaves a very small space for a ring and the standard type used is not more than an inch and a quarter in diameter.

The ship has no wheel, landing instead on a conventional wooden skid mounted on rubber blocks for shock absorbing. On the instrument board, I found on the left a Polish altimeter; in the center, a French variometer; and, on the right, a Polish air speed indicator. Derengowski fastened around me the four-way safety belt. The four straps, two for your shoulders and two to form the belt across your waist, are made of thick leather with a series of center holes reinforced with brass grommets. To fasten the belt, you take a pin resembling a big clevis, with the barrel about a half inch in diameter, put it through one strap at a time

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