

Power SAILPLANES

The Next Step in Soaring

by PETER RIEDEL

Translation by Walter Setz

✍

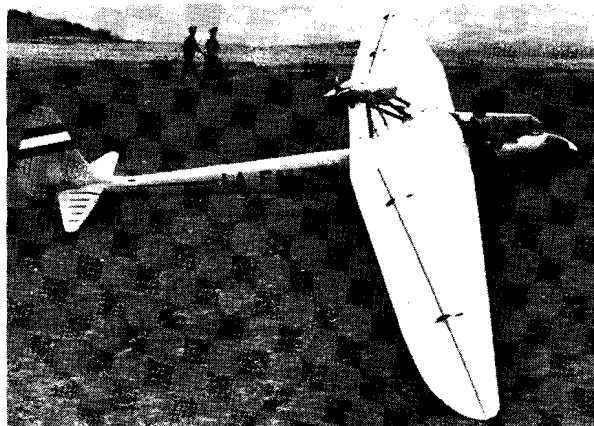
EDITOR'S NOTE: *It is our good fortune to have our first article on the application of power to a sailplane to facilitate its transportation about the country, written by Peter Riedel, the noted German pilot, who won our National Soaring Contest last year.*

It is clear that the necessary work in assembling and launching a sailplane cannot be done by one man. The following gives an idea of what a pilot must go through when he wants to make a flight.

The owner of a sailplane stands on the airport looking at the clouds. They are perfect and predict a good flight. The problem is: how can he get into the air? The poor man must run around in search of some men to help him drag his sailplane from the hangar.

It would probably happen that his friend, who flies the tow-plane, has no time that day. He must find another means of being towed. Perhaps he is fortunate enough to have a winch on his car. But then he needs

The author demonstrates light weight of engine.
Hans Schaller



The Condor Motor Glider

Alex Stocker

✍

help to operate the winch. After more chasing around, everything is ready and he can start.

No—wait—he can't start now! A man comes bouncing over the field on a motorcycle. He tells the sailplane pilot that in ten minutes a transport plane is coming in. The pilot must wait, or still better, not start at all. Then the poor man jumps out of cockpit and, while cursing motorless flight, puts his ship in the hangar.

However, if he has weathered all of this and is lucky enough to get in the air, he will forget the whole mess, and the happy owner of the sailplane will glory in the joy of this wonderful noiseless flight. But, alas, sooner or later he must come down, far from his home port. Maybe he had the fortune to have made 125 miles or so, but how is he going to get home with his ship? The car with the trailer is standing some 125 miles away. A good friend is needed, who is willing to spend the day at the airport until the landing report comes in. He must travel through the night to retrieve the soaring pilot. Early in the morning they return, after a sleepless night.

America has the greatest number of private owners of power planes. Someday it can have the most private owners of sailplanes, or rather, powered sailplanes; and now I have arrived at my subject.

The power sailplane is a compromise. There are disadvantages to all compromise solutions, but a compromise is better than no solution at all. The power sailplane should fulfill certain requirements. It should have:

1. Wheels on which the craft can be rolled.
2. A skid, so that good landings can be made in rough places.
3. An engine, so that without additional aid it can taxi to position, take off, and, after soaring to some distant field, fly back to its home port in the evening.
4. Good soaring qualities, so that distance flights can be made.
5. A two-place cabin. It is good to have a companion and the joy of one is doubled when shared by two. Single place power planes cannot be sold readily.

The engine with propeller, the passenger, the retractable landing gear, all means more weight. However, weight doesn't necessarily mean the sacrifice of good soaring qualities, if designed according to the best aerodynamic principles. Therefore, the power sailplane must have: