

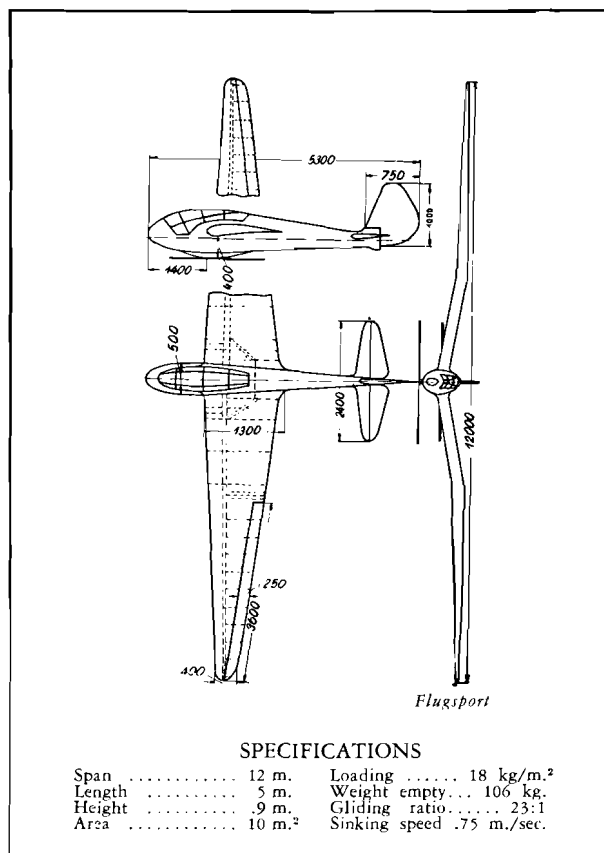
THE KOLIBRI *High Performance Sailplane*

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The Kolibri is a small sailplane of only 40 ft. span designed by Blessing and built by the glider division of the Luftwaffensportverein. The purpose of the design was to build a high performance ship as light and maneuverable as possible, which at the same time would offer no great constructional difficulties. The Göttingen 535 section is used thinned 10% to the gull point and from there out 15%. There is a geometrical twist of 3°.

To avoid heavy wing fittings, the main spars join in the center of the fuselage which is supported from them by steel straps. The spar on the first model was made considerably over-strength and weighs 47 pounds. The next one will weigh only 28 pounds. The weight empty is 265 pounds, which in the next ship constructed should be reduced by 37 pounds.

The cockpit has a semi-elliptical cross section. Its removable cover opens up the fuselage nearly half its length. In order to give the pilot more room, the parachute lies in the upper part of the fuselage behind the pilot's head.



Dismantling A Sailplane at 16,400 Feet Altitude

(Continued from page 2)

and chest chute straps had been torn so that I hung solely by the leg straps. If at the moment the chute had opened I had been hanging head down, I would have fallen out of the harness—at an altitude of about 16,000 ft.! Chills ran up and down my back at the thought of it.

At last I came out of the clouds at about 2500 ft. Below me a large city lay, which I thought must be Fulda. Now I was losing altitude rapidly but was being blown over a forest. I noticed small strips and splinters of my ship floating about me. Once, between 1000 and 1300 ft. above the ground it became very rough. The

chute was thrown around so much that for a time I was floating horizontally. Luckily it soon calmed down and drove me beyond the edge of the forest. In the fields bordering the forest I saw some people. I called, asking them to help me spill the chute as there was a strong ground wind blowing. Then I landed on a pathway 160 ft. from the forest and 65 ft. from a high-power line. Quickly the peasants were there and brought me first aid. Ten minutes later, to my surprise, some flying comrades appeared, the ground crew of my friend, Opitz. They said that they had seen pieces of a wing falling out of the clouds and a man hanging from a chute so they immediately hastened to my assistance.

A couple of hours later, while my head was being sewed and bandaged in a hospital in Fulda, I thought: "In spite of all this I'll soar again."