



Emil Lehecka

The late Robert Kronfeld enjoying American hospitality during his visit to the U. S.

**I**T is with the deepest regret we announce the death of Robert Kronfeld, one of the world's outstanding soaring pilots, airplane designers and research scientists, in a glider crash at Alton, Hampshire, England.

Robert Kronfeld was killed on February 12 in a General Aircraft tailless research glider which he was testing for the Ministry of Supply.

The glider—one of the three GAL-56 experimental aircraft—had just been released from its Handley Page "Halifax" tug at an altitude of about 17,000 ft. for low-speed tests.

Immediately after the release, the aircraft seems to have gone into a spin, from which it recovered.

## A GREAT GENTLEMAN PASSES

By CAPT. RALPH S. BARNABY

It then nose-dived, turned on its back and crashed out of control; some instants before the impact Kronfeld jettisoned his hood and told his observer that the controls were useless.

The observer saved himself by bailing out at 1,000 ft., whereas Kronfeld seemed to have been stunned during the descent.

Robert Kronfeld was born in Vienna in 1904 and became a British subject in 1939. Before the advent of Hitler he played a leading part in gliding and soaring in Austria and Germany, and in 1939 he won the "Daily Mail" \$1,000 prize for being the first man to cross the Channel both ways in a sailplane.

When the Nazis began to infiltrate in Austria in 1933, he left the country and soon was one of the outstanding soaring and lightplane protagonists in Switzerland, France, Italy and Great Britain.

Upon the outbreak of war he joined the Royal Air Force and, with the rank of Squadron Leader, became Senior Technical Officer and Test Pilot of the Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment. In this capacity he contributed to the development of the gliders which the Allied Forces used in the invasion of Western Europe. The research work he was undertaking at the time of his death was an extension of his war-time activities.

During 1946, he visited this country, where he was well known, and delivered the Richard duPont Memorial Lecture in New York.

To those interested in gliding and soaring, the name of Robert Kronfeld has long been well known as one of the outstanding contenders and record holders in the early International Soaring Contests on the Wasserkuppe, as a distinguished author on gliding and soaring, as a test pilot of exceptional ability, and as a capable research scientist in motorless flight.

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### The G.A.L.56 Glider

**DIMENSIONS.**—Span, 45 ft. 4 ins. (13.8 m.); Length, 18 ft. 8 ins. (5.69 m.); Height, 11 ft. 6 ins. (3.51 m.); Aspect ratio, 5.8; Root chord, 11 ft. 4 ins. (3.46 m.); Tip chord, 3 ft. 7.6 ins. (1.1 m.); Dihedral angle, -1.5 degrees to +4.5 degrees; Washout, 5 degrees; Sweepback, 28.4 degrees (at quarter chord line); Wing (gross), 360 sq. ft. (33.4 m.<sup>2</sup>).

**AREAS.**—Total elevons, 55.2 sq. ft. (5.13 m.<sup>2</sup>); Total fin, 22.8 sq. ft. (2.12 m.<sup>2</sup>); Total rudder, 15.5 sq. ft. (1.44 m.<sup>2</sup>); Total flaps, 39.6 sq. ft. (3.68 m.<sup>2</sup>).

**WEIGHTS.**—Empty weight, with normal equipment, 3,244 lb. (1,475 kg.); All-up weight, with max. ballast, 4,400 lb. (2,000 kg.); Wing loading (max. load), 12.57 lb. sq. ft. (61.3 kg. m.<sup>-2</sup>).

**PERFORMANCE.**—Max. towing speed, 150 m.p.h. (241 km.p.h.) E.A.S.; Max. diving speed, 200 m.p.h. (322 km.p.h.) E.A.S.; Stalling speed, 58 m.p.h. (93.3 km.p.h.) E.A.S.

