

# SO YOU WANT TO BUY A GLIDER!

By DICK COMEY

Following is a list of the gliders currently advertised as being available to the soaring enthusiast in the U.S.:

**Two-Place Utility:** Schweizer 2-22 (NC), all-metal, complete and kits.

**Single-Place Utilities:** Schweizer 1-19 (NC), steel tube fuselage, wood wing, complete and kits; Briegleb BG-6 (NC), steel tube fuselage, wood wing, plans, kits and complete; Midwest MU-1 (NC) steel tube fuselage, wood wing, plans; Cadet Utility, (NC), wood, plans.

**Single-Place Intermediate Sailplane:** Schweizer 1-20, wood wing, 1-19 fuselage, plans; Briegleb BG-7 (NC pending), wood wing, BG-6 fuselage, plans; Midwest MI-1 (NC pending), wood wing, MU-1 fuselage, plans; Slingsby Prefect, (licensed in United Kingdom), wood, complete; Canadian Loudon, wood, plans.

**Two-Place Intermediate Sailplane:** Slingsby T21B (UK), wood, complete; French Caudron C.800, wood, complete.

**Two-Place Sailplanes:** Briegleb BG-8 (NC), wood, plans, kits and complete; used surplus ships—TG-1, TG-2, TG-3, TG-4. Pratt-Read.

**Single-Place Sailplanes:** Screamin' Wiener (modified), wood, plans; Kirby Kite and Kirby Gull (NC), wood, plans; French Castel C.311P, wood, complete.

**High-Performance Single-Place Sailplanes:** Schweizer 1-23 (NC) all-metal, complete; Prue 215, all-metal, plans; Ross-Johnson RJ-5, metal wing, wood fuselage, plans; Ross Zanon (modified), wood, plans; Slingsby-Gull IV (UK) wood, complete; Slingsby 34A (UK), wood, complete; Swedish Weihe (NC), wood, kit and complete; Swiss Moswey IV, wood, complete; French Air-100, wood, complete; French CM-8-15, wood, complete.

**Powered Sailplanes:** Hummingbird (2-place), metal wing, wood fuselage; French CM 8-R-15 (1-place), wood.

A lot can be said about the above list. It is not a complete list, but it does show just about every glider of interest to the American glider pilot. At first glance it would seem that there is no shortage of glider sources. However, the difficulty of home-building some of the types and the cost of many of the factory-built jobs narrows the field down to a scant handful for the average enthusiast.

A set of plans costs from \$25 to \$100 with \$50 being the more usual charge. A kit will run from a few hundred to over \$1000. To build a glider at home takes from six months to three years depending on the complexity of the design and the ability and perseverance of the constructor. (For the trials and joys of this work see "So I Decided to Build a Sailplane" in the Nov.-Dec., 1949 SOARING). A nice way to side-step this problem is to make an arrangement with a technical school whereby you buy the plans and pay for the materials while the school builds the glider as a class project and turns the finished product over to you. Under this system by starting now you can be flying your own new ship in about two years at a very reasonable cost.

Provided you or your club can put your hands on sufficient funds, the quickest, simplest and surest way to obtain a glider is to buy one already built. In

rough figures prices range from \$400 to \$1200 for a used ship and from \$800 (1-19) to \$10,000 (CM 8-R.15) for a new one. The more common price range for a new ship is \$1700 (2-22) to \$3000 (1-23).

Since World War II the number of gliders going out of service each year has exceeded our production and imports. Roughly 500 two-place sailplanes were built for the military during the war. Say 400 of these found their way into civilian hands through surplus sales. Allowing for normal attrition it is doubtful if 250 of these are still serviceable. All of them are eight or nine years old.

On the credit side of the ledger we have acquired 100 new gliders during the past five years. U. S. factory production has accounted for about 70 (1-19, 2-22, 1-23, Dragon Fly, 1-21, 1 20), home-building 25 (1-19, BG-8, BG-7, BG-6, Olympia, Hummingbird, Screamin' Wiener, RJ-5, 215, 2-22, flying wings, etc.) and imports 5 (Air-100, Olympia, Weihe, Horten IV).

An optimistic estimate of the present number of serviceable gliders in the U.S. would be 300-350. Last year we can assume about 10% went out of service or roughly 30. Factory production was less than 10 (mostly 1-23's). Home-building contributed less than 5 (most notably the RJ-5, 215 and Hummingbird). Imports were only two (Weihe, Horten IV).

It can be seen from all this that if soaring is to expand or even hold its own instead of sinking into oblivion we must increase our activity mightily on one or more of the three fronts of factory orders, home-building and imports.

Our one real glider factory, Schweizer Aircraft Corp., is becoming increasingly involved in military production. However, a supply of 1-19's is on hand, as are materials, spares and components for the fabrication of a number of 1-23's and 2-22's. Anyone desiring one of these ships had best place his order in 1951 or be prepared to wait until the end of the present national emergency which may last ten years. Per soaring and training dollar none of the foreign ships can compare with the 1-23 and 2-22 in their respective fields. While everything should be done to encourage and increase domestic production there is no doubt that importing gliders is a very healthy thing for our sport. For the purposes of comparison research and increased competition it would be extremely beneficial if one each of the Slingsby Prefect, T21B, Gull IV and 34A as well as the French C.800, C.311P and CM-8-15 could be brought to this country. A Moswey should also be included in the list of desired imports. The general purpose single-place (Prefect, C.311P) and two-place (T21B, C.800) machines might be worthy of importing in quantity. If these imports are to be made, it is up to our clubs and individual members to take the initiative.

In reviewing the ships for which kits and plans are available there are both bright and dark spots. The single-place situation is pretty good. The 1-19, BG-6 and MU-1 are all proven designs. However, a single-place utility while it is the easiest to build, is of limited usefulness in this day and age of two-place training.

Tapered wings can be built for these three models converting them into intermediate sailplanes. These