

GLIDE-AERO, INC.

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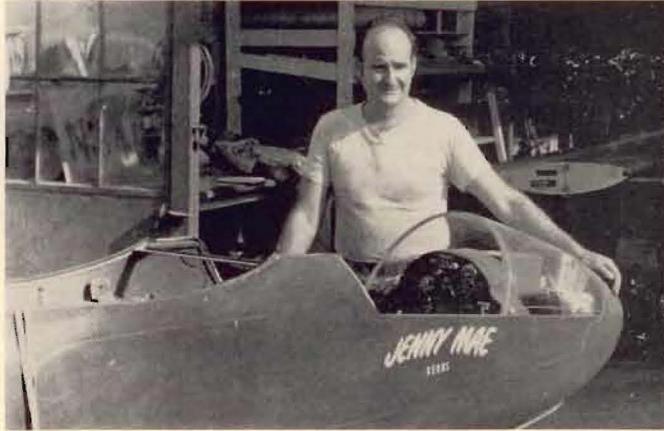
An outdoor steel crane structure offers another possibility for covered space and plans call for doing that soon. One other convenience, which was in when the property was acquired is a hydraulic car lift which makes an excellent work bench in the shop. Frank has installed a double toilet restroom and has been leveling the open ground to provide good drainage. He provided the use of his large storage building for the big SCSA dance in May which turned

ments and trailers to rent with a tow-plane to help the birds into their realm. In fact, a soaring trek to Texas for the 1956 Nationals is planned using the Kinner to launch ships each day on their way east.

There may be times when subcontracting jobs, such as the AT-6 exhaust stacks that were made at Glide-Aero recently, will detract from the main effort, but with an underlying dedication to the sport of soaring which Frank carries in his every thought, the future of West Coast soaring with the assistance of Glide-Aero, Inc. looks very bright indeed.

Frank Kerns and the Jenny Mae which is named for his mother who has encouraged him in his flying efforts since boyhood.

Photo: Licher



out to be a huge success. No better atmosphere could exist for a social gathering of glider folk than a glider business. A small office building on the property has been offered to the SCSA as a permanent home and for use in putting out the Thermal which shows how big Frank's heart is.

There will continue to be new ships built at Glide-Aero as time passes. A number of people have expressed interest in obtaining copies of the Jenny-Mae and Frank has 50 steel pod halves for that purpose. They will sell for \$5500.00 and put owners in a machine capable of challenging the best. The prototype was actually built at home by Frank, with Lyle Maxey doing the wing work. It is named for Frank's mother who has encouraged him in his flying efforts ever since young boyhood. It is the fourth complete design Frank has constructed and represents a huge step forward over the old primary and secondary he built and flew on the Palos Verdes hills near Long Beach in the early 30's.

And so Glide-Aero will continue to grow, slowly according to plan, as the facilities and demand for its services make themselves felt. Eventually there will be parachutes, radios, instru-

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chairman comprised the Rules Committee. The successful operation of the Regatta was due in no small measure to the intelligent rules as established by these three. So many had contributed; Aldrich and Hutchinson for meteorology; "Doc" Murdoch towing at Elsinore; Lester for publicity; Smith, Licher, Saudek, and Thomson for scoring; and Wolfe and Thompson for awards.

This long drive through the desert at night and into these early morning hours is ideal for musing. The heads of the fair ones have relaxed in slumber as the clear air has grown cooler and more comfortable. Bill remarks that it was beautiful this afternoon when he was about an hour away from Independence. Soaring along at 17,000' the visibility was startling. The blue of the sky was alive in richness of color vibration. The Sierra and White Mountain crags stood out in jagged relief. The valley floor looked reassuring with its myriad colors and scarcely discernible landing spots. One could experience the eerie feeling Bill described as he looked ahead

and saw the Jenny-Mae materialize against a white cloud as Lyle, already returning, passed 1500' above him.

It was less than an hour after this moment that Paul Bikle was heard telling his crew to continue past Bishop to Hawthorne, Nevada. Paul had realized that Maxey would probably make his goal and return. Paul's take-off card had called for a goal and return to 12 miles beyond Independence, but at 16:15 when approximately 18,000' above his goal he must have realized that Maxey was well over an hour ahead of him. Having been able to return only to Inyo-kern on a similar attempt yesterday, Bikle figured how many points he needed to assure himself of victory. If Lyle was successful then Paul needed a flight of 297 miles to beat him. The cloud street under which he was flying stretched far ahead into Nevada and Paul required roughly 110 more miles, so off he went.

Hoverman had grown sleepy, so the author took over the driving. Now, followed a rare experience. With no claims to clairvoyance, the imagination was allowed to project into Bikle's 1-23, and as it later proved the author closely pictured what happened. This insight began by seeing everybody at the homesite roasting weiners around the fire, feeling cozy and friendly with all the happy company as night falls. Paul still winging his way along his last glide over strange territory exercises his eyes to be sure of his depth perception. He finally starts his pattern over what he hopes is a suitable landing place. Alone with his decisions and judgment and the tight feeling in his stomach muscles, he turns off his base leg, and the dimly seen ground comes rushing up at him. Touchdown; then the convulsive wrenchings as his skid plows into the ground followed almost instantly by the last lurch as silence and nightfall hide him away from the world. The whirl of his gyros seems distant as all sound is deadened by fatigue which shouts from his tired body. His alter ego is detached from these aching muscles as he smiles in the knowledge that he is down safely and has won the contest. What care, that he is desolated in the wilds of Nevada while so many are back at homesite enjoying themselves. No feeling can equal the glow of inner satisfaction at having accepted the challenge of free flight and of having conquered.