

Soaring Readers Write

R. R. No. 1
Bristol, So. Dakota

"... Soaring is now my favorite magazine and I wish that I had started subscribing to it 15-20 years ago when I first became interested in flying. How about having an article on the different sailplanes and gliders around the country, make modifications or changes in them, airfoil used, full cantilever or braced wing, 1 or 2 pass., landing speeds, span, area and so on. Considering all the magazines I have, I believe I have very seldom seen any information like this.

"Continue to have articles or notes and pictures and 3 views on powered sailplanes. A 2 passenger type would in my opinion be just what I would want. In fact, I have a new idea for a sailplane or airplane of this type..."

Lester Sandvik

122-A Horner
China Lake, California

"... Let me congratulate you on your excellent publication and I'm hoping that this letter has reached you in time for me to get on your mailing list for the next issue. I am a member of the CHINA LAKE SOARING CLUB which has two TG-2 flat-topped planes, one PR, in need of covering, and a Benson tow type helicopter glider.

"I am very glad to get this letter off to you for another reason—I won't have to 'scrounge' each issue of SOARING from Al Sievert, our vice-president and instructor, who is a long time member of SSA."

John C. Rambo

Fisher Bldg.
Detroit 2, Michigan

"Several European Glider Pilots have been talking to us recently about the advantages of towing at the center of gravity of the glider, particularly on winch and auto tows. I have not heard of this being done in this country and was wondering if you could refer me to anyone who has experience with it or if you know of any articles which have been written covering this method."

Harner Selvidge

Montrose, Colorado

"I very much appreciate Pete Bower's article on Roy Daly. I'm sure that he must be a swell chap.

"So often we give young fellows breaks because of scholastic ability or because his dad is some big wheel we want to impress.

"I am pleased to see this boy get a break because of his pure love of the sport.

"Thanks again for that small article."

Bob Morachim

501 Elmira Street
Denver 8, Colorado

"I believe your readers and members of the SOARING SOCIETY would be interested in hearing about Fred Ruble's crash in a modified TG-3.

"Fred has been soaring since high school days and was considered to be one of the best soaring pilots of this area..."

"When Fred discontinued the school he kept one of the TG-3's and decided to rebuild and modify it in an attempt to improve the performance. The modifications consisted of smoothing out the nose section by eliminating the plexiglass and installing two beautiful bubbles for the pilots. He also cut off the wing tips to the outside end of the outboard aileron and added splates to reduce induced drag. He then eliminated the inboard ailerons and made them solid wing. The entire plane was reconditioned and recovered so that it was an exceptionally beautiful TG-3. We all agreed that it should fly well and were anxious to get a chance to fly it..."

"The performance did not satisfy Fred and we could tell he was not pleased with the modification. He complained that the plane gave no warning of a stall, the visibility was poor and the airspeed indicator did not seem to be behaving as it should. Nevertheless, he made a number of flights (perhaps 10) and one or two were long enough and high enough for him to spend some time feeling it out. He may have had as much as 10 hours in the plane when the accident occurred.

"Although I did not see the accident the comments of observers seemed to agree that he was being towed by a car and had reached about 200 feet when the glider started to porpoise. He either cut loose or was automatically released at this time. The nose was lowered and a turn started. No one is sure whether Fred started the turn or the plane fell off into a spin. At any rate, it went into a spin and crashed before he could recover.

"Most of us feel that Fred was near the stall soon after he cut loose and that the plane stalled without warning. We feel that Fred was a better than average pilot and that the modifications of the glider caused the accident.

"Fred was badly injured and was rushed to the hospital. The accident occurred on July 31 and Fred died on August 8 without regaining consciousness enough to say what happened. Survivors are his mother, wife Marjorie, and two small sons.

"Fred was one of the most enthusiastic soaring pilots I have ever met. He had many friends and was the kind of a man you like at once. His death was a terrible blow to soaring in this area and to his friends who miss him very much."

William R. Fuchs
Major, USAF

UNUSUAL GLIDERS

by PETER M. BOWERS

The "MISTAL" composite aircraft shown here is another one of the many attempts made during World War II to make a military weapon out of what was essentially a piece of sports equipment. Some of the uses to which gliders were put, particularly as troop transports, were highly successful, but such efforts as the Flying Gas Tank (Soaring, Sept.-Oct., 1955) and the MISTAL Gliding Bomb can only be classed as interesting experiments.

Composite aircraft were nothing new when WW-II came along. As early as 1916, the British had used large flying boats to carry short-range fighters far out to sea where they could attack the German Zeppelins, and in 1937, they had used flying boats to launch a small Trans-Atlantic mailplane that could not take



off by itself when loaded with enough gas for the trip.

This German arrangement, however, reversed the previous roles played by the large and the small aircraft. In this case, the smaller unit, a Messerschmitt Me-109E Fighter powered by a 1175 hp Daimler-Benz 601, was mounted on top of a standard DFS-230B troop glider, where it served both as the power plant for the composite and the controlling element. The object of it all was to load the glider with high explosive and fly it to the vicinity of heavily-defended targets. At that point, the fighter plane pilot would aim the glider at the target, lock the controls and then separate the fighter from the combination and streak for home. In theory, it was a good idea, but there were serious drawbacks. First of all, the combination was extremely vulnerable to interception by defending aircraft or anti-aircraft fire due to the low speed and limited maneuverability. There was also the hazard that the whole works might blow up during a rough takeoff. Needless to say the

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