

INTERESTING GLIDERS

by PETER M. BOWERS

By the middle 1920's, the basic configuration of the sailplane had become pretty well standardized. Wood was the universal medium of construction, the wing was single-spar with "D" leading edge to take torsion loads, aspect ratio ranged between 12 and 18, and the fuselage was either of wooden truss type covered with plywood or was of semi-monocoque type using plywood for the shell.

The German Espenlaub 5 can safely be called one of the first production sailplanes in the world, not because it was built in any appreciable quantity, but because several were built that did not differ from one another in more than minor detail. While it looks crude by modern standards, the Espenlaub possessed all the essential features that were to be standard on German sailplanes for the years 1927-1937.



The Espenlaub has another claim to fame, however. In addition to being the first production sailplane, it was one of the first, if not *the* first, rocket-powered aircraft. A standard E-5, similar to the one shown scattering the shock-launch crew as it is launched down the slope of a sand-dune at Rossitten in 1925, was slightly modified to take rocket power. A two-wheel landing gear was added to keep it level on the ground, powder rockets were mounted on the center section of the wing, and fireproofing material was added to the center section and to the upper forward portion of the rudder to protect them from heat. Although of extremely short duration, the rocket-powered flights were successful. Nearly seventeen years were to elapse, however, before serious development got under way again during World War II.

West Words

by LLOYD M. LICHER



As a "paid" columnist for SOARING magazine, it will be my pleasure to provide the readers with news items and observations from the Southland, as Southern California is called.

Bill Ivans has been practicing at Elsinore in his 1-23E to prime himself for duty in France on the U. S. team. A goal and return to El Mirage was completed—the hard way—via the Banning Pass.

Someone else who is warming up for competition is Graham Thomson. He recently completed a diamond goal flight from El Mirage to Dry Lake, Nevada, in the RJ-5. Being a new father will not keep Graham from vying seriously for the Nationals crown at Grand Prairie.

Contributing to the array of new ships which are expected at the Nationals will be three each of the Briegleb BG-12 and Hall Cherokee II. Both ships are in production in the Los Angeles area. The prototype BG-12 has been successfully test flown and is lauded by the many pilots who have tried it. The Cherokee II is scheduled to fly by the end of June. Frank Kerns of Glide Aero is producing the Cherokee. He and Lyle Maxey will be flying the Jenny Mae at Grand Prairie.

A recent big event was a ride session at the Elsinore gliderport. The Southern California Soaring Association, Inc., sponsored the affair for people who had expressed interest at a previous hobby show display. Over 50 airplane tow rides were given on the weekend. Reward for participating pilots and ground crews was in the form of a dinner-dance at the Elsinore Hotel that Saturday evening.

Next on the social agenda is a hangar dance-dedication at El Mirage on the weekend following July 4th. The long awaited erection of Gus' large hangar is scheduled for completion by then and it will provide sorely needed site storage space. A mass soaring flight to Apple Valley Airport, some 24 miles distant, for dinner at the famed inn there is planned for that Sunday.

A righteous desire to obtain legs for various C badges is prevalent amongst the pilots this season. Positive-thinking Bill Royce is setting the pace in this "year of action" by obtaining his Commercial glider rating, Silver C distance and Gold C altitude, the latter two in the BG-12. Oh, yes, he got married, too. Herman Stiglmeier has his oxygen-equipped P-R based at Bishop for the use of friends. So far Graham Thomson, Harold Hutchinson and Lynn Christensen have made diamond C altitude legs in the wave there. Many more legs are bound to be earned during practice for, and participation in, the Nationals.

Two new clubs have begun operation at the Elsinore gliderport. One is the Aeronauts Soaring Club with a TG-3 which has been in the shop for covering too long to mention. Members are mostly from the Downey plant of North American Aviation. The other is the Elsinore Valley Soaring Club, Inc. This is a club with many revitalized soaring people on the membership roster. They have a beautifully refinished P-R to fly.

The Klemperer family now owns the L-K which broke a wing on a car at Torrey Pines in February. Herman Stiglmeier has been repairing the damage and expects to test fly it by July. The Klemperers will soar again, although probably not in Texas this year.

TRIANGLE FLIGHT

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tern and land in front of the hanger at 7:43 P.M., 7 hours and 43 minutes and 222 miles after starting out.

The flight is certainly one of the most interesting I have ever made. The ground speeds established were far from good owing to severe headwinds of the long legs. The triangle includes some of America's most famous soaring sites, and certainly was a challenge to try. The Banning Pass is always a formidable obstacle, and the final 10 miles into Elsinore never over a thousand feet, all added up to a truly memorable experience.