

SAFETY FIRST

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The end result is the BG-12A, America's finest kit sailplane. Taking all factors singularly or collectively, the BG-12A is surpassed by only a very few of the custom built, expensive and high time to build sailplanes.

Inasmuch as Gus has the monumental job of operating El Mirage Field, and prefers to design rather than produce, the manufacturing license for the BG-12A has been granted to Jack Wolf's SEAIR CO. Gus will now devote his time to the design of the two-place BG-15. With a little luck, the prototype BG-15 may make its appearance at the 1958 National Contest.

Kit production of the BG-12A has been intentionally limited and slow, for two reasons. First, since haste makes waste, this new company wanted to start and remain on a firm foundation. Secondly, making slower progress allows all kits to be furnished with all the latest changes included. So far only 34 ships are being built; 27 in the U.S., 2 in Canada and 5 in Australia.

The SEAIR Co. will move to much larger quarters on about January 1st, which will allow a much needed increase in production.

An 8mm color film showing the BG-12A in flight, and including some construction shots, is available without cost or obligation. Running time is about 15 minutes. Soaring clubs will receive first consideration.

Complete information may be had by writing to: The SEAIR Co., Box 582, Newport Beach, California.

Cold Weather Precautions

Since not all of us have the opportunity of soaring the year around in warm, sunny climates, it would probably be wise to call everyone's attention to some precautions which should be observed when engaging in soaring activities in the winter time. The southern pilots may not realize it, but there is occasionally fairly good soaring in the winter in the north, and a number of clubs continue their activity during the snow season, concentrating on training flights in the usually stable air.

The most important thing to remember is the point which is constantly being emphasized to power pilots, including private, commercial and military, who operate their aircraft regularly in these conditions. This is the extremely dangerous effect of snow, ice or frost accumulation on the lifting surfaces. Judging from the way many sailplane pilots scrub the microscopic dust layers off their wing surfaces in the summer time, it should be easier to convince them than power pilots of the loss of lift which will result from even frost layers on the wing surfaces. This reduction in lift runs up the

stalling speed and can lead to unexpected accidents if all traces are not removed before flying. Be sure to brush and wipe the wings carefully before take-off. This precaution is, of course, equally applicable to tow planes. The cold weather will shorten take-off distances because of the increased density of the air, but this can be more than counterbalanced by snow, ice or frost on the lifting surfaces.

It is also possible for melted snow and ice to get in control linkages and freeze again when the aircraft is parked outside or in an unheated hangar. This makes it doubly important to check the freedom and full travel of all controls before take-offs. Freezing rain or drizzle is also frequently encountered in cold conditions in the winter time which can result in ice build-ups very quickly while in flight or on the ground.

Snow on the ground means that take-off distances will also be increased because of drag on the gear. Ice on the ground can give rise to very bad skids after landing if you don't watch out. The sailplane can go down (or off) the runway sideways almost as well as straight under such circumstances.

Another problem of icy ground is footing when you are propping the tow plane. It is very easy to slip into the propeller under such conditions, and in cold weather it seems that the battery is always dying and you have to crank it by hand. Don't lose your footing, or you may lose your head!

While it is nice to be warm and cozy in the unheated cockpit, some thought should be given to boots and mittens. Some of the surplus, sheepskin-lined boots don't give much clearance around the rudder pedals and may affect your ability to use these controls. Some heavy mittens, as well, are so bulky that it is impossible to grab with any assurance the tow release or spoiler controls. Also, be sure to remember to thoroughly warm up winches and tow planes in cold weather so you will not have engine failures at critical times. Winter soaring can be fun. Just remember — don't take a shortcut to an accident.

