

TWEEDIE

by ERNIE SHATTUCK

The Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California, San Diego, has done it again. The place was Torrey Pines Gliderport; time was 5:00 P.M. Thursday, September 18, 1958.

After nine months in the Torrey Pines training program and with 135 flights and 13 hours of dual instruction, a dream came true for a son and his father. Keith Allen, a native of London, England, who has been in the United States for two years, soloed a Schweizer TG-2 from winch tow at precisely the minute of his fourteenth birthday.

Keith, who is only five feet tall and weighs only 85 pounds, had been waiting for this moment for several months. He completed his



Photo: Ernie Shattuck

Keith Allen

training program with flying colors, but could not legally solo until he was 14. For the past five months he has been taking his turn, with the other students, improving his skill as a sailplane pilot. The only difference with Tweedie was that he had to carry out 70 pounds of ballast and put it in the front seat. This brought his weight up to CG limits and also provided the necessary height for him to see over the nose of the sailplane.

John Swinson was on hand to give Keith his final instructions. After several dual flights, John climbed out of the rear pit; fastened the shoulder harness and safety belt; secured the rear hatch and walked around to the front cockpit. With a few words of caution, John signed his name to the student permit and returned it to Keith. Several minutes passed and up came the winch cable. Watches were checked for the exact

INTERESTING GLIDERS

by PETER M. BOWERS



The German Daimler L-15 of 1919 is of interest because it was both a glider and a powered airplane and because it was the direct link between the last of a line of German World War I fighter planes, the Daimler L-11 monoplane, and the long and famous line of German Klemm light planes.

During the wartime testing of the fighter, Dr. H. Klemm, an engineer with the Daimler firm, discovered that the L-11 could be kept in the air as a glider under certain conditions. When the armistice put a stop to most airplane construction in Germany, he designed the light L-15 as a glider for further study of the subject.

In general appearance, the L-15 was an extremely clean looking cantilever monoplane of all wood construction. While most of the contemporary German gliders appeared to be picking up where the prewar models had left off, the L-15 clearly showed its airplane ancestry. Even the landing gear was of two-wheel airplane type with the notable exception that the wheels were solid

wood in the rubber-short Germany of 1919. The only unconventional feature of the design was the use of floating wingtips in place of the usual ailerons. The pilot sat ahead of the two-spar wing in order to keep the weight forward.

The L-15 was damaged during tests in 1919 and was stored for a few years. It was rebuilt in 1922, and flown again as a glider before being fitted with a second-hand Harley-Davidson motorcycle engine and flown as a powerplane in November, 1923, with the pilot moved aft to a position between the wing spars. Still later, a second cockpit was added and the ship became a two-seater. In this form, the L-15 served as the prototype of the Daimler L-20, which was put into production, and the later Klemm models that continued the series when Dr. Klemm formed a new company in 1927 to succeed the original firm that had closed down. Klemm trainers that could be traced directly to the L-15 of 1919 were in quantity production as primary trainers for the German Luftwaffe well into World War II.

minute; the cable was installed in the tow hook; the wing was raised; and, as the exact minute arrived, the flag was dropped and Tweedie was off on his first solo—just barely 14 years old.

As the cable fell away from the tow hook at 300 feet, Keith's father said, "That's a boy." Mr. Allen had also been waiting for this big moment and he was more excited than a football coach who is about to win a game. Such coaching I have never seen. Even though Keith couldn't hear him, he was making those turns almost to the words as his father coached him. The approach was set

up, the final turn, spoilers and, just like a veteran, the touch down was made. Roll out was right up to where we were all waiting with the big bucket of water. The wet clothes did not bother him one bit and with one more solo he closed the operation with newsmen, camera men from the local TV station and other Club members standing by. And so one more youth took to the air. We feel sure that some day he will be a great soaring pilot.

P.S. Tweedie asked his father what he was going to do after he soloed. Mr. Allen calmly stated, "Get your Diamond C."