

SCHWEIZER DEALERS' MEETING

by TONY DOHERTY



Schweizer Aircraft Corp. officers, dealers and friends shown with mock-up of the 2-32 cockpit section. Standing, L. to R.: Paul Schweizer; Larry Gehrlein from Erie, Pa.; Gus Street from Advance, N.C.; Ernie Schweizer; John Gordon from Winston-Salem, N.C.; Dave Blanton and Jim LeSueur from Wichita, Kansas; Jim Doyle from Ballard Vale, Mass.; and W. E. "Tony" Doherty. Kneeling, L. to R.: Jim Parrott from Miami, Fla.; Rod Gehrlein; Jim Gillanders from Montreal, Que.; in the cockpit, Fred Harris from Tehachapi, Calif., and Les Arnold from Fremont, Calif.; Steve and Al Parker from Odessa, Texas; and Al Groves from Neenah, Wis. Attending but not in photo were Steve Bennis from Middletown, N.Y., A. N. LeCheminant from Ottawa, Ont.; Larry Smith from Cortland, N.Y. and Will Schweizer.

Whenever you have a gathering of twenty soaring pilot-dealers and their friends from all parts of the country, the outcome is bound to be extremely interesting and constructive. This was certainly the case at the 2nd Annual Schweizer Dealers' Meeting held at Elmira November 10, 11, and 12. The formal agenda scheduled discussions on sales promotion, finance plans, new products, advertising and similar staid subjects. However, all phases of soaring were thoroughly reviewed. We are certain that everyone associated with soaring would have found it very interesting.

The high points were the Soaring School reports, the 2-32 program, standardization of training procedures, 1-26 Regattas, vacation soaring sites, and others.

Of the 12 Schweizer Dealers who operate soaring schools, seven were present and gave reports of their activities for the first 10 months of

1961. The totals for these schools were 13,188 flights — 4712 flying hours. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the national total this represents. One hundred and eleven C badges were earned at these schools. The majority of the recipients were newcomers to the sport and, consequently, new SSA members. It is hoped that they will be able to continue soaring at the established clubs in their home areas and that they will be made welcome. We have also learned that a number of them are planning to form new clubs in areas where up to now there has been no organized soaring activity.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the showing of a full sized mock-up of the cockpit of the 2-32, the new high-performance, two-place sailplane. The wings and fuselage of the flying prototype were seen being constructed in their jigs. The evident

progress was enthusiastically received by those present.

1961 should set an all-time high for the production of sailplanes by the company. With the excellent national publicity the sport is receiving and the current backlog of orders it is expected that 1962 will be another record year. Several new dealers have been signed up during the past few months while several others will be before the first of '1962. With the increased number of commercial schools available, there should be a record number of new pilots taking up soaring.

Several of the dealers reported that they have or are planning to set up vacation type soaring fields that cater to the whole family. The company reported on several new soaring areas that were established during 1961. These operations have been started at well-known vacation areas to supplement other activities. One famous New England ski center has already set up a soaring program and several others plan to do so in '62. For the best interests in soaring, more of these vacation centers should be developed.

Interest in the 1-26 continues to spread and an increasing number of 1-26 Regattas were held in '61. More are scheduled for 1962. The popularity of the 1-26 is reflected in the increased number of orders received in 1961.

An important area of discussion was standardization of training procedures. Schweizer dealers are working to tailor their training methods as much as possible to those being proposed by the SSA training committees. Since these have not been finalized, the majority of the Dealer schools are currently following a system based on both the recommendations of the training committee and procedures discussed at the 1960 Dealers Meeting. The importance of standardization of training methods and flight procedures is vital to the healthy growth of soaring in this country.

Soaring in America has made excellent growth in 1961. Schweizer Aircraft and their dealers are looking forward to working closely with all members of the SSA to make '62 even better.

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