

REPORT ON SCHWEIZER AIRCRAFT CORP.

by PAUL A. SCHWEIZER

The first flight of the 2-32, the production of the one hundred-fiftieth 2-22 and the two hundredth 1-26 were three of the highlights of the Schweizer Aircraft soaring program in 1962. It was another year of steady growth of the soaring phase of our business and another record year for commercial sailplane sales. The rate of growth, which had a marked upturn in 1958, has been steadily increasing.

One important factor in this increase has been the excellent publicity that soaring has been receiving on the national and local levels. Exposure in such leading magazines as *Newsweek*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Aviation Week*, various house organs, TV commercials and other advertisements has helped to make the public much more aware of the sport. The Paramount "short," *On the Wing*, was made in Elmira and is currently being shown in moving picture theatres all over the world. It is estimated that between twenty-five and thirty million people will see this.

Sports Illustrated's "Good Design in Sports" article was featured with a sailplane display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City last spring. This year we are already helping on some other projects. As an example, we are assisting a *National Geographic* magazine writer who is presently attending our school as the start of nation-wide coverage on soaring for a possible article for this magazine.

Another factor, which we feel has an important effect on the growth of soaring, is the steadily increasing number of dealers who are setting up commercial operations around the country. We now have about thirty dealers, most of whom have some form of flight operation. Last year our dealer organization totaled over 25,000 sailplane flights and over 10,000 hours. We suspect that this may approach half of the total activity in the country. We feel that our dealers are supplying a very useful service to soaring by providing equipment and facilities where people can be introduced to the sport, receive instruction and checkouts and where private owners can obtain tows and other assistance. Many of our dealers have FAA Flight Examiner's Ratings, thus providing another useful service. In order to spend more time soaring and promoting the sport, some clubs rely on the commercial operator for the training of their members.

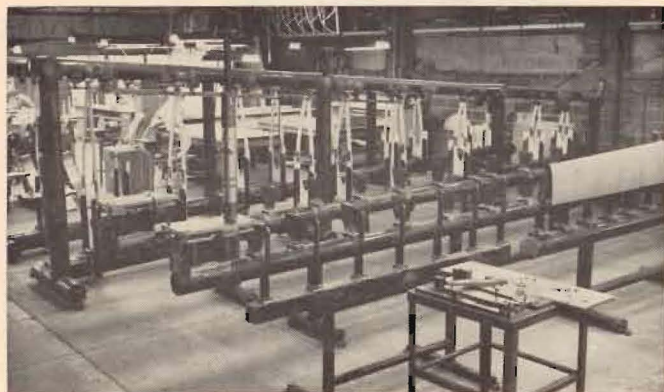
We are encouraging our dealers to establish soaring centers away from the busy, built-up areas, preferably in scenic surroundings. In the next five or ten years, we envision Flying Sport Centers located throughout the country, similar to ski centers and other resorts. In fact, there are already several ski centers featuring soaring in their off-season. This helps them to utilize their facilities to full advantage and encourages a tie-in between the two sports which we think appeal to the

same type of persons. As with any new idea or industry, it does take time to get started, but our dealer program is designed to permit the development of the business over a period of years. It is our aim to have dealers throughout the country who can furnish a constantly increasing number of services to the soaring public.

The major soaring project at SAC is getting the 2-32 into production. Twenty firm orders for this ship have already been received. Once demonstrators get around the country, we are sure that many more will be sold. The 2-32 was first flown in July and since that time has logged over 130 hours of time. A completely new, tapered "stabilator" has been developed, and other minor changes have been made. As a result of the design requirements and the features which we felt a ship of this type should include, the price unfortunately had to be increased over that originally projected. This tended to discourage immediate sales to some degree, but we are confident that this sailplane will sell itself, and in addition it can be responsible for introducing many new people to soaring, particularly power pilots.

At the present time, work on the 2-32 is going along in various phases—(a) the redesign and re-engineering for production, (b) stress analysis and static tests to substantiate strength, (c) flight tests to verify stability, performance and general handling characteristics and (d) production planning and tooling up. A project of this size is a very costly one, and its expense must be spread over a reasonable period. Because of this and our other plant work loads, the schedule has had to be extended so that we now expect the

A view of the 2-32 D-tube, spar and wing assembly jigs, which are nearing completion.



Static test of 2-32 aileron being carried out as part of the type-certification program.

