

ANOTHER CHEROKEE II

by RONALD A. CHITWOOD

The tow car took up slack, the signal to go, and the skid started to scrape the runway. A few feet and the nose was up, a little farther and my Cherokee II lifted for its first flight. Not very smooth since I'd been away from the control stick for some time. It went well though and after four runs up and down the runway, it was time for an aero tow. Two days later and at 11,000 feet I finally had time to reflect that here I was, the Cherokee II was finished and flying.

This set of plans had originally been sold to Lt. Bill Volk who started the project in Iceland. Somehow the bits and pieces came to rest in Pete Bower's shop where they were when Larry Welch bought them and moved them to Connell, Wash. Larry sold me the materials, plans and the started fuselage three months later, when he bought a Scheibe Bergfalke II 55. For me, the work began. It's not hard to see why so many plans are sold and so few ships built, unless a person is inclined to like that sort of work it's an impossible task. I might also add, that if you are married, it takes an understanding wife.

There are a few items to point out to anyone buying a ship that has been started; first, be sure that the work that's done satisfies an FAA Inspector and second, check it carefully yourself, and make sure that the construction wasn't stopped due to a blunder. I was lucky, only a few items were changed and they were minor, my



Photograph by Robert L. Moore

Ron Chitwood's Cherokee II reflects the fine quality of a conscientious builder.

thanks to Mr. Volk and Mr. Welch for the careful work they did.

The ship has a few modifications, the leading edge of the wing is aluminum, the tip is squared off and has a Horner type bevel. Like many Cherokee's this one has a bubble canopy, which I think adds considerably to its appearance. For covering material Ceconite 103 was used, and sprayed with white buterate dope. Stan Hall discourages modifications and with good reason, mine I feel were minor.

The cost of my sailplane was considerably above the Stan Hall Cherokee II, and although the completed sailplane represents a considerable investment, it's far below the market price of a ship with similar performance. I expect to have about \$1500 in the sailplane

and trailer.

In the air, Cherokee II is at home. It's unusually easy to fly on tow (maybe it's the sharp canoe like nose) and very quiet except for the oil canning of the aluminum leading edge in turbulence. Stick pressures are light and control is adequate, however the spoilers are not as effective as I would like. Stall occurs a hair under 40 mph and it thermals well at just under 45 mph although that's too close to a stall if the thermals are rough.

There were no problems licensing the ship, it had been inspected about six times during construction by the local FAA Inspector, and he found nothing that needed correcting. I was required to fly the first 15 hours in a test flight area but it was no problem because my trailer was not finished and I could not leave the area anyway.

In summary one might ask, was it worth it, would you do it over? My reply of course would be, yes. I recall the many times I slipped into the half completed fuselage to check the fit, to move the stick and rudder and dream a little. Then came the day when movement of those controls brought response, it was a day and an experience worth remembering. It is my hope that my ship collects as many hours flying as it collected when being built. Who knows, maybe someday you'll read about a Gold or Diamond flight in N3300T.

Wave Soaring Camp

January 18th through 29th

February 15th through 26th

Sponsored by Wave Flights, Inc. at Black Forest
Glider Port, Colorado Springs, Colorado

High Altitude Course available

Well equipped Schweizer 1-26s available, or bring your own sailplane

Modern hangar and lounge with limited bunk facilities

Major ski resorts nearby

Limited Reservations — Contact

David C. Johnson
303-634-6815

Mark Wild
303-495-4144

Wave Flights, Inc., 625 Berglund Rd., Colorado Springs, Colo.