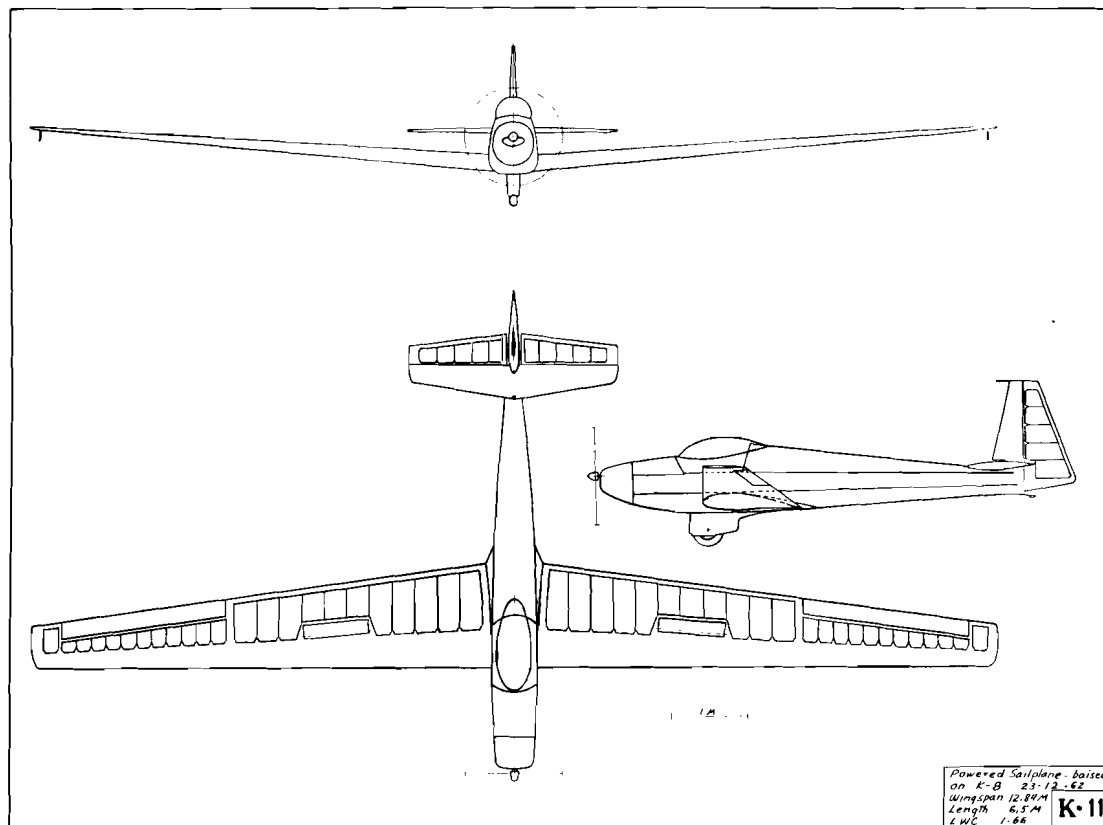


K-11



Three-view by Lynn Christensen

FLYING THE MOTORSEGLER

During a visit to Germany in September, 1964, Rudolf Kaiser permitted me to fly his K-11. The occasion was a motor-sailplane competition near Bad Oeynhausen in Westphalia. Later I was given the chance to fly four of the other motor-sailplane types there, a good opportunity to compare performances and flight characteristics.

"Please don't do any aerobatics," Rudolf said emphatically, while helping to adjust the straps. "She is not stressed for that. I wanted her to perform well as a sailplane first of all, and equally well under power. This can be achieved only by being very careful with weight."

The visibility through the plexiglass canopy was excellent. It also was good to the rear which is so valuable for flying in the traffic pattern around a busy airport. Low-wing planes always make me feel safer from collision danger than airplanes with other wing locations. Ignition switch, throttle, gas on/off lever and the handle for air starting the four-cylinder Hirth engine were pointed out, but the latter was not used for starting the engine. Instead Rudolf Kaiser was swinging the propeller by hand. The engine came to life immediately, being still warm from a flight before. The neat little two-cycle engine is supposed to start with equal ease when cold, but I was not a witness to that. Anyone who ever dealt with small two-cycle aircraft engines knows that they often are temperamental when it comes to starting.

At lower RPM there was considerable shaking and vibration, but as soon as the throttle was shoved forward the engine began running smoothly with only

some inherent high-frequency vibration left. The K-11 accelerated like a Piper Cub. The slightest stick forward movement brought the tail off the grass and there we were, running into the brisk breeze. After a roll of about 200 feet off she went into the autumn sky. And how she went! That little ship climbed in an exhilarating way, with only 25 hp. whirling her propeller just a little beyond the tips of my toes. In no time 400 feet were reached and the first turn initiated to the right. Initiated is too long a word. Before you could finish saying it the K-11 was around 180 degrees, shooting down wind with considerable speed over the ground. This first impression was enough to say: *Delightful!* This is the most delightful thing I have ever flown. Yes, no exaggeration. It was like dancing with the most graceful partner, only somebody had told me not to waltz with her. She can't take it.

So I mastered the temptation to really keep her moving and flew straight ahead for a short while, testing her immediate reactions to coordinated aileron-rudder movements. It produced a spirited Dutch roll, if there is such a thing. Well, it gave me an idea of how it would feel to do aerobatics with her.

The speed in horizontal flight? Frankly I was too much carried away by this graceful ship to soberly check such figures. Rudolf Kaiser can furnish them. I can say that the K-11 did make good speed into the strong autumn wind. My estimate would be some 80 mph. After all, speed is not what we are looking for in a powered sailplane.

Not having a skid for safe landings outside of an airport I did not feel at first like stopping the engine for a true soaring test. Besides, the thermals were very weak and the Vennebeck airfield is only a small strip