

Before beginning to cover, the structure was smoothed with a mixture of micro-balloons and epoxy resin. After a complete sanding, polyurethane varnish was applied to all wood surfaces which would not be in contact with fabric when covered. Two coats of Super Seam Cement were brushed onto the areas where the fabric would be adhered, to provide a good bond for the rather slippery dacron.

The familiar episode, in which the enthusiastic builder partially demolishes his house in order to remove his creation from its confinement, was now enacted. After a futile effort to negotiate the stairs into a bedroom and thence out through a window, it was decided to accept the long dreaded alternate route through two very small contiguous basement windows. This decision involved the removal of a chunk of concrete between the two windows, which would allow the wings to pass through in a horizontal position. After the expenditure of considerable sweat and mental anguish, this feat was accomplished. At last my wings were free! What if I did have to call in professional help to rebuild the rubble into some semblance of its original form? And did it matter that the two windows didn't open and shut quite as easily as before?

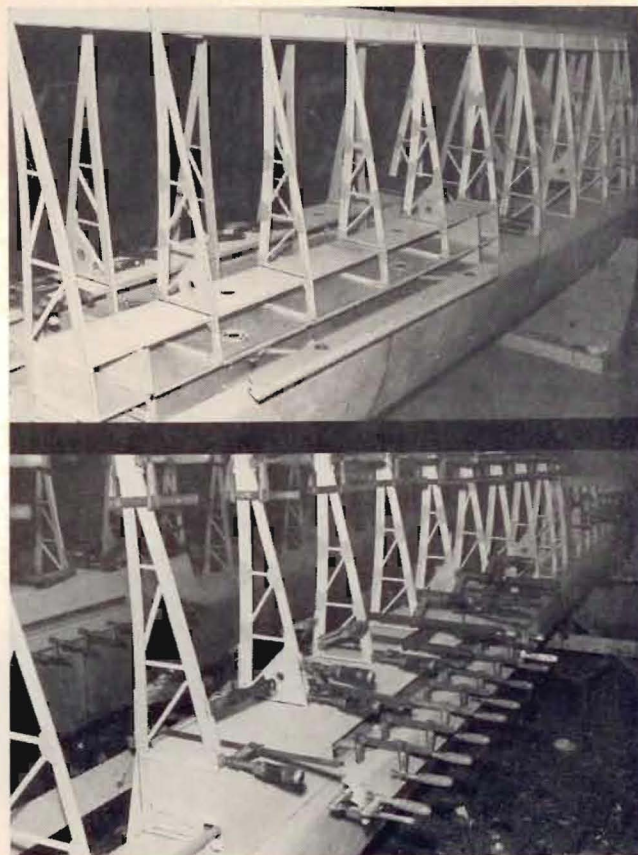
With the approval of the F.A.A. Inspector, covering operations began. Lightweight dacron was used and proved to be very satisfactory. Even compound curves were no problem and ghastly looking wrinkles shrank away to taut smoothness with the heat from a household iron. Upon brushing on the first coat of clear dope, I found that drops of dope would collect on the underside of the cloth, unless the dope was used full-strength and brushed very lightly. After the weave had been filled with one coat there was no more trouble.

By now it was May and the move to Arizona was imminent. Despite determined efforts to complete the ship before moving day, I had to suspend work and store the half-covered plane until I could return for it in October.

Covering was resumed at Bob Wister's shop in Phoenix. Thanks to Bob's generosity and encouragement, good progress was made until a cold, wet spell curtailed activities in the unheated shop. In February of 1966 the final color coats were sprayed and detail work accomplished. The color scheme was Daytona White with Stearman Vermillion for the belly and a broad black stripe down the fuselage. "Sticky" stencils were used for the numerals and these were daylighted into the black stripe to conserve vertical space and to add a little interest.

Finishing required more time than I had anticipated. It was not until April 23, 1965 that all was

ready for test flights. Arriving early at Deer Valley Airport, N 93000 was assembled and inspected. After the usual photographs had been taken, the first low auto tow was made. The smooth, easy flight of this bird was quite a revelation to me. While enjoying this buoyant sensation, I opened the dive brakes and immediately pushed the stick forward to maintain flying speed. Indeed, the dive brakes are most effective and should be treated with care.



Two K-8 wing details: top photo shows the completed dive-brake box, the bottom, gluing on plywood cover and gap-closing strips.

Satisfied that all was as it should be, Ruth Petry moved the Champ into position for towing and soon we were climbing easily to 2000 feet over the desert, where an accommodating thermal was found. After releasing, I was impressed with the quietness and ease of control which is characteristic of the K-8. Truly, it is a most enjoyable machine to fly and will return high dividends in soaring pleasure to those who buy a factory-built version, or to those, like myself, who choose to double their satisfaction by sharing in the creation of a noble sailplane.

Historical Notes

Other Russian records of the year included a 205-mile flight along the coast in a seaplane glider piloted by Korotoff; a 313-mile cross-country journey in a GN7 soaring plane guided by Kartasheff; and an 83-mile goal flight from Sultan-Sarai, in the Crimea, to Djiploff, on the Sea of Azov, in a KIM2 passenger-sailplane piloted by Ilchenko. Later in the year, Kartasheff rode his GN7 soarer to a distance record of 378 miles after being towed upward for a start by a motored ship.

— THE BOOK OF GLIDERS

Quotable Quotes

"Many Americans are excellently informed, mainly via Reader's Digest, of the German mentality, and therefore know very well that we Germans (a) like to drink beer, (b) consider sauerkraut and frankfurters a delicacy, (c) are courageous. I had to put up with these beliefs quite often, and I am afraid that my behaviour is the reason for quite a few disappointments as (a) I can't stand beer, (b) I hate sauerkraut, (c) I rather belong to the more timid type of individuals ('cept where there were Frauleins!)." — HANS-WERNER GROSSE

— HANS-WERNER GROSSE