



Photo by Jack L. Hiller

The degree to which the Edelweiss pilot reclines, and the method of mounting the instruments in the canopy, are evident in this photo.

NOTES ON THE EDELWEISS

The Edelweiss is built by Siren under the control of the Bureau Veritas, whose standards in both materials and workmanship are the highest in Europe. In fact, when the German government recently announced that they were thinking of adopting Bureau Veritas standards for glider construction, the German manufacturers complained because, they said, they would have to raise their prices by ten per cent.

Dr. Cayla brought his entire design team from Breguet when he went to Siren to build the Edelweiss, so the ship is put together by old hands, although under a name new to gliding. The design studies, wind-tunnel, stability and flutter tests were all paid for by the French government as part of a national program to update the gliders in the government-subsidized clubs and to get France back into a strong position in international competition. If Siren had had to pay for this the price of the Edelweiss would have been about twice what it is. Fortunately, all Siren had to do was to tool up and build the glider.

Assembly is quick and easy. There are two main pins, three alignment pins and four quick-release connectors for the controls. All these are of the most modern European type. The tail

position. After a few minutes of towing one feels that the glider is both light and strong, this in spite of the magnitude of the vertical movements of the wing tips. With some altitude one is at ease. The visibility is excellent. Release—and here we go!

The first turbulent thermal is really a test of the ship's qualities. I am impressed by the light and even forces of the stick and rudder. I notice a lack of negative yaw, but some little overbanking. The grooved feeling is amazing. Coordination is excellent, even in steep turns. The rate of roll is outstanding. In a straight line the Edelweiss picks up speed immediately. In one speed test which I flew (in the Foka) against Henry in the Edelweiss (no ballast) we found the penetration of both machines fairly even, with perhaps a slight advantage for the Foka above 100 m.p.h.

Flying the Edelweiss with 135 lbs. of lead ballast is a thrilling experience. The ship is, of course, heavier to handle, but the basic feeling remains the same. The climbing performance is good, even in weak thermals. When these become irregular and disorganized, however, I find myself wishing I'd left the ballast at home. The roll rate is good, comparing favorably with that of the Zefir, but not at all the same as when flying without ballast. Thermalling speed tends to be about seven m.p.h. higher. Coming out of a thermal is a unique sensation: the ship picks up speed like a bomb. This excellent high-speed performance, with ballast, should be an attractive feature when flying under western conditions.

Based on my experience with modern sailplanes I would state that the Edelweiss is the easiest glider to fly of them all, even easier than the Vasama. After a few hours of flying one begins to realize the im-

pieces are also quickly detachable. We expect the retractable landing gear to be available as an option soon. The ballast system consists of eight removable lead bars mounted in each wing root near the C.G. position. With them you can vary the ballast weight from zero to 135 pounds in steps of approximately 17 pounds. There is no problem as regards structural loads inasmuch as the ballast in the wings actually tends to counter-balance the regular wing loads.

Production is now two per month with most of the gliders going to French clubs and to other European countries. Belgium is ordering the Edelweiss for its team and the government of Israel, after making a survey of everything in the glider market, decided on the Edelweiss and is ordering three.

We will be in Marfa this year for the Nationals, and as the real underdogs because everyone expects ships like the AS-12, Libelle, Sisu and Austria to grab the big thermals and leave the others behind. However, we can grab thermals better than they can and I think that, with the ballast, we will probably penetrate as well as any of them except the AS-12 (which may have some high-speed rough-air problems which nobody ever mentions!) So, watch out for the underdog.

KEN LIVINGSTONE