

### One reason for Blanik's outstanding success\*



Over 1000 Blaniks have been built and are in use all over the world. Fowler flaps add greatly to the utility of any sailplane and the Blanik is the only two-place that has them. May be licensed in the Experimental Category under C.A.R. Part 21.

\*For more reasons, contact Phil Paul

Box 1959 Lancaster, Calif. (805) WH 8-3146

## SAFETY CORNER

Suddenly, with the recent crashes of two two-place sailplanes, our fatalities for 1966 have jumped to nine. This is a sad and heavy price to pay in a sport that should bring us nothing but pleasure and satisfaction, and particularly since soaring can be and is essentially a relatively safe pastime.

However at Lewisburg, Tennessee on September third Keith Ducker, a flight instructor, and his student Bill Bennett were killed when their Schweizer TG-3A spun out of a turn at low altitude. Accounts indicate that immediately after take-off on airplane tow the engine of the towplane became rough, and the mandatory release signal was given by the towplane. The sailplane did not release, however, and at a point about 100 yards past the end of the runway, and at an altitude of perhaps 100-150 feet, the towplane again waved the sailplane off. When the sailplane still did not release then the towplane dropped the rope and was able to make it back to the airport. The glider began a slow left turn after release, but without noticeably dropping the nose to increase its speed. After about 45° of the turn was completed it went into a spin and crashed.

Here we see again the results of what is probably the worst mistake that can be made in a glider—the slow turn near the ground. Perhaps two factors contributed to the stall and spin on this turn. The first and probably most important being the release from tow at a slower-than-normal release speed. Under ordinary circumstances most sailplanes are towed at a speed comfortably above the stall, and upon release the pilot forms the habit of turning away and slowing down. But with a failing towplane, where the emergency actually results from critically low airspeed, there is no margin at release, and the glider's nose must be dropped *immediately* in order to maintain safe flying speed. This factor, together with the downwind-turn problem outlined in last April's Safety Corner

### INDEX PROJECT

Readers are advised that the index for Volume 30 (1966) of *Soaring* magazine is presently available. The price is 25 cents. The Index Project is the work of Mrs. Jean Doty of Phoenix, Arizona. Mrs. Doty began the undertaking with Volume 1 (January, 1937) and is progressing toward modern times at a very satisfactory rate. She interrupted the major part of the work, however, to complete the index for the year 1966. Not only will this current-year index permit the serious reader and researcher to find material more quickly, but it will also give the membership the opportunity to examine the style and content of the index and offer suggestions for improvement. Pertinent suggestions can then be incorporated in the 30-year index which we hope to print in due time.

It should be noted, in this regard, that the Index Project was not launched without a good deal of preliminary exploration directed toward finding the best possible form. In addition, it is our conviction that Mrs. Doty has done a very careful job, one that will make substantial improvements highly unlikely. We are just as certain, however, that if serious weaknesses are pointed out, Mrs. Doty will be the first to acknowledge and correct them. In the meantime you can enhance your enjoyment of *Soaring*, and lend support to the Index Project, by sending 25 cents for your copy of the 1966 edition to the Soaring Society of America, Box 66071, Los Angeles, California 90066.

almost certainly contributed to the accident. Other pilots who observed this spin agreed the turn could have been made if the nose had been dropped at once to increase flying speed.

The other two fatalities occurred at El Mirage, California on October 16th when Larry Bell and Kirk Harris crashed in Larry's modified Laister-Kauffman 10A. They had apparently gone up to do some aerobatics during gusty conditions, and with thermals to 9500 feet above sea level. During a dive, and at about 1500 feet, a piece was observed to come from the tail, and the sailplane pitched nose down and hit the ground inverted. This ship had had the aft fuselage lengthened, had new all-metal tail surfaces, and was flat-topped. Subsequent examination showed that structural members in the aft fuselage had failed resulting in complete loss of control, but that failure appeared to have occurred at relatively low speed. Since this ship always had been well maintained and previously had been dived at speeds up to 150 miles per hour, the reason for the failure is not immediately apparent, but it is felt that the gusty conditions present that day must have been a contributing factor.

The particular lesson to be learned from this accident, however, concerns the wearing of parachutes—first of all because of the intended nature of the flight and secondly, perhaps, because of the obvious age of the aircraft. There were parachutes available for both men, but they were not worn because it was felt that their weight would adversely affect the performance of the sailplane.