



Schweizer SGS
2 - 8
(TG - 2)

Drawn by Martin Simons 1996
From information supplied by Schweizer Aircraft Corp'n.
©

year. Ernie and I became entirely occupied with engineering, design, sales and administration. We needed someone to organise production. It was now that Bill, our young brother, joined the company. When he graduated from Syracuse University in June he planned to begin pilot training with the U.S. Army Air Force (U.S.A.A.F.), but was rejected for medical reasons, and when he heard from us, came to Elmira. Soon we took over more space in the Knitting Mills building and constructed large sloping wooden ramps to the upper floor to make movement of complete wings and fuselages easier and safer.

Fred Dent started his courses with six trainees on Harris Hill, on 1 June. Schweizer delivered the first glider to the military in that month, with no modifications. Manuals and maintenance schedules had to be prepared, standard instruments and military harnesses had to be fitted and the paint scheme had to conform to official requirements. In military finish, the 2-8 was painted in training yellow with a large dark blue flash on the fuselage sides, and stencils and numbers in appropriate places. National markings, a red disc inside a white star on a blue circle, were painted above and below the wings and the words 'US Army' in large block capitals underneath, with the red and white stripes of the national flag and vertical blue band on the rudder. The wing leading edge was left in natural aluminium. It looked very smart. The 2-8 became the Army TG-2, i.e., Training Glider number 2. We felt that we should have received the designation TG-1, but the Frankfort Company had been allocated this number for their version of Stan Corcoran's Cinema – even though their first delivery was made several months later. The Naval examples of our two-seater were designated LNS-1.

Although the U.S.A. was not at war it began to seem that we soon might be, one way or another. Sport soaring continued. During the 1941 National Contest Dick Johnson finished in fourth place in his SGS 2-8, and Stan Smith set a two-seater goal record of 73 miles. Major Dent flew the first TG-2 in the Nationals to gain experience in soaring. The Air Force pilot-training scheme soon outgrew the facilities on Harris Hill. It was essential to continue training during the winter, when the Hill operation was usually out of action because of bad weather, so the school was moved to Mobile, Alabama, and others were opened in other states. Schweizer remained hard at work producing the aircraft needed.

Fifty-seven SGS 2-8s had been built before we were required in 1942 to change to a new design. The type played an important part in getting the military pilot-training programme underway. Perhaps from the Army's viewpoint the 2-8 was too good. It had been designed as a light sporting sailplane with a degree of refinement and a good glide ratio. The troop-carrying glider was much cruder, intended only to be towed into action and then to get its cargo

down to the landing zone as quickly as possible. The kind of trainer needed by the Army was really something more like these aerial barges, but the TG-2 was available when it was most needed and did the job it was required to do.

Post-war, in 1946, Dick Johnson used his 2-8 to set a national two-seater distance record of 309.68 miles, which stood unbroken for twenty years. Twenty-three were still recorded in use in 1964.

Today the 2-8, usually still referred to as the TG-2, is regarded as a vintage sailplane, and a few are still in use. Some have been fully restored to their lively military paint schemes and are treasured by their owners. I had the pleasure of flying in a fifty-plus-year-old TG-2 that Jeffery Byard restored and had entered in the International Vintage Sailplane Meet at Harris Hill in July 1995. During the same week Martin Simons, the editor and illustrator of this book, had his first flight in a TG-2.

⁴ The Ross R-2 Ibis, developed from the R-S 1 Zanonina, was followed by the R-3 and, in postwar times, the world record-breaking Ross-Johnson RJ-5.

⁵ The world record climb at this time was 10,840 ft, but in May 1940 German troops invaded France, which surrendered on 22 June. Paris, where the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (F.A.I.) had its offices, was occupied by the Germans, and Barringer's flight was never registered there. A decision was subsequently made that records broken in belligerent countries during the Second World War would not be recognised. The chief effect of this was to negate certain duration records flown in France and Germany. Several distance flights in the U.S.S.R., not belligerent in 1940, were allowed. On this basis, Barringer's flight should have been accepted.

⁶ A full description of the preparation and operation of the German glider force at Eben Emael is given in the book *The Fall of Eben Emael*, by James E. Mrazek, Luce, 1970.

⁷ A few weeks later the U.S. Army Air Corps, wholly subordinate to the Army High Command, became the U.S. Army Air Force with a degree of independence.

Schweizer SGS 2-8

Total number built: 57

Specification

Span	52 ft	15.85 m
Length	25.25 ft	7.70 m
Wing area	214 ft ²	19.88 m ²
Aspect ratio	12.6	
Aerofoil section	NACA 4412	
Empty weight	450 lb	204 kg
Pilots	410 lb	186 kg
Flying weight	860 lb	390 kg
Wing loading	4.0 lb/ft ²	19.5 kg/m ²
Estimated best L/D	23: 1 at 42 mph	
Minimum rate of sink	2.75 ft/sec at 40 mph	0.84 m/sec at 64.3 km/h
Speed at 2 m/sec sink rate	68 mph	109 km/h