



Photo by Albert Farrenkopf

Dallas Wise in his Franklin

when there is a strong wind, and about 700 feet on ordinary days, that is when the wind does not exceed 15 m.p.h. From these heights, several pilots have been able to encounter thermals and make fairly good flights. On the average, a thermal flight was made every two weeks last summer.

Triangle Gliderport and the country surrounding it are uninterestingly flat. About twenty miles eastward, lie Detroit and Lake St. Clair. Lake Erie would be encountered on southeast flights of thirty miles or less. There are possibilities for good soaring flights in other directions which would not limit the distance, especially during the summer, when we are occasionally blessed with easterly winds.

The hangars on the field are of wood construction and not in a particularly noteworthy state of repair. Last May, when we first moved in, a great deal of time and effort were spent in making repairs to the buildings. When the work was completed, under the engineering guidance of Randy Chapman, and at a very nominal cost, we had some buildings which served our purpose very well. There are four individual hangars and one larger one, designed to accommodate two airplanes, but into which we are able, in a pinch, to stuff four utility gliders, completely assembled. Last summer, we were able to rent hangar space to four airplanes, three of which are still with us, two of them belonging to glider pilots.

Each glider and airplane hangared in the field is charged with a fixed monthly rental according to whether it is kept on the trailer or in an assembled condition. The Detroit Glider Council furnishes tows, either on the winch or by auto, for ten cents per tow. These are the sources of revenue with which we manage to keep the field rented and to make minor repairs on the hangars and equipment. The towing fee necessarily goes back to the towing equipment for maintenance and gasoline, and under the gentle persuasion of Elmer Zook, seems to be sufficient income to keep these items in the clear. Johnny Nowak, the airport manager, reports that the hangar rentals at the end of the first year will cover the field rental as well as the necessary repairs of the hangars, with a little to spare on the black side of the ledger.

Perhaps a roster of the gliders flying at this field would be interesting. Not all of the ships mentioned are at the field all the time, as the number varies from month to month, but the following are considered as tenants of Triangle Gliderport and do all their flying

from there: the Laister Sailplane, Lawrence Tech IV, and the Mehlhose Utility, owned by the Glider Club of the Lawrence Institute of Technology; the ABC Sailplane, owned by Art Schultz and Johnny Nowak; the Haller-Hawk Sailplane, owned by Jack Murphy; three Franklin Utilities, owned respectively by Bill Sherman, Dallas Wise, and the XYZ Soaring Club; the Universal Two-Place Utility, owned by the Blackhawk Club; and the U. of D. Utility, owned by the Glider Club of the University of Detroit. By the time this gets into print, XYZ should have a newly purchased intermediate sailplane flying there also.

There are some other gliders which will call this port their home as soon as work is completed on them. Among these are the Mid-West Sailplane and Utility, a new design now under construction by Mid-West Sailplanes; the Universal Two-Place, now being repaired by the Lawrence Tech group, and a gull-wing ship, owned by Randy Chapman and Bill Putnam.

A normal week-end at the field will disclose about three clubs training their students early in the morning, using the Model A tow cars and a rope for towing. The more advanced pilots come out to fly off the winch later in the day, when the training programs are completed. During the summer, when the days are long and the sun sets late in the evening, almost any day will reveal one or more groups actively engaged in flying their ships. Last summer, quite a number of the boys camped in the main hangar on various occasions in order to be near their beloved pastime and to enjoy the rare country atmosphere. Large groups of spectators assembled at the field whenever any flying was going on. At times, the proper handling of the spectators proved to be quite a task, as Johnny Nowak can well tell you. He often expressed the wish for a troop of Boy Scouts to handle the crowds. Several young fliers have been recruited from the ranks of the on-lookers. We don't put on exhibitions for their benefit or try especially to draw a crowd, but just go ahead with normal, safe flying procedures. That seems to be plenty to arouse their interest, as they besiege the take-off line, asking questions about what makes them go up, how long they can stay up, how they are controlled without motors, and if they can come down whenever they want to.

The XYZ Soaring Club hopes that with the facilities that are available for instruction at this gliding center, it can turn out some fairly well-rounded glider pilots in the space of fifteen days during the concentrated course it is going to give starting April 8. Students will be carefully selected after every precaution has been taken to determine ability, fitness, and flying aptitude, including a physical examination by a local CAA examiner. This exam is something new that is going to be required of every pilot or student who flies on Triangle Gliderport. This will not be a regular airplane pilot's exam, but rather one which the physician is going to try to adapt to the particular needs of glider pilots. The fee for it will be three dollars. XYZ had had requests for pilot training this summer which will almost tax the present equipment. It is hoped that a schedule can be worked out for utilizing week days for training and leaving free, to a large extent, Saturdays and Sundays for those regular commuters who are out there only on week-ends.

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