

employed. These instructors are excellent soaring pilots and are required by the government to fly at least five hours a month. Within twenty days of our arrival at Beynes, we had our "C" license. This they considered record time, which was due to the kindness of everyone there, as well as excellent weather. For the next month, November, however, there were very few good flying days. On several occasions, the low lying fog would be scarcely 500 feet above the ground so that we had a taste of what blind flying was like. We each got a chance to fly the new Delanne but otherwise were limited to the secondary plane.

The Delanne 60E, designed for aerobatics as well as for elementary soaring, is really a fine effort on the part of the designer, Monsieur Jarlaud. Contrary to the older soaring planes, it is of rugged construction and beautifully delicate to handle in flight. Unfortunately, the French have not perfected the use of a wheel in the landing skid and, therefore, the Delanne is difficult to get off and on the ground.

The club has three Avia 40P's, intermediate sailplanes, and two privately owned high performance 41P's. These are of old design and the lightness of construction leaves much to be desired when the going gets rough. Monsieur Nessler, after he had broken the French distance record last spring in his 41P, "L'Aigle", stated that he was frequently worried during the flight by the weakness of his ship. The French, however, are at present in the process of developing new and stronger sailplanes, and now Monsieur Jarlaud has probably completed construction of a new modern two-place sailplane with gull wings and a built-in wheel in the skid.



Typical day at the C.A.U.

Without doubt, the most thrilling flight that I had there was while slope soaring on Thanksgiving day when I had the pleasure (?) of meeting three French army pursuit planes of the latest model capable of 280 miles per hour. It so happened that on the slope over which I was soaring an artillery unit was doing some maneuvers. At the beginning of the flight, I did not help them any because the wind was very light, with the result that I was skimming very close to the ground and more than once nearly hit some of the soldiers. A few minutes later, I managed to get about 100 to 200 feet above the crest of the hill and was struggling to keep this altitude, as the wind was still quite light. All of a sudden, I heard a roar of motors and looked up to see three pursuit planes flying straight at me at my own altitude. I had just time to bank a little to the left as I thought the one farthest to the right was low enough to fly under me and then I ducked. In a second they were gone, but I managed to see out of the corner of my eye that the one on the right had passed under my right wing with less than six feet to spare, our wings overlapping. My next thought was to put both hands on the stick to try to keep the plane steady in the slip stream. However, partly due to the very high speed of the planes and to the stability of the glider, I felt very little rough air and I continued the flight for fifteen

or more minutes until the wind became too light. Later, I learned that the middle plane had overlapped my left wing above. Also, the two pilots on returning to their base said that they had not seen me at all until they were right on top of me. They were very profuse in their apology and admitted that they also were nearly scared out of their wits.

The membership of the club numbers roughly 150. For women, active membership may only be had by special permission of the Air Ministry. Men may become active members merely by paying dues and a small annual premium for liability insurance. Actually, the total cost per member is around \$12.50 per annum.

The enthusiasm among the members was very keen, with the result that a great deal was done which otherwise might have cost extra money or might not have been done at all. For example, much of the repair and maintenance work was done by the pilots on days when the weather was bad. This amounted to enough to save the necessity of employing an assistant carpenter. Regular activities started at eight in the morning unless there was a very good wind, and then they might begin at sunrise. Flight lists were made up by arrival times as the most impartial method. It was interesting to note that the membership included numerous reserve army pilots who were sent there to learn gliding as a direct method of improving their flying ability.

That France appreciates the value of gliding is quite evident. She has seen from close range the success Germany has had in training pilots to be excellent flyers. It is far less expensive to give a student an hour of training flight in a glider than in an aeroplane and the transition from one to the other seldom requires over an hour of motor flight. Furthermore, gliding makes far better aeroplane pilots.

For these reasons, the extent of the financial help given by France to the C. A. U. is roughly as follows: The Ministère de l'Air has bought the land the C. A. U. occupies at Beynes and has paid for the old hangars and is constructing the new one. The Air Ministry also supplies sailplanes, tow cars, parachutes, spare parts, cables, winch cars, gas and oil and about five hundred dollars a year for running expenses.

If Mr. Roosevelt's plan of training 20,000 student pilots a year is successful from an economic, as well as practical point of view, it must incorporate the experience of our friends abroad. Most of the European countries have recognized the fact that gliding experience makes for better pilots, and in France, that is the reason for the interest in gliding, aside from the fact that it is a great sport. Why would it not be wise for our government to do likewise and promote gliding and soaring on a large scale?

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Avia 41P, "L'Aigle"