

News FROM Clubs AND Members

MASSACHUSETTS

M. I. T.

A review of Aeronautical Engineering Society History shows that the new sailplane, at present under construction, will be the 17th in the long line of ships either built or owned by the Society.

Gliding activities first began in 1912. A small group, under Frank Caldwell, now of Hamilton Standard, built a ship that aroused much interest. The glider took part in an intercollegiate meet held in Squantum. (The name of the other glider in the meet could not be found.)

Interest in gliding waned until 1920, when the AES was organized as an active professional society. Otto Koppen, now a Prof in the "Big House", and Eddie Allen, started things off by tossing together a 72 pound glider. Eddie satisfied his yen for testing things by letting himself be launched from a hilltop, on a very windy day, in a ship which he outweighed by two to one. We have no performance data available on the glider but, evidently, it must have been good (?) for, within four weeks, the AES had a new glider. This one had full length ailerons which could be used as flaps, a covered fuselage, and it actually weighed 92 pounds.

In 1922, these two machines were entered in a gliding meet in France. They had but one tail between them. It was realized that if one was wrecked, the tail would probably remain intact and ready for use on the second ship. Expectations were more than completely fulfilled for the first machine was completely destroyed except for the tail, which probably realized how badly it was needed.

However, the expedition was quite successful and returned with a bronze plaque to show for it.

When this group left the Institute, there was a lull in activities for some time. Eddie Allen had been the only pilot of these early gliders. (They probably didn't let Eddie see how the things were built.)

Sometime later, an unfinished glider was obtained from the Aeromarine Corp. Soon a big, heavy primary, known as "409", was built and flown by Ben Kelsey. This was followed, in 1928, by a primary known as the "Rock Crusher", which had the wings and tail of a Curtiss Robin. For safety's sake, this glider was flown only in the spring.

Serious gliding began when a Franklin Utility, dubbed "Tech is Hell" was bought in 1930 with the aid of Dr. Lange. The Glider was used in two meets at Elmira.

The following year, the "Professor" was purchased from the Cape Cod Glider School. This ship was built at Wasserkuppe, the German soaring center, and was the predecessor of a long line of famous German high performance sailplanes, including Kronfeld's "Wein". It was flown at Elmira by Lt. Hank Harris. The second best high performance sailplane in the U. S., the "Professor", was retired in an undamaged condition when doubts arose as to the strength of

its aged glue joints. It now hangs in peace in the large wind tunnel room of Building 33.

There are a number of other gliders including the "Ugly Duckling", which are not being mentioned here because of lack of information.

In 1934, a second Franklin Utility, of later design, was purchased from Richard duPont. This ship is still in good condition and is in active use. It was trained to answer to the call of "Allair".

The "Alfaro" was obtained in 1935. After one of the boys took a fence out with it, it came to be regarded with suspicion and will probably not be flown again—unless the AES sells it to someone.

It is to this long list of forerunners that the present group of AES members (that's us, boys) will add the first super-sailplane both designed and constructed by the Society.

ILLINOIS

GLEN ELLYN

Dave Miller reports on some new activity.

Harold Krueger, Bob Blaine, and myself are constructing a "Wolf" sailplane which we expect to complete by spring. Harry and I have decided to put a display of our tail assembly in a local drug store window. We are also running an article in the Glen Ellyn News this week, telling of our building the "Wolf" and also of Harry's and my starting of two glider clubs which will start operations in a month or so. We are really going to stir up some commotion in this town and vicinity. Three glider clubs in a town of 10,000 population isn't bad.

LA GRANGE

Kurt Siemon . . .

For the last nine months, I have been living in these parts, and together with others, I try to make the Chicago Area one of the most active gliding centers. You, as well as I, know the vast possibilities which this country offers. The question was mainly to stimulate again the dying interest. I can say that, through our combined efforts, this has been achieved. Our greatest need was for good flying equipment. Nearly all enthusiasts are rather short of cash, and new ships cost a lot. Therefore, the building of gliders was pushed as hard as possible with the result that quite a few ships are under construction.

I formed the E. M. C. Aviation Club at the New General Motors Diesel plant, here in La Grange. The club has about twenty-five members, and gliding as well as motor flying is sponsored. Officers are: President, Kurt Siemon; Vice-president, Bob Held; Treasurer and secretary, Frank Hall; and Chairman of the Advisory Committee is Melvin Brown. The Club has rented a store 55 x 15 for \$10.00 a month. A truckload of discarded crate wood supplied all the material for work benches, jigs, steam-outfit, etc. After quite some effort calssoming the place and so forth, we created a nice, big clubhouse. The front is used

as a workshop. A ten-inch saw and bandsaw were loaned by members and all the other necessities, like sanding disk, presses and clamps, were made out of scrap materials. During the 1937 contest, as interpreter and crew-manager of the Lithuanian pilots, I repaired their damaged ships. As their thanks, the boys sent me a complete blue-print set of one of their training jobs. The ship is more or less constructed after Grunau Baby pattern, as this ship seems to be the basic formula for that type in many countries. The ship has a span of thirty-seven feet, weighs about two hundred pounds, and is of exceptionally clean design, and also very simplified in construction.

I am a firm believer in making the sport as inexpensive as possible; therefore only \$1.00 per month is paid, and we intend to raise the money for the ship through entertainments and also through contributions from people who get a kick out of sponsoring our undertaking.

At the present, elevator and rudder are almost completed, and ribs and bulkheads are in the making. If we are able to raise the cash, we should be able to complete the ship within two and one-half months.

NEW YORK

ELMIRA

The Southside Aeronautical Association of Elmira decided, at a recent meeting, to furnish free crews for any pilots who are unable to bring their own at the coming National Meets. Pilots are urged to contact the organization at 370½ Fulton Street, Elmira, New York, which is the address of the President of Southside Aeronautical Association, if they desire a crew for the coming National Soaring Contest. The club also announced that they will purchase a new training glider sometime after the contest in June.

MICHIGAN

DETROIT

At a recent meeting of the Detroit Glider Council, the officers for 1939 were elected. Art Schultz, the former president, declined renomination, stating that he hadn't the time to devote to this office. He and R. E. Franklin are to make up an advisory board.

Our new officers are as follows: Randy Chapman, President; Johnny Nowak, Vice President; Frank Bacon, Jr., Secretary. Bob Canfield, of the U. of D. Club; Bill Putnam, of the L. I. T. Club; and Jack Murphy, of the Black Hawks Club, were elected to the board of directors. All of the clubs around Detroit are represented in the board.

A highlight of the meeting was a speech by Mr. Charles Wood, author of a recent article published in SOARING.

ARIZONA

Robert Luepke writes . . .

Since I last reported to the editorial offices, I have had the opportunity to build up my flying time to 6 hours, 15 minutes solo flying time in an Aeronca KC. It seems that there has at

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