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## GLIDING *and National Defense*

The results of the soaring movement in Germany under government subsidy are making themselves manifest in World War II. Following World War I, Germany was forced by the Versailles Treaty to resort to gliding and soaring as their only outlet for flight training. The far-sighted German government saw in this movement a means of building up a tremendous flying personnel. It has been encouraged and subsidized for many years and as a result the German air arm has an almost inexhaustible supply of airmen.

Airplanes, like automobiles, can be flown night and day constantly, but human endurance is limited. With all the excitement in Washington at the present time by the realization that our air force is highly inadequate, from both the standpoint of the number of planes and the number of pilots, it would seem an ideal time to begin thinking seriously about our own American soaring movement as an actual means for training pilots.

While the present system of training pilots has met with splendid results, it is extremely expensive. It fills the immediate need for pilots, but it does not have the long range potentialities which the glider movement can offer.

Scattered throughout the United States are some 150 glider clubs, some of which are very active; others that would be active if they had funds to maintain suitable flying equipment. Inasmuch as the government is now subsidizing private flying schools to a considerable extent, in its effort to build up its air corps personnel, it would seem that a small portion of this money distributed as a subsidy to glider clubs, would be well spent.

Past experience has shown that glider pilots can be soloed in 2-S airplanes in less than two hours. Many glider pilots have soloed in 1-S airplanes with as little as  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours dual instruction. This represents considerable

saving in time and money in getting students past the solo stage.

The question has always been how to subsidize gliding, how to seek subsidy. Many plans have been formulated, some of which have involved the expenditure of considerable money. Perhaps the most feasible of these has been the plan of subsidizing glider clubs on the basis of pilots trained; that is, each club would be paid a flat sum for each student trained to a certain point. For instance, students passing their "C" certificate requirements.

This would give the club sufficient funds for the proper maintenance of flying equipment and additional funds for the purchase of new equipment. With such an incentive, there are few clubs that would not make every effort to train as many pilots per year as time would permit.

There are, undoubtedly, other feasible systems for subsidizing the glider movement. However, the main point at the present time is to convince our Congressional leaders that they should profit by the experience of the belligerents. Many individuals and groups have contacted high ranking governmental officials in an effort to get some sort of glider subsidy, but as yet these officials have not seen the potentialities of the glider movement.

It is impossible at the present time to state how many glider pilots there are in the United States, since many of them do not hold CAA certificates nor FAI licenses. However, a safe estimate, combining CAA statistics, NAA statistics, and those of the SSA, would be approximately 1,000. If it is possible to have this number of pilots available, at no cost to the government, a subsidy should result in a 10-fold increase within a year.

It is high time the government gave some aid to the soaring movement for the direct benefits to be derived therefrom.