

## Foreign & News Notes

### ENGLAND

#### Those troop-carrying Gliders

A survey of some dozens of press cuttings about troop-carrying gliders leaves us with a feeling of satisfaction. Because someone has at last found a "practical use" for gliders? Not at all. Our satisfaction comes from realizing that nobody has yet been able to find a "use" for soaring flight.

It must be emphasized that the practice of motorless flight has spread and developed for one reason only, which is that gliders have been proved capable of soaring. This has no connection whatever with their use as troop-carriers. The subject is, therefore, strictly outside the scope of this journal, and if we run through our collection of pronouncements by press "experts," it is only because of their entertainment value to readers.

True, a "Correspondent" in *Reynold's* imagines that the troops "would glide in the clouds for an hour or even more after the departure of the visiting craft" (the towing aeroplane), "and alight in lonely spots." But no other writer expects any soaring to be done. The *Daily Mail* "Services Correspondent," though, has another use for "currents," evidently thinking that they are the only means of directional control, for he writes that, after being "loosened," the gliders "are then at the mercy of the air currents, but in skilled hands these can be turned to advantage and the glider may descend within reasonable distance of its objective." Don't ask him to define his "reasonable distance"; it probably depends on the amount of "mercy" available.

Few other writers dare to commit themselves on the subject of spot landings, though Air Commodore L. E. O. Charlton, who has a well-informed article in the *Daily Herald*, reveals that a glider pilot can, within limits, land wherever he wants to. But *The Times* Aeronautical Correspondent was surely off his guard when he wrote that, "having no motor, they have to land where the elements dictate," for he certainly knows better.

When it comes to gliding angles, we are given a variety to choose from, of which 1 in 10 seems to be the most popular; even Flight can specify nothing better than a lift/drag ratio of "at least 10." But this angle is too good for the *Sunday Times* Air Correspondent, who is so overcome by his boldness in suggesting a mere 12,000 feet for starting height, that he has to throw in "a favorable wind" as well.

The prize for the flattest descent goes, at first sight, to "An ex-R. A. F. pilot" in the *Star* with a glide of 25 miles from an altitude of 6,000 feet. But one finds, on reading further, that he thinks this is the best a sailplane can do with up-currents, for he says that these "cease when the air blows out to sea," and then reasons that it is, therefore, "not practical" for the sailplanes to start from the Continent with

sufficient height to glide across. So he wants them released "near the British coast," evidently sure that a gliding angle of about 1 in 1 will strain nobody's credulity. Some other writers conceal their ignorance of gliding angles by placing the release directly overhead of the landing point, thus missing the whole "advantage" of gliders over parachute troops.

On the question of materials, "Our Military Correspondent" of the *Newcastle Journal & Mail* leaves the rest nowhere when he tells us of "the raw materials for a glider—in which bamboo and canvas are used— . . ." The same writer explains vividly that, if attacked, "the plight of troops in gliders would be pitiable"; but there are others who point out that you can shoot ever so many holes in a glider without stopping it from gliding.

As for towing more than one glider at a time, the usual practice is for them to be splayed out fanwise each on a separate cable from the aeroplane; but none of the writers has ever heard of this, all being hypnotized by the "train" idea. We have only once seen a photograph of a "train," and would imagine the arrangement to be highly unstable, even without going to extremes like the *Daily Mail's* artist, who shows only a few feet of cable between one glider and the next. Imagine what would happen if the rearmost pilot started pump-handling!

Mr. F. N. Slingsby favors the "train" arrangement, but with hundred-yard intervals, in the *Illustrated London News*, where he writes with more authority than all the rest put together. In fact, his ideas, as depicted by that paper's artist, have been used in an Air Ministry poster just issued, according to *Everybody's Weekly*, which reproduces it.

Mr. Slingsby gives, as approximate figures for a glider carrying eight fully-armed men, a span of 85 ft., wing loading 7 lbs. per square foot, stalling speed 42 m. p. h. (36 m. p. h. with flaps down), best flying speed 48 to 50 m. p. h., with sinking speed 4 ft. per second, which gives a gliding angle of 1 in 18 or 19. An interesting estimate by Flight is that a glider with 10 men would only add 11.4 per cent to the drag of a "Ju 52" aeroplane carrying 20 men.

And now let us leave this irrelevant subject and return to soaring.

—July/August *Sailplane*.



### SOVIET RUSSIA

A new woman goal flight record was established on May 30, by the Master of Soviet Soaring, Olga Klepikova, flying a "Rot Front-7" single place sailplane. She soared from Tushino airdrome near Moscow to Mouron a distance of 178 miles (285 kilometers) in 4 hrs. 12 min. Her best altitude during the flight was 6,650 feet.

The "Rot Front-7" is a full cantilever shoulder wing sailplane of all wood construction, monocoque fuselage. The wing is straight and sharply tapered. The cockpit is fully enclosed and the span is 54.4 feet, length 21.4 feet. It has a load factor of 12 and it has been dived to a speed of 300 klm/h with a sharp pull out without any sign of failure.

### 1940 Eastern States Meet

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hour. Such a speed is not excessive but the glider stops only because there is a wooden skid on the bottom of it. Ed Quarterman, finding himself in the position of coming downwind at sixty, discovered that the skid of the glider acted just like a wheel when it was sliding along on wet grass. He had the stick all the way forward and the glider was skidding along on its nose in bucking broncho style. He effected a stop by dropping one of the wings and skidding a bit sideways. Such a maneuver is not at all dangerous but it is likely to be hard on the glider.

One of the Airhopper boys from New York was confronted with the necessity of having to keep clear of a ship that was taking off. In maneuvering he flew out over the woods and at right angles to a narrow runway. He put the nose of his ship down, picked up much speed, and found himself on the ground but going across a narrow runway at sixty miles an hour. His glider had a brake so he applied it, but still he could not stop; so he picked out a soft spot in the underbrush that did the stopping for him. The glider was not damaged and, of course, he was not hurt.

The only other thing out of the ordinary that happened was when an airplane was taking off and the motor stopped. The plane was just a few feet off of the ground but headed for the woods. The pilot landed the ship, put on his brakes and stopped a few feet short of the end of the field.

Probably the best flying at the meet was done by Don Lawrence. He was towed aloft in his Lawrence sailplane and stayed up for over half an hour. He also flew his Cadet Utility and put on an excellent exhibition of stunting. He cut loose from a tow plane at about three thousand feet and stunted all the way down. He looped his glider, made barrel rolls, and even spun it. It is rather likely that he would have looped off of a winch tow except that some of the powers-that-be were there.

One of the contestants was George Law with a ship new in these parts. It is Dick du Pont's Heutter now owned by George. The ship was designed for use in rough country in Europe, particularly the Alps. It is short and fast but very maneuverable. A top-notch pilot with luck might put down in a tennis court.

Commander Ralph S. Barnaby, U. S. Navy, Commandant of the Naval Aircraft Factory at Philadelphia, and President of The Soaring Society of America, was on hand to lend his support to the gliding. Barnaby is an expert at the business, and when the sun shone at Philadelphia he just could not resist the temptation to get around gliders again.