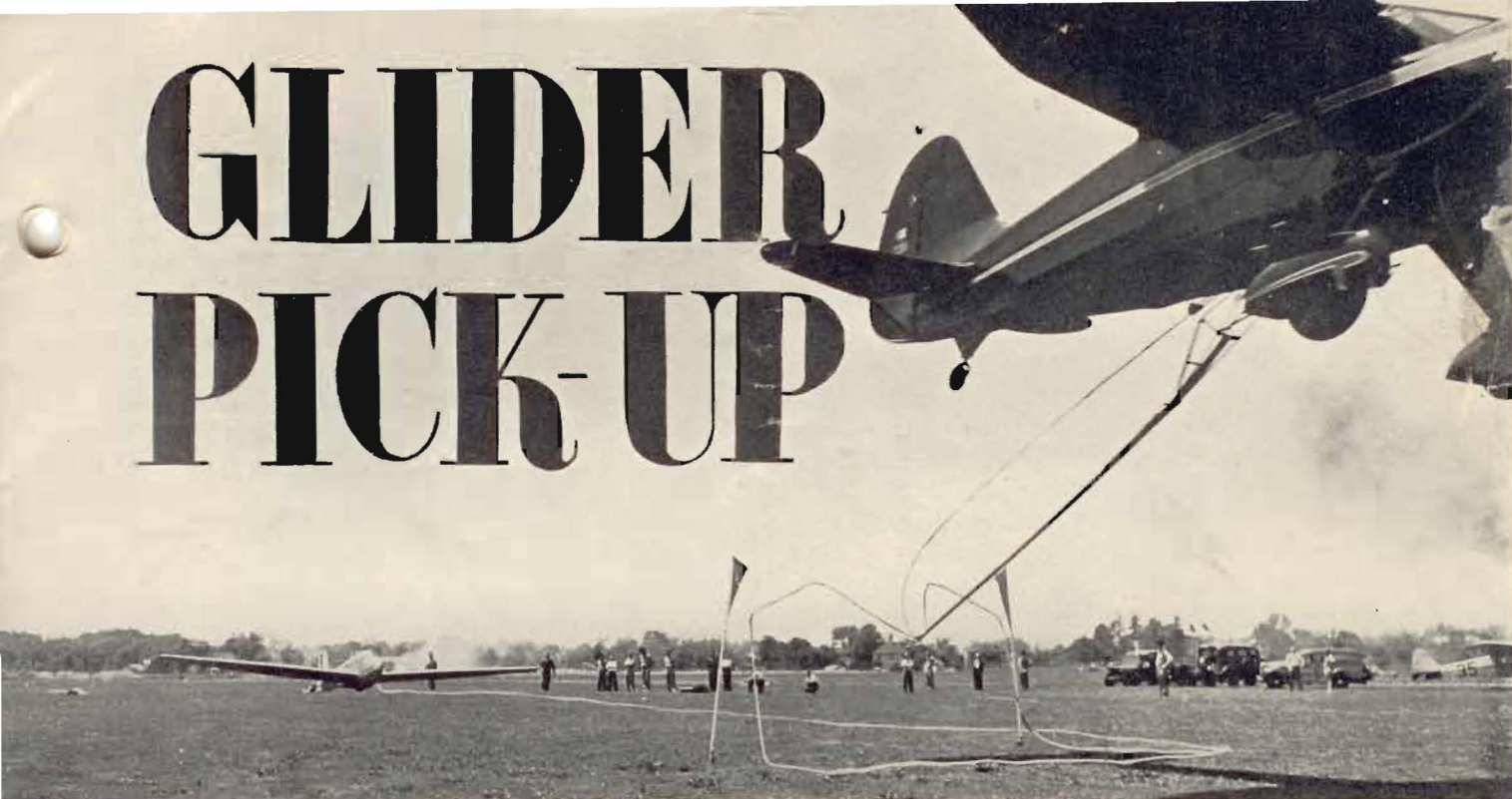


# GLIDER PICK-UP



Official Photograph U. S. Army Air Forces

*Arthur B. Schultz*

**F**ANTASTIC? I'll say it was! I never could just figure out what kind of a star attraction could make a super-duper soaring champion like Dick duPont lose interest in cloud hopping and keeping his nose to the grindstone.

One day in September 1941 I got a phone call from Dick—could I arrange to get a glider to Wright Field to help put on a demonstration for the Army? Would I pass up a chance to boost gliding and soaring? No! A week later I had postponed my vacation and was on deck at Wright Field with a Midwest Sailplane I'd borrowed from XYZ.

In a Dayton hotel I met Cammy Vinet, All American Aviation's number one test pilot who was to be the tow plane pilot for the demonstration. Cammy began to outline the program. My heart sank! They were going to try to pick up XYZ's perfectly good Midwest—and perhaps wreck it (but they'd, consolingly, pay the damages)—with one of their air mail pick-up planes! What would I tell XYZ when I returned mournfully home with the pieces?

Then Cammy dug into the details of the plan—explained how pick-up worked—why they were sure their pick-up gadget (designed to pick-up a 50 pound mail bag) could pick-up a 500 pound glider—Lewin Barringer was going to be the glider pilot and he had confidence in the idea. Maybe this nightmare wasn't so bad after all. Maybe there was something to it.

I retired to my room, but not to sleep. With the technical data Cammy had supplied me, my pocket slide rule and plenty of hotel stationery I started figuring. By 3 A.M. my doubts were satisfied. If their 50 pound pick-up gadget would do what they said it would, if the airplane didn't exceed 100 m.p.h. and if everything went smooth, I was sure the wings wouldn't be left behind and that the fuselage could keep up with the release all right. The wild idea didn't look so bad after all!

Next day Dick and Lewin arrived and the rest is history. Three successful pick-ups were made and the Army was satisfied that glider pick-up had possibilities.

A few days later Helen Montgomery was stunting XYZ's Midwest at an airshow near Detroit, not in the least suspecting that the glider she was flying had just made history by being the first glider to be "picked-up" by an airplane passing overhead at 100 miles per hour. Few XYZ members will know until they read these words just what happened that week when their pet sailplane was taken to Wright Field for a "demonstration."

All American Aviation was given experimental contracts to develop larger units to be designed especially for glider pick-up. A new engineering department was organized, with your writer as its chief, and in several months, quoting from the company's monthly, PICK-UP, June 1942 issue, "... Saturday, May 30, marked the first time in the history of aviation that a 'full fledged' airplane has been picked up from the ground by another