

# Philadelphia Glider Conference

*by Lew Hull,* **PRESIDENT, PHILADELPHIA GLIDER COUNCIL**

**T**HE merits and desirability of a glider training program for American youth have been widely discussed in civilian as well as in military circles. Although our country has been slow to follow the lead of Europe, we are about ready to offer to our boys and girls a chance to learn fundamental air skills through gliding.

Profiting by the broad experience of the 10,000 glider schools of Europe, we shall omit certain features of their program, and . . . typically American . . . we shall do a better job.

As an important supplement to the aeronautics courses now offered high school students, gliding presents a safe, inexpensive, and fascinating means of pre-flight and flight training in preparation for the war and for the inevitable air age which looms large on the horizon.

To consider the best procedure for launching a program, a GLIDER CONFERENCE was held in Philadelphia under the auspices of the Soaring Society of America and the management of the Philadelphia Glider Council. We are pleased to submit the following summary:

The conference was held at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, on March 27, 1943. The thirty representatives present consisted of representatives of national youth organizations, executives from various state Bureaus of Instruction, and glider personnel familiar with glider construction and flight instruction. Although the press of war work and travel conditions prevented a number of groups from sending representatives, those present included several who have been active in glider work in western United States.

The discussion centered around (1) the relation of the Soaring Society of America to a national youth glider program and to other youth organizations, (2) the availability of gliders and launching equipment for a national program, and gliderports and materials for construction, (3) availability of personnel for instruction.

The remarks indicated that all agreed that the present pre-flight courses in schools are sterile without actual flight experience, and that the glider flight program is the natural way to "Learning by Doing."

Among the opinions expressed were the following:  
Alex Dawydoff:

"Gliding can provide a vast supply of active pilots, mechanics, and maintenance personnel. Gliding can eliminate the present expensive screening in the Air Forces. Pre-flight training as instituted in the high schools is not sufficient because most subjects will be forgotten unless practical application is made. This is the place where glider training fits in. Glider camps and school glider clubs provide excellent recreational and educational activities."

Parker Leonard:

"Start the kids early, teach them every phase of flying and let them fit into the grand picture wherever their talents best suit them to serve."

"The imitation of the English subsidy plan is the quickest way to achieve a glider program."

"We should avoid duplication of effort by knowing the aims and accomplishments of other groups working toward the same goal and then coordinating them."

Paul Schweizer:

"We should be cautious against going forward too fast in the expansion of flying activities with inadequate flying equipment and without proper instruction."

"Most of our trained glider people are tied up by the Army or by industry."

Ben Shupack:

"The future of gliding in the United States can best be served through strengthening the various regional gliding associations and coordinating their efforts through the Soaring Society of America. The S. S. A. has seen the gliding movement through its infancy and guided its early footsteps. The organization now stands ready to build on this sturdy early foundation and go forward sponsoring a robust glider program for the youth of the nation. This we must do for we know that a glider pilot training program started at an early age will materially cut down the flight accidents in power plane flying."

From the discussion, in which all present participated evolved a plan of action. It was felt that with the concerted effort of all gliding enthusiasts, the Soaring Society

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