

HOMOLOGATION

by Wally Setz

LEW BARRINGER disappeared January 24, 1943, while on a special mission for the Air Forces.

We are living in a time of death for men of action. Lew would have asked us to pay homage first to those who meet death at the lines of battle. Yet he so perfectly symbolizes the best, not only in our movement but in our times, that we ought to pause for a moment to remember him. Lew was a definite part in the history and development of soaring. And, somehow, a strong parallel may be drawn between the movement and the present great struggle. Soaring is not just a sport, or a technical development. Nor is gliding just a training expedient, or a military tool. To those of us who have spent a large portion of our lives in it, we have come to feel a deeper meaning not apparent on the surface. A meaning that cannot be measured on scales or be put into words. We have frequently been called a fraternity. That might be true. Whatever it may be called, the spirit that Lew imparted to us represented the finest in the movement.

To some the background of Lew's life did not seem to warrant the hardships and dangers he chose to take. However, he was undoubtedly influenced by the example of his father's pioneering in mining engineering. Lew was well grounded in the resistance of man and nature to overcoming obstacles considered insurmountable. Time and again he proved this by challenging the accepted, whether in debate or in actual flying. His leadership was not thrust upon him unearned but was a result of long, and frequently bitter, experience that passed practically unnoticed by all but a small handful that comprised the movement.

By virtue of his widespread experience, he knew not only the scope of soaring but he knew our many differences. The problems of the struggling club with inadequate resources and equipment was equally clear to him as the individuals lacking the cooperative support a group offers. He drew no class distinction between the members. Actually, he marvelled and was proud of the fact that here was a movement that inherently equalized all those that took part. The diverse vocations represented in the Society intrigued him. The soundness of the move-

ment was largely based on this acceptance by all types and factions.

At contests and meetings, many got to know him best. When competing he was never jealous, always pleased when other contestants, especially younger ones, turned in a good performance. Willingly he would impart of his wide knowledge and even advise fellow contestants on how to improve their technique. Yet, at no time, was there the slightest trace of vanity. On the contrary, he was extremely grateful to anyone pointing out improvements to his own flight technique. As a contest official his fairness was limitless. There were meets where such a quality was put to severe demands. He could enter into heated discussions and still emerge with a completely impartial judgement. He did as much as anybody to foster "pilots" meets as opposed to "spectators" meets, although he realized the latter's significance in the full development of the movement.

There were a few people who thought that Lew emphasized the publicity angle of soaring too much. These people were generally interested in the pure sporting phase of the movement. It was agreed by all that the Society must have an enlarged membership to be self-sustaining. Lew contributed unstintingly of his time to bring soaring before the people. To some few members, this was narrowly interpreted as belittling the pureness of the sport. However, no one was more emphatic in his opposition to the commercialization of gliding and soaring than was Lew.

Lew was fortunate enough to have visited some of the foreign soaring centers. He, too, was impressed and influenced by the fraternal spirit that is common to the movement the world over. National, political and language differences dissolve when old soaring people foregather. There are far too many mutual interests and problems within soaring to permit making issues of these differences. Just as gliding and soaring are a great leveler within a nation, so it was between nations. The fraternal spirit in soaring knows no boundaries. Lew was well known and loved by many who are now on the other

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