

for instructors

# A TRAINING AID

by Wesley B. Hammond

**T**HIS school year I have had eight new members in our glider flying class which meant that the process of ground trainer tows, ground tows, and skims, etc., had to be started again. Since this is the third group I have taught I somewhat dreaded the instructor's anxiety connected with singleplace glider training. Our students are all members of our high school and run in age from fifteen to eighteen and because of the fact that I am also a high school teacher and always must contend with criticism I have to be especially careful as far as safety is concerned. In fact, I lean backward as far as student safety and therefore progression is concerned.

The students soon reached the straight, low, non-release stage and I began to worry about their first free flights. The hand signal system had been used before but seemed to be very inadequate. I spent quite a few hours trying to formulate a better method of instructor to student communication. Radio came first in mind but was out of question because of war time restrictions. A system was thought of whereby an amplifier and microphone would be located in the tow car with a disconnecting junction for the speaker board incorporated in the tow line, and the speaker located in the glider. The fact that the connection would be broken when the student released would prohibit communication when it was needed most; so this method was abandoned.

Our school fortunately possesses a 35 watt public address system which will operate on 110 volts or 6 volts and has an outdoor type of speaker. This outfit had been used innumerable times on a car for advertising scrap drives, dances, etc. Why not use it on the towcar. Well, why not? We installed it on the car with the speaker facing backward and journeyed to the airport for a trial. Since the speaker and microphone are located so closely together with no steel top to act as a shield, we could use only about 5-10 watts (estimate) of the available output. Because of feed-back, there was some question as to its range. We also wondered about disturbing others near the airport but found to our delight that we needed much less power than at first thought necessary and it did not disturb people outside of the airport.

We have used it for several weeks now and have found no disadvantages. Its advantages are many and very apparent. I'm now giving "dual instruction" and sometimes *I can analyse and correct some of the student's mistakes*

*better than if I were riding with him.* The "helpless feeling" situations are few and far between and I can really help the student when he becomes confused and excited. My experience has been that the instructor, as always, must be careful to always talk in an even, unexcited tone, to avoid transmitting his worry or anxiety to the student.

The students are very grateful for its use and make statements such as these, "I feel as though you were right beside me," "Why didn't we do this before?", and "I learn so much faster."

The following is a flight which is typical and happened a few days ago.

Instructor sitting in towcar and student ready. "All set, Nick? You have a little cross wind so remember what I told you about slips. If you do O.K. I'll tell you to release and land."

The actual tow:

"You are riding nose high. Fine, left wing too low. All right ease it off. A little higher. Hold it. Release. Faster." (At this point student slowed ship to the stalling point. Would hand signals help?) "Level off. Easy. Fine." Sometimes you can see a student tighten up while in the air but with a few words you can reassure and help him to relax.

It's still singleplace training but helps to combine the advantages of both single and twoplace training and lessen some of the disadvantages of singleplace training and take full advantage of the benefits of singleplace training.



Soaring