



THE TG-4A

By Randall N. Chapman*

THE Yankee Doodle Two, also well known as the Army Air Forces TG-4A, is a direct descendant of the world-famous Yankee Doodle.

In 1937 President E. George Lawrence of the Lawrence Institute of Technology of Highland Park, Michigan, asked J. W. Laister to design the Yankee Doodle with the definite aim of making a high-performance sailplane which would out-perform any other sailplane in this country. Laister had designed and built several gliders during the preceding years and had already decided to build a high-performance ship for himself. Therefore, he incorporated his ideas into the design of the Lawrence Tech Yankee Doodle. The ship was built under Laister's direction by students in the school and made its initial flights in 1938. The fundamental soundness of the design was proved by its performance in soaring contests in this country and in the International Aerobatic Competition in France in 1939, where it was flown by Dick Randolph.

In 1941 the Army Air Forces became interested in gliders as a tactical weapon and sent several pilots to Elmira to learn to fly gliders. Among them was Colonel (at that time Major) Fred R. Dent who was in charge of the development of new gliders for the Army Air Forces. It was at this time that Jack Laister wrote to Colonel Dent offering his service and experience in building gliders for the Army Air Forces. Colonel Dent replied immediately and requested three-view drawings and specifications for a two-place training glider similar to the

Yankee Doodle. These were quickly prepared and submitted to the Materiel Command and a contract to start building a static test and three experimental flight test gliders was issued in October 1941. The static test article was delivered to Wright Field on December 30, eight days ahead of schedule and less than three months from the time the contract was issued. This static test glider was put through the rigid tests required by the Materiel Command and passed with only minor changes, thereby becoming the first glider to be successfully static tested by the Materiel Command. The first XTG-4 for flight testing was delivered late in February, 1942, shortly after the static tests had been completed. The flight tests began immediately and were so successful that the Army immediately placed a production order for these gliders.



RANDY CHAPMAN

* Chief Engineer, Laister-Kauffman Aircraft Corporation, St. Louis, Mo.