

In contemplation of future International Contests, American pilots would do well to consider the aspects of . . .

Alpine Soaring

By DR. W. DOLLFUS

has been materially improved and expanded during the war. In fact the number of pilots in training and their flight achievements have in the year 1943 surpassed pre-war statistics. Only 1,100 pilots trained in 1938, flying a total of 2,112 hours. In 1943 the flight achievements of these men covered almost 3,000 hours.

During the present war the possibilities of the Swiss Alpine regions for motorless flying have been continually and systematically studied. Formerly it was the opinion in Switzerland, and in most other countries, that successful gliding was feasible only in the atmospheric conditions of large plains. In recent years, however, it has been discovered that the Alps with their mighty bulwarks of rock, their valleys and gorges, and their glaciers are equally and sometimes even more desirable for gliding, from a topographical and meteorological standpoint, than the lowland regions.

Gliding in the high Alps is undoubtedly more dangerous than in unobstructed flat country. Landing opportunities are extremely limited and flying through clouds is possible only within a fair distance at the side or at a sufficient altitude above the mountains. Strong upward winds which carry a pilot thousands of feet up in a few minutes, change like a flash with downward winds, which can as quickly throw him down again into a narrow valley. Here the skill of the pilot receives its most severe test. Gliding in the high Alps is beyond a beginner. A would-be glider pilot has to get his first training in the lowlands, then in the lower mountain regions.

The reward which later awaits the glider pilot in the high Alps is rich beyond compare. Silently he floats through sunlit spheres above a realm where dazzling glaciers, regal peaks, lakes sparkling like jewels, dark forests and verdant pastures form a grandiose panorama as far as the eye reaches. In his solitude many a glider pilot has been joined by a proud companion, the eagle, once king of his domain.

In the year 1943 the Swiss Aero-Club held its annual glider championships for the first time on the flying field Samaden-St. Moritz, in the famous Upper Engadine. The best twelve glider pilots in Switzerland were invited to compete. These men achieved amazing results. For the first time a round trip flight competition of 62 miles: Samaden-St. Moritz, Davos, Arosa,

THE COVER

The Spyr IV, one of Switzerland's better Alpine gliders, takes off on Muottas Murail, 8,058 feet a/s, in the Upper Engadine, for a big Alpine circular flight over the Grisons. The Spyr IV has excellent performance; the gliding ratio being 1:30, the minimum sink 2.26 ft./sec., and the normal flying speed 39.2 mph. The photograph is by Photopress.



Photopress

The Inn at Muottas Murail, 8,058 feet a/s, in the Upper Engadine, Switzerland, is an excellent starting point for Alpine gliding. In the background appears the Roseg Glacier, to the left Piz Tschierva and the Bernina group of mountains.

Lenzerheide, Samaden-St. Moritz was offered. At all turns, which were usually mountain peaks of a height of 9,900 feet, there were control stations with short wave transmitters, from which the passing of the contestants was reported. Results were surprising even for the experts. Of the eleven contestants who had started seven were able to complete the prescribed flight. The victor covered the extremely difficult stretch in only 162 minutes flying time.

On the basis of the experiences made in this contest the Swiss Aero-Club has decided to work out rules and regulations for a post-war International Alpine Glider Competition. Thus, when peace reigns once more in this war-torn world, Switzerland will invite the glider pilots from everywhere to visit her and to become acquainted with the joys of Alpine gliding!



Heimgartner, Zurich

From the lofty mountain plateau of Crans sur Sierre in the Valais, Switzerland, glider pilots proceed into space. In the background appears the Rhone Valley.