

A Soaring School in *Action*

WITHIN a few hours after the ban on Pacific Coast private flying was lifted, southern California's old established soaring school was back in action with seven students lined up for training in the sleek BG-8 sailplane.

William G. "Gus" Briegleb, whose Briegleb Soaring School was training students on that fateful December 7th, is now back in full swing again with a growing enrollment of students. On December 8, 1945, Gus had approximately 100 students all concentrated in weekend instruction. The line-up at the Briegleb Soaring School site on Rosamond Dry Lake is impressive. There are always three or four airline pilots—men with 3000 to 4000 power hours—eager to try their hands at soaring. There are service pilots, men long familiar with fighters—even P-80 jets—and men intimate with B-17's, B-24's and PBV's. They all agree there is a lot to the thrill of soaring on up without those thousands of "horses" and their din.

Rosamond Dry Lake has been described in *SOARING* before, but even after you have had it described, you almost gasp on driving from the lumpy, sandy, scrub-mesquite-covered Mojave Desert out into the almost endless expanse of flat, hard, smooth, *FLAT* surface which comprises the Dry Lake. Once a year there is an inch or so of water, but this lasts only a short time, erases any marks of the season's activities, and starts you out all fresh and smooth again, and very, very *FLAT*!

There are about 24 square miles of dry bed, so, when the Briegleb School is operating there may be a dozen other activities going on as well. The sailplanes of

other Southern California pilots soar here and there, light airplanes practice spot landings, a Bumblebee hums its way to 1800 feet and cuts its engine to join the soaring fun—then starts it up again to get quickly over to a big "dust devil," frequent visitors at Rosamond. Even the "hot rods" or "hopped up" automobiles and motorcycles use the dry lake bed for speed runs.

The Briegleb Soaring School has, then, a splendid location at Rosamond. Students from Los Angeles travel eighty miles through beautiful country. The western edge of the Mojave Desert saw great wartime pilot training activity with schools at Lancaster, only ten miles from Rosamond, Palmdale, and at Mojave. Now the BG-8, Briegleb's high performance two-place tandem, highwing sailplane and the TG-1A (Cinema II) in Gus's fleet carry on where December 7 caught the single-place BG-6s at work.

Now undergoing final tests at Briegleb Soaring School is the BG-7, Gus's high performance single-place. Hopes are high for some records in this sleek new member of the "BG family." These tests are being carried on during a few weeks of wetness on the dry lake. Also in process is permanent equipment for the very unique launching method worked out last fall at Briegleb.

As a strictly commercial school launching method, Gus's two-gliders-on-one-tow-car launch deserves attention. Working with Harry Perl and Hice Johnson, Gus worked out this system, adaptable to long smooth tow runs and a really powerful towcar. The Briegleb



The personnel and equipment of the Briegleb Soaring School. Gus Briegleb, standing beside his BG-8, instructors, students and old time pioneer, Hawley Bowlus (second left) after a flight in the Bumblebee. Beside Hawley are instructors Harry Perl (left) and Paul Loudon (right). In the background is the Cinema TG-1A; and at the extreme right are the crew members Wayne Bledsoe and Richard Kesteren on the Duesenberg tow car.