



Photo by Edward Stevers, courtesy San-Diego-Cal. Club

The Briegleb "BG-7," the Bowlus "Super," the Polish "Orlik," and the Ross-Stevens "Zanenia" soaring in formation

TORREY PINES

By JIM SPURGEON

GLIDING is not new to San Diegans, in fact, the first successful winged flight of man was made here in San Diego by John J. Montgomery in 1883. Hawley Bowlus did his early experiments with soaring flight here during the late Twenties, and he also taught Anne and Charles Lindbergh to fly gliders right here in San Diego in 1928. The training methods of Bowlus were destined to become the pattern for glider training the nation over.

John Robinson, Woody Brown, Ray and Harry Parker, and Dick Essary were mere air-minded kids when Bowlus was flying his now famous Albatross series here. Youth must fly, so it was that John, Woody, Ray, Harry, and Dick took to building their own ships. At first, their efforts were repaid with joyful shock chord launches down San Diego's rolling hills but soon the boys were towing the homemade ships off the sandy beach that stretches some three miles along the Pacific shore just north of town. They noticed that when the wind was strong enough to kick up "white caps" on the ocean, it was easy to remain aloft and soar up over the 350 foot cliff that backs up the beach. This was the discovery of the Torrey Pines site which today, stands out as one of the best equipped and most used glider-ports in the entire U. S. A.

Public interest demanded an expansion of these early glider operations on the cliff so it was that the Associated Glider Clubs of So. Calif., Ltd., came into being in 1930.

Since that time, the club has produced three national record holders, Robinson alone capturing the National Champ title three times running.

When the Glider Corps was being formed early in the last war our club had such seasoned pilots as Parker, Robinson, Comer and others who, like many glider pilots the country over, pitched in and became the actual backbone of the Army Glider Corps. Our soaring site at Torrey Pines fell within the boundaries of Camp Callen Training Center, so of course our operations were at a standstill until 1946, when the Camp officially closed. Our club then immediately renewed its lease with the City of San Diego.

Today, in our third year of gliding since the war, we have in our club over sixty active members along with over a hundred associate members. Our club equipment includes a V-8 Mercury powered winch with tow speeds of 0 to 80 m.p.h., five sailplanes: two Schweizer TG2s, a Cinema TGIA, a Briegleb BG7, and a Pratt-Reed. We have leased from the city five army type buildings which we use for equipment storage, clubhouse, etc.

Every weekend our gliderport hums with activity and when soaring is not too good, we use the time for training new students. Our instruction is free, a use fee on the equipment is \$3 per hour. We have 8 commercial pilots, 5 private pilots and the rest student pilots. Some of our boys hold the SSA "C", Silver "C" and Golden "C," and,