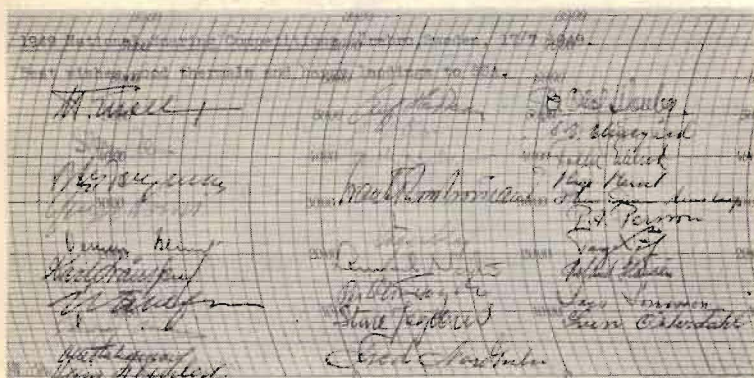


IS there anything more wonderful than a championship soaring contest? First the preparations full of anticipation during the months ahead, then the arrival at the airport with highly polished sailplanes, cars and trailers, the reunion of good old friends and soaring champs, the discussions, the jokes. The preparations for the start, the actual take-offs, the sailplanes circling under the clouds, the anxious waiting for the landing reports and then the retrieving.

Among soaring pilots there are no boundaries, no nations, only the one great longing to fly. Everyone who attended the 1949 Swedish Nationals at Orebro, July 6-17, had that feeling. This was the best contest we have had yet, and at the same time it was the dress rehearsal for the 1950 World Soaring Championships.

As team captain I kept a diary and it is from my notes that I reconstruct the following day-by-day account.

Wednesday, July 6: This was registration day. Eighteen teams showed up, ten from the Air Force and eight civilian groups. Lt. Pelle Persson, champion of the 1947 Swedish competition and of the 1948 Swiss International, was the favorite. Alf Hedman and Billy Nilsson were considered next in line.

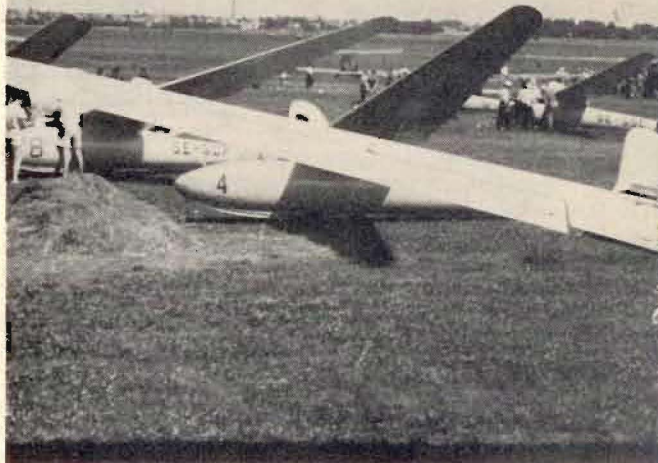


Greetings to the SSA from the contestants at the 1949 Swedish Championship Meet—pilots' signatures on paper barogram.



Left, Tage Lof, winner of the Swedish Championship; right, Pelle Persson, international record-holder and champion, who placed third.

1949 Swedish Soaring



By OLLIE H

Translated by

Thursday, July 7: The 9:00 AM weather report by meteorologist Goesta Hakansson promised good thermal conditions for noon, and at 11:00 AM the task of distance combined with altitude was set for the day. An hour after take-off everyone had disappeared, and that night the little flags on the map told a tale of remarkable performances. Five pilots had landed on the west coast with distances of more than 300 kilometers (187 miles). Pelle Persson, the winner of the day, and three other pilots earned Golden "C's". Persson had made the altitude leg in 1947 with his record flight of 26,400 feet gained.

Friday, July 8: Good thermals with moderate north winds were expected and the contest committee decided on goal flights for the day. Again it was noon before things were right for take-off. Most pilots chose their goals rather far away, some even as far as 250 miles, as the high number of points offered for goal flights was tempting. Performances exceeded those of the day before, and landing reports did not come in until late. Six pilots flew beyond the 300-kilometer mark and others went almost as far. Victor of the day was Lt. R. Hamren with 235 miles, second Sergeant Elmegard with 190 miles. Four more Golden "C's" were won. Unfortunately, two sailplanes were damaged beyond repair in landing during this event; another damaged ship was repaired, after 60 hours of work, in time to continue.

Saturday, July 9: This was decreed a rest day, as some of the retrieving crews did not return until late Saturday afternoon.

Sunday, July 10: The weather did not hold