

# SOARING

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and  
THE SOARING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA



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## AN EDITORIAL

# AMERICA WAS THERE!

It would have been better, no doubt, to have won. Nevertheless, Spain will be written down as an achievement, and one more milestone, in the advancing American soaring movement of today.

Let us keep in mind this fact: **We were there!** America was there! On our own power, without fanfare, under difficulties and disadvantages, we were there. And this time (which is important spiritually, if you will, in the world right now), America was in Europe to compete, not with more dollars than anybody else, not with immense superiority in expensive facilities, not with Government backing.

The Americans ("norteamericanos") were at Madrid, competing in the World Soaring Championships, in the good, old-fashioned American way of individual and personal initiative. There was your real testimony to the vitality of the soaring movement in this country. Our boys (and a few of our girls, bless 'em!) did it by themselves, the hard way.

To be sure, the entire effort was organized under the wing and official auspices of the Soaring Society of America; and SSA can point proudly to its performance. But fundamentally, it was a triumph for red-blooded U.S. individualism, the kind that is the mark of soaring people in this country and of SSA members everywhere.

Soaring is going places in America. Spain was a good "school" for us. Forgetting results, ratings, the mathematics of points and the glory of championships for the moment: Think of the value of what we learned. Our boys are back with us, and all of us will now share with them in the experience gained, the fund of knowledge acquired, the broader outlook.

American soaring has been enriched — yes, American aviation has been enriched. Enriched in a first-hand, "under-fire" study of the soaring movement of a large part of the globe. Enriched in terms of world wide fellowship of the people of soaring, the creation of American friendships and ties with soaring folks from Africa to Australia, from the Rhine to the Thames. Enriched in the understanding of the workings, the very mechanics, of international soaring events.

American soaring has been stimulated. Everywhere in the U. S., soaring people—and those in aviation, generally—must have been quickened in spirit to know that our boys were over there in Spain, flying, crewing, retrieving with not-so-efficient, jeep-like "Unimogs," temporarily getting lost, temporarily battling with intestinal "tourista," sweating out difficulties, paying the penalty of daring to enter competition in strange surroundings and under great handicaps, and learning, learning, learning.

Immense effort by a few individuals made Spain possible in the first place. Yet, again, contributions by many, many persons made it possible. It was a great accomplishment.

Strictly from the standpoint of how we came out, of winning, of American pride in "licking 'em," Spain was, of course, disappointing. Here and there the bitter word "fiasco" has been spoken, apropos many unfortunate aspects of the event. But soaring is much more than a game, conceived to create winning teams; it is not a horse race, nor is it the World Series.

Soaring, among other things, is teamwork; Spain was teamwork on a world stage. There are plenty of legitimate gripes as to what went on; the gripes will be aired, and progress will be made.

And even at that, an American managed to set a new world's speed record for motorless flight at Spain, Dick Johnson's neat dash of 123 kilometers in 1 hour 9 minutes.

So, it's hats off to all who helped make Spain possible—you who went, you who gave cash, you who wrote your Congressman (without results), you who stayed home and cheered (or groaned!), all of you who did whatever you did! Hats off to Soaring, U. S. A.!

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