

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

50th Anniversary of Powered Flight Sets Stage
For Soaring's Recognition; Youth Program Timely

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of Powered Flight will be appropriately celebrated by all aviation organizations and individuals the world over during 1953. The celebration in the United States will be led by the National Committee, Fiftieth Anniversary of Flight, which is very appropriately headed by one of America's most eminent aviation figures, Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle.

It shall be the pleasure of the Soaring Society of America to cooperate with Gen. Doolittle and this Committee in conducting this great celebration which will, in its entirety be a tribute to all the untiring individuals who by their genius and determination have provided man's most spectacular accomplishment, human flight, and have made it a tool of service for the great good of all mankind.

AMONG THE MANY events of the celebration are memorial dinners, aviation symposiums, the laying of the cornerstone of the Wright Memorial Museum at Kitty Hawk, educational programs in schools, aviation conventions, commemorative stamps, airline exhibits, traveling exhibits, air shows and races, radio and television shows, aviation weeks, open houses at air stations and manufacturing plants, programs at civic and luncheon clubs, schools, and many other things to impress the citizenry of the world with the importance of this "50-milestone" in aviation's history of progress.

It is more than merely coincidental that the Soaring Society will participate in all these activities of the celebration, for it is also a celebration of the success and accomplishments of Aerodionetics.

ALL THE TRIALS and errors, the toil and labor of untold thousands of hours, the hundreds of bitter disappointments of failure, the unknown numbers of lives spent in unrewarding partial success or lost in fatal accidents, and the few meager successes of the nearly 500 years from the time of Leonardo de Vinci to the time of the Wright Brothers, were the results of attempts to glide from a higher to a lower level or to soar off into the atmosphere, and were gliding and soaring's first contributions to aviation.

Just as gliders served the Wright Brothers and all their contemporaries of 50 years ago, and throughout all the years since, gliding and soaring are serving the geniuses of super-sonic design today. We all know that the immortal Wrights, as did all the others of the very early pioneers of human flight, made their first successful flights in gliders.

Most of us probably know that one of the world's most successful designers and constructors of modern high performance powered aircraft, Willie Messerschmitt, said that he was able to design superior aircraft *because of his experience in designing and building gliders and sailplanes.* We all also know that it required all the genius and know-how of the engineers and manufacturers and all the bravery and daring of the pilots and crewmen of all the countries of the free world five years to conquer the air force that was trained in the same school that trained Willie Messerschmitt.



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Soaring Society of America

OF COURSE, we also know that some of the leading design engineers of our present-day super-sonic aircraft include contest soaring in their recreational activities, as have aeronautical engineers throughout the 50 years of aviation development.

The knowledge they gain in seeking to improve their craft aerodynamically and to sharpen their piloting skills cannot help but be reflected in the results of the great engineering projects they are directing.

In addition to this natural influence that has been coincidental with gliding and aircraft design throughout aviation development, many contributions to further development and improvement of aircraft are being made by research projects now fostered by organized soaring.

Currently, there is the Sailplane Project of the Research Station of Mississippi State College, where aerodynamic research is conducted, employing the sailplane in natural atmosphere, obtaining results of equal value to some obtained in high-cost wind tunnels.

Another project employing sailplanes to great advantage is the recent investigation of the behavior of violent winds over and on the lee sides of the High Sierras. Results of these studies, coupled with knowledge already known by students of aerodionetics and meteorologists, may enable pilots to avoid mountain-top crashes that have taken so many lives, (one such crash, in Korea, is being announced by radio, while this is being written).

THE MANY INDIVIDUAL contributions made to aviation progress by gliding and soaring are far too numerous and too well known to go further into here, but the program for the Anniversary Year and thereafter is of immediate importance.

Those of us who have been associated with soaring over the years realize that Youth Air Training was one of the principal cornerstones of the founding of the Soaring Society of America in 1932.

This year of the 50th Anniversary of Powered Flight provides an opportune time to call attention to the many possibilities of gliding and soaring to provide many of the current needs of American Aviation and to request support for the Society's determination to create the realistic Youth Air Education Program that is referred to, but neglected, by so many. (Read the Editorial in this issue of SOARING.)