

THE LINDBERGH PERIOD

Upon his return from flying to Paris, France, Charles A. Lindbergh stimulated public interest in gliding and soaring by his scientific interest in this, another phase of aviation. Much publicity, with profuse illustrations, was given Lindbergh's soaring flights in sailplanes designed and built by W. Hawley Bowlus. Actually, California, where the foregoing soaring flights took place, had long been glider-conscious because of Professor John Montgomery's many years of scientific research in glider design and flight.



Martin Schempp

Other factors entered into the renewed interest in gliding and the exponents from abroad were not the least of these. An instance of this is that of Martin Schempp's coming to the United States.

Schempp had been a member of Wolf Hirth's crew at an International Soaring Contest in France. An American, Bob Evans by name, had been attending glider contests in Europe and in the course of his travels had attended the contest in France where he and Schempp became acquainted. This meeting resulted in Schempp's coming to the United States. Later on Schempp worked with Gus Haller and Hawley Bowlus. At Elmira, New York, he conducted a flight school for glider pilots and also operated a glider repair shop. When Bob Evans returned to the States he matriculated at the University of Michigan and

thus a pattern was established, for at the "U of M" were Professor R. E. Franklin, Department of Engineering Mechanics, and his brother Wallace H. Franklin. Also on hand was M. F. "Milt" Stoughton, now of California.

The group mentioned above started investigating glider design and with a German "Zoegling" as a guide they designed and built the "Franklin" glider that became the "backbone" of gliding and soaring in the United State. Another step forward made by this "U of M" group popularized automobile-tow launching of gliders. Then, J. C. Penney, Jr. became interested in gliding and soaring and sponsored a group of glider pilots and five gliders that came to the States from Germany.

California glider pilots were not idle and had gone ahead and developed the Palos Verdes Hills Soaring Site, under the able guidance of Jay Buxton, south of Redondo Beach. Other activity centered at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, where Dr. Wolfgang Klemperer, number one German "C" soaring pilot, assisted by Martin Schempp, headed up an expedition to determine whether or not a soaring site could be established in that vicinity.

At Akron, Ohio, where Dr. Klemperer was employed at the time by Goodyear-Zeppelin, a very active group was designing, building, and flying gliders. Of course, with Dr. Klemperer as instructor-advisor the contributions from this center were many, varied and lasting.

The Penney-sponsored group now opened the Cape Cod Gliding and Soaring School at South Wellfleet, Massachusetts. One of the German glider pilots, Peter Hasselback, made a glider duration soaring flight of over four hours thus breaking the existing Orville Wright duration record made in 1911! This school did not materially increase the number of qualified soaring pilots but did "graduate" Ralph Stanton Barnaby

as the first or Number One "C" soaring pilot of the United States!



Ralph S. Barnaby
Captain U.S.N. Ret.

Other influences created by the Cape Cod School were the gliders which later on enabled American designers and pilots to really start catching up to the glider pilots abroad; e.g., J. K. (Jack) O'Meara's "Chanute," German Darmstadt high-performance sailplane, and the Preunflings and Zoeglins, some of which, later on were utilized by American pilots to set new glider marks. Obviously Parker Leonard of Osterville, Massachusetts, must have been influenced by the Cape Cod School because for many years he has soared back and forth across the dunes.

In the interim, progress in gliding flight was being continued in California where Harold Higbee, a member of the Crown City Gliding Club, flying a primary glider built by this group, was launched from the top of Mt. Wilson and glided to a predetermined landing field in Arcadia, a distance of twenty miles.

The mid-west glider pilots were also busily engaged in searching out the secrets of glider design and flight. At Neenah, Wisconsin, Walter Haufe, and others flew gliders of their own design. In one of their primary gliders, another member, "Junior" Blue soared four and a half hours after being launched from a three-hundred-foot bluff on the shore of Lake Winnebago.

We are proud to play our part in the advancement of soaring

—Elmira Association of Commerce