

UP CANADA WAY... A FLIGHT OF FANCY TURNS INTO SOME FANCY FLYING

by BROTHER HORMISDAS

BACK IN 1948 folks around Ottawa, Canada, were startled to see a glider pilot in flowing black robes soaring around the country-side. They soon learned, however, that it was Brother Hormisdas, Catholic Lay Brother, from Buckingham, near Ottawa, and guiding light in the newly organized BUCKINGHAM GLIDING CLUB.

The Club, incorporated since Dec. 31st of last year, was initiated by Brother Hormisdas. An instructor in the Ecole Superieure Saint-Michel, Buckingham, Brother Hormisdas turned a flight of fancy into some fancy flying. It was his belief that a Glider Club could be of much benefit to the local youths and it was his purpose in organizing the Club to give the boys an opportunity to learn to fly inexpensively; to bring them the advantages of this wonderful new sport; and, to have them master more easily the abstract principles of physics underlying the basic theory of flight.

Brother Hormisdas soon found the truth of a bit of advice in the Schweizer's booklet, "You Can Fly Inexpensively in a Glider Club." The authors warned that, "the initial efforts in organizing a Gliding Club call for the leadership of an aggressive individual."

Aggressiveness Brother Hormisdas had, but not many other qualifications. He was then 49 years old, knew nothing practical about gliding, nor did anyone around know any more. Further, not a single philanthropist would venture to sponsor such an enterprise. Nevertheless, the Buckingham Gliding Club became a reality.

Using his aggressiveness and organizational ability, Brother Hormisdas interested the high school boys in the Club project. Various and sundry social entertainments were devised and carried through to a financial success to enable the Club to buy a

used 1-19. With this machine and the help of the Gatineau Gliding Club, located finally after a long search, Brother Hormisdas was on his way. He acquired his pilot glider's license along with an instructor's rating all in the same year.

Training was then started the year following in 1949. The Club now had acquired a 2-22 and training was carried on between mishaps. The 1-19 was overturned twice and the 2-22 came to rest in tree-tops. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the least, bringing home the conviction to Brother Hormisdas that a Club operates far better with too much prudence than with too much ambition. In the last two years, nearly a thousand flights have been made by members of the Club without mishap.

Today, the Buckingham Gliding Club boasts a membership of 25. It owns three gliders—the 1-19, the 2-22 and a 1-20 to be flown this spring. For towing, it has a Tiger Moth and a one-ton truck. It has two

trailers for retrieving.

A hangar large enough to accommodate all of the craft was built in a field three miles from Buckingham. Although the field has serious shortcomings, nevertheless, its X-runways—the longer one extending 2,000 feet—will allow an unlimited amount of gliding, depending on the wind direction for the take-off.

Training is generally carried on at the Pendleton Air Field in Ontario, the use of which has been granted by the Department of National Defense. This air field is one and a half hours away by road, but only fifteen minutes by air.

The initial purposes of the Club's organization are being gradually fulfilled. Most of the boys, Brother Hormisdas finds, will go for gliding, but a large percentage cannot afford the expenses incurred. A small number have parents who object to it because of an inborn fear of this art of motorless flying, a typical remark being that, "It is dangerous enough in an airplane!" The first objection has been overcome partially, but the second still requires more time.

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Brother Hormisdas getting into the 1-22
Left, Original membership and equipment
When a hangar was needed, all "pitched in."