

SWITZERLAND PROVIDES FINANCIAL ENCOURAGEMENT



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by OTHMAR SCHWARZENBERGER

All types and ages of people in Switzerland are interested in soaring, but it is difficult for them to finance the education for their soaring enthusiasm. There are around four hundred sixty-five licensed glider pilots and one hundred seventy registered gliders and sailplanes. The major problems confronting the Swiss Clubs are more land for airports and more sailplanes. Most of the clubs are using pre-war gliders and it is their desire to get newer, high-performance sailplanes and two-seated planes for instruction.

The average cost for ground instruction for C award at one of the Swiss Soaring Centers, Berne and Birrfeld, is approximately \$90.00. The Swiss Federal Air Office along with the Swiss Aero Club is trying to help the soaring clubs and pilots by assisting with the cost of instruction and "C" award flights.

Cross-country flights are very expensive because of high transportation costs and border line expenses, such as customs.

Each year the Swiss Government

provides pre-military instruction to a limited number of young men. These pre-military courses last two weeks and at the end of the course most of the young men have earned their F. A. I. "C" Award and Swiss Glider pilot license. The only expenses these men have, during this time, is their room and board.

During 1953, the Swiss Federal Air Office in Berne (equivalent to CAA) will make the following awards to encourage civilian flight training:

For private power pilot to get their glider license: 100 Franken.

For student glider pilots to get their license: 200 Franken.

For glider pilot to get their Silver C Award: 150 Franken.

For glider pilots making a cross country flight for F.A.I. Gold C Award: 200 Franken.

For glider pilots to get one of the diamonds to the Gold C Award: 200 Franken.

This year and for the first time the Federal Air Office will give 600 Franken each, to soaring clubs for making experimental flights in high waves. Pilots interested in these contributions must make application and pass certain requirements, such as character and a good flying record. When a pilot makes application for a certain award and does not meet the conditions of the award, he does not get the contributions.

Each year the Federal Air Office sponsors a course for student flying instructors. These candidates are trained in a weekly course of theoretical and practical work as a glider instructor, and if he passes this course, he has to serve an apprenticeship in one of the Swiss Soaring Centers or soaring clubs before he is awarded his instructor's rating. The Federal Air Office pays him 150 Franken for this apprenticeship. The FAO has organ-

ized courses for glider instructors in order to keep the standards high for flying instructors.

During the winter months the FAO has organized instrument flying courses with courses in link trainers, and during the summer instrument flying courses with sailplanes are taught. Before a pilot joins a flying course during the summer, he has to pass two link courses.

The Swiss Aero Club and Swiss Federal Air Office are very interested in having first class sailplanes and gliders, which are necessary for safe flights. For this reason, the FAO has organized courses for maintenance, overhauling and repairing for sailplanes and materials required such as tow-ropes, wind-ropes and winches. If a student passes the course, he will be able to hold jobs in his soaring club. This insures good materials and good repairs to the planes. All of these courses are free, with the exception of room and board, and a portion of the airplane tow.

Several times since the war, the FAO has sponsored some research camps in different parts of Switzerland for test flights in thermals and waves. In order to qualify for this course, a person must be a top-flight pilot. These courses have been partly paid by the FAO, but the pilots have an opportunity to make flights at a very low cost.

The aid for soaring enthusiasts in Switzerland is not as much as in other European countries, but the FAO and Swiss Aero Club are trying to make progress by helping all pilots, the glider clubs and soaring in general.

A survey conducted by mail in 1950 determined that there are about 400 gliders and sailplanes in the U.S.A. belonging to members of the Soaring Society of America. It is believed that there are about 200 more that could not be located and identified because the owners are not members of the Society or local clubs.

UP DRAFTS (Continued)

tried to recover. The ship didn't respond. I heard a loud crack on my left wing. I looked out expecting to see it pulling apart. It was still there, and seconds later it was pointing through a thin hole in the cloud. I could see Bear Mountain—a part of the Tehachapi range—spinning around far below. I was in a left spiral dive. No wonder I couldn't right the ship—I was helping it spiral-dive

all the time. I brought the Baby back into level flight only to be sucked back in the cloud again. This time I believed my instruments and flew by them instead of by the seat of my pants. I was in the cloud 15 minutes this time, although it seemed like an hour.

I finally drifted out the north side of the cloud. My altimeter read 10,000 feet, and from this altitude I had a difficult time getting my bearings,

since the countryside was unfamiliar. I landed about an hour later. I slept very little that night when I realized how near that flight had been to being my last.

The next morning Frank Kelsey and Hawley Bowlus inspected the Baby and found scarf joints on the pod's neck and the wings' leading edges had begun to pull loose. It was then I realized just how lucky I had been to get out of that flight alive.