

(Continued from Page 12)

stalls and stall recovery. Unfortunately, we did not actually spin the sailplane, as was the case with the four younger less experienced power pilot glider candidates who were deliberately pushed through the "accidental" stalls and spins out of steep turns. I may have been overly impressed by Richter's 1100 hours of power experience, which resulted in an overestimation of his ability with regard to stalled flight and stall and spin recovery. Richter could fly the sailplane, but he could not fly out of a jam which was precipitated by his disastrous attempt to soar on base leg at 600 feet.

Let's digress for a moment and establish a soaring safety rule. Since abnormal altitudes close to the ground can be deemed dangerous, it would be wise to terminate soaring flights in the vicinity of an active airport at a minimum altitude of 1000 feet to insure proper entry into established safe landing patterns. Strict adherence to established safe landing patterns should be deemed mandatory for student glider pilots, but then again why limit safe practices to students.

Getting back to the crux of the matter, let's get into this "accidental" spin business and review the conditions at which a high speed stall can occur at relatively low speed conditions. Remember there are situations such as those encountered in cloud soaring where the deliberate spin can be deemed a safe escape maneuver, such as Wally Wiberg's big fall where it was deemed expedient to affect a loss of altitude under marginal visibility conditions. In his case, the deliberate spin precluded a very probable spiral dive, which would have resulted in excessive structural loads.

When I became the proud owner of N49913 four years ago, the old maestro D. M. Lawrence advised that LK's are like mean spinning airplanes as indicated by the number broken up after spinning in, so during the first ten hours I treated her very gently. Curiosity finally got the better of me, and after verifying that the empty CG was 11.3 inches aft of the datum, I put on the "chute," took the high tow, and found that the entry was surprisingly gentle with plenty of warning. The nose came up, buffeting was obtained, followed by the extreme quiet, whereupon hard back stick and hard rudder was applied. The wing dropped and the ship seemed to slide through half a turn before the nose went down and the spin began. The N.A.C.A. recovery

(Continued on Page 16)

ARIZONA'S FIRST SOARING CLUB

By EARL ZARBIN



Don McCraven attaching tow line, Darrell Cheek in the cockpit, Gerald McWane and Earl Medlicott, before testing their newly acquired Pratt-Read.

Arizona's first organized soaring club, the Desert Hawks Glider Club of Tucson, made its first successful flight in a World War II navy Pratt-Read sailplane on Sunday, May 23.

The club was organized three weeks earlier under the direction of Earl Medlicott and Robert Keyworth, two of the club's 10 members, all of whom are civilian employees at Marana Air Base, instructing air force cadets in preflight.

Medlicott is the founder and former owner of Elsinore, Calif., airport, where the National Soaring Meet will be held July 27 through August 4.

The Hawks intend to serve as the nucleus around which the Tucson Soaring Association will be built. They hope to revive the sport in Arizona, educating and teaching interested persons to soar.

All of the members, eight of whom are pilot instructors, contend the southern Arizona desert has the finest weather conditions for gliding they have come across.

Darrell Cheek, a meteorology instructor at Marana, said excellent thermal activity prevails in the Tucson area seven months each year.

While flying T-6 trainers, which weigh between 5,500 and 6,000 pounds, the pilots found thermals

would shoot their aircraft up 4,000 feet in less than a minute.

Noting this, the men decided to form the Hawks. Medlicott was sent to California where he purchased the second-hand Pratt-Read two place glider for \$750. He trucked the sailplane to Tucson where it was reassembled the day before the first flight at Downtown Airport, owned by Neil Taylor.

Taylor was at the controls of a 90 horsepower J3 Cub when the Pratt-Read was cut loose 2,000 feet below cloudless skies. There was little thermal activity but Medlicott and his copilot, Roy Kemp, were able to soar an additional 2,000 feet before settling down 50 minutes later at Tucson Municipal Airport, about five miles away.

A second flight, lasting 25 minutes, was made by Cheek and Don McCraven, who returned to Downtown Airport.

The men hope to receive permission to use the Marana airstrip runways for automobile take offs.

Medlicott is president of the group and Robert Bogue is secretary-treasurer. Other members are Louis Bowerman, Gerald McWane, Basil Colburn and Lowell Bowman, and all are planning to attend the national meet.