

VIVE LA BELLE FRANCE

We went to France to win the 1956 World Glider Championship. The world knows that Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Jr., focused on that task. The world should know that the entire American Team found in France genuine LIBERTE, EGALITE, and FRATERNITE. That is why we say with friendly warmth in our hearts "Vive la Belle France!"

Never has there been such a contest. Even with the last minute withdrawals of two countries—Australia and the SAAR—25 remained to compete, the largest number ever to do so. It was the sixth in the series of world glider competitions. The first at the German Wasserkuppe in 1937 had seven countries entered. The second at Samedan, Switzerland, had six. In 1950 Sweden played host to eleven countries at Orebro. In 1952 fifteen countries competed at Madrid, Spain. England played host to nineteen countries at Camphill in 1954.

Mother Nature repentant over the severe weather inflicted on France last winter (and on the 1954 Internationals!) paraded such an infinite variety of unstable airmass situations across the theatre of operations that every soaring skill was taxed to the limit, and for many individuals, far beyond.

LIBERTE was found as quickly as we found a Frenchman. Not licensed, mind you, but true liberty in the civilized sense. That meant rules of procedure for the greatest good to the greatest number. Since France has a culture extending through the centuries she has accumulated a great many rules and of course there is too her starch-stiff protocol.

Very competent officials—MM. Marcel Agesilas, Rene Eyraud, Pierre

by MONSIEUR B. L. WIGGIN
Chef de l'equipe des ETATS-UNIS



Photo: Heimgartner
At the Awards Banquet Paul B. MacCready, Jr., is shown flanked by Juez of Spain on his right and Gorzelak of Poland on his left. Juez was second flying a Sky and Gorzelak was third with a Jaskolka.

Simon, Charles Boissonade, Robert Aubert, and the glider meteorologist Norbert Gerbier—together with their aides and assistants, poured the required mould of behavior about us during the practice week, June 23-29. It chafed in only a few places. Pad-dings of more insurance satisfied the organizers and soon we were all set for the job at hand.

Ideal weather marked the practice

period That is really not too true since the press characterized the first 26 days of June as the worst on record (80 years). It was down to 42°F on the 26th with a Camphill type rain. Thereafter it could only get better, so it did.

Everybody approved and aided the strict discipline of the flying field. Here a squadron of 140-hp Stampe biplanes, directed by an alert and agile field manager, got all ships safely airborne in less than an hour. There were no accidents on the flying field except the one to Walt Hausler. While speculating about a sun-worshipping miss from the Baltic area Walt walked into the side of a jeep!

In Gerbier's met office there was liberty for all to use weather data as soon as it was received. His staff of fifteen worked up synoptic data, the local radar winds, and airplane soundings. Pre-briefing sessions were not only permitted, they were encouraged. Most teams included a meteorologist. These facts nearly made me lose my grip. Every appearance at the met office, not just the first one, meant the ritual of fifteen-plus, warm hand shakes. I can now squeeze milk out of a coconut with just my right hand.

The free exercise of LIBERTE is for everybody of course as witness the afternoon on Monday, July 9th. This was the day of the sixth task, an out and return with Moulin the turning point.

We had a very steep lapse rate in fresh polar-maritime air swept inland under the high-flying westerly jet stream. The possibility of an early thundershower dictated our strategy which was to get going as soon as possible, make the circuit to Moulin