

SAFETY FIRST

by JOSEPH M. ROBERTSON, *Chairman
SSA Flying Safety Sub-Committee*

This is the initial appearance of what will be, in the future, a meeting place for ideas on how to improve the safety of motorless flight. Soaring as a pastime, indoctrination media or sport is a wonderful thing and the real benefits to be gained from participation, both in the practical sense and for the sheer satisfaction of flight, cannot be denied. To us, no power to drag the ship through the air means that flight becomes a challenge; a contest between the pilot and his media. To the public, the lack of power indicates danger. As we have all heard so many times, "no engine? Migawd—don't you just drop?" Gliders mean crashes and the person on the powerless side of the fence is generally considered to be either daredevil or a complete fool. In either case, the sport is thought of as being extremely dangerous and not to be indulged in by ordinary mortals.

This, of course, is simply not true. Soaring is inherently safer, providing the pilot is capable, the launching equipment sound and the ship air-worthy. Once in the air the sailplane pilot is thinking further ahead of himself than the great majority of power pilots. He does not get into critical situations without having an "out" always at hand in case of need. Power pilots on the other hand, tend to depend on the engine to drag them out of trouble whether the difficulty is weather, terrain, a misjudged landing or whatever. Sailplanes fly slower, have better flight characteristics, particularly in landing and are built to take more of a beating.

However, there are certain rules that must be followed and judgments that must be developed if sailplanes are to be operated so as to fully realize their safe potentialities. For instance, 89% of all two-place ship accidents in the past eight years have occurred in the landing or take-off phases of flight. This suggests that if more care were taken and the rules observed more closely, we could eliminate the great majority of accidents.

In order to collect enough data on accidents to properly evaluate where corrective action can be most effective, the Safety Committee earnestly requests the cooperation of the SSA membership. Reports of accidents from those involved, or from observers, are necessary if the work

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- 271—William P. Quinn, Jr.
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- 279—Stanley Turner
- 280—Roger Ruch
- 281—Phillip A. Meyer

GOLD C

- 66—Ray W. Jackson
- 67—John W. Williams

DIAMOND C

- 10—Dewey J. Macuso
- 11—Sterling V. Starr

SILVER C LEGS

- James H. Turnbow—Altitude, Duration
- Adolph Yost—Altitude
- Frank J. Severy—Altitude
- Bertha M. Ryan—Duration
- Stanley H. Hall—Duration
- Thomas D. Greenwood—Altitude, Duration
- Robert E. Smith—Altitude, Duration
- Bjarne Lund, Jr.—Altitude
- Robert K. Hawkes—Altitude
- Edward L. Walsh—Altitude

GOLD C LEGS

- Linford B. Bachtell—Distance
- Kenneth R. E. Bawden—Altitude
- Sven Ake Anderson—Altitude

DIAMOND C LEGS

- Frank Kerns—Altitude
- Roger E. Ruch—Altitude
- Linford B. Bachtell—Goal

E. M. G. A. M.

of the committee is to be effective. Nothing is learned from an accident that no one knows about. Names and places will remain incognito if so requested, but send in the facts! Your misfortune might keep someone else from learning the hard way!

This column will, in the future, discuss all subjects relating to safety. The cooperation and ideas of all pilots is earnestly requested. All letters will be answered promptly.

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320 MILES TO PLYMOUTH

by FRITZ COMPTON

Read this story about the second longest flight ever to be made out of Elmira. The author presents a spiral-by-spiral account of what it is like to push a weary old L-K all the way to the east coast under imported Florida clouds. A saga of diamond hunting with surplus equipment. To be featured in the Sep.-Oct. SOARING.