

Soaring Readers Write

B-66 Mobile Training Detachment APO 328, San Francisco, California

"... Most of the gliders in Japan are of a secondary type designed for training and only one, the LB-5, is a high performance type. It was designed and built for the Internationals, but was not shipped to France because of money problems. The Japanese pilot who flew in the contest, a Mr. Ota, test flew the LB-5 last summer and seemed fairly well pleased with it. Mr. Ota, incidentally, is Japan's only Gold "C" pilot. He qualified for the badge in France last year. The LB-5 was designed by the Tokyo University AE department and built by a small aircraft factory in Tokyo. It has an all fiber glass fuselage, wood and fabric wings, DFS type speed brakes, and has a NACA laminar wing section. Its performance would probably be in the over 30 to 1 class if the wing were smoother and other clean-up work accomplished. It has ample interior room for a pilot my size, however the controls are set up permanently for a pilot half my size, so anyone my build has to be a contortionist to fly any of their ships.

"All gliding activities are conducted on a club basis throughout Japan with private funds in most cases. There is some financial assistance given by a newspaper chain for meets and for new gliders.

Mr. Ota's trip to France was covered by this group. I am a member of the Japan Glider Club which is located in the Tokyo area. Most of the club members are similar to the ones we have in the SCSA; their occupations vary widely, but all have common interest. Some like to fly, others design and build and the usual group who like to talk about it.

"Flight operations are conducted at a former Japanese Navy field some 25 miles west of Tokyo, it is paved and 1,000 meters in length. Nearly all launches are by auto tow, and a CG type release is used on most ships which is very useful on a short trip. Aero tow is available but too expensive to use, even for an American. Our club owns a Grunau "Baby," an S-22 two-place, and will soon have the use of a new two-place built by a couple of club members. It is supposed to have pretty fair performance. The S-22 is widely used as a training glider and performs like a watered down 2-22.

"Soaring conditions have been pretty good here this winter and if our site had a suitable ridge or if aero tow was within reason it would be easy to log time. Airports are hard to find in the mountains and level ground is at a premium anywhere in Japan. On the Sunday before Christmas, thermal conditions were good and I was able to soar the Grunau very easily for the first time. I had to quit after 30 minutes as I was turning blue from the cold. I cannot use the canopy enclosure so am exposed to the breeze and feel like Orville Wright flying at Kitty Hawk.

"I rather doubt that cross-country soaring will ever be popular here due to extremely small fields, very poor roads, expense of retrieve and at present there are no trailers available. They have several very good pilots who are capable of flying

Gold C distance if given the right terrain and equipment. The club I belong to would like to send a pilot to the International if held in the U.S. I have offered to give him what help I can if this plan goes through.

"Thermal conditions are never too strong over here, but there is a wide variety of Wave Conditions throughout Japan. I encounter them on nearly every AF flight. Well, so much for the Nippon newsletter."
Ed Butts

1150 Nebraska Avenue Toledo, Ohio

"Just as soon as it quits raining and blowing, we will push the Super H.P. out for some pictures which will be rushed to you. A lot of good ships have been built but you've never seen one like this. Aside from the usual ridiculous features of 22/1 aspect ratio, 42/1 glide ratio, oxygen, radio, retractable retractables, flush flushes, etc., it has such bourgeois comforts as foam rubber seat, blue and white interior upholstery, and a white shag rug.

"Construction was started January 6th and is scheduled for completion on April 21st. Construction is all metal with emphasis on simplicity, comfort, ruggedness, laminar flow wherever possible and smooth lines.

"A couple of other local members, namely Mel Laing and Bob Bauer, on being exposed, got overly enthused and have started building duplicates.

"Drawings and sketches have been made for each part as it was designed and cut so that future versions can be turned out with a minimum of effort. A final 3-view is being drawn and this will be mailed to you with the photos.

"Glad to hear that both the SSA and SOARING are going to be pepped up. When you are ready for some articles let me know and I'll uncork a couple. I haven't been gliding for 2 years yet, but have run through a few experiences. Hope to get my last diamond at Bishop during the next month."
Dick Schreder

(Editor's Note: Any editor of any magazine is always "ready for some articles." What about "uncorking" at least one well-illustrated article on your Super H.P. as soon as possible for the May-June issue, scheduled to be out before the 10th of May?)

The Hobby Center 49 High St. West Moose Jaw, Sask.

"I find SOARING very interesting and except for one issue have every one since 1950. I do hope you'll have continued success and that I'll be reading SOARING for many years to come. I remain,"

R. D. Shirley

(Editor's Note: Let us know which issue you are missing and we will send it to you.)

2453 East Spring Street Long Beach, California

"... Your desire to persuade someone to build a good transistor radio for sailplanes is commendable, but so far the transmitter has us stymied. No doubt we will eventually have transistors that will work as R.F. amplifiers with sufficient output power to do the job, but I'm afraid that it is still somewhat in the future.

"In the meantime, we are considering the manufacture of a very small unit using subminiature tubes all the way through. However, it will be limited to considerably less range than our present equipment and won't replace the higher powered units now used in the sailplanes.

"The other item we are working on is a subminiature omni converter to use in conjunction with our Tunable MULTIPHONE. There seems to be quite a lot of interest in such a device for cross-country flights, so we are going to see what we can come up with at a reasonable cost. We will tell you more about this at a later date."

J. Lynn Brown
Skycrafters Aviation Radio

THE 24TH ANNUAL U.S. NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. W. S. Ivans, Jr., Chairman of the SSA Contest Committee, announces that three excellent bids were received for the 24th Annual U. S. National Soaring Championships. These bids were from Texas Soaring Association, Southern California Soaring Association and Elmira Area Soaring Corporation. After careful consideration by the Contest Committee, it was decided that the contest to decide the 1957 National Soaring Champion would be held at Elmira from July 2nd through July 11th.

Full details of the plans and the preparations for the '57 Championships are not available at this time, but it is hoped they will be forthcoming in time to be included in the May-June issue of SOARING. It seems fairly certain, however, that the rules governing the 23rd National in Texas will be used substantially as they are with only minor changes to conform to the local conditions at Elmira.

Mr. Howard E. Burr, President of EASC, promises the biggest and best contest ever held (and he is including the last one, too). The EASC group, the oldest in the country, has staged many a wonderful contest, and has a wealth of experience behind it. Let's give them all the help we can by being there with a sailplane on the line at take-off time on July 2nd.