

# TWENTY YEARS AGO

*From the March and April, 1938, Issues of SOARING*

by E. J. REEVES

The first National Gliding and Soaring Conference and Annual SSA Meeting had been concluded on February 11 and 12, 1938, at Washington, D.C.

Sixty-eight SSA members were in attendance. Some of the distinguished guests were Gen. H. H. 'Hap' Arnold, Assistant Chief of the U.S. Army Air Corps; Dr. George Lewis, Director of the NACA; Mr. Richard Boutelle of the Bureau of Air Commerce; Capt. Richardson of the Bureau of Aeronautics of the Navy; Mr. Paul Garber, Aeronautical Director of the Smithsonian Museum; Lt. Col. Ira C. Eaker; Mr. Fred Weick and Congressman Melvin J. Maas.

Lewin Barringer, General Manager of SSA and Editor of SOARING, presided at the meetings and gave flying demonstrations at Bolling Field in a "Wolf" sailplane. Richard duPont showed color movies of the 8th National and Ralph Baraby's film "Clouds in Motion." (Barnaby at the time was on duty with the Navy in the Canal Zone.)

During this meeting, plans were completed for the "level country" soaring expedition which was to come in the early summer, basing the camp at Wichita Falls, Texas. This was to result in interesting developments for soaring in America.

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A description of the now famous ridge sites at Ellenville and Wurtsboro, N.Y., was given in an article by Arthur A. Ramer.

First flights had been launched from these sites only recently. Barringer in the Bowlus-duPont Albatross II had flown SW from a start atop Mt. Mongola, 1400 feet above the valley and the town of Ellenville. This trip took Barringer a distance of 156 miles, all via ridge soaring.

Situated only 80 miles from the N.Y. City area, these scenic sites, especially the one at Wurtsboro, continue active to this day. With the possible exception of Harris Hill at Elmira, this remains one of the favorite soaring sites.

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A reprint from SAILPLANE AND

GLIDER was an article by the famous British soaring pilot, Mr. P. A. Wills. The telling was of a 72 mile goal flight accomplished during the 1937 British National Competitions.

Then as now, Mr. Wills was equally dexterous with sailplane or pen. We have always considered his descriptions of soaring flights superb. You feel really that you were there. A handy man with the "King's English" - him. We quote a few classic paragraphs.

"I took off in Hjordis at 11:35, and in a few minutes found lift under an approaching cloud-street, under which we fled six miles downwind to Stannage Edge, which was a bit less crowded than Bradwell. Here, in company with the Cambridge and Peter Davis in our gallant old Scud II, we soared up and down for perhaps twenty minutes, surveying the scene of carnage below.

"Misled by the truly staggering conditions of the day before, when people left the hill just after breakfast and landed for elevenses (Tea and muffins - we'd call it a coffee break, E.J.) at Hull - when shrieking virgins were whistled, impotently struggling, in secondaries up to cloud base and deposited a short while later dazed but in one piece at the seaside - sundry innocents had, a second time, cut away from the hill straight from their take-offs, and were now to be viewed adorning the rather forbidding scenery at the foot and on the slopes of Stannage Edge, 6 miles from the start.

"Now a thermal came along which took us to 2,000 ft., and as the country behind Stannage Edge falls a further 1,500 feet this was good enough, and I set off for Sheffield."

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This word had come from Wichita Falls, Texas. "We have definitely decided to base the expedition at the W.F. Airport, April 10th to May 8th. We are inviting experienced and licensed pilots with high-performance, licensed sailplanes to take part, but they must pay their own expenses."

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Photographs and descriptive writing told of The Carnegie Tech sailplane "Flying Anvil." This 36 foot span, 350 pound ship was the handi-

work of Victor Saudek et al., of the Tech engineering undergrads. "Easy ground handling, careful aerodynamic design, and amazing 'staying power' of the wings characterize this intermediate sailplane." She looked all of that - a very solid property we would say.

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Hang type gliders - a story about gliders that were different was told by Bob Morse and Don Stevens. It dealt with their designing, building and flying three of these types.

Stan Hall, Dr. Klemperer and other California soaring men of that day had a hand in this caper. Hall in fact built and flew one of the more successful of the three. Photos of each of the three ships accompanied the story. It was all and all a perfectly thrilling experiment. As far as we can tell it was, amazingly enough, carried out without incident. The last time we saw these chaps - not too long ago, none of them were sans limbs. Here is the author's account of one Sunday's flying of these "hang on types." "Don and I took the ship up on the Palos Verdes Hills and I ran down the side of the hill. I rose ten feet and sailed forward for 700 feet. Don couldn't believe his eyes, and, on my next hop, I got up about 15 feet and flew 900 feet. Stan Hall came out and flew over a thousand feet. I intend to show that this kind of sport flying, as did the early pioneers, is still thrilling in this day and age."

The Editor's Note accompanying the article is still timely advise: "We print this story not to advocate the flying of hang gliders, but to show how the pioneer spirit is still with us."

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A new "Baby"-The Bowlus "Baby Albatross" was announced in the April, 1938, issue. Photos, three-view and general descriptive material made up the short article on this famous newcomer. A good number of these graceful little sailplanes are still about. It was a great contribution to American soaring. It was to give many soaring pilots in this country their first taste of flight in a performance machine. Quite a transition from the loggy primaries theretofore available to many.

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"Reassurance by Radio" was an article by Ben Shupack of the Airhoppers Club which dealt with solo instruction supplemented by a radio receiver in the sailplane.