

THE A, B & C BADGES REVIVED

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SSA Integrated Training Committee

The SSA Board of Directors, at their recent midwinter meeting in Dallas, voted that a special committee be formed to deal with the various aspects of several pressing problems of interest to soaring pilots and the sport of soaring in general. Briefly, the committee was directed to:

(1) Establish a standard SSA training program based on the A, B & C soaring badges and publish it as the training chapter of the American Soaring Handbook (Chapter 2).

(2) Establish realistic SSA experience requirements for glider ratings.

(3) Establish realistic SSA standards for written and oral examinations to include all glider ratings.

(4) Establish realistic SSA standards for cloud soaring requirements for both pilots and sailplanes.

(5) Establish an SSA-approved glider instructor rating.

(6) Try out the upgraded requirements for one year then, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, approach the FAA in an effort to clarify and have the existing regulations changed. In order to implement the above program, a committee, called the SSA Integrated Training Committee, has been formed of soaring pilots who have the background to do the job. A summary of the subcommittees and their responsibilities follows.

(A) Training Program Subcommittee.

Objectives: Develop training program, instructor pamphlets, check lists and written tests.

The training program will consist of a complete flight syllabus divided into logically arranged lessons. There will be two series of lessons given; one series for those situations in which a powered aircraft is used in the initial phases and one series for those situations in which all training will be done in gliders. All the necessary flight maneuvers will be included in the lessons. The program is so arranged that when the student has soloed, he receives his A badge. The B badge is awarded when the FAA Private Glider Pilot Certificate has been gained and the C badge will still be awarded for the first soaring flight. In tabular form, the program looks like this:

Basic Training — Preflight to Soaring Flight

Preflight — SSA-Approved Training Program

Presolo — SSA-Approved Training Program

Solo — A Badge

Pre-Private — SSA-Approved Training Program

FAA Private — B Badge

Soaring and Pre-Cross-Country — C Badge

Advanced Soaring

Silver, Gold & Diamond C Badges

Instructor's Ratings

FAA Commercial — SSA Instructor

FAA Instructor — SSA Senior Instructor

Nothing prevents a student from starting at the top by getting a B or C badge if his SSA-approved instructor is willing to certify that he is capable of meeting the standards required of the A or B badge. Persons, for instance, with previous power experience may omit the early lessons of the "power time" syllabus. The intent is not to restrict gaining the C badge but to assure that those receiving it are capable of flying safely. In other words, when a pilot receives the C badge, he has been trained to the point where he is ready for cross-country flight or landings away from home base and is legal in the eyes of the FAA in that he has received at least the FAA Private Glider Pilot certificate. It is hoped that eventually the A & B badges will be as eagerly sought after and be as much a mark of achievement as the C badge now is.

(B) Instructor Standards and Certification Subcommittee.

Objectives: Determine SSA Instructor minimum standards.

The standards established will be those necessary to properly instruct students with the use of the new training program. It is a well known fact that the act of acquiring an FAA Commercial or Instructor Glider Pilot Certificate as now required to teach, does not automatically make a pilot a better instructor. It is the intent of the SSA to build up a group of instructors who are experienced, responsible and safe pilots and who can pass their knowledge along to others. Certain minimums

will be set, based on accomplishment. The instructors chosen will be furnished a kit to make easier the job of instruction. To these instructors will be given the responsibility for issuance of the A, B & C badges.

(C) Club and Instructor Coordination Subcommittee.

Objectives: Establish liaison with those using the program.

As the name implies, the committee will, by various means, get the program in motion. This article is the first step in that process. It will be followed by letters and circulars to all organized groups and individuals requesting the recommendation of an instructor to administrate the program. Ultimately, the intent is to get at least one SSA Instructor in every group actively training pilots and one at every commercial operation. The advantages will be the use of a standard program and achievement along with printed matter that will ease the job of instructing.

(D) FAA Regulations Subcommittee.

Objectives: To define and clarify existing FAA regulations governing soaring.

To establish the impact of the current regulations on soaring is an important job. For the first time, all aspects of the regulatory blanket under which we labor will be probed by one well-qualified group. After we have a completely integrated picture, we will be in a position, as the voice of soaring in this country, to present a package to the FAA requesting such changes as we feel are necessary to improve our lot.

In the past, problems have been dealt with piecemeal, on many levels of jurisdiction and by many people. The results have been inconclusive. Recently however, the FAA, under a new administration, has changed its basic approach to aviation problems. The SSA now feels that there is chance for improvement.

(E) American Soaring Handbook Subcommittee.

Objectives: To integrate the A, B & C badges into the SSA training program as published in Chapter 2 of the American Soaring Handbook.

The SSA, as an organization, recommends the training program outlined in Chapter 2. The need for a definitive training program, tailored specifically for gliders, has been felt for some time. The program will be particularly valuable to small

(Concluded on page 19)