

THE A, B & C OF SOARING

by JOSEPH M. ROBERTSON, *Chairman*

SSA Safety and Flight Operations Committee

In the June, 1961, issue of *Soaring*, an announcement was made of the formation of an Integrated Training Committee to work up a standard glider training program based on the long unused A&B Badges as well as the traditional C Badge. The Committee was formed as a result of action by the SSA Board of Directors who recognized the need for a modern training program for gliders. Existing material on the subject, except at the professionally run glider flight schools, was either obsolete or generally unavailable.

It was decided to use the A, B & C Badges as incentives along the path to an FAA Private Glider Pilot Certificate or equivalent. The training program itself was to be published as a chapter of the *American Soaring Handbook* which would be written to conform with the ABC concept. The decision was also made to shape the program to fit with the existing FAA glider pilot certificate requirements.

This has now been accomplished. The training program consists of a complete flight syllabus divided into lessons. Two approaches are used. One for those situations in which a powered aircraft is used in the initial phases and the other for those situations in which only gliders are used. The A Badge is gained when the student solos, the B Badge when the FAA Private Glider Pilot Certificate has been gained and the C Badge for the first soaring flight. Nothing prevents a student from starting at the top by getting the C Badge if his SSA Instructor is willing to certify that he meets the requirements of the A and B Badges. Pilots with power time may omit the early lessons of the "power time" syllabus.

The intent is not to restrict gaining of the C Badge but to assure that those being awarded it are well trained, safe pilots. When the C Badge has been earned the pilot will be ready to safely fly cross-country because (1), he has received instruction and practice in strange field minimum distance landings and (2), he has received his FAA Private Glider Pilot Certificate.

A simplified outline of the training program follows:

Basic Training Program— Pre-flight to Soaring Flight

Preflight — SSA-Approved
Training Program
Pre-solo — SSA-Approved
Training Program
Solo — SSA A Badge
Pre-Private — SSA-Approved
Training Program
FAA Private — SSA B Badge
Soaring and Pre-Cross-Country
SSA C Badge

The operation of the entire program will depend on the availability of qualified and enthusiastic instructors. It is realized that there are many experience levels of instructors around the country. There are also many types and sizes of clubs. For this reason, the instructor requirements have been set as low as the committee believes possible for safe, competent instruction. SSA Instructors will be required to have 50 hours of glider flight time including 100 flights; or 35 hours, including 150 flights. In a few hardship cases, the committee would consider approving instructors with slightly less than these figures if it were compensated by sufficient power instructor experience. These cases are expected to be rare since the great majority of clubs have at least one instructor with more than 200 hours of glider flight time. The SSA believes all clubs will benefit from the use of the program and for this reason the first year's operation will have to be flexible.

The program will go into effect just as soon as sufficient clubs and schools have received approval of an instructor. A detailed description of the program is being prepared and interested clubs and schools are urged to write the new chairman of the SSA Flight Training Subcommittee, Robert Forker, 19408 Santa Rita St., Tarzana, Calif., for complete details. When writing include the name of the instructor you wish to handle the program for your club or school and a detailed description of his flying experience and ratings. Those instructors who in the past aided the committee by submitting experience resume's need not submit new ones. Only one instructor will be approved as an SSA Instructor for each club or school. He will be issued a supply of pins and forms so that he can present the awards in the field.

The ABC program represents a rather drastic change from past procedures and from the status of the present C Badges. Inevitably, there will be a temporary period of confusion but it should not last long and it is felt that the changes will ultimately benefit soaring.

The Committee members who have contributed to the program during the past year are to be commended for their work in getting the program started. They are: Frank Woodward, Tom Page, Paul Schweizer, Brian Masters, Gus Briegleb, Alice Fuchs, Marion Griffith, and Harland Ross.

NATIONALS NOTES

Daily Bulletins during the Nationals will be available again this year, according to Anna Saudek, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee for the contest.

There will be no charge for the bulletins. To receive your copy each day, print your name and address clearly on the front of twelve envelopes, bearing postage for the type of mail service which you desire, and send them to 29th U.S. National Soaring Championships, El Mirage Field, Adelanto, California.

Out-of-state contestants should note that the speed limit for cars with trailers in California is 50 mph. Also, the state has agricultural inspection stations near the border that often times confiscate any fruit that is brought in. On occasion, Arizona has charged stiff registration fees for transient sailplane trailers. However, SSA has challenged this procedure and obtained a favorable ruling. If such fees are charged, refunds can later be obtained. Full details will be included with the information kits to be mailed to all preregistering pilots.

Some more pilots who have indicated their intention of competing, in addition to those mentioned in previous issues, are: Spud Kohler, Prue 215A ("has distance requirement, will travel"); George Coder, Ka-6 BR; and C. M. "Bud" Mears, Prue Standard prototype. The total is now 39.

John C. "Jack" Wolfe has taken over as Contest Manager for the sponsors, relieving Vic Saudek who was acting in that capacity until a replacement was found since Vic has no vacation time this year. Jack would like it made known again that more help will be needed, especially during the contest. Anyone who is willing and able to help should write to Jack at Box 481, Van Nuys, Calif.