

KNOW YOUR DIRECTORS

There continues here a series of biographical and autobiographical sketches of the 28 SSA Directors.

Wolfgang B. Klemperer

Klemp, as he is known for short, was born in 1893 in Dresden, Germany. His interest in aviation was aroused in 1907 and he began building model flying machines, some as gliders and others with small engines which won him many many prizes. Hops with homebuilt hang gliders date back to that time also. While studying mechanical engineering at the Royal Saxon Institute of Technology in Dresden, he completed and flew his first airplane, a 55-hp canard monoplane.



Photo by Douglas Aircraft Co.

Dr. Wolfgang B. Klemperer

Following World War I and the completion of his studies in 1920, he went to Aachen to become assistant to Professor Theodor von Kármán. Besides postgraduate, teaching assistant and research work, an opportunity was found there to design and build the first cantilever wing gliders and early sailplanes. Thus originated the "Black Devil" which proved the feasibility of shock-cord launching, demonstrated soaring in the slope wind over the winward escarpment of Mount Wasserkuppe and, with a smooth glide of 2.2 km., emerged as winner of the first gliding contest. In the following year, 1921, with an improved version named the "Blue Mouse," Klemp made the first cross-country flight from the same Wasserkuppe site to the town of Gersfeld in 13 minutes.

For this flight Klemp was awarded Soaring Certificate No. 1. It brought on a surge of interest in soaring flight and sparked a movement which within a few years spread to many countries and produced performances hardly dreamed of by the early pioneers.

In 1922 Klemp joined the Zeppelin Company as head of the research laboratory. Some of his airship wind tunnel work there became the subject of his Doctor's thesis at the Institute of Technology of Aachen. In 1924 Klemp, with a group of other Zeppelin engineers, came to the United States and became research manager of the Goodyear Zeppelin Corporation in Akron, Ohio.

In the U.S., his old love, gliding and soaring, was not forgotten. He became associated with the Baker-MacMillen Co. of Akron where F. Gross produced the "Cadet." With the Akron-built Condor sailplane he made the first mountain range flight exploration in Pennsylvania (see *Soaring*, October, 1959). He chose Elmira, New York, as the place for national contests and participated in the first one there, and in various others. In 1936 Klemp left Ohio and came to Southern California where he joined the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica. He was Chief of Missiles Research until 1958; his present position is Staff Assistant to the Vice President and Director of Product Development.

Klemp has been an officer or director of The Soaring Society of America, Inc., ever since it was founded and, since 1951, has been Honorary Vice President and Director. He is also Honorary President of the Southern California Soaring Association and has served several terms as its President. Since coming to California, Klemp has actively participated in many soaring activities in that state and flown and/or tested all kinds of sailplanes at the many soaring sites. In the 1950's he served as chief engineer of the Mountain Wave Project. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the OSTIV. The Klemperers' son Walter and daughter Eleanor Orloff have followed in their father's footsteps and become accomplished sailplane pilots in their own right. SSA is indeed proud of the accomplishments of Dr. Klemperer

and of his contributions to soaring. Those who are privileged to know and work with Klemp value his friendship highly.

Harland C. Ross

Harland C. Ross, residing at 5719 Hanover St., Wichita 15, Kansas, is one of the two SSA Regional Directors representing region 10, the south-central part of the U.S. He was elected a Regional Director in 1959 and re-elected in 1961 for a three-year term expiring December 31, 1964.

Born in Alva, Oklahoma, in 1906, he first learned to fly airplanes while in the U.S. Navy at San Diego, Calif. The following year, in 1929, he became interested in gliders and learned to fly them with Hawley Bowlus at Lindbergh field in San Diego. He has designed and built a number of high-performance sailplanes including the RS-1 "Zanonia," the first ship designed and built in the U.S. with a flight test glide ratio of 30 to 1. In it he earned U.S. Silver badge #9 in the 1937 U.S. National Soaring Contest.



Photo by Beech Aircraft Corp.

Harland C. Ross

In order to promote the idea of soaring over the Great Plains country, he helped finance the first SSA expedition to Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1938. He designed and built the R-2 "Ibis" research sailplane at Wichita Falls that year.

During World War II he was Assistant Chief Flight Instructor in the U.S. Air Force contract glider school