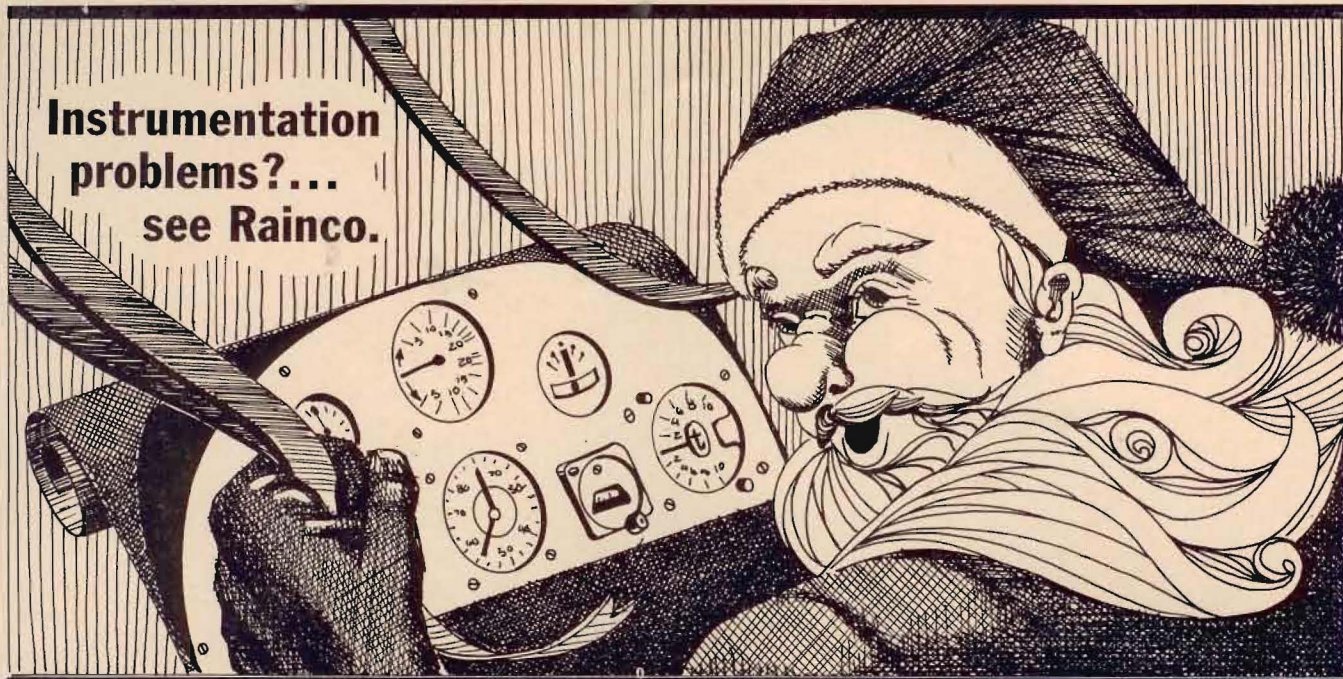


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## WHEN IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

It is unfortunate to report that soaring's safety record for the eight months of 1964 was not a good one. A number of fatalities in sailplanes occurred, most of them due to spins at low altitude, when either recovery was impossible or a wrong technique was used.

To quote a few: A Briegleb BG-12 spun in at Apple Valley, Calif., resulting in fatal injuries to its pilot. According to witnesses, the pilot was making flat turns in turbulent air, using excessive rudder, at an altitude of approximately 1,000 feet. The sailplane entered a spin during which considerable altitude was lost. The resultant proximity to the ground evidently made the pilot apprehensive causing him to execute an abrupt recovery from which the aircraft entered a secondary spin, hit the trees and cartwheeled into a house.

A BG-12 flown by a U.S.A. pilot during the Canadian Nationals spun in when attempting to land in a field during a cross country contest flight.

A Standard Austria SH, in Northern California, entered a spin at low altitude and crashed killing the pilot.

Regretfully there were no witnesses to the last two accidents, but all are attributable to spins. The other contributing element was that all three victims were low time pilots, at least in type, flying high performance sailplanes. But the most important factor is the lack of experience and training in spin recovery.

Present methods of instruction teach the student recovery from a stall with a great deal of emphasis being put on stall recognition through the aerodynamic buffet. In addition, some of our training sailplanes are spin proof and the stall produces a mushing flight rather than a pitch-down.

This training method may be all-right for power flying where straight and level flight is "de rigueur" and where any bank over 30 degrees is considered an aerobatic maneuver. The sailplane, on

the other hand, spends most of its time in turning flight at bank angles often well over 45 degrees and predominantly in turbulent air at low air speed. The stall warning is not always easy to detect due to buffeting experienced by the aircraft in turbulence.

Another danger point is during the landing, in the pattern when the pilot may get a false impression of speed by watching the ground too intently. A pilot properly trained in spin recovery may get away with it, and we have personally seen them do so, but what chance has a pilot who has never received formal education in spin recovery. None, unless through a miracle, and this rarely happens now days. As we cannot depend on miracles, it behooves that the only solution is proper training in emergency procedures, even if it is only a spin demonstration in a two-place sailplane.

ALEX DAWYDOFF

SOARING