



The most successful of the early Riedel gliders was the PR-4, built by Peter and flown by him in the 1924 Rhoen Competitions.

Two more particularly distinguished years followed. With Wolf Hirth, Heini Dittmar (a student from the RRG days) and Hanna Reitsch he was part of Dr. Georgii's South American Soaring Expedition (1935). During the trip he made headlines with his soaring flights over Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires and his distance flights in Brazil and Argentina. In July of the same year he established another unofficial record with a goal flight of 275 kilometers from Berlin-Tempelhof to Hamburg Airport. Goal flights became official records shortly after this flight and in large part because of it. This same year Peter was designated as a member of the famous German soaring team (including Ernst Udet, Heini Dittmar and Ludwig Hoffman) that participated in the first Swiss Alpine Soaring Contest at the Jungfrauoch in Switzerland. In this contest he won second place. While demonstrating soaring to the Swedes in 1936 he made one of the very first over-water flights, this one across the Baltic Sea from Malmo, Sweden, to Copenhagen, Denmark, for which he (unwittingly) won a prize of 1000 Danish crowns.

During the years 1934 to 1936 Mr. Riedel flew as a pilot for Lufthansa, then for SCADTA, in Columbia, for two years. Following that he was appointed (through the intervention of old comrade Udet) to the staff of the German Embassy in Washington as Assistant Air Attache. During his years in America he participated in the U.S. Nationals, winning in overall points in 1937 and 1938. On both occasions he re-

ceived the Bendix and duPont Trophies. Two flights, one a 365-kilometer goal flight from Elmira to Washington, earned him his Gold badge and his first Diamond. Peter's longest flight was one of 245 miles from Albuquerque, N.M., to Hereford, Texas, made in July, 1939, during which he reached an altitude of 18,000 feet asl.

In 1942 Peter Riedel was returned to Germany in a diplomatic exchange. He spent the war years in the German Embassy in Stockholm as an Air Attache. He sought asylum in Sweden in 1944 and was permitted to stay in that country until 1946. In 1948, after being delayed in Casablanca, Peter sailed the Atlantic as a crew member on a 40-foot British yawl. Subsequently he worked as a civil engineer in Venezuela, Canada and South Africa (where he resumed gliding as CFI of the Windhock Soaring Club). He returned to the United States in 1956 as an immigrant and was employed by TWA in Kansas City. Since 1960 he has been employed as a Staff Engineer at Pan American World Airways overhaul base in Miami, Florida.

Peter admits that he would like to own a K-6, perhaps even a Sisu, and that he would like to complete his Diamond badge. He finds that his work with Pan American, however, offers him unique and tempting opportunities to travel. Most recently the man who began as a boy in a hang glider on the Wasserkuppe, flew half way round the world (to Japan) for a short holiday. Today all the great names of the early days of the Rhoen have passed—Hirth, Kronfeld, Groenhoff, Klemperer—and only Peter Riedel remains.

Quotable Quotes

Glider pilots worry only about "little" things—like keeping their tools safe, neat, dry, handy, and out of the way. Floating down a fickle breeze at 40,000 feet without a motor, while hunting for the makings of an up-draft, is to them a peaceful pastime. But they can get quite excited, it is reported by Reading Body Works, Inc. . . .

PRESS RELEASE FROM READING BODY WORKS, INC.

There's an internal energy to the wind. The motorless plane uses it for lifting. That's the secret.

There are two kinds of raising air currents. "Hang wind" is formed in mountainous regions. Air pockets are common over sandy deserts, beaches and rocky cliffs. . . .

Bishop in the High Sierra is a favorite playground for glider pilots. Here the heat from Owens Valley sweeps up sheer cliffs and creates winds that make soaring sweet adventure.

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