

SAFETY CORNER

MILES COVERDALE

Sufficient information has now been gathered for a summary of the soaring accidents which have been reported for 1965, and the tabulations are also shown for 1964 and 1963 to permit a comparison.

As in previous years the landing accidents account for well over half of the total number, in this case thirty out of forty-four if the spins which occurred during landing attempts are included. In order to provide a more complete understanding of the perils involved, the landing accidents were further broken down into the following categories: collision, nine (including one fatality); undershoot, eight; stall, five; spin, three (including two fatalities); ground loop, one; weather, one; and unknown, three. One of these last is unknown because the pilot later was unable to give any explanation of the crash, and the other two because insufficient information has been received as yet to clarify the accidents.

Spinning at low altitude is of course tremendously dangerous, as shown by the fact that two of the three spin-ins resulted in the deaths of the pilots. Notice also that there were five other crashes which resulted from stalls near the ground, although the gliders did not spin. These were almost certainly narrow escapes, and point up the continuing need for increased airspeed when near the ground. Actually, the various categories of landing accidents are so closely related (for instance an undershoot which results in a collision or a stall and spin) that definite conclusions are difficult to make. It is obvious, however, that flying too slowly near the ground can be fatal, and that an undershoot situation is consequently dangerous because it tempts the pilot to slow down in the usually vain hope of stretching his glide.

* * *

The tabulation shows that four gliders were damaged by wind, and at least one of these accidents was completely needless. Do not forget now easily a light machine with a large wing area can be blown over, nor that the beginning of a good strong thermal even on an otherwise calm day can create enough of a gust on the ground to damage a glider that is left unattended. As to the takeoff accidents, all four of them resulted from stalls during the initial climb, again em-

ACCIDENT SUMMARY

	1963	1964	1965
Wind	4	1	4
Hit Hill	2*	—	—
Landing	25*	24	27*
Spun In	—	7*	3**
Maintenance	4	—	1
Hyperventilation	1*	—	—
Rope Break	1	—	1
Structural Failure	2	1*	2
Take Off	3*	1	4
Airsickness	—	1*	—
On Ground	—	1	—
Mid-Air Collision	—	1	—
Trailing	—	—	1
Unknown	—	2**	1*
Totals	42	39	44

*Indicates one fatality.

phasizing that the need to maintain adequate speed is paramount at every moment of a flight.

Since the four fatalities which occurred during 1965 were described in some detail in last November's *Soaring* they will not be reviewed here. However, in a recent letter to the editor it was suggested that one of those fatalities might have been avoided if the pilot had been wearing some sort of safety helmet. Although this writer is not in a position to undertake any sort of comparative testing of a variety of helmets in order to make a recommendation on the subject, nevertheless it would be of great interest to know if there is a suitable light-weight and comfortable helmet that might fit our need. Therefore it would be appreciated if any member knowing of such a helmet would bring it to the attention of the Safety Committee.

There have been repeated suggestions that articles of the type "I Learned About Soaring From That" should appear from time to time in the magazine, but of course they can only come voluntarily from those who have been through some experience and are willing to write about it for the benefit of the other members. An appeal was made along these lines last year without any results; perhaps further encouragement now might persuade someone with a story to tell to unburden himself in order to start such a series rolling.

SSA Photo Display

Readers are reminded of the availability of SSA's traveling photo display. The display consists of 50 numbered 11x14-inch black and white and ten color photographs of sailplanes in flight taken by Dita and Alex Aldott. They are mounted, with captions, on 15x18-inch hardboards which have eyelets for hanging. Booking reservations (not to exceed one week) should be made through the SSA, Box 66071, Los Angeles, Calif. 90066. The booking fee is \$5.00 and two-way motor freight is generally about \$20.00. Exhibitors are responsible for damaged or missing photos; the fee is \$10.00 for B&W, \$35.00 for color prints. Viewers may order copies, as mounted, for \$10.00 each, or 8x10-inch singleweight, glossy prints for \$1.50 each. Prices for color reproductions may be obtained from S. A. Aldott, 13311 Carondelet Avenue, Chicago 60633.

SLINGSBY SAILPLANES

DART 17R

Available for Demonstration
Sales & Service
Northeastern U.S.

CLARENCE SEE, LTD.
730 COLD SPRING RD.
BALDWINVILLE, N.Y.

Ph. 315-NE 56681