

NSM

A Quarterly Journal
of the National Soaring Museum
Summer 1983 Vol. 6, Number 1



From the Editor:

The highlight of the Summer was the World War II Military Glider Symposium. We were able to meet some of the people who responded so willingly to our request for help in mounting this year's exhibit. The symposium was chaired by Floyd Sweet, McLean, VA, and brought together speakers, Dr. Milton Dank, Wyncote, PA author of **THE GLIDER GANG**, Donald Hamilton, Daytona Beach, FL, Joe Hann, Wurtsboro, NY, Paul Schweizer, Elmira, NY, Nelson Shapter, McLean, VA and Doug Wilmer Dunwoody, GA, Film Historian for the Glider Pilots' Assoc.

The exchange between the guests and speakers broadened the scope of the information received. Fortunately the symposium was taped and will be published as space permits in future issues of the NSM.

A little "aside" about this event was that we finally completed the restoration of the forward fuselage section of our CG-4A and were in the process of moving it into the exhibit hall, with the help of many volunteers, on **THE** day of the symposium reception. What can I say? . . . We have a tendency to stretch our deadlines to the limit, as anyone knows, who has appeared a bit early to a major function and has had a hammer, paint brush, or what ever thrust at them.

In any case, the fuselage was positioned, the jeep moved into place (the slow leak in one tire having been repaired earlier in the day since it chose this day to give-out completely), and the wires were installed to lift the cockpit. As it slowly raised, we gasped; the bottom was **WHITE**. It had not been painted for its 1982 debut into the exhibit hall. So, at 4:00 PM, — reception to begin at 8:00 PM, — we quickly gave it several coats of paint. But as usual, with so many great volunteers, we made our deadline. There was a slight odor, but we glistened!



S. Tipton Randolph, National Secretary of the National WWII Glider Pilots Assoc. reminiscing at the Memorial Wing Pylon at the completion of the Museum's Symposium.

ON THE COVER:

Copy of a water color by B.J. McCausey, Baltimore, MD; one of two cartoons he donated to the National Soaring Museum archives. He also donated a 32" x 40" painting entitled **RAT RACE AT THE LZ** which complimented an article he wrote, "Hamilton's Reply" for the **AEROSPACE HISTORIAN**.

Mr. McCausey can also be read in the NSM as he permitted a reprint of his 1979 article in the **AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE**. Because of this bit of research and due to this year's exhibit focus, I pulled the following for your information:

- NSM, Vol. 1, #3 — EASC V.S. US Government or in debt for the War Effort, by Edward A. Mooers
- NSM, Vol. 2, #2 — WACO CG-4A Restoration, by William (Bill) Horn
- NSM, Vol. 2, #4 — How the SGS 2-8 Became the Military TG-2
- NSM, Vol. 3, #1 — Silent Wings of World War II, by B.J. McCausey
- NSM, Vol. 3, #4 — Birth of the LK, by Jack Laister
- NSM, Vol. 3, #4 — History of LK-10A (TG-4) No. 9-53612, by A. Wayne Smith



NSM is a publication of the National Soaring Museum, Harris Hill, RD3, Elmira, New York 14903. Anyone is invited to contribute material and pictures with identification about historical soaring activities, renovation of old sailplanes, soaring pioneers, unusual uses of sailplanes, etc. Manuscripts are subject to whatever revisions, additions or deletions are necessary to make the material conform to the space limitations and standards of NSM. Material that is to be returned must be accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope. No compensation other than credit will be made.

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CALENDAR

Date	Event	Location
July 30	World War II Military Gliders Symposium (Chairman: Floyd J. Sweet)	NSM
Nov. 5	10th Annual Ralph S. Barnaby Lecture and NSM Board of Trustees' Fall Meeting (Speaker: Ralph S. Barnaby)	Princeton, NJ
Dec. 16	Community Soaring Committee Luncheon	NSM

WORLD WAR II GLIDER PILOT TRAINING

By Don Hamilton

(Editor's Note: This report was given by Donald Hamilton at the World War II Military Glider Symposium held at the National Soaring Museum on July 30, 1983.)

This crash pilot training program lasted only about two years, 1942-1943, and like nearly everything else in gliding, started here in Elmira. Floyd Sweet was certainly one of the first to enter the program, and Elmira established and ran the first school for the training of Army Air Corps glider pilots.

I became involved, unknowingly, during the Soaring Contest in 1939 when The Soaring Society of America designated me as the official pilot for their newly acquired Schweizer sailplane. In that capacity I introduced soaring to two Army Air Corps observers, who had been sent here to learn what they could about the sport, and its possible use to the Air Corps.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor I received a phone call from Major Walt Lee, who was one of the observers just mentioned, offering me a commission in the Army Air Corps Training Command to assist in the establishment of the Glider Training Program.

I reported for duty as a Capt. in January, and was assigned to the Operations Division at HQ Training Command in Washington, D.C. My desk was waiting for me, as were a number of problems.

At that time the school here in Elmira was in progress, and a school in 29 Palms, California was under construction. Unfortunately the only gliders we had were those commandeered from the glider fraternity; — mostly sailplanes which were not at all suitable for primary instruction.

Fortunately a C.A.A. engineer Al Volmeche, had his own plane. He designed a cockpit to replace the engine and engine mount on his Aeronca airplane, thereby converting it into a glider. The Training Command accepted the idea and Aeronca constructed one and fitted it to an airframe during a single weekend. Nelson Shapter, who is here today, supervised and approved this first modification. Lewin Barringer was aero towed in it from the Aeronca factory to Washington's National Airport, and during the next couple of days he and I flew many interested military personnel in it. The result was that Aeronca was awarded a contract to build 500. Subsequently, similar alterations were made on both Piper and Taylorcraft trainers.

The next problem was a lack of volunteers for glider pilot training. All manner of publicity had been distributed, and recruiting personnel were being urged to sell the program. The CAA cooperated in every way, even to the extent of sending their own personnel out to attempt to enlist for glider training.

They soon discovered that the physical requirements for glider pilot training were the same as those for regular pilot training, so recruiting personnel invariably steered the recruit into the regular airplane program.

This led to a prolonged argument with the medical department as to how well one really had to see to fly safely. The medical people finally admitted that the 20/20 visual requirement was not based on any factual data, but was simply an easy means of elimination when there was a surplus of recruits. They finally agreed to 20/100 if corrected with glasses, and applicants began arriving in great numbers.

These problems settled, I was able to take a breather to try to obtain a pilot rating for myself. Gen. Arnold had given me written authorization to pilot Army gliders, but I needed a power rating to get around to the various headquarters, and the many schools that were in the offing.



Above: Aeronca, TG-5 and below, the Taylorcraft, TG-6.



A regulation had just been issued that authorized the granting of the rating of **Service Pilot** to Air Corps Officers whose civilian flying experience, and demonstrated ability satisfied the stated requirements. I went in to see Col. Johnson, the head of Operations to ask for a bit of time to do this. He agreed readily enough, but wanted to know what I had been flying.

I started out with gliders, and worked up through C- Aeroncas, E-2 and J-3 Cubs, also assorted Fairchilds and Stinsons. He stopped me with a blast, — "My God, you'll kill yourself in this stuff we've got"! He then picked up the phone, called Bolling Field, and said he was sending over an officer who needed a flight check.

When I appeared before the Board they examined my log book, without comment — I can imagine what they thought, then asked for a copy of my flight physical. I said that, that had not been mentioned, and as they could not find any requirement in the regulation, they decided that one was **not** required for **Service Pilots**. They then directed one of the officers on the Board, a Captain, to conduct the flight check. (Continued on Page 4)

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As we went out to the line he handed me a list of the maneuvers to be performed — spins were scratched out. I asked what kind of airplane we would be flying — he said a BT-9. I had never seen one before, and to the best of my knowledge, I've not seen one since.

He put me in the rear cockpit, flew the pattern, landed and had me move to the front cockpit, told me to take and perform the maneuvers indicated. He handled the radio. To me the take-off was a dream. I had never had so much power before. I left the pattern and began doing the more simple of the maneuvers indicated. I had not done very many when he shook the stick and said over the intercom that he wanted the controls.

Another airplane had come into view, which apparently wanted to play, so for the next half hour I hung on as we rolled about in mock combat. Following this I got the controls back, and was instructed to return to the field and land. This I did with a hard drop, and was immediately told to take off again.

As I was turning out of the pattern, I was told that traffic had been reversed, and that I should turn and land. The second landing was as hard, if not harder than the first. I was then told to return to operations and park. I felt that I had "blown it," and was just sitting in the cockpit waiting when my examiner came up the wing and made his longest speech of the day. "You done good, you done real good. Congratulations, you're a pilot." Thereafter, I would phone Bolling every week, and reserve an airplane. This presented no problem, except that I never got the same kind of airplane, and never got a make or model that I had ever flown before.

The next problem to arise was the rank and pay to be awarded to Glider Pilots. The regulation in effect at the time I joined, and which I used in all the publicity stated — that Glider Pilots would be commissioned as 2nd Lts. and would receive pay and one half. However, shortly after recruiting picked up, and the first class was about to graduate here in Elmira, someone in what came to be known as the **Puzzle Palace**, the Pentagon rewrote the regulation. The new regulation stated that the Glider Pilots would become Staff Sergeants, and would receive an additional \$60.00/month.

As soon as I learned of this change, I dashed into Gen. Yount's office and protested to the Chief of Staff that this new regulation was quite unfair, since men were already in training, and many more had been enlisted under the old regulation. I was told that this had been decided by higher authority, and that I could do nothing about it.

As luck would have it, a large static display of captured German aircraft, a flight demonstration by an Army Air Corp glider, and a mass swearing in ceremony of new recruits by Gen. Arnold, together with Marlene Dietrich, the Army band, etc. was scheduled for the following Sunday, 28 June 1942. This it seemed to me was the time and place to do something. I got hold of the Colonel in charge of the show, and told him that the first Glider Pilot class had just graduated but that no pilot awards had been made. I volunteered to make this first award to the pilot of the glider, if it struck his fancy. It did!

I then obtained a set of regular pilot wings and had the letter "G" soldered on, in place of the shield. The glider flight was the high point of the show and was wildly applauded by the spectators. The pilot was brought to the reviewing stand where he was congratulated on nationwide radio by Marlene Dietrich. I then stepped to the microphone and congratulated him again



L1A towing, Left a TG-2 and right, a BG-6.

as I awarded him the first Glider Pilot Rating in the U.S. Army Air Corps, and pinned the Glider Pilot wings on his uniform.

The Washington Post gave the show a couple of columns on its first page, including a picture of the award of the Glider Pilot rating. I was called to the Chief of Staffs office the next morning to be told that I was going to be court martialed. That was the last I ever heard of it. The new regulation just disappeared.

Things ran quite smoothly after that. Our Training Command HQ moved to Ft. Worth, Texas, which was more convenient, since most of the training was in the South. We had a little trouble getting tow planes, but that was soon corrected by the assignment of BT-13s, which seemed to be in good supply.

Glider towing should not be passed over without mentioning the fine job the women pilots did in this boring job. They liked the work, and were good at flying — both the BT-13s, and the Lockheed Loadstars (C-60s). They never did such a thing as happened one night at the school in Stuttgart, Ark., when a couple of our male jockeys put the C-60 on auto pilot and fell asleep. Fortunately they were sinking slowly, and the rice paddies were flat and muddy. The glider pilot on tow saw the airplane exhausts reflected in the flooded paddies, and cut loose. The airplane, still under cruise power, just slid along in the mud for a short distance, with no major damage, except to the engines.

The training program adopted worked very well, and I believe turned out excellent pilots.

(I'll use the terminology **Phase** since I have forgotten just what we did call them).

Phase I using Aeroncas, Pipers and Taylorcraft was the equivalent of that given by the CAA in their Civil Pilot Training Program. It amounted to 35 hours and the award of a private pilot license, on completion. Civilian graduates of this course were entered in Phase II.

Phase II. This was another 35 hours in the same aircraft, with great emphasis on night flying, and with all landings being made with ignition off upon entry into the down wind leg.

Phase III. Also 35 hours in the same aircraft in their glider configuration — engine removed, and flown from the new front end cockpit. This also called for considerable night flying, formation flying and multiple tows.

Phase IV. Was 15 hours in CG-4s, consisting of night, multiple tows, various loads up to maximum, with both men and cargo. All four phases came to 120 hours.

Throughout much of the program a principle concern was lack of aircraft lights. None had been provided. We just flew and trusted to luck, complaining of course, but getting nowhere. At one school in Eastern Colorado which was located right on an airway, we finally had to strap flashlights to the struts, but still had no landing lights.

This problem remained unsolved until a CG-4 broke loose from its tow plane at night near Dalhart, Texas, and struck a concrete pump house on the open prairie — killing seven men. We then got action.

Our first real problem came in the advanced stage, since there just were not enough CG-4s to meet requirements. This resulted in the establishment of Glider Pilot pools where we had to house many hundreds of men who had nothing to do, but who had to be kept flying to maintain their skills while awaiting advanced training. Aeroncas, Cubs and Taylorcraft were used for this purpose. I remember that Mike Murphy had charge of one of these pools at Louisville, Ky.

Sometime in the winter of 1943 I had a phone call from the Pentagon telling me that I was to attend a meeting there the day after next, and to be sure to be there. I mounted a sturdy T-6

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Morning on the ramp at 29 Palms, CA.

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and got through the weather as far as Martinsburg, W. Va., where I really had to quit. I phoned the Pentagon to explain my predicament, but was told to get a car anywhere I could, but to be there for the meeting.

I finally made it on time, and walked into a meeting of at least a dozen full colonels — I was then a major. I was given a sound ribbing about the whole Glider Training Program, and was then asked how many students we had in training and in pools. I think the number was about 10,000. I was instructed to return to Ft. Worth immediately, and to get rid of half that number. **How**, was my problem.

Somehow I got back to Martinsburg, by staff car I guess, got the T-6 out of the snow, the oil thawed out, and headed for Ft. Worth, TX. As soon as I got in the office I prepared a wire to all glider schools and glider pools to take off flying status immediately all students in the categories I specified — mainly those less advanced. I thought that would get action, and it did.

The next morning the deputy chief of Operations called me into his office and asked me, "Who wrote the wire?" I said, "I did!" "Who coordinated it?" — "I did," "Who signed it?" — "I did". He said, "do you mean to tell me that you, yourself took 5000 men off flying status?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "I have nothing more to say!"

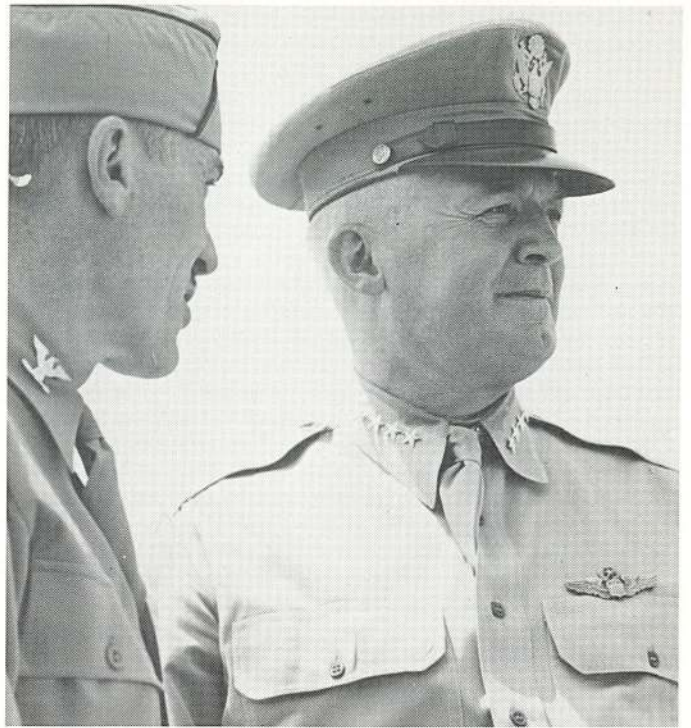
By the end of the day telegrams were arriving from all quarters protesting the grounding, and the Pentagon was getting its share, including calls from Congressmen and Senators.

The Pentagon changed its tune immediately, and told us that the men to be separated could be given their choice of Regular Pilot or Navigator Training (if they could pass the physical), Officer Candidate's School, or discharge.

I was made a member of the board that was formed to interview these students, and I think that most of them got what they wanted.

While there was still some advanced training to be done as CG-4s became available, the Training Command part of the program was about at an end.

The emphasis was now on Operational Training which was run by Mike Murphy at Maxton-Laurinburg under Troop Carrier Command.



Left, Col. Reed Landis Commanding Officer of the 1st Troop Carrier Command and Gen. H. "Hap" Arnold Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Force.



Left to Right, Maj. Gen. B.K. Yount Training Command, Capt. Lester C. Hess Commanding Officer, and Lt. Brett. (1942 photo.)

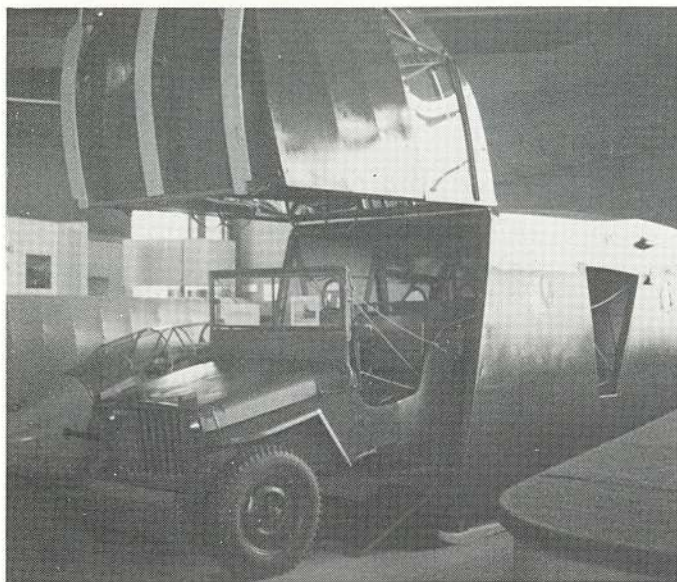


Author Donald Hamilton, Daytona Beach, FL.



Aerial of Laurinburg-Maxton A.A.B., N.C.

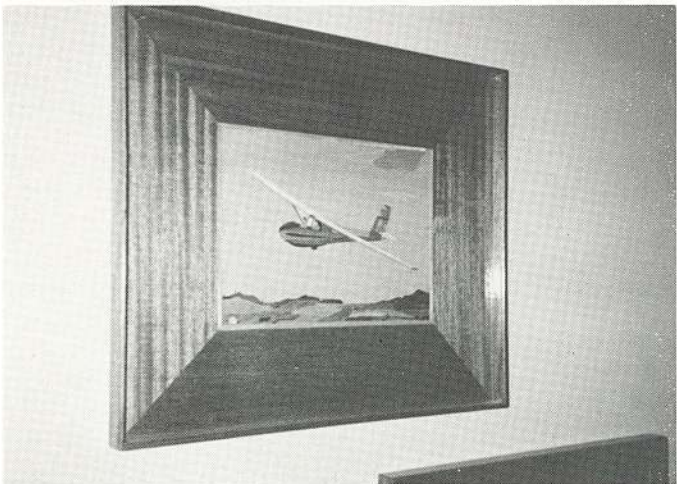
SUMMER 1983 OVERVIEW . .



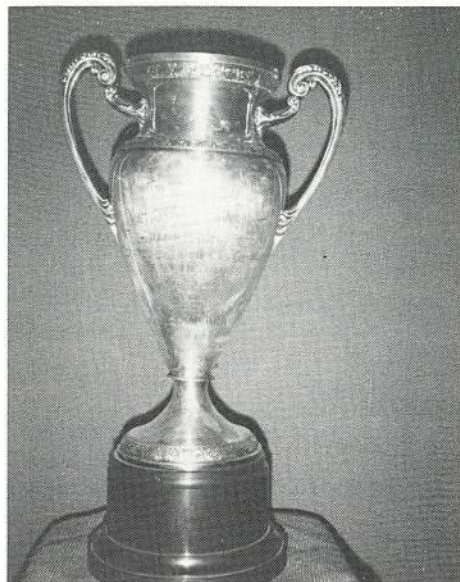
The Museum's restored CG-4A forward fuselage section and cockpit. WW II jeep on loan from Stan Wilcox, Horseheads, NY.



One of the Museum's latest acquisitions, a TG-3 from Les Arnold, Brownsville, CA.



The NSM loaned a copy of this parquet tray, by Elmiran George Reid Clapp, to the NYS Governor's Mansion. The tray is Chemung County's representation.



Trophy for Best Distance at the Third National Soaring Meet, 1932, won by Jack O'Meara and donated to the Museum by his sister Mrs. Barton Anderson, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.



Class from the Twin Tiers Baptist High School held their Senior Outing at the Museum.



SSA OSTIV representative Floyd J. Sweet presenting a complete set of OSTIV papers from President Dr. M.E. Reinhardt to Museum Director Sliwa. (ORGANIZATION SCIENTIFIQUE ET TECHNIQUE INTERNATIONALE DU VOL A VOILE).

ANNUAL RALPH S. BARNABY LECTURES

Excitement is building, anticipating the 10th Annual Ralph S. Barnaby Lecture to be held on November 5, 1983 at the Henry Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton, NJ. The Soaring Society of Princeton is hosting the event. The lecture coincides with the National Soaring Museum's Board of Trustees' Fall meeting.

The speakers at the lectures have created a prestigious list as follows:

- 1973 Ralph S. Barnaby, in Philadelphia, PA
- 1974 Stanley W. Smith, in Dayton, OH
- 1975 A.J. Smith, in McLean, VA
- 1976 Karl Striedieck, in Falls Church, VA
- 1977 E.J. Reeves, in Dallas, TX
- 1978 Opening of the new National Soaring Museum
- 1979 Paul Mac Cready, in Los Angeles, CA
- 1980 Richard Hallion, spoke for Paul E. Garber, in Boston, MA
- 1981 Tom Page, in Chicago, IL
- 1982 John W. Firor, in Boulder, Co, and

in 1983 at the 10th Annual Lecture, we will be privileged to have as our speaker, again, the person for whom these lectures honor, Ralph S. Barnaby.

It was announced at the 1981 Lecture in Chicago that the Eric Sloane painting, "PINK DAWN AT 8,000 FEET" had been donated to the Museum to be sold or auctioned to subsidize the Annual Ralph S. Barnaby Lectures. A colored print of the oil painting was on exhibit at that banquet. The painting is presently on display in the Museum. Since the painting enhances the exhibitry we are also investigating other methods of subsidizing the lectures so that this outstanding Eric Sloane oil can remain in our collection.



Oil painting "Pink Dawn at 8,000 Feet" by Eric Sloane.

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