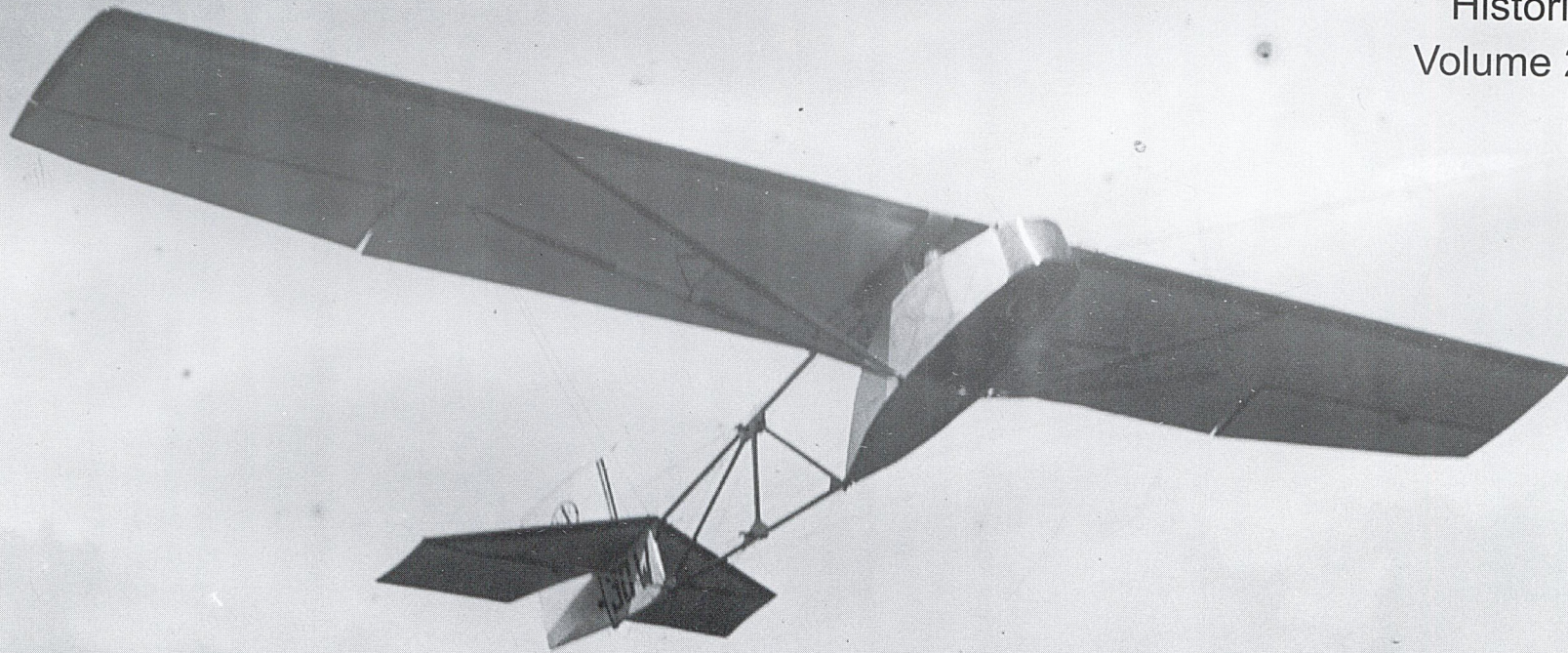
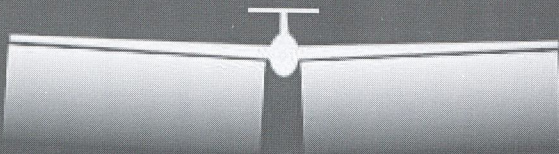


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National Soaring Museum



Patricia Hange, Harriet Hamilton and Robert Semans Inducted in the 2003 United States Soaring Hall of Fame

Pat Hange and Harriet Hamilton of Arcadia FL, and Robert L. Semans of Los Altos CA were installed during ceremonies at the 50th Annual United States Soaring Hall of Fame reception and banquet. The observance was held February 5, 2004, at the Atlanta, GA Renaissance Waverly Hotel in conjunction with the Soaring Society of America Convention.

Members of the Hall of Fame are individuals who have made noteworthy achievements in soaring, or who have made significant contributions to the sport of soaring, as determined by the Soaring Society of America Directors, and more recently by an advisory vote by senior/life members.

In 1936, Paul Helms, Sr. of Helms Bakery in Los Angeles, CA, founded a Hall of Fame Foundation that honored outstanding sports luminaries. By 1954 the Foundation decided that soaring was a sport of such dimension both nationally and internationally, that it should be recognized with a Soaring Hall of Fame. The SSA's Directors were then asked to select and to recommend to the Foundation candidates for recognition in the new Helms Soaring Hall of Fame. In 1975, the SSA Board of Directors decided to transfer the Hall of Fame to the National Soaring Museum.

Patricia Hange and Harriet Hamilton

Patricia Hange and Harriet Hamilton have devoted their lives to the sport of soaring and gliding. As partners in the operation of the Lenox Flight School, America's 13th licensed commercial glider operation, they have provided the means for thousands of pilots to participate in the sport of soaring. Battling hurricanes and the vagaries of the aviation economy for over four decades, Pat and Harriet made their Lenox Flight School an institution in the soaring community.

Burt Compton (Miami, FL) recalled as a ten-year-old accompanying his father, Fritz (Francis B., Hall of Fame, 1972) and of his being impressed by the convergence of two sea breezes over Sebring, FL. It made for good soaring, and the folks that provided the two-seaters were Pat Hange and Harriet Hamilton. He said that at one time they ran the only glider training



Burt Compton

facility in Florida. Once they were up at the partners' Lenox Flight School in Arcadia FL, and he asked his dad who was in that sailplane? Fritz responded, "Richard Bach" (Author of Jonathan Livingston Seagull). Burt said, "That's the type of folks they attracted, the famous and the not so famous. They were always there for us, always available, and sometimes for people who couldn't afford it."

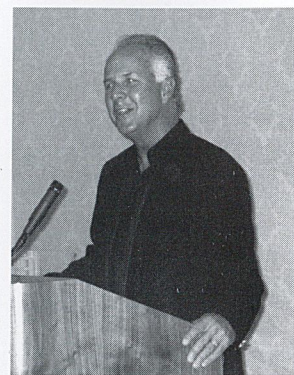
Burt then introduced Ed Kilbourne (Rock Hill, SC), known for his great stories and songs about soaring. "I was somewhat surprised,"

Kilbourne said, "that they would allow someone into the Hall of Fame who bet on soaring. Harriet and Pat bet their lives on soaring. So many years invested,

everything gambled and lost in some ways because it was an enterprise. But you win with all the time and people that you invest your lives in." He said that in 1968, when he arrived at Mulberry to begin his sailplane instruction, he didn't know it then, but he had joined a family. "Pat and Harriet, you have spent your lives so well that when it came time to dedicate an album of soaring music, I couldn't think of any two heroes more deserving in my hall of fame. I'm so thankful for them, and that they will stand before you and receive this recognition for somebody who bet their lives on soaring."

Amid a standing ovation Harriet Hamilton moved to the rostrum and began by thanking the SSA, "and their spouses and friends that are here to enjoy these proceedings for the Hall of Fame recognition." She thanked Burt Compton, recalling that through his father Fritz they were invited to Sebring, FL "Well, a few years later, this young man became a state representative and has done an extremely fine job of representing each and every soaring operation in Florida."

Next, she turned her attention to Ed Kilbourne. "We did not know who arrived on our premises sporting



Ed Kilbourne



Harriet Hamilton

boards with them. "I will no longer need them," he said. "You can sell them or give them away...I'll be back." She said that most of the time they didn't know when to expect him. "Driving home from work, it was no surprise to find a tent pitched in my back yard. Then came the day when I found a van parked under a shade tree back there. She said that Ed has been coming and going, "touching our lives and inspiring us for many years."

She spotted Jim Short (Homer Glen, IL) in the audience and remembered that he was so proud of that glider instructor certificate that he had earned, at that moment his college education was in second place. "When he was at Schweizer Aircraft, we would call and ask for a small part that we needed. If it was available, Jim would have it in the mail to us the next day. If not, Jim would call saying that he didn't have the part, but would send blueprints and we could have it made. We still have some of those blueprints, Jim."

Harriet then turned the rostrum over to her partner at Lenox Flight School, Patricia Hange.

Pat said, "All I want to do is thank everybody tremendously. This couldn't have happened without two things. Our love of aviation and the wonderful people who have played in it for those 40 years." She summed it

two surf boards on top of his vehicle...It was Ed Kilbourne. He was giving a concert close by and decided that he wanted to try the art of soaring." After having worked with him a short time, Harriet said that Kilbourne wanted to know if he could leave the



Patricia Hange

up saying; "I'd do it again in a heartbeat. Thank you so much."

Robert Semans

Carl D. Herold, (Long Beach CA) was next on the program, introducing new Hall of Famer, Robert L. Semans. Herold said, "Since his early childhood, Bob has had an interest in gliders, heightened by articles he read in SOARING and the Scouting magazine BOY'S LIFE. A power and glider modeler in the 40s, Bob saw a real glider the first time at a Southern California Soaring Assn. exhibit during the Los Angeles County Fair. In 1956, he had his first glider ride in a flat top TG-4 at Lake Elsinore. Herold said, "He was hooked."

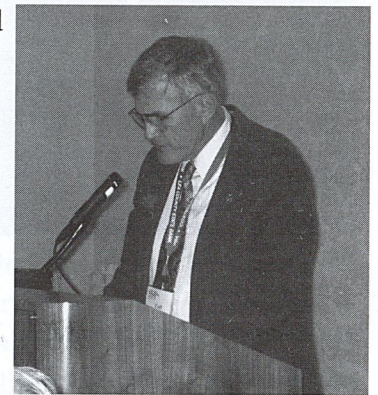
Semans became a Naval officer and after shipboard duty was fortuitously assigned to Mare Island, north of San Francisco. There, he took glider lessons at Les Arnold's Hummingbird Haven and received his private glider pilot certificate in 1958.

Herold said that Bob joined the Southern California Soaring Association and got his first look at competitive soaring and crewing. In 1964, he purchased his first glider, a Schweizer SGS 1-23. In his first competition, a mid-winter championship meet at Torrey Pines, near San Diego, he placed third

in the duration event, and followed that by entering his first National at McCook, NE. That same year Semans became a director in the SCSA, and did committee work on procedures for running competitions including techniques for validating achievements. He also did analysis on membership growth for each region.

In 1966 Bob received his Diamond Badge, #50. He was an SCSA vice president before a job situation shifted him to San Francisco where in 1968 he joined the Pacific Soaring Council. "In the late 60s he competed in regional and national events. During a 19-year period, Semans put on 18 Regionals in California and Nevada. He flew in seven Nationals from El Mirage, CA to Adrian, MI.

"He ended his active competition in the early 80s, devoting his time to working on contests and doing whatever was needed," Herold said. He listed many of



Carl Herold

Seman's accomplishments, such as official scorekeeper at the first Nationals held at Minden, in 1986 & 87, and the World Championship at Uvalde in 1991. He was CD for the first two Hitachi Masters of Soaring contests, and in 1989 was Steward at the World Championships at Wiener Neustadt. While in Austria, at the request of the International Gliding Commission Vice President, he worked on clarification of competition rules.

Bob Semans has set 42 state and six national records and is a recent winner of the Barron Hilton Cup.



Robert Semans

When Bob Semans was told of his selection to become a member of the U.S. Soaring Hall of Fame he said, "It triggered a great deal of reflection and philosophizing about my soaring journey; so many miles, so much scenery, so many

beautiful skylscapes, and so many special people. My sense of this honor is acute."

Plumbing the depth of childhood memories, he said that one of his earliest recollections of airplanes and his fascination with flight began at age three. By 10 he was building and flying gas-powered models and was reminded by several events that gliders existed. Eventually at 21, he decided to find out more and went to the local library where he found three books on soaring. "I was surprised to find that many."

He read about the history of motorless flight: Wolfgang Klemperer's "Blue Mouse," and stories of the early soaring at Elmira NY, Arvin CA and Altamont Pass in CA. In 1956 he began attending the monthly meetings of the SCSA. "This was a 'Wow' event for me," he said. "Dr. Klemperer was there and several other pilots I had read about." Also present were Dr. Paul MacCready, who had just returned from his stunning world championship victory at St. Yan, France, and Lyle Maxey (last year's inductee), who had just won the U.S. title with his new high aspect ratio glider, the Jenny Mae. Semans said that it was a

wonderful and inspiring environment in which he became a committed and enthusiastic soaring pilot. There were talented and famous pilots scattered all over the country, but nowhere was there anything near the concentration of soaring luminaries as in Southern California.

Semans recalled that the Helms U.S. Soaring Hall of Fame was founded 50 years ago this year and he wanted to "spotlight someone without whose efforts there might possibly not be a Soaring Hall of Fame...David Matlin." He was an attorney, former weight lifter and President of the SCSA; "a person who knew how to get things done," Semans said. For three four-year terms, Matlin was Chairman of the U.S. Olympic Weight Lifting Committee, and had close connections to the Helms Olympic Athletic Foundation. "So, through his good offices, David was able to establish the Helms U.S. National Soaring Hall of Fame," the speaker said. He added, "though not a Hall of Fame inductee himself, Dave Matlin's particular contribution shouldn't be lost to U.S. soaring history." Semans noted the surprising number of Californians in the Hall of Fame beginning with Hawley Bowlus in 1954: 21 in all (out of 115).

Semans paid homage to his instructor Les Arnold. "Ridge soaring at Altamont Pass, thermal soaring; I think that this really helped me up the learning curve quickly in preparing myself psychologically for cross country flying ...He was a very encouraging mentor."

One of his five most memorable flights was at the 1969 Nationals at Marfa, TX (George Moffat won, Wally Scott second.) "The big day was June 17. The task was free distance. My pulse goes up every time I read my log entry," he said. By that year he said that only five pilots in the world had exceeded 500 miles. "That day seven did, and I was one of them!" he said. He had overflown the sectional chart he had with him, and was using a AAA map of the Western US. "And that didn't have a lot of aeronautical detail," he quipped. Semans finally touched down after sunset in a Fargo, OK cornfield.

"Looking back, it's been a wonderful long journey. I wish I could have done more flying. If we allocate more time to our soaring than we should, it's because of the magic it brings into our lives. Looking forward, he said that there are more audacious flight declarations to be made and personal bests advanced. On the ground there are plenty of challenges to

soaring.

Closing, he said, "This was a very special moment in that journey. "I will savor the moment and the honor. Thank you for sharing this special moment with me. So the journey goes on."

Shown at right

United States Soaring Hall of Fame Members at the Atlanta, GA 2003 Induction Ceremonies: Top Row (L to R) Dick Johnson 1956, Lanier Frantz 1986, George Applebay 1999, Carl Herold 1996, Bernald Smith 1984, Doris Grove 1988, Bill Sproull 1997, Ed Seymour 1995, Ed Byars 1992, Gene Hammond 1996, Tom Knauff 1997. Bottom Row (L to R) Bertha Ryan 1972, Harriet Hamilton 2003, Pat Hange 2003, Bob Semans 2003, Charlie Spratt 1993.

**Patricia Hange, Harriet Hamilton,
and Robert Semans
SSA's 2003 Selections to the
United States Soaring Hall of Fame**



NSM Hosts First Soaring History Symposium

The Symposium speakers arrived at the National Soaring Museum Friday morning May 14, from all over the country. For two days they would deliver lectures, slide and video presentations, and even a harmonica rendition of "No Place Like Home," for one of the liveliest sessions of soaring academia ever. The agenda contributors included a retired college professor, retired military and airline pilots, vintage sailplane writers and historians, a surgeon, and retired aircraft industry CEOs. Some of the speakers even flew gliders at the national glider meets here in the middle 1930s.

In his report to the NSM Board of Trustees, Paul A. Schweizer wrote, "The main purpose of these Symposiums is to encourage interest in the preservation of soaring history by bringing to light new or little known facts about various phases of soaring history. It is hoped that these Symposiums can become a yearly affair and develop additional history for the soaring world and the National Soaring Museum Archives, as well as to develop potential Barnaby Lecturers."

His report continued. "Talks on soaring history, no matter how well they are documented, are dependent on the author's knowledge of the facts and how well he presents them. Others who may be familiar with

that subject from another point of view, can correct and expand upon, or refute details of the talk. This is what we hope happens at these Symposiums..."

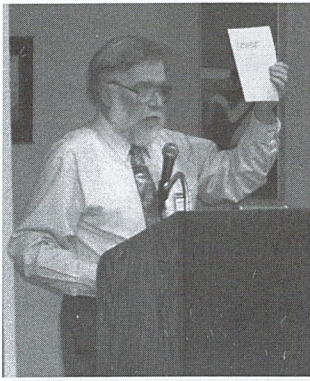
The weekend program officially started with the annual Community Soaring Luncheon. Though usually held in December, luncheon prepared by NSM's staff was re-scheduled for the Symposium weekend to accommodate trustees, principals and the one hundred or so attendees.

Following the luncheon, National Soaring Museum president Robert E. Gaines welcomed the presenters and the audience in the Museum's "C" Gallery then introduced NSM director Peter W. Smith. Peter said that at the start there was just a vague idea for the Museum to sponsor a Sailplane History Symposium. As the feasibility of such a project developed through his discussions with Paul A. Schweizer, and input from Robert Gaines and the trustees, the concept was realized, the date set and invitations posted. Smith then introduced Paul A. Schweizer, who said that he was happy to see everyone here, and hoped that they felt that the Symposium was a worthwhile endeavor.

From Deep River to Wright Patterson with Tuntland in Between: The Stories of Pratt-Read N69215

By Dr. Norbert A. Wethington

Paul A. Schweizer presented Dr. Norbert A. Wethington of Fremont, Ohio who he said bills himself



Dr. Norbert Wethington

as an "airport rat." Dr. Wethington is a retired community college dean, glider pilot and volunteer at the U.S. Air Force Museum. An affiliate scholar of Oberlin College, Dr. Wethington has written several articles about Pratt Read gliders and specifically about the Pratt Read LNE-1/TG 32, serial number 19. His special project for the last five years has been researching the location and the history of all Pratt Read gliders. His talk was, "From Deep River to Wright-Patterson with Tuntland in between: The Story of Pratt-Read N69215."

While working as an Air Force Museum Visitors Services guide and touring a group through the Dayton, OH Museum's innards, Dr. Wethington spied a crated, de-rigged glider sitting in a remote corner. "I had never seen anything like it, and I just stared until I realized that I was holding up the tour. Ever since then I have been haunted by the ghost of Pratt Read 69215."

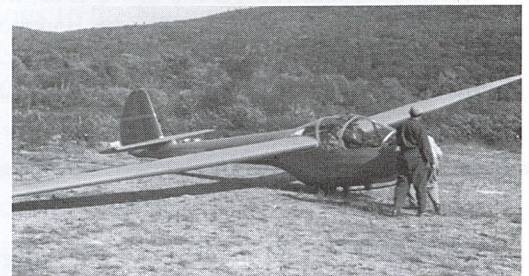
In late 1940, Pratt Read's president, James Gould became concerned and alerted stockholders about the questionable future of the company within the American defense-oriented economy. The company historically worked with ivory keyboards and other wood components of piano manufacturing that were labor intensive and not related to the pre-Pearl Harbor defense effort.

Roger Griswold, who was convinced by recent German glider actions that the deployment of gliders was becoming strategically significant, suggested a militarily directed product solution to Gould. Griswold was associated with Connecticut's burgeoning aircraft industry. He and two associates Michael Gluhareff and Parker Leonard designed a two-place (side by side) training glider that could be constructed mostly of plywood, and could be produced at Pratt Read's old abandoned factory in Deep River, CT. A few months before America's entry into the war, the company allotted funds to build Griswold's design. In September of 1941 the Marine Corps Div. of Aviation ordered 50 training gliders, and later upped the order to 100 (See NSM Hist. Jour. Vol.25, No.2 2003).

Exactly one week later work began on PR-G1 factory

serial #1. Dr. Wethington's story began with Pratt Read factory serial no. 19, the motorless vestige now in storage at the U. S. Air Force Museum. The Navy accepted it as an LNE-1 Bu. Aer. #31523. It was delivered in Sept. 1943, even though in January 1943, the Navy suspended deliveries of the LNE-1 pending a final review of the entire Navy/Marine Corps glider program. A total of 75 of the 100 ordered Pratt Read LNE-1s came off the assembly line (in addition to the prototype) before the cancellation was implemented. A crated #31523 was part of a shipment of gliders to a Reconstruction Finance Corporation salvage depot at Souther Field near Americus Georgia, still wearing its Navy colors. There for administrative purposes it became an Army Air Forces TG-32 awaiting civilian purchase.

By late Spring 1946 this ship now civilly registered NX69215,



became one **Pratt Read LNE-1-Similar to N69215** of three storm- chasing gliders purchased by the Aero Institute of Mississippi State University for the Thunderstorm Project. The Thunderstorm Project was a multi-agency investigation into bad weather and its effects on aviation. Based at Florida's Pinecastle AAF Field, FL (now Orlando International Airport) the storm chaser glider pilots were Don Pollard and Paul Tuntland. Crew chief/ground operations officer was MSU student Mel Schwartzberg. MSU professor August (Gus) Raspet was overall project coordinator.

In his July 26, 1946 project flight, Tuntland in NX69215 reached an indicated altitude of 22,700 feet, a world record two-place glider altitude gain of 18,700 feet. Unfortunately the NAA/FAI disallowed the record, since there was no actual second crew member aboard...the right hand cockpit contained a dummy load of meteorological recording equipment. Later Tuntland was caught in a fierce downdraft and

On The Cover:

1931 - Gustave Scheurer flying his "30W," a glider he designed and built. Note the Aero Club Albatross insignia on the rudder. (Probably at Millington, New Jersey)

successfully mushed-in on Lake Kissimmee without serious damage to NX69215, except for the acquisition of a snake that managed to slither aboard and was never heard from again, despite Olympian efforts to smoke it out.

After the Thunderstorm Project, Dr. Wethington said that several sources indicate that NX69215 was among the three purchased by Steve and Ginny Bennis to set up a gliding school in Sanford, FL. Thereafter the trail disappears for 12 years, and following a considerable amount of research by the speaker, NX 69215 shows up in January 1964 as being owned and rebuilt by Carlton Kibler of Porterville, CA (no mention of the undetected snake). Kibler added a "non-factory spec" fiberglass nose, and to further blur Dr. Wethington's quest, Kibler used a different serial number when he re-registered it. That made the paper trail more difficult to confirm. Sold and resold in 1972, 1978, 1982, 1985 and 1987, the ownership chain extended coast to coast and left an extended track of documents that would make a lawyer cross-eyed. Not Dr. Wethington however, who burrowed through bureaucratic effluence determining the particulars of how N 69215 was finally acquired by the Air Force Museum. Dr. Wethington said that the Air Force Museum has no plans to restore it to its original condition, the rationale being that while it is an historical glider, its reputation was earned during its civilian, not military tenure. None of the Pratt Reads assigned to the Thunderstorm or Bishop Wave Projects ever saw any flight time with the military.

Report on the Early National Contests from "My Heart Soars"

By Howard E. Burr



A young Howard Burr demonstrates a model sailplane.

Paul Schweizer next introduced Howard E. Burr of Tehachapi, California, mentioning that he was a long-time resident of Elmira. "He worked at Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, and

was president of the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation. He has a full aviation career as well as a full soaring career, and has written a book called "My Heart Soars." Howie is one of the few pilots around who

attended some of the first national soaring contests." Burr was a Director of the SSA, past chairman of the Sailplane Homebuilders Association (West), a trustee of the National Soaring Museum, and holds a Goal and Altitude Diamond "C".

Howard Burr said that he is originally from Schenectady, NY. His grandparents lived in Elmira and at an early age he spent his summer vacations there. Already interested in model glider building, his interest was heightened when the grandparents sent him newspaper clippings of the 1930 glider contest to be held in Elmira. He and his friend Warren Gammons were so interested in Edwin Teale's "A Book of Gliders" when they borrowed it from their lending library that they managed to rotate the due dates between them for a whole year.

In 1931 the Elmira National Meet was moved from September to July so that college students could participate with their club gliders. Burr's grandfather took him up to Elmira's South Mountain to see the activity. The beautiful gliders, the pilots, the camaraderie and activity, it was magnetic. Pretty soon the teenage Burr was part of a glider launching crew of ten others pulling and running a V-shaped shock cord. A Curtiss Robin was the weather plane and would go up from the Caton Avenue Airport each morning to determine the weather, wind direction, and which of the six ridges surrounding the Chemung Valley would be selected for that day's launch site.

One of the gliders launched was a Bowlus Model 15, piloted by Captain Phillips who intended to land at the airport below the ridge. On take-off, Burr noticed an approximate 10-degree right bend in the vertical rudder. Phillips cracked up hitting the wires alongside the approach to the Caton Avenue Airport at the base of South Mountain. Ernie and Paul Schweizer were approaching the airport and saw the ambulance with Phillips inside pull away. Burr emphasized that accident reinforced Ernie's philosophy of designing that future Schweizer gliders with extensive structural integrity.

The next summer Howie talked his friend Warren Gammons into joining him at the third National Glider Meet in Elmira. They crewed for Ralph Barnaby, who was flying a two-place Spanish glider called the "Alfaro." The back seat was designed to accommodate a motor if the owners ever wanted to convert it to a motor glider. This ship became known as the "songbird," because there were no turnbuckles to

tighten the wires. "We did our best, but as Barnaby came lower and lower, the whistle caused by stress-loosened wires became louder and louder." During the contest they became acquainted with all of the glider personalities of that time: Al Hastings, Richard duPont, Warren Eaton, Wolf Hirth, Lewin Barringer, Wolfgang Klemperer, and Jack O'Meara.

He reminded the audience that this was the depth of the Great Depression. "Elmira held a big welcoming parade, and to save on hotel bills pilots and crews often stayed in private homes, " Barnaby and Harriet stayed at grandma's and she got others to stay at homes on Elmira's South Avenue."

In 1933 and again in 1934, he and Warren crewed for Martin Schempp who was flying the "Haller Hawk" built by Gus Haller and Gus Scheurer. It was an Americanized copy of the German "Professor" sailplane. Burr mentioned the Rhodes family, and how Mrs. Rhodes opened her farm home on Hill #6 (adjacent to present Harris Hill glider field) to pilots and crews. "They slept on the floor, or in sleeping bags, in the barn or wherever. Mrs. Rhodes, with help from my grandmother and others, prepared all the meals. They were great. "

While a student at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute in 1935, Burr attended an air show at Roosevelt Field. There he became acquainted with Hans Groenhoff and his brother, the famous German sailplane pilot, Gunther Groenhoff, who flew the "Fafnir," one of Germany's highest performing sailplanes. The brothers introduced Burr to one of the outstanding aerobatic pilots at that time and star of the show, daredevil WWI number two ace, Ernst Udet. Udet later became one of the highest-ranking officers in Hitler's WWII Luftwaffe.

That year Warren Eaton flew his Bowlus mahogany "Falcon" at the meet. "They would get together and shoot the breeze about aerodynamics and that sort of thing. It was fun to sit and listen to what they had to say. They were really great days. It was very informal. One of the nice things about the Rhodes farm was if there was a rainy day, guys would get together in the barn Stan Smith, the M.I.T. guys, Jim Kendricks, Warren Merboth, Vic Saudek, Floyd Sweet, and Bud Iszard."

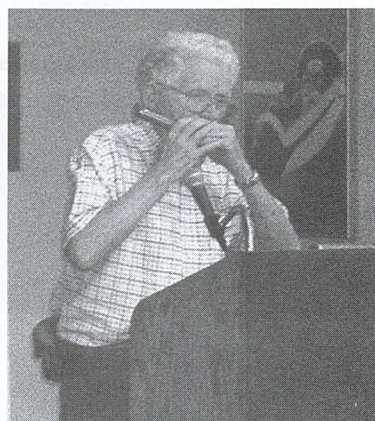
The 1935 meet was moved from #6 to Harris Hill, where a Roosevelt Administration WPA Project was underway. The complex eventually included an administration building, glider field and hangar, along

with cabins, and picnic facilities.

"Katy Jones was with the Association of Commerce, and she was a wonderful gal. She attended all our meetings up until 1959 when the contest moved out to Grand Prairie, Texas."

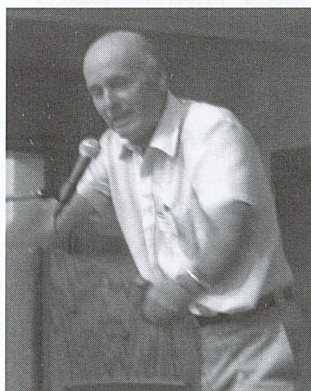
"In my book (My Heart Soars) I mention that I played the harmonica several times at these soaring get-togethers." He surprised symposium attendees by reaching inside the speakers rostrum for his harmonica saying, "so I'll play a tune," then proceeded with his rendition of "Long, Long Ago." The Museum's "C" Gallery reverberated with enthusiastic applause.

Then, he said, "Eddie Mooers, who played such an important part in the early days was good with the accordion and he and I used to play together at meetings. So I'll play "Home Sweet Home." because it's just like home sweet home for me to be back here where I spent so many years of my youth in this area with Schweizer Aircraft and Elmira." Following extended applause he took questions from the audience.



Howard Burr playing the harmonica.

The Story of the Vintage Sailplane Association **By Jan Scott**



Jan Scott

Jan Scott, past president and trustee of the National Soaring Museum is from Lovettsville, VA. He is a retired American Airlines captain, and one of the founders and a president of the Vintage Sailplane Association.

He opened his slide show presentation by recalling that ever since WWII many people have enjoyed restoring cheaply purchased old cars, sometimes to a better condition than when they left the factory. Some select models became collectors' units and worth a lot of money.

After the war, military aircraft sold for sometimes less

than the value of the fuel in their tanks. They were snapped up and put into every use from glider tugs to forest fire “borax bombers.” Gradually, as the supply dried up, these war birds became precious and the toys of a few well-heeled enthusiasts. Wartime birds became so rare that buyers would even search for them in such inaccessible places as the jungles and swamps of Asia, South America, even Greenland ice fields (Lockheed P-38, “Glacier Girl”).

A new generation of Germans also became interested in owning artifacts from Luftwaffe history. But, save for a few examples of advanced technology all Luftwaffe aircraft were destroyed in 1945. As the “woodies” aged the world over, they were replaced by sleek new glass, fiber reinforced, epoxy resin sailplanes.

Jan had an old “Wolf” glider, built in 1942 from German blueprints by a Chicago vocational school. He



Jan Scott's beautifully restored Wolf

said that the design had some structural flaws and the ship was tricky to fly. Unable to sell it, he approached Liam English (then director of the NSM,) to see if he would accept the glider as a gift. It was the only “Wolf” flying at that time. “Liam refused because he was inundated with similar offers from people who could not sell their older gliders and the NSM had no storage space.”

Then Jan got an idea. He asked Liam to check the list of all those people who wanted to donate their gliders and invite them to a soaring meet at Harris Hill. The August 1974 three-day event was a great success. With seven flyable gliders and a couple from the NSM, the Vintage Sailplane Association was formed with Geoff Steele elected president and Ginny Schweizer secretary.

It was decided that the year of design would govern what constituted a vintage sailplane. Initially in 1950 it was established with a sliding scale so that newer gliders would be accepted in the future. Scott said, “We did not think that there were more than a couple of dozen flyable old gliders in the country. With normal attrition we thought that we might find

ourselves without any sailplanes unless we admitted newer types.” Quite the opposite happened. As the VSA grew, more and more old gliders came out of barns and basements, so the cut off date was finally fixed at 1958. Currently, there are about 350 airworthy vintage gliders listed in the VSA directory, and there are now more than 500 VSA members on every continent in the world. In 1979, the VSA became a division of the Soaring Society of America.

Vintage glider meets are held each year in many parts of the country. In August 2005, the third International Vintage Sailplane Meet held in this country will take place at Harris Hill.

The market value of these restored birds constantly increases; some of the more desirable models, especially the gull wing gliders, bring as much money as the new composite sailplanes.

The Vintage Sailplane Association maintains a photo and data archive, managed by Raul Blacksten of Downey, California, who also edits the VSA newsletter, “Bungee Cord.” The archive also makes available to members, construction drawings of older and obscure gliders to help them with repairs or restorations.

In an attempt to reach the younger set, in 1990 the VSA established the “Classic Division,” for any glider at least 25 years old. “But not surprisingly it has not generated much enthusiasm. A 25 year old plane looks strikingly like one fresh from the factory, and they are all painted boring white.”

Unknown to American VSAers, a similar group, Vintage Glider Club of GB had already been formed in Great Britain under the guidance of Christopher Wills, the son of the famous soaring pioneer Phillip Wills. Scott commented that nobody collects old things like the British, so naturally the country was overflowing with old decaying sailplanes at the time. “Some were the sole remaining samples of types that were popular and plentiful.”

Since the second “Rally” at the Wasserkuppe, as the VGC of GB called their meets, old timers from all over Europe participated bringing a variety of sailplanes. The VGC of GB became the VGC, an international club almost overnight. The VGC News, the club publication, is published three times a year. Editor Margaret Shrimpton maintains the high standard of excellence established by its founder and

editor, Chris Wills.

After a slow start due to the destruction of almost all the German sailplanes during the war, the Germans began building large numbers of replicas. They sometimes brought to European rallies glider types that were thought to have been long extinct as even their production drawings had been lost during the Allied bombing.

Every year Chris Wills arranges to have the Rally with all its colorful side programs in a different country. Sometimes more than 100 gliders enter, placing a serious logistical strain on the facilities of the host country. Some teams bring merchandise to help defray the cost of their attendance. Wills, now in his seventies, usually opens each international rally with the ringing a large cow bell and giving a welcoming speech in the language of the host country.

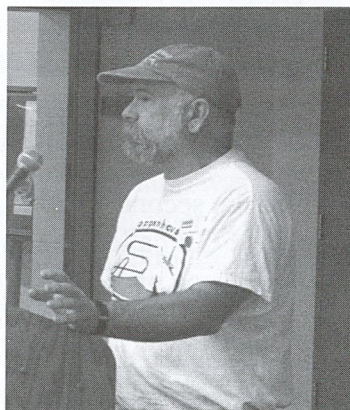
Other museums in the world that are dedicated to the history of motorless flight in addition to the National Soaring Museum: the Wasserkuppe in Germany, one in Sweden (that has run out of funds), The Southwest Soaring Museum, near Albuquerque NM, (currently under construction), and one in Ukraine (closed for several years due to lack of funding).

Scott closed by saying, "At the present time we know of 41 aviation museums around the world that have significant numbers of gliders on display along with other types of aircraft. More are added to the list as we learn about them. Their gliders have been entered into a data base which enables us to instantly identify about 500 gliders listed by type, designer, registration, or where they are located."

How Did Soaring Benefit from the Involvement of Charles Lindbergh?

By Raul Blacksten

Raul Blacksten of Downey, CA is the archivist for the Vintage Sailplane Association and edits its quarterly newsletter, "Bungee Cord." He has had numerous articles on soaring and the history of soaring published on three continents. He is currently writing the biography of Hawley Bowlus.



Raul Blacksten



Charles Lindbergh at the Bowlus Sailplane Co. in San Diego, CA

In a copyrighted paper entitled, "What Benefit Did Soaring Get From the Involvement Of Charles A. Lindbergh?" Blacksten guided attendees through the very early days of gliding to the legacy of Charles and Anne Lindbergh.

He recounted how the Germans were virtually forced into motorless flight by the strictures imposed on them by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, officially ending WW I. The world's first glider meet was the German Rhon Competition held in 1920, and again in 1921. The third, fourth and fifth competitions were held during the spring and summer of 1922, in France, Germany, and England.

In the United States, where the world's first successful glider was built and flown, gliding stagnated, "considered to be the realm of crackpots and crazies," as Blacksten put it. "My records indicate that between 1902 and 1922 only about nine individuals and/or organizations were experimenting with gliders."

In 1922, the M.I.T. group led by Eddie Allen and Otto Koppen built the "Kiwi." With pilot Allen, "Kiwi" was the first and only American glider to fly in both the Rhon and French competitions. It crashed beyond repair at the latter meet. However Allen went on to be the sole American to attend the Itford Meet in England.

That same year, at McCook Field in Dayton, Jean Roche designed and built the GL-2 Air Corps Glider. Later this basic design with an engine added became the Aeronca C-2, "Flying Bath Tub."

Blacksten said that perhaps the most prolific glider experimenter was Hawley Bowlus, "who, after attending the 1910 Los Angeles Air Show went on to build 12 gliders before 1922."

1927 was the pivotal year that interest in aviation radiated throughout the world. It was the year that

Charles A. Lindbergh flew solo from New York to Paris. Everyone wanted to fly, and the least expensive way was in a glider.

Within three years the first glider school was founded in Cape Cod, the National Glider Association (forerunner of the SSA) was formed in Detroit, Navy Lt. Ralph Barnaby was dropped in a glider from the airship Los Angeles, and the first national glider meet was held in Elmira.

Hawley Bowlus had built four more gliders including the first real sailplane in the U.S. To help foster the glider movement among the youth of America, Bowlus, the pre-eminent manufacturer of gliders at that time, prevailed on the "Lone Eagle" to fly a glider.

T. Claude Ryan met William Hawley Bowlus while both were attending a San Diego flight school preparing for entrance in the WW I Army Air Service. After the war Ryan employed Bowlus, converting wartime aircraft to civilian uses. Eventually they built the Ryan M-1, and started the first scheduled airline in the U.S.

After frustrating negotiations with Bellanca and Fokker, Charles A. Lindbergh finally settled on Ryan Airlines to build the modified Ryan M-2, named "Spirit of St. Louis." It became the ship that carried him to instant world fame. Flight fever had struck, with dozens of glider manufacturers springing up. In 1929 Bowlus began construction on America's first successful state-of-the art true sailplane, the SP-1 Albatross. Blacksten said that Bowlus and Lindbergh made a fast friendship during the construction of the "Spirit of St. Louis." Bowlus was the first employee of Ryan Airlines. When newlyweds Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh came back to San Diego during their extended honeymoon they looked for the renowned sailplane builder.

Lindbergh made his first soaring flight in Bowlus' 18th glider, a Model A "Albatross." Blacksten said, "his instruction consisted solely of being told where the best lift would be found and that he should not bank the glider when turning so as to avoid losing altitude." Earning his First Class Glider Pilot's License (9th in the U.S.) Lindbergh later exclaimed, "that's the most stimulating air ride I've ever had."

Inspired by her husband's enthusiasm for gliding, only a few hours after her first glider lesson, Anne Morrow Lindbergh became the first woman, and only the 10th person in the U.S. to earn a First Class Glider Pilot's

License. The Anne Lindbergh Glider Club was founded in San Diego to encourage woman pilots who were inspired by her exploits.



Anne Lindbergh in the Bowlus sailplane in which she won the first American glider license for women

Lindbergh later returned to meet with Bowlus, and the two began a search for a suitable place to fly gliders. To escape reporters, for a few days Bowlus, Lindbergh and crew explored soaring near Lebec, California at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. They hoped to find good soaring conditions along the western slope of the Tehachapi Mountains. Instead of conventional trailing edge ailerons, the Bowlus Model A "Albatross" had the outboard three feet of wing tip rotate for roll axis control. Later on, one of the wing tip ailerons on Lucky Lindy's Bowlus ship failed. A previously bent wing tip aileron fell off when his glider reached about 40 feet. It looked worse than it really was, so Lindbergh continued the flight and landed safely near a schoolhouse, "much to the delight of the teacher." Reporters bird-dogging the crew immediately assumed that Lindbergh had crashed, not realizing that the disassembled glider awaiting its trailer was not the result of a crack-up. The lone Eagle remarked that the glider flew nearly as well with one wingtip aileron as it did with two.

Lindbergh had an Albatross shipped to Pebble Beach where it was taken out to Carmel. He kept the press at bay saying that he was just experimenting. Actually it was said that he was hopeful he could fulfill one of Bowlus's dreams of a soaring flight from San Francisco to Los Angeles. With uncooperative weather, Lindbergh packed up the Albatross and returned to San Diego where he and Anne continued

their extended honeymoon.

Though Lindbergh ordered an Albatross, there is no record of its ever having been delivered, and the Lindberghs are not known to have flown gliders again. The reclusive Charles Lindbergh and Hawley Bowlus never got together again, though Blacksten said that when Bowlus was severely injured in a glider accident at the 1930 National Championships at Elmira, Lindbergh did persistently press contest officials for a thorough report on Bowlus's condition.

"So what benefit did soaring get from Lindbergh's involvement? Directly, we have to wonder," Blacksten said. His flights were national news, centering attention on the sport. Except for a flight or two, Lindbergh did not soar, which may have discouraged some. Then there were the incidents, like losing part of the wing twice and almost hitting power lines, and also the number of spectacular plane crashes from which Lucky Lindy got his 'nom de l'aire'.

"It is almost certain that soaring gained almost nothing from Lindbergh's involvement. He may even have hurt the sport because of his notoriety."

Blacksten pointed out there is one enduring outcome and that is the legacy of Lindbergh's wife, Anne. Almost immediately after her flights the Anne Lindbergh Glider Club was founded to encourage women to take up gliding. "Although the name is gone now, the club still exists in a sense because it was later combined with several Los Angeles and San Diego area glider clubs to form the Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California. Today this club lays claim to being the oldest club in the U.S. Oh, and it was while on that trip to Lebec that the site of the later meets at Arvin was discovered."

The Bowlus BA-100 "Baby Albatross"

By Jeff Byard

Jeff Byard of Atascadero, CA is recognized as one of world authorities on all aspects of this vintage sailplane. He is a trustee and past president of the National Soaring Museum, a past president of the Vintage Sailplane Association and has authored several articles on vintage sailplanes and antique power planes that have appeared in American and foreign publications. He was editor of the VSA's "Bungee Cord," and is a captain flying for US Airways.



Jeff Byard

He said that the Bowlus BA-100 "Baby Albatross" was one of the most popular American sailplane designs of the late 1930s. Designed by William Hawley Bowlus as a utility sailplane, it was built along the same lines as the famous "Grunau Baby" from Germany. "In my eyes, the BA-100 is one of the

prettiest sailplanes ever built and I have been under its spell for as long as I can remember." He was about 10 when he got a really good look the first time at a "Baby Bowlus" in 1964 at El Mirage Dry Lake. "It was at that time I began building models of and collecting pictures and information about, the "Baby Albatross." I have dreamed of owning one and flying one ever since."

There was never enough accurate information available on this ship for Byard. He acquired his first Baby in 1963 through some friends of his father in the aircraft engine parts business. They didn't know anything about this glider, not even its "N" number. It had been stored in the rafters of a hangar at the Van Nuys Airport for as long as anyone could remember. He burrowed through all his Bowlus material to find some clue to the ship's identity. "That is how this research project got started."

Byard enlisted the help of Mrs. Hawley (Ruth) Bowlus, Don Mitchell and Frank Kelsey. (the latter two having worked with Bowlus.) Byard eventually identified the "Baby" as serial #123. By that time he had amassed so much information that he just kept on collecting and organizing Bowlus parts and material. Subsequently he also acquired #134 plus parts for several other BA-100s.

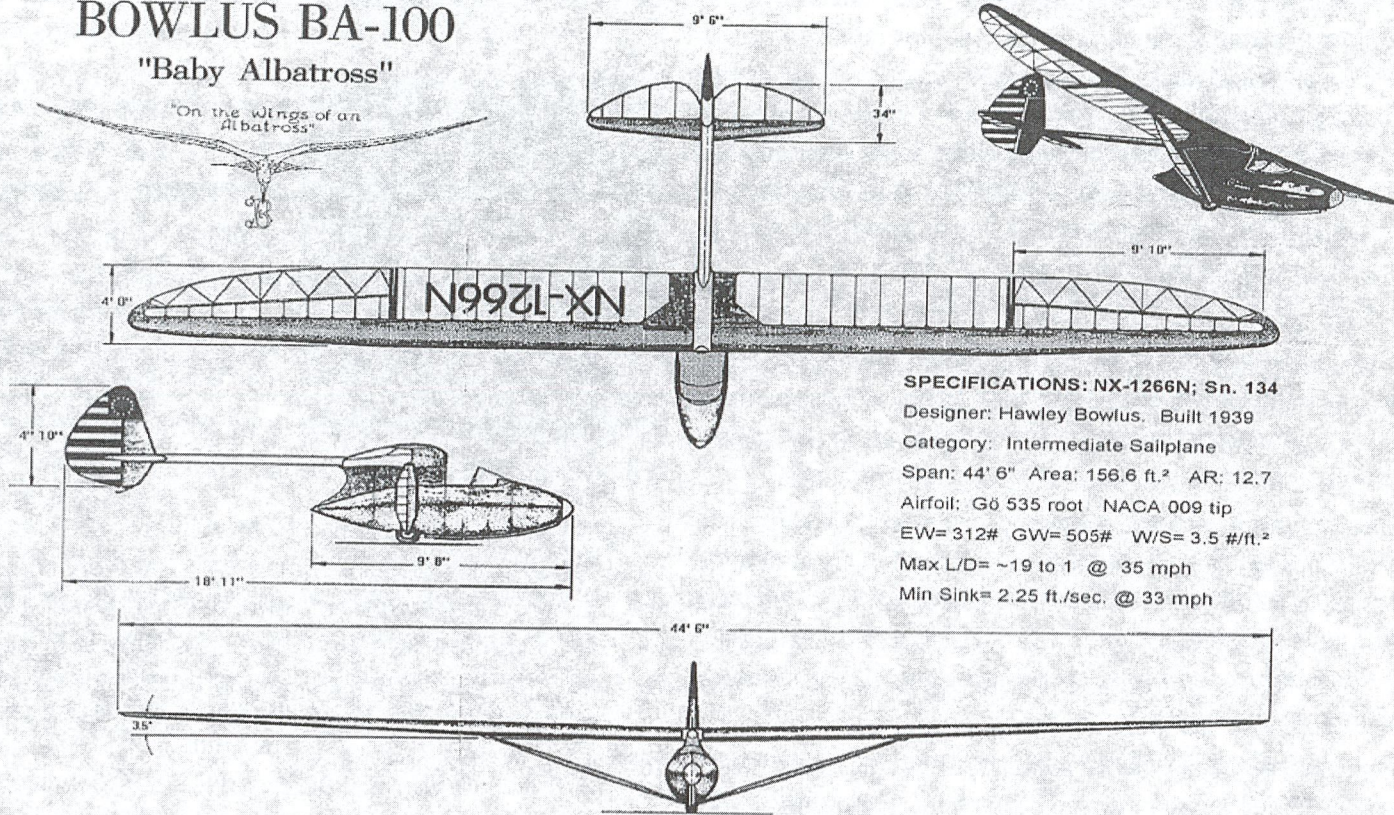
The end result of all this was "a restored and flying "Baby Bowlus" as well as a listing of all of The BA-100 sailplanes that I could find information on."

Byard mentioned that as early as 1910, Bowlus was designing and building full size gliders. He earned a reputation as an excellent aircraft builder, eventually becoming the first employee of Tubal Claude Ryan at the Ryan aircraft factory in San Diego. He also became friends with Charles A. Lindbergh while

BOWLUS BA-100

"Baby Albatross"

"On the wings of an Albatross"



SPECIFICATIONS: NX-1266N; Sn. 134
 Designer: Hawley Bowlus. Built 1939
 Category: Intermediate Sailplane
 Span: 44' 6" Area: 156.6 ft.² AR: 12.7
 Airfoil: G6 535 root NACA 009 tip
 EW= 312# GW= 505# W/S= 3.5 #/ft.²
 Max L/D= ~19 to 1 @ 35 mph
 Min Sink= 2.25 ft./sec. @ 33 mph

From Jeff Byard's bound folio "The Bowlus Baby Albatross Story." One of the most popular American designs of the late 1930's.

working on the "Spirit of St. Louis." Another co-worker at Ryan was Douglas Corrigan who became famous ten years later by flying his modified Curtiss Robin the "wrong way" from New York to Los Angeles and landing in Ireland.

The Bowlus Sailplane Company was formed in 1928. Throughout the Great Depression, Bowlus was convinced that gliders were the best way to teach people to fly. The first of the famous Albatross sailplanes appeared shortly after the Lindbergh trans-Atlantic flight. By 1930 Bowlus sailplanes had evolved into the magnificent "Bowlus/ DuPont Albatross," later known as the "Sr. Albatross." It was designed by Hawley Bowlus and Martin Schempp. Schempp had studied with the eminent German aerodynamicist and sailplane builder, Alexander Lippisch.

Bowlus's reputation continued to grow through the aviation industry. By the time the "Baby Bowlus" went into production his firm had the backing of many of the aviation greats, including Donald Douglas, Glenn L. Martin, Rueben Fleet and several others. Byard said that with that kind of support if it hadn't

been for the outbreak of WWII, there probably would have been hundreds of BA-100s built.

The "Baby Albatross" is an intermediate or utility sailplane intended to fill the need for good performance at a reasonable price. Its design was pretty much state of the art at that time.

By 1936 the design work on the BA-100 was well along. "While the wings of the "Baby Albatross" are far from being a copy of those of the German "Grunau Baby," they were certainly influenced by the Grunau's design. Not too much of the "Sr. Albatross" found its way into the Baby. Only on the four prototypes with the scarfed pods were there really any interchangeable parts. All of the woodwork on the wings, pod, and tail surfaces use the characteristic Bowlus style of sailplane construction found in all of his later designs.

The BA-100s were marketed as highly prefabricated kits and most ships were sold in this form. The kits were sold as units and could be purchased as individual units, in packages of units, the complete kit, or you could purchase the glider as factory assembled and ready to fly.

The factory would sell a complete “Baby Albatross” without spoilers, instruments or cockpit cowling for \$750 (1940). Byard said that serial #123 was the only factory- assembled ship that he had yet been able to identify. Several others were built by their owners at the factory. All but the four prototype BA-100s had molded pods, and they were easier to build than the scarfed pods on the prototypes. Lightweight construction techniques were used throughout.

Hawley Bowlus’s father C.D. Bowlus, who had worked for Lockheed where the “Vega,” “Orion” and others were constructed by the mold process, built the plug used in making the Baby’s concrete molds.

Byard said that flying the Baby was both fun and challenging; “the pitch control demands a great deal of respect.” On the advice received from Irv Culver (well known sailplane designer and “skunk works” engineer) he wound up completely rebuilding the elevators and changing the rigging.

Byard remembers the 7th flight in #134. To the west he could see a cap over the Tehachapi Mountains and his father towed him into weak lift at 2,550 feet (agl). Scratching at 1,550 feet, he followed a Schweizer 1-26 into a cloud street climbing to 8,500 feet.

“The Bowlus is not a comfortable glider to fly, you sit on your tailbone. I was getting pretty sore and with the open cockpit, cold.” Then he went up to 10,000 and into the wave system that was breaking up. Now it’s really cold and he’s into virga, which turned into snow. “A new experience for me and yes, it really stings in an open cockpit. Its near lunchtime and I’m sore, cold and hungry.” After an exciting test of stamina, airmanship and challenge to the rawest elements, the BA-100 beat its way back to Rosamond where his parents were waiting. He said “this flight certainly was no record breaker. It lasted less than two hours and only covered a round trip distance of about 45 miles. Even so on this one short flight I encountered wave, rotor lift, lines of rotor-induced thermals, blue thermals, snow and a great cloud street, all in a 1939 glider with a 19 to 1 glide ratio. In all my years of flying I can’t remember having any more fun in another glider.”

“The truth about the ‘Baby Albatross’?” Byard asked. He said that it is an absolutely beautiful ship and incredibly fun to fly. However, they are now approaching 65 years old, and a little tricky to fly, casein glues and designed very lightly. “If we are

going to keep flying these gliders, and I think we should, we must be very careful. As long as they are restored, maintained and flown with a great amount of care and respect, there is no reason that we can’t keep flying these little ships well into the 21st century.”

How many were originally built? “I really don’t know for sure.” After Byard’s investigation and discussion of the recorded serial numbers and variants of the type with other Bowlus authorities, “... I now believe that there were 90 gliders and kits produced (at least there were 90 serial numbers assigned). The BS-100 (Super Albatross) and BA-102/BTS-100s (two place Baby Albatross) were probably among these 90 gliders.”

Who owns the rights to the “Baby Albatross”? The rights and type certificate for the BA-100 were sold to the Laister- Kauffmann Aircraft Co. of St. Louis, MO in 1944. Byard noted that no BA-100s were ever built by L-K. The type certificate passed to Dwight Whiting of Los Angeles and in the mid 60s was reacquired by the Laister Sailplane Company.

Today, there are only three airworthy B-100s; one owned by Wayne Spani, #173 by Jim Stoia and Jeff Byard’s #134.

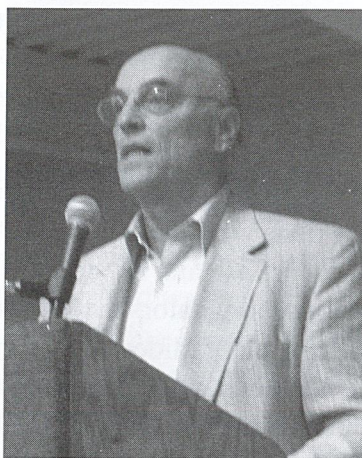
At the conclusion of his presentation Byard made available to Historical Symposium attendees a booklet on the “Bowlus Baby Albatross Story” that included an “All the Babies” list.

Byard said that this list represents almost 30 years of collecting information and 10 more of organizing it. “This list contains a lot of information and answers a lot of questions. It also raises many more questions. The list contains all known BA-100 serial numbers (90 total). My goal is to match as many “N” numbers, dates of manufacture, names and current status (or eventual fate) to as many of these serial numbers as possible. Updates, corrections and additions to my list would be very much appreciated.” (Space limitations prevent the inclusion this 12-page listing with this article. Readers may contact Jeff Byard or the National Soaring Museum for specific information.)

Observations After Fifty Years in Soaring By Dr. Walter B. Cannon

Dr. Walter B. Cannon and his wife Irene live in Palo Alto, CA. He is Clinical Professor of Surgery at Stanford Medical Center, a member of the American College of Surgeons and the Western Thoracic Society and has written several articles on the physiological

problems associated with soaring and flying. He is a Trustee of the NSM, a member of SSA, EAA, PASCO, and is a Diamond "C" sailplane pilot. He currently owns a Discus 2B, and is restoring an ASK-13. Dr. Cannon restored the Schweizer SGU 1-7 (The "Pterodactyl") currently on display in the NSM's Schweizer Gallery.



Dr. Walter Cannon

He opened by saying that he had now been a part of this sport for 50 years and had often wondered what it was about soaring that has held his interest for so long. "We certainly have a variety of avenues for interested people to pursue within the sport; SSA, VSA, SHA, SRA, and USHGA." While hang gliding sometimes offers a long climb for a short ride, many hang gliding pilots have become quite good sailplane pilots.

The Vintage Sailplane Association provides another direction. Cannon recently bought a non-airworthy ASK-13 (and trailer) for \$3,000 that needed nonstructural repair, cleaning up and covering. "The cost of restoration could be well within the reach of an enthusiastic person with some outside advice and monitoring. Restoration enthusiasts are attracted to the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association), but not to us."

The well heeled who enter the sport in mid-life are dazzled by the sleek glass, instrument-laden ships. "A glider flight soon becomes a data gathering event rather than an appreciation of the essence of the sport which is the efficient utilization of God-given lift to propel us higher and farther in our gliders."

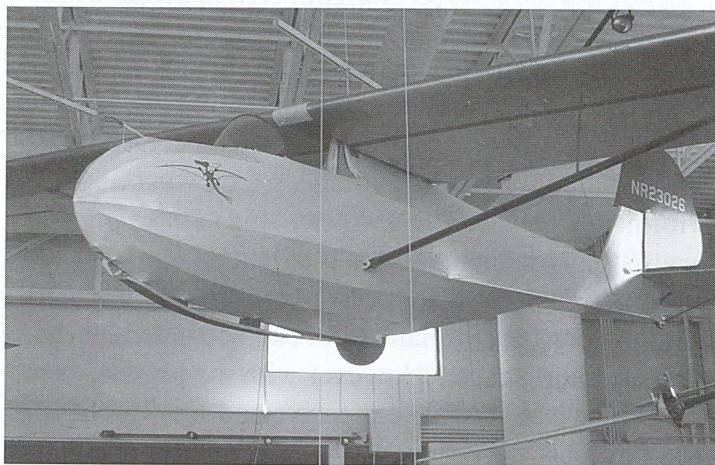
He started with a variety of model aircraft, "Lots of crashed aircraft, some repairable some not, but good practice for the future," He also learned that he could solo at 14.

During the recovering job of the MIT glider club's Schweizer 2-22, Cannon contacted SAC for advice. Paul A. Schweizer responded and encouraged him to come to Elmira to the Schweizer Soaring School, which he attended in the summer of 1954. "It was a life-changing experience... Bernie Carris was very

patient and I think a little conservative since teaching a 14 year old boy with the intent to solo him was not that common." He soloed in two weeks: total cost \$125. The second summer he crewed for Bernie at the 22nd U.S. Nationals and transitioned to the latest Schweizer sailplane, the SGS 1-26. "It was an enormous step for me."

That fall Cannon and his brothers pooled their earnings and bought a Schweizer 1-19. They flew in Barre, MA for a year before it needed recovering. Seeking advice, the 14, 15, and 16 year olds found a sympathetic ear of the East Coast Aero Tech's VP, who assumed that the boys were talking about covering a model glider. "He must have been shocked at seeing what we had. This man was a superb teacher and mentor, very patient and impressed by our resolve to complete the project. But we wanted to fly ASAP."

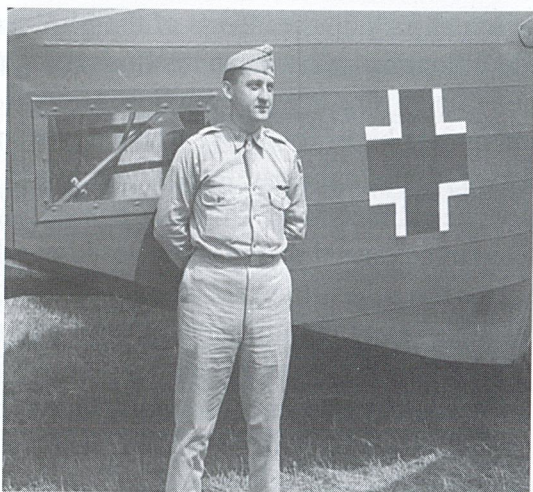
Owning, re-licensing, storing, assembling and flying the 1-19 was a maturing experience for all of the Cannon boys, "even though we couldn't get farther than 50 km (about 31 miles)."



1937 SGU 1-7 (called the "Pterodactyl") restored by Dr. Walter Cannon in time to be flown at the 2000 IVSM at Harris Hill. At that time it was one of the oldest flying sailplanes in existence.

They made another trip to Elmira in 1956 for more 1-26 flying at SAC. Young Walter took off from the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport and was a few miles east of the field when a thunderstorm formed over the airport. "I did not dare to return so I turned downwind and landed 60 miles away in Choconut, PA. Poor Bernie was worried but it all worked out well and I had my Silver Badge distance."

By age 18 he had his Commercial and Instructor licenses and was now "joyfully flying" with the MIT glider club at the Orange Airport as their instructor. It



Major Floyd Sweet with the German Gotha 242 that he flew at a post war soaring contest at Harris Hill.

them for Glider. They would say oh, those damn gliders and all that stuff. A lot of people didn't realize that we flew eight invasion missions." One of them was over Burma with Brig. Gen. Orde Wingate. Among the glider pilots in the First Air Commando, was John Leslie Coogan. Jackie Coogan was the famous child movie star of the 20s and 30s. He flew the first night glider mission as part of the assault behind Japanese lines. It was All American Engineering Co. that made the pick up gear for the gliders and Coogan would hook them up to the towplanes and dispatch them for take-off. He was once an instructor at 29 Palms, where Sweet was director of training.

At Wright Field Sweet did a lot of the designing and modifications to the big combat gliders. He made the point that the large combat gliders were built with the same structural requirements as the famous Stearman "Yellow Peril" biplane trainers. The CGs were not as lightly built as some people thought they were. "It was a pretty rugged flying machine. I wanted to get it in the history books because I think that they are all related to what we did in our both our military and civil careers," he said.

After the war new criteria were agreed upon for military gliders. They were to carry a load of dimensions nearing 8,000 pounds and another to carry a load of 16,000 pounds. They were all metal, built by the Stroukoff Aircraft Company in New Jersey. "The G-20 was a big glider and with engines it became the C-123, that was used extensively in Viet Nam. It was off the production line before the G-20." The G-18 became the C-125 when they put engines on it.

Sweet related one of his G-20 glider experiences. The

glider weighed 33,000 pounds and he was ferrying it up from a base in the South to Trenton to be converted into another C-123. The co-pilot was power-rated and had little or no time in a G-20. Night was quickly approaching and having already passed McGuire AFB, they were going to have to make a night landing. The field was not lit and flare pots were set out to mark the runway. Releasing from the towplane, the co-pilot became nervous and asked Sweet how many night landings he had made. Sweet didn't answer, but set up his pattern, touched down and rolled up to the appointed hangar. Then he turned to the copilot and held up his index finger. "I thought the guy was going to fall out of his seat," Sweet said.

Events from the 1920-21 Glider Contests on the Wasserkuppe from Peter Riedel's "Start in Den Wind" as Translated by Sonja Eglert

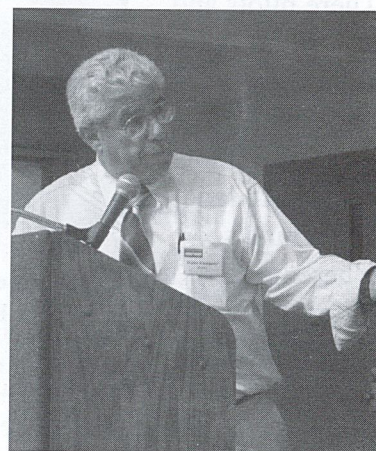
By Walter & Ashlee Klemperer

Walter Klemperer of Portland Oregon is a Silver "C" sailplane pilot, with completed altitude of Gold & Diamond "C" legs, and one "Lennie" of the Bob Symons Award.

He holds private, commercial and instructor's glider ratings, along with power, commercial in single engine, land and

sea, multi engine land, and instrument ratings. He was designated Most Active Instructor in 2003, for Region 8, in the SSA's "A, B, C, Bronze Program."

Klemperer instructs and tows with the high Desert Soaring Club in Bend and Oregon Wing Program, Civil Air Patrol in Mulino.



Walter Klemperer



Walter's daughter, 17 year-old Ashlee Klemperer (left), is a high school junior who soloed in 2002, and currently holds both "A" and "B" soaring badges. She is working towards her private glider rating and hopes to become a glider instructor by the end of the

summer of 2005, so she can instruct while attending college.

Wolfgang Klemperer in his acceptance speech for the Warren Eaton Trophy in 1963 said, "I began to build flying models in 1908 with rubber bands and then compressed air motors. A wealthy aunt of mine vowed to disinherit me if I attempted to resort to such dangerous fuels as gasoline used in the devilish horseless carriage. I assured her that the day would come when we would fly without any fuel.



Pomeroy sketch of Dr. Wolfgang Klemperer and the "Akron Condor."

"When we started out in the Rhon Mountains in 1920 after WWI we resumed gliding with the definite aim of developing it into soaring. We were pretty sure of achieving slope soaring and cherished the hope of learning how to emancipate ourselves from the hillside to skip from one slope to the next and to find updrafts underneath clouds and in thermals above sun-heated terrain" He said that the development of soaring possibilities in waves and storm fronts was beyond our dreams at that time.

The presentation was a series of stories delivered alternately by Walter and Ashlee from Riedel's book. They opened with how Kemperer's "Black Devil" (Schwarze Teufel) got its name.

Through the friendship and influence of an interested young lady whose father owned a fabric shop, the very lightweight black fabric was donated to the students at the University of Aachen (mainly because black didn't sell well.) The "Black Devil's" cantilevered wing design concept used the first time in powered aircraft was applied to gliders. Klemperer added two streamlined landing legs with Eschen-wood skids at the bottom. He said that the wings were built in one piece because the students did not trust themselves to build a cantilevered wing with a strong enough joint in the center. "For that reason we selected the length of

an open railroad car as our wingspan." At this point the builders ran out of plywood and since the leading edge of the wing did not contribute to its torsional stiffness they used cardboard instead. The tail was removable. The joint was at the wing's trailing edge. "This made assembly and disassembly very simple."

The idea of the bungee launch came from WW I German warplane landing gears that used bungee cords as their only means of shock absorption. Klemperer discovered that large quantities of the 16-20 mm cords were stored near Aachen. He calculated that these could store considerable energy when stretched far enough and release this energy very quickly. The Black Devil had two pins at the trailing edge of the gear fairings. The bungee cord would be attached to those pins before take-off. Riedel wrote, "They were elegant, effortless and safe."

The last day of the 1920 Wasserkuppe Meet began with fog and a strong wind, but by noon it cleared and all hang gliders and gliders were up. By the end of the day one after another had crashed, including the "Black Devil." The "Stuttgarter" was the only exception. Klemperer climbed 10 meters over the launch site and stayed in the air one minute and fifteen seconds. For 10 seconds he was standing still in the air. Then Weil, who Klemperer referred to as "our ace" would take his turn. Ignoring Klemperer's advice on the acceleration force involved in the launch the slightly built Weil pressed against the seat causing him to over-control and the bird zoomed up nose-high. Then it came down just as fast and crashed. "He jumped like a flash from the wrecked remains and disappeared towards Gersfeld, where he caught the next train to return home." The contest jury declared Klemperer the winner with Willy Pelzner second and Willi Drude third. "After the contest ended poor Robert Heinzmann beat his unsuccessful aerial creation to pieces with a big hammer. Oskar Ursinus wrote a number of encouraging articles in "Flugsport" that helped keep interest in the new sport alive.

Several important aviation personalities including Anthony Fokker and British industrialist, Fredrick Handley-Page visited the Wasserkuppe as news spread of the gliding activities held there. Handley-Page was particularly interested in Klemperer's "Blue Mouse" (Blaue Maus) After witnessing the launch he exclaimed, "Fantastic! Do you think that I could offer the young people a round?" Of course the fun-loving Aacheners did not say "no."

Fokker made 32mm motion pictures of the 1921 and later the 1922 Wasserkuppe Contests with a hand-cranked camera. These moving pictures were included in Walter and Ashlee's presentation to the symposium audience.

After the 1921 contest Klemperer managed to fly a goal flight of 5 km from the west ridge to Gersfeld and soared above his launch height for 13 minutes and 3 seconds for new endurance and distance world records. For the first time Orville Wright's endurance record of 9 minutes and 45 seconds had been surpassed. Riedel said that it was clear to every one that with the appearance of "Blaue Maus" and Marten's "Vampyr" a new age had been started. It was the beginning of model standardization and the end of the multitude of designs and ideas as the Rhon contest of 1921 had shown them once more.

The German Aero club subsequently awarded Wolfgang Klemperer German glider license #1 and "C" badge #1. They were the first of each awarded worldwide.

Soaring Reflections of Jack Laister and Larry Edgar

Jack Laister drove across the country from his Apple Valley California home with his dog "Bruness" for company to attend the Symposium. His soaring and glider building days go back to when he was 16. He designed and built the famous Lawrence Tech "Yankee Doodle", the giant wartime CG 10A "Trojan Horse," and the TG 4A (L-K 10A). Post war he built the Laister LP-15 (now on exhibit at the NSM) and the Laister LP-46 and 49.

He said that the Laister - Kauffmann Aircraft Corp. had been on a CG-4 building program where contracts were given out to his organization 100 at a time. "Along the line we changed from cost plus to a fixed fee. This fee is determined before you start. You're responsible for everything. You really have got to watch your costs if you're going to make any money."

Laister was reviewing the company's costs with the comptroller on the last hundred CG-4As. They decided to ask for \$20,000 apiece, "and we wouldn't take the contract for less than \$19,000 apiece." About that time John Kauffmann walked into Laister's office and heard the last part of the conversation. Kauffmann had sat in on more than one of these negotiations with me dealing with Colonel Dichman, the chief contracting officer at Wright Field. Kauffmann said, "Jack you're terribly busy why don't you let me go down to Wright Field and handle this one for you?" and I said, "Have at it John."

"He went down there. John's biggest problem was that to often he opened his mouth before he thought." As Kauffmann walked in Colonel Dichman said, "I'll tell you one thing, we're not going to give you more than \$20,000 apiece this crack." Kauffmann responded, "Huh...we can do them for \$19,000 apiece." He just gave away \$100,000!

Larry Edgar of Northridge California said that he has had some great soaring experiences, "I'm just a young 88." He said that the Pratt Read was a good ship for flying in the Sierra Wave projects due to the hazards of high altitude flight and it had a

side-by-side cockpit. "You always took two fellows up together so you could watch out for one another. Edgar's oxygen system was leaking and he didn't realize it. Harold Klieforth who was with him on a high altitude flight contacted the ground. They were advised to activate the interlocking O₂ system, which they did, and they made it back.

He recalled his near calamitous April 1955 wave flight in the Pratt Read N63195. "I love those Pratt Read gliders, they are so strong." He was flying alone and was using full spoilers doing 90 mph and still going up. To get out of the wave he dropped down, now he was only doing 62 mph when he entered the roll cloud just between the mountains and the road. All of a sudden he was in the midst of a little bunch of clouds. "It was spotted so I could go through it clear. All of a sudden it started to condense. "There I was in the cloud, the violence was unbelievable, and I blacked out immediately, just like wham! And I'm unconscious." He said that he's flown jet airplanes and that when you pull a lot of Gs it's like a curtain coming down. "But this was instantaneous. Just before it happened the glider slid sideways and the right wing broke about seven feet in. Then there was this terrific hit in my stomach. I couldn't see. I hit my head on the tubing. Then I heard a clatter noise like a truck dumping a bunch of two by fours on cement. I realize now that's when the tail boom broke off. Then the left wing tore off. To be broken up in mid-air like that is unbelievable. I could move my arms but I couldn't move my feet. They were hooked to stirrups on the rudder pedals. I knew I was falling, I couldn't see and I pulled the ripcord and wow! It gave an awful jerk."

"When they located the wreckage they found that one boot was still on the rudder pedal." I was in my socks and my gloves flew off. Through one eye I could just make out a blur of light moving back and forth, It was the sun and I was in the clouds. He feared that he was going to get sucked back up into the maelstrom, but the wind was quiet. "No oxygen; so I got hold of the shroud lines on one side until I got the chute halfway collapsed and I just hung on. By golly, pretty soon I came out of the bottom of the cloud along with parts what was left of the Pratt Read." Drifting toward the snow covered White Mountains he thought, "I'm going to be walking through snow in my socks." When he got near the mountain base the large pieces of the ship that he was worried about colliding with started to drift the other way. With just one functioning eye Edgar's depth perception gone, he popped the chute release and hit the ground so hard it knocked him out. "Two state policemen found me and wrapped me up in the chute until help came." Even with his flight suit on he was black and blue on both shoulders.

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