The First World Championship Soaring Contest

By CAPT. RALPH S. BARNABY USN (Retired)

Last summer it was my privilege to attend the first World Championship Soaring Contest, in Orebro, Sweden, where I served in the dual capacity of Secretary and Observer and U.S. Team Captain.

While there have been several International Soaring Competitions prior to 1950, this was the first to be held since the FAl Gliding Committee meeting in Cleveland, September 1949, where the idea of a "World Championship" was crystallized, hence the title, "First World Championship Contest."

With Wally Setz, I flew to England via MTS when, after a few days visit at the Royal Naval Air Station, Gosport with Lieutenant Comdr. J. S. Sproule, RN (A), and at Fleet with Group Captain Christopher Paul, RAF, we went to the Red Hill Gliding Club, rendezvous of the British team. Here we were put up with Mrs. Anne Douglass, the British Team Captain; Mrs. Phillip Wills, the British National Champion; Mr. Lorne Welch, Instructor at the Slagelse Gliding Club, and Flight Lt. Jack Forbes, RAF. The fourth member of the team, Flight Lt. Peter Mallett, was flying in Sweden. Together we proceeded with automobiles and trailer-borne sailplanes from Red Hill, which is due south of London, to an airfield in Sweden. Together we were housed there, Wally Setz and I had arranged for a room at the Stora Hotellet, Orebro's principal hotel. Mrs. MacCready, Sr. Mrs. Klember, and Dr. Slater also were at the hotel. Books of tickets obtained for a nominal charge were recognized at a cooperative cafeteria about half way between the hotel and the school house, and a special room was provided where we all ate together. The food was plentiful and very good, once one got used to it.

Sleeping, at first, was difficult because of the light. Orebro is pretty far north, better than 59 degrees, and during early July it just doesn't get dark. When we arrived there, one could drive all night without needing headlights.

Monday, July 3rd, was devoted to registration, and familiarization flights for the contesting pilots, in which each visiting pilot was taken up and flown around the airport vicinity as passenger in a two-place Kramich sailplane with a Swedish pilot. Paul and British pilots who had flown in, passed up that part of the program. Paul, however, made a flight of two hours that evening from 9:00 to 11:00 p.m. Tuesday, the contestants were permitted to make familiarization and check flights in their own sailplanes.

Thirteen countries submitted entries for this contest. Two, however, did not show up: Poland entered five pilots and sailplanes by name, but the week before the contest, withdrew. "Because of technical difficulties!" Egypt had one entry, but he never appeared. The eleven countries which actually competed were: Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Holland, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, U.S.A., and Yugoslavia. There were 29 competing pilots as follows:

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The First World Championship Soaring Contest in Orebro, about 112 kilometers, by air. Welsch and Wills were launched back from Karlstadt by car. Wills had a little difficulty getting away, getting down to as low as 50 meters over Karlstadt but finally picked up a thermal and before long all three had disappeared to the Eastward. The rest of us continued over the road. Upon arrival at Orebro at about 2:00 p.m., we learned the three British sailplanes had arrived around 3 p.m. We also learned that Paul MacCready had soared in also, some 90 kilometers, from Vasteras bucking a 20 knot wind all the way. Apparently, 'getting the hang' of his Weihé hadn't troubled him much.

At a school in Orebro, rooms had been arranged as barracks, and the contestants, their crews, and such officials arriving there. Wally Setz and I had arranged for a room at the Stora Hotellet, Orebro's principal hotel. Mrs. MacCready, Sr. Mrs. Klember, and Dr. Slater also were at the hotel. Books of tickets obtained for a nominal charge were recognized at a cooperative cafeteria about halfway between the hotel and the school house, and a special room was provided where we all ate together. The food was plentiful and very good, once one got used to it.

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The trip was calm and uneventful and we disembarked at Goteborg in the rain early Friday morning, June 30th, where we were greeted by a group of Swedish gliding people, and invited to spend the next two nights at Karlstadt before proceeding to Orebro, where the contest rules were introduced to the pilots. The contest included some novel rules for towing. Each contestant was entitled to three tows per contest day. The management of the contest was in the hands, principally of the Royal Swedish Air Force with Major General Paul R. of Uhr, Commander of the First Air Group, as Chief Judge, the following Lieutenant Colonels Wybladh, Captain von Essen, and Captian Karlsson. Colonel C. O. Hugesson served as Clerk of the Course, with Mr. B. Cson Bergman as Secretary of the Meeting and Mr. B. Florman as Chairman of the Organization Committee.

Nine Focke-Wolf "Stieglitz" Royal Swedish Air Force primary training planes with 160 H.P. BMW engines, resembling in appearance our own Stearman trainers, and flown by Air Force pilots, were used for towing. Each contestant was entitled to three tows per contest day. The competition itself consisted of six contest days. There was three event categories:

1. Combined Distance and Altitude Flights
   In this category the pilots could go in any direction, and points were awarded for both distance and altitude, based on the following formulae:
   \[ F_d = \text{the day's distance factor} = \sqrt{F_p} \]
   \[ F_m = \text{average of the three longest distances flown during the day} \]
   \[ F_h = \text{the day's altitude gain factor} \]
   \[ H_m = \text{average of the day's best altitude gains during the day} \]
   \[ P_m = \text{straight line distance from take-off to goal or point beyond} \]
   \[ P_p = \text{gain of the three longest} \]

2. Distance Flight to Goal Pre-Determined by the Pilot
   Distance points are a result of the scoring process not the original author or publisher. Copyright © 2007 Soaring Society of America. Use with permission is prohibited.

**Table:**

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<tr>
<td>I. Combined Distance and Altitude Flights</td>
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March-April, 1951
First World Championship
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distances flown during the day.

III. - Race to Goal Pre-set by Clerk of Course.

Speed points

\[ V = \frac{D}{T} \]

where \( V \) = average of three highest speeds of the day.

The category of the day was announced by the clerk of the course each morning at the pilots' meeting after meteorological report.

The meteorological service was provided by a Royal Swedish Air Force unit. The reports read in the two official languages of the competing force unit. The reports were quite complete and I believe could well be the pattern for such a system at our own contests.

At the top of the page was a simple sketch indicating clouds with base and top altitudes shown at different times during the day. Under this was the forecast. Below is a typical one for July 7th, the day picked for the speed dash to Lidköping, 142 kilometers southwest of Orebro.

General Outlook

The High with center northwest of Norway is moving northeastwards and causes weak winds from northeast to east over Sweden.

Soaring Forecast

The convection currents will start at a ground temperature of 15 degrees C with the cloud base of 800 m. At a ground temperature of 16 degrees C (at about 9 o'clock) cloudbase 1000-1200 m, tops 2200 m. When the temperature reaches 20 degrees C (at about 12 o'clock) cloud-base 1500-1700 m and then some of the tops will break through an inversion between 2100 and 2400 m and reach 3500-4000 m. From these clouds some light thermals (at about 20 degrees C ground temperature) 2-4 m/s cloud thermals 4-6 m/s. Moderate icing in clouds 2400-4000 m.

Wind

- 500 m: 70-50 degree
- 1000 m: 70-50 degree
- 2000 m: 50-40 degree
- 3000 m: 50-40 degree
- 4000 m: weak changeable

15-25 km/h: -10 degr. C
20-30 km/h: -10 degr. C
20-30 km/h: -6 degr. C
25-35 km/h: 10 degr. C

The Fourth of July was duly celebrated by the setting off of a bunch of fireworks under the windows of the British team at the schoolhouse barracks that evening by certain members of the U. S. Contingent who shall be nameless, since it nearly provoked an international incident, — by not the Britishers who took it all in good spirit, — but by the Swedish officials and police whose sense of humor seems to follow different lines!

The Competition was officially opened on Wednesday morning, July 5th, with flag raising ceremonies and an address of welcome by Major General of Uhr. The teams were lined up before the flagpoles upon which had been raised the flags of the competing nations, and the General greeted personally each team captain, competitor, and crewman.

The meteorological briefing followed. A category I day was declared, and the contest was on. Launchings started just before 11 a.m. and all 29 contestants were away by 12:20. The weather could be described as fair to good.

When the category was announced, a time at which contest launchings would start was also given. Contestants were allowed to pick their own starting times thereafter, the clerk of the course having the authority to decide exact order should several contestants ask for the same time. This was decided in general on the sequence of the requests. This system seemed to work quite satisfactorily.

On this first day all launchings were successful, and no contestant returned to the field.

When the first day's results were in, Alm of Sweden was in first place with a distance of 284.5 kilometers and a maximum altitude gain of 3030 m, and a resultant point score of 138.127. Paul MacCready was second with 246.5 kilometers, 2885 m, and 123.712 points. Nilsson of Sweden was third with 261.3 km, 2120 m, and 113.712 points.

Thursday, July 6th, was declared a pilot-selected goal task day, Cate-
The longest goal flights were declared for goals along the west coast of Sweden, from Göteborg south. The goals, of course, were not disclosed until all pilots were away. The rules required that the goals be picked from a list of approved goals which had been selected before the contest. Access to all established airports, services, etc. were all goals at estabished airports. These goals were all marked on the official maps furnished and there were available for reference large scale maps of each site.

The 29 sailplanes launched, 19 reached their goals, all more than 272 kilometers away. Eleven declared as an authorized goal and so picked reached their goals, all more than 200 kilometers southwest of Orebro. None of these three reached their declared goals.

With the points acquired on this last day, the final standings were:
1. Nilsson of Sweden 866.75 points
2. MacCready of U.S.A. 842.99 points
3. Borisek of Yugoslavia 772.48 points

Fifteen of the contestants reached their declared goals. All these were the same goal, Orsa, 2166 kilometers north of Orebro. In fact, the only real "washout" of the contest was the Breguet 900 which Lepanse wrecked completely on the fifth day, landing in the "rough." It was a great disappointment to the European contestants that no U.S. designed and built sailplanes were present. They had all hoped to see at least one of our Schweizer sailplanes. A Schweizer 1-21 or 1-23 could have made a very creditable showing in this contest.

The Swedish repair crew worked all night and all morning repairing the damaged wings of Wills' glider and had him in the air shortly before noon.

When the results were in, it developed that Norrkoping had made the fastest time, 1 hour, 39 minutes, 32 seconds, — almost 10 minutes faster than his nearest competitor, Borisek, flying the Orao II and 15 minutes faster than the nearest competitor flying the same type ships as MacCready. This win raised MacCready's standing to third place, — first and second places still being held by the Swedes, Nilsson and Persson.

Saturday, July 8th, was declared a rest day, and no contest flights were made.

Early morning conditions on Sunday the 9th were poor. The pilots' meeting and announcement of the task was delayed until 11 a.m., at which time another category III day was declared with the goal for the second day, Lidkoping, 96 miles to the southeast. Take-offs started at 12:30. Here again MacCready took the lead, beating his nearest competitor, Nilsson of Sweden, flying the same type sailplane, by nearly eleven minutes, or by an average speed of 11.3 kilometers per hour. At the close of the day the top standings were:
1. MacCready ....... 557.24 points
2. Nilsson ............ 525.79 points
3. Borisek ............ 525.79 points

There followed four days of bad weather during which Wally Setz and I took the opportunity to run over to Stockholm and do a bit of sight seeing. In addition, through the kind offices of Frank Piasecki, who wrote of my visit to Bo Lundberg, Director of the Aerenautical Research Institute, we had the opportunity of spending a very interesting day at that installation.

Friday, July 14th, was the next contest day. Category I was selected, and launching started at 9:30 a.m., the earliest starting time to date, Paul MacCready was first off at 10:06. Conditions were marginal, and on no previous contest day had so many sailplanes been held within sight of the field an hour and a half after launching started. Several came back for new starts.

Lasch, the South African, had one re-launch; Arbajter, the Yugoslav, two; and Maurer, the Swiss, had his full quota of three.

Again Paul MacCready stepped out in front, -metal sailplane, a distance of 326 kilometers and achieving enroute an altitude gain of 2520 meters. Nilsson, again his nearest rival, made 280 kilometers and an altitude gain of 2380 meters. The standings at the end of this fifth day were:
1. MacCready ....... 691.78 points
2. Nilsson .......... 676.57 points
3. Persson 614.18 points

Saturday, July 15th, was the sixth and final contest day. Conditions were fair to poor, with southeast winds. A Category II, pilot-selected goal, was announced. Launchings started at 9:15. MacCready was third off.

Since rules forced the crossing of national boundaries, and since distance was the chief desire, the existing wind and weather conditions dictated goals to the north and northeastern coast of Sweden. This put the flight through the roughest and worst terrain of the contest. Designated goals in this area were few and far between. Nilsson almost due north of Orebro; Borisek, landed near Östersund, also north of Orebro a distance of 412 kilometers; MacCready landed west of a town on the east coast of Sweden about 350 kilometers up the coast from Stockholm. His distance was 342.1 kilometers, second to Nilsson. No one of these three reached their declared goals.

With the points acquired on this last day, the final standings were:
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The day finished with Nilsson of Sweden leading, with a total contest score of 866.75 points; Persson 829 points; Fontielle of France, third with 279 points.

With the exception of Forbes, the British team had very hard luck, Wills' glider were damaged when his object was unhurt. It was a great disappointment to the European contestants that no U.S. designed and built sailplanes were present. They had all hoped to see at least one of our Schweizer sailplanes. A Schweizer 1-21 or 1-23 could have made a very creditable showing in this contest.

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While Paul MacCready was the only real U.S. entry, Rene Comte, flying the Swiss Miswuy IV, was also listed as a U.S.A., contestant, Actually Comte is Swiss, and was flying a Swiss sailplane. Each country was allowed a maximum of five entries. The Swiss had selected a five man team which did not include Comte. He then requested permission from the Royal Swedish Aero Club as host club, from the FAA as the governing body, and from the Soaring Society of America for permission to use one of the U.S.A.'s unused allotments. The rules did not forbid it. Comte had flown in this country and was a member of the SSA. None of the contesting nations objected, and the request was approved. It is interesting to note that only one of the Swiss team, Gehringer, finished ahead of Comte. Gehringer placed 5th. Comte was 21st. The other members of the Swiss team placed 19th, 20th, 22nd and 23rd.

It was a great disappointment to the European contestants that no U.S. designed and built sailplanes were present. They had all hoped to see at least one of our Schweizer sailplanes. A Schweizer 1-21 or 1-23 could have made a very creditable showing in this contest. On the other hand, it was a great tribute to Paul MacCready's skill as a pilot that he was able to make such a splendid showing with a sailplane of the same type as only twelve of his competitors, particularly since it was a type he'd never flown until his arrival in Sweden.

Part of the credit should also go to Dr. Gus Raspert, under whose direction a very careful and thorough "Cleaning up" job was done on Paul's "Weihe", which must have performance measurably better than the others. A nose pilot was sub-

(Continued Next Page)
Dear Editor:

The action of the S.C.S.A. calling for more regulations on top of the many already promulgated by the S.S.A. demands that we evaluate our entire approach to gliding and soaring. It is ironic that these additional regulations are asked for in the name of safety when the facts, our accidents, show that our safety record is hurt, the little fact it is, by our experienced pilots attempting more than the regulations permit.

But, basically, what does the S.S.A. represent—a profession or a sport? Is it an attempt to monopolize an amateur phase of aviation? Our answer to this should be carefully thought out and stated.

If we agree that we represent a sport and the amateur phase of aviation, then we should resist all efforts to impose more restrictions. In fact, we should fight for the elimination of all present regulations such as the flight instructor category, the more severe flight test, etc.; which will impede our growth. The S.S.A. is hurt, the little fact it is, by our experienced pilots attempting more than the regulations permit.

And, mind you, this trend toward severe regulation is in the name of safety. There seems to be in our midst those who like to glory in the “dangers” of soaring, and, to impress their fellows, want the regulations to be as stringent as possible. These “safety freaks” in our midst will not and cannot prove that our present glider pilots are unsafe just because they cannot do lazy eights, or fast turns, or did not have a physical examination or the benefit of a certified flight instructor. If anything, the contrary is true.

World Championship

(Continued from Page 4)

instituted for the standard pilot-static head for the airspeed indicator. The aileron gaps were closed by flexible aluminum strips, and all other openings and gaps were sealed with masking tape. Even the canopy was sealed in place after the pilot was in the cockpit. According to Dr. Raspet this attention to detail raised the maximum glide ratio from 29 to 45. To 31 to 1, by actual measurement. The gain in high speed performance was even more important, since in competition a sailplane is usually flown at speeds well above that for best glide. The wing overhangs were increased 118 ft. The gap between the vertical rudder control and the rudder itself was increased 5 in. the gap between the center of gravity and the wing was increased 3½ in.

Of particular interest was the new Yugoslavian glider, the ‘Orao’. Designed by Dr. Boris Cijan and Mr. Stanko Obad, who were present at the contest. Dr. Cijan was elected a Trustee of OSTIV at the meeting held during the contest. He is a most attractive gentleman, and has written a very comprehensive book on sailplanes. Because of Orao’s advanced design, it was the center of great interest. Its high standing in the competition was a tribute to its designers and to the skillful piloting of Borisek. It is indeed a sad sequel that he should have been grounded on this same sailplane in Yugoslavia not long after his return from the contest.

Because of the great interest shown in this sailplane, Dr. Raspet arranged, with the cooperation of Dr. Cijan, for a comparison flight test between the Orao II and Paul MacCreaddy’s Weine. An interesting report on these tests was given in the July-August issue of Soaring. Another new design was the Brequet-900. While Lepanse, the French pilot who flew it, had a series of mishaps, eliminating him in the landing accident while trying to complete the entire course, it was interesting and better designed, than its performance in the contest would indicate.

AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING SOCIETY
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Glider Club
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Editor:

In past years the A.E.S. used to be a regular contributor to the news columns of Soaring, but we seem to have been quite negligent of late. Our letter is to bring anyone who is interested up to date on our activities at MIT.

In 1947 we lost our long wing Franklin, purchased from Aircop to 1948, a battle of a bomb trap on the edge of Fort Devens, Cape Cod, Mass. Needless to say, the ship came out a poor second. For about a year, during this period, there was no visible means of aerial support until we acquired a Schweizer 2-22, and were able for the first time in the history of the club to give instruction. The ship was used for two years until in April, 1950, when a student on a solo hop judged her altitude on the final approach and made a hard landing. This letter is to bring anyone who is interested up to date on our activities at MIT.

In 1947 we lost our long wing Franklin, purchased from Aircop.
As you have just read our soaring teams have a long and proud history of international participation. Over the last several years the opportunity to compete internationally has grown as more classes become sanctioned by the FAI. More teams and eligible pilots puts the title of World Champion within the reach of entirely new segments of the soaring community including Club, World and Junior pilots. The chart above shows when each FAI class participated in their first World Gliding Championship. Notice the recent growth in classes and events.

_A long term strategy?_

Since both types of contributions are tax deductible, a long-term contribution strategy to minimize tax burden and maximize support might incorporate comfortable direct contribution every two years and larger, trust contributions with less frequency. How much to contribute is determined by each of our individual circumstances. Every dollar counts.

Now is the time...

Not all competition happens in the air. Often it is what happens on the ground months before World Soaring Championships that makes the difference. Adequate team funding is where it all starts. Our international competitors are doing what it takes to compete and win and so should we. If our soaring teams are going to compete internationally they need our support. While most of us can’t be in the cockpit we can still do our part to make sure our pilots have the opportunity to compete and win.

Please make a direct contribution to the U.S. Soaring Teams or a perpetual contribution to the Robertson Trust today!

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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Place*</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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* Eliminated 1958

Robertson Trust Contributions

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<tr>
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Direct Contributions

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<tr>
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<td>Soaring Society of America P.O.Box 2100 Hobbs, NM 88241-2100</td>
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www.robertsontrust.com    www.ssa.org