



Southwest Soaring

Quarterly Newsletter of the U.S. Southwest Soaring Museum

A 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization

An affiliate of the Soaring Society of America, inc.

June 2007



Our Slingsby T-2B in the UK, 1956 (see article page 3)

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Our Web site: www.swoaringmuseum.org

(Cover photo courtesy Idris Edwards)

**Come Join Us at a Gala Dinner on
June 9th as We Celebrate The First
Anniversary in Our New Building
(Tickets \$35 -Details Below)**

**OPEN HOUSE! June 7-10 Admission
is Free, Donations are Always
Welcome**

Editorial

by Bob Alkov

The USSS Museum's one-year anniversary dinner will be held on June 9th in the museum. The invited speaker will be Dennis Piszkiwicz, whose story was featured in our March newsletter. His talk will be centered on Hanna Reitsch, the remarkable German female glider, twin and single-engine airplane, helicopter, jet and rocket plane test pilot during WWII. Her fascinating and controversial biography written by Dennis can be purchased in the museum gift shop. Once you start reading it, is hard to put down. I finished it in one sitting.

Following the dinner speaker, a panel consisting of Hanna's former friends will attempt to clarify her relationship with the Nazi party during World War II. The makeup of the panel has not been finalized but we hope to host Karl Striedieck, Bertha Ryan, Betsy Woodward, and Joachim Kuettner.

The VSA (Vintage Sailplane Association) and the VSA (The Experimental Sailplane Assoc.) will be meeting at Moriarty June 7-10 and there will be a model sailplane event on June 9. Friday evening, June 8th John Ashford, Technical Director of the Australian Glider Design Council, will speak at the ESA Technical Workshop. Contact Kathy Taylor, 505-667-7097 (day) or phone 505-672-0152, (evening) kathytaylor1000@msn.com, for additional info.

This month's cover shows the Slingsby T-21B two-seater trainer that is exhibited in our museum as it appeared fifty years ago in the UK. It was first used to train RAF glider pilots in 1944. Later, after World War II, it was used to train generations of British Air Cadets.

One of those cadets, who later became an instructor and flew this ship with his students, contacted us with photos and information about its history. His name is Idris Edwards and his story is related on this page. The two pilots are identified as Keith Nicholls and Nick Morris. The glider was donated to us by Dean Carswell.

An interesting post WWII story about the fate of one of the CG-4A Waco gliders that was to be used in the invasion of Japan appears on page 4. The article written by Col. Richard S. Robinson, USAF (Ret.) first appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of the "Bungee Cord", the Vintage Sailplane Association's Newsletter. Colonel Robinson is a long-time friend and hanger neighbor of George Applebay's. At age 84 he is still active in aviation, having recently completed building a two-thirds scale P-51 made of wood. He has donated it to the proposed Rio Rancho Military Museum.

Museum Musings
By
George Applebay,
President

Spring is in the air although a bit slow in bringing our usual good soaring conditions. We look forward to a very active year both at the US Southwest Soaring Museum and the Moriarty Gliderport.

In this issue of our quarterly newsletter, Bob Alkov has written about English pilots reporting of their long-ago early experiences flying our Slingsby T-21B. We have also gotten feedback from other UK individuals who learned to glide and soar in our T-31, which during its life with the RAF, acquired over 60,000 individual flights.

During the upcoming month of May we will have two groups of fifteen USAF Cadets from the AF Academy at Colorado Springs, flying from the Moriarty Gliderport and visiting the Soaring Museum. Glider pilots from many other states have indicated a desire to visit Moriarty this year to sample our excellent soaring conditions as well as visit the museum.

USSSM will celebrate its first anniversary in the new #3 building with an open house June 7-10.

Several events are planned. See Bob's editorial for details.

The museum is sponsoring a flight rally for the Vintage Soaring Association as well as a restoration workshop for members of the Experimental Soaring Association. This activity will be supplemented by a Friday evening meeting in the museum with Australian Soaring Association, Technical Director John Ashford talking about several soaring subjects of interest.

A GALA Event is scheduled in the museum for Saturday starting at 5:30 PM. The Dukes of Albuquerque, a 15 member swing band will offer music for dancing. The El Comedor de Anayas will serve a Mexican Buffet dinner. Tickets at \$35 each can be reserved by calling 505 832 9222, or writing to USSSM at PO Box 3626, Moriarty, NM 87035.

Glider Training in the UK, 1943-1970s
By
Idris Edwards

I first started gliding in 1943. At age 14 we were eligible to join the Air Training Corps. I started training at W70 EGS Pennard Church. It was just a farmer's field. The school started in mid 1943 with a Zogling (A Dagling with struts) built pre-war by the Swansea (Wales, ed.) Gliding Club. It was damaged on almost every launch, and by the time I arrived it had been derigged.

We now had a Kirby Cadet TX Mk 1. On first flights the student was towed slowly to keep wings level, it was called a ground slide, then faster ground slides to slide hops where the student left the ground for the first time. After a number of these, the student went on to low hops up to ten feet and pulled the release. More often than not it was twenty or thirty feet depending on the winch driver. I finished once with a wing over the hedge.

I came of age when I was taken to RAF Fairwood Common for high hops to a hundred feet, again depending on the winch as to the height. There were no instruments and we had to land ahead. Once I landed in a cross wind in the station rubbish dump. But I must have been good; I was made a Staff cadet, helping to teach others!

A few years later I left to do other things. In the fifties I flew with the Swansea Gliding Club, later joining the gliding school at RAF St. Athan as a civilian instructor. When it was first formed in 1964 I joined 636 GS (glider school, ed.) at Swansea as Tech officer and instructor. I flew T21 WB941 (this is the glider that is on display in the USSS Museum, ed.) for over ten years with the school. I also taught a number of US cadets over the years at the Central Gliding School. We sent cadets solo after they had achieved between twenty two to thirty winch launches. Aerotows were also carried out as well as downhill launches from hill sites. The hill at Cheddar Gorge had five-foot high stone walls on landing approach, the aircraft used were a T21 with a forty-pound weight for solo and Slingsby Swallows. We loved the T21 or barge as we called it. It out climbed other aircraft in thermals, but when wings were leveled, they all passed it. It did aerobatics, loops and stall turns great. Spins were a work of art. We had to use the wing that drops first in stall on the outside in a spin.

I am the only one still breathing of 636 staff. My old CO of 634 is still flying, Don Garner, best thermal man I have ever flown with. We are now members of FOGIES (Former Old Gliding Instructors Extension Society).

The Last Glider Flight
By
Col. Richard S. Robinson, USAF (Ret.)

I was stationed at Tachikawa Air Base, home of the 374th Troop Carrier Wing, commanded by Colonel Troy Crawford, a very senior USAF Colonel. At the time, I was Wing Director of Materiel.

We had a sub-base known as Matsushima, located on the east coast of Honshu, about an hour flying time in a C-46 up the coast from Tachikawa. It was used to provide flying time to the US Army Glider Regiment located a bit North of Matshushima. Our base was commanded by 1st Lt. John Doolittle, son of the famous Jimmy Doolittle. John had a C-46 to tow gliders, a little weather detachment, and Japanese workmen to keep the dust off the CG-4As or BG-15s. The gliders were kept in hangers left over from WWII when it was a Japanese Navy base.

As the glider regiment needed paytime, Doolittle would fire up the C-46 and tow gliders for the regiment. Needless to say, visitors were rare.

When the Korean War came along, the mission died abruptly and only the weather detachment survived along with the Japanese workmen who dusted the gliders with feather dusters.

Once the mission died, we were left with quite a few combat gliders looking like they had just come from the factory. My office queried the USAF Logistics Command for disposition. The response was to pack and crate the individual gliders and send them to the Logistics Command base at Kisarazu, located southeast of Tokyo.

Being a smart young officer, I decided to fly there. So, I went across the hall to the DO shop and got a C-46 pilot, Lt. Coleman, and alerted my staff officer, Captain Caldwell Powell, that we would go up to the little base the next day and fly a glider to the logistics base.

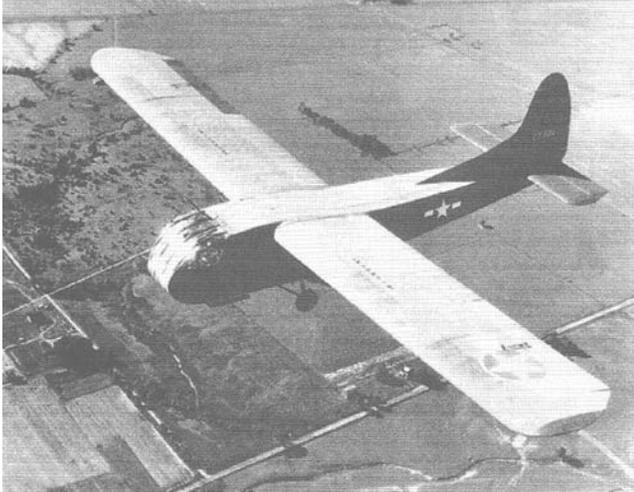
Next day, dressed in a flight jacket with sheepskin collar and winter flight pants, away we flew to Matsushima. After we landed, we made a practice glider flight, landed, hooked up our long tow to our C-46, and headed south. The weather was clear, and the C-46 tow took us into clouds. I was not sharp enough to see the tow rope angle flatten out, and that turned every way but loose. Yes, I exceeded the redline! Powell, in the right seat, leaned over and said, "Robby, little cables in the back are breaking." I cut loose from the C-46 tow. The silence was delicious!

We descended about 200 feet and broke out of the clouds, and looked for a place to land. There was a beach only about a mile away, and attempting to turn brought a big shudder from the glider. Being very gentle, I got lined up with the beach and touched down at the water's edge.

The vertical fin was gone due to heavy yawing; strips of wing plywood and fabric were gone; chunks of the stabilizer were also gone. *Needless to say*, the glider was no longer operational. Lt. Coleman dropped down through the clouds to see what had happened to us.

We waved to him and he “waved” back. On the beach, the glider and we were a great source of curiosity; about 100 of the local villagers surrounded us.

Powell and I were guests of the local Mayor and Chief of Police. We were the first American officers they had ever seen. It rained for two days. We slept on tatami mats in the Mayor’s house next to a hibachi. Fortunately, we still had our flight jackets and winter pants since they didn’t have blankets. We ate the local fare, rice and fish, three meals a day.



CG-4A WACO Photo by US Army Air Corps

Fortunately, on the third day, a USAF jeep came through the little town and we got a lift to a fighter gunnery range, a phone, and food. When I called my wife wanted to know if I was hurt. I wasn’t.

The next day, a C-46 from Tachikawa AB picked us up at the gunnery range.

At the office, the wing commander said he wanted me at his table at the club for lunch. I thanked him. At lunch, Brigadier General John Heneby leaned over and said, “Robby, we are not going to fly anymore gliders, are we?”

What happened to the gliders? We received a save list amounting to next to nothing. We saved the main landing gears to make an airdrome trailer. The rest of the gliders were burned. This flight may have been the last combat glider flight in the Far East.

We Need Your Help

By

Lynn Buckingham, Treasurer & Membership

The checking account is seriously dwindling, causing me great concern. Winter electric bills have been astronomical—one over \$400 for the Rte. 66 building even though we have not attempted to heat the big display area at all. Summer weather should temporarily alleviate the electric problem.

In the past, memberships have more than paid for the utilities and everyday expenses. Donations from visitors have helped a great deal. Unfortunately, aside from some group tours coming through, visitors have been few in the past cold months.

On a more positive note, we have been able to open our doors daily, thanks to our docents and our caretaker, Dale. This brings up another serious need. The number of docents we currently have available is now down to two! Sheila Mink and Earl Fain have given generously of their time and talents in the past year but now have other concerns occupying the time previously given to the museum. **Is there anyone out there who can donate time to show people around the museum, as a docent?** We will train you. We anticipate many visitors in the coming months and you will meet some fun, interesting people. Currently, Bob Alkov (our newsletter editor) is performing this job and I hear Deor Jenson will also be a volunteer docent.

We thank all of you who have purchased memberships and who have faithfully renewed yearly. We also appreciate those who have only joined for a year or so. You are our lifeblood! I have been inconsistent in sending out renewal notices but please notice that your renewal date is on your newsletter mailing label. A huge **Thanks!** to all donors, members and volunteers.

Although the winter weather here in Moriarty has kept the volume of traffic to the museum low, with the spring warmth and fair skies we expect things to pick up considerably. If you haven’t gotten out to visit us, plan to do so this year. We are located at 918 East Old Highway 66 (now State Route 333) just South of Interstate 40 at exit 197 in Moriarty. Call for an appointment at (505) 832-9222.

Southwest Soaring Museum Foundation News

By
Allene Lindstrom, President

Last issue incorrectly stated our IRS tax status. The Southwest Soaring Museum Foundation and The US Southwest Soaring Museum are both authorized by the IRS to be 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organizations. There has been some notice, though not headline news, that there will be some tax changes in the near future. This has ramifications for most 501 (c) (3) charities since they are dependent on donations that people can claim to lower their taxes.

For you as individual donors, you may wish to consider the effect of this legislation on your own financial planning. It is my understanding that the new congress has allowed the “Sunset” clauses on many of the tax reductions of recent years to take effect. As of this writing, *I have not been able to verify all the facts*. Time may well bring changes. Taxes that affect donors and charities alike are basically estate taxes, capital gains, dividends, and the alternate minimum tax. There may be others. State tax laws can influence these numbers.

Now may be the best time to do your estate planning just to insure that your estate will be disbursed as you desire. There are many tools available to help with estate planning. As the foundation is still in its infancy, we will work with you to facilitate any plan that reflects your desires when naming the Foundation as the recipient. Contact your tax advisor or attorney for assistance.

For those of you who have more liquid assets, your planning should reflect near future contributions to the Foundation that might help adjust your tax status! Many support the Museum and Foundation because they want to see the activity they have enjoyed continue for themselves and others.

The Foundation gratefully acknowledges our most recent donors for their support. Thank you Bob Leonard and Bob Holliday. Your support of the Foundation’s Endowment fund will continue to keep aviation alive.

As the assets of the Foundation continue to grow the Board is searching for new willing working members to serve. The Foundation cannot financially compensate board members or employees at this time, therefore volunteers are needed. Positions to be filled include, but are not limited to, Director of Development and Director of Investments. Volunteers need to be able to devote time, energy and support the purpose of the Foundation. Contact me via email at: ba1337853v@losalamos.com.

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Benefits of memberships include:

1. Free admission to museum facilities.
2. 10% discount on gift shop purchases.
3. Receive all USSSM mailings.
4. The satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to build a first-class museum.

Life members and major contributors and their minor children receive these benefits for life. Other members receive them for one year. Family, Supporting and Sustaining include minor children. Supporting and Sustaining accrue toward a Life membership.

Send check to: U.S. Southwest Soaring Museum
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