

SOARING

WE SHOULD NOT SCRAP OUR GLIDER PROGRAM

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Cover Photo—Unloading the CG-4A	
The CG-4A—by Lt. Leeds Mitchell	1
A South American Record—by Lili S. Pinto	4
Theory of Soaring Flight—by Wolfgang B. Klemperer	5
Atmospheric Turbulence—by L. P. Harrison	7
A Training Glider for High Schools—by Wesley B. Hammond	9
Report of Records Committee by Robert M. Stanley	11
L. Howard Morrison—by Ben Shupack	12
News from Clubs and Members	13



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This statement, I believe, is timely and important. Possibly the question of "Why Not Scrap Our Glider Program?" has been asked of you or by you, and you may have some very definite answers. The question has been put to the glider manufacturers so often that probably everyone still in the business has seriously considered giving up. Many have already stopped producing gliders and turned to other war work even though some of these intend to go back to glider production after the war. In order to arrive at some conclusions, let us look at the picture as it is now and see if there are any advantages to be gained by continuing the program.

It will be a serious mistake if we quit now, not only because of the part gliders are playing in the war today, but from the standpoint of maintaining our position with other countries in postwar aviation.

Cargo gliders are in their bare infancy. We have just gotten under way in the experimental program. Prior to the war we built nothing larger than a two-place glider in this country. Since then we have built the CG-4A fifteen-place glider, the even larger CG-13, and others.

Two questions are often asked: What advantage does the glider have over the airplane, and why not let the airplane carry all of the load instead of supplementing it with a towed glider? To the first, the important answer from a military viewpoint is — gliders can land and get out of fields not accessible to powercraft. Ask any person who has seen the CG-4A glider land at night in small, plowed or otherwise rough fields, as was recently done during airborne maneuvers in North Carolina, if he would be willing to land any fifteen-place powerplane we have today under those same conditions. The answer is pretty obvious—he would not! Ask him if he would attempt to take off in a fifteen-passenger powerplane from the same field. Again the answer is No! The pickup system enables gliders not seriously damaged to be flown away from these fields and used again.

Let's take a look at the added flexibility which the glider lends to our standard combat and military cargo powerplanes. By placing two CG-4A's behind the C-47 airplane, for example, we increase the payload more than 7000 pounds, and we have not taken away the airplane's safety factor for single engine performance, as we would do if this additional load were placed aboard the C-47 itself. While it is true we are using the airplane's excess power available to pull the glider through the air, the failure of one motor on the airplane does not mean that the entire train is lost. The gliders may cut loose and seek a normal landing in a cleared field, while the power-plane proceeds

(Continued on page 11)