

pilots be indisposed at the time, and creating a few vacancies, Captain Lewis took a chance and briefed S. Sgt. Bernard Channing, T. Sgt. James Bohn, T. Sgt. Adrian Ballam, and Sgt. Leo E. Albro.

There, sailplane manufacturers, is one of your potential markets, all tailor made. The licensed pilots, out of appreciation for the work of those four and hundreds of similar mechanics, would be only too glad to act as traveling instructors.

And speaking of such instructorships, Lt. Michael J. Samek, went still further by suggesting that sailplane and glider manufacturers hire some of these war-trained GP's, and put them on the airlines much like sporting goods manufacturers have hired the best tennis players, golfers, swimmers, and sent them around the country in interest of the sports, but more particularly, the equipment necessary to pursue said sports.

"Mike," now an Operations Officer, made the first airborne invasion of Sicily, but after being towed off the sands of North Africa, headed for Syracuse, Sicily, he had the misfortune of being "cut" fully four miles at sea, without a chance of ever gliding to land. He didn't, and several of the British airborne infantrymen in his glider were drowned. He, himself, was picked up by a British destroyer, and eventually taken back to his African base.

He was also one of the very few interviewed who had had previous gliding experience, having qualified for both a power and glider license in Switzerland in 1938-39, before coming to the United States. He has every desire to stay with this particular phase of American aviation.

"Call the GP's flying salesmen, barnstormers, or what will you," he continued. "Don't forget the stories of your American World War I pilots who barnstormed around the United States for several years, thus fostering aviation as much as many of the other so-called crazy ideas. Anyway, it might not be such a crazy idea, though one has probably never seen a crazier bunch of guys than wartime glider pilots. They have to be, or they wouldn't take up a motorless craft when they might just as easily have continued training on a motored job."

2nd Lt. James Dunn, Jr., who invaded Normandy, and received injuries serious enough for a two weeks' hospitalization, just discounted the experience and is now hoping commercial tow jobs will make possible his staying with that particular phase. In the Southern France invasion, he had the rare experience of trading places with a gunner of a bomber, and the two boys have since been collaborating on their respective new experiences.

Probably one of the most disappointed glider pilots in all England D-Day (June 6) was F/O Clarence Madden, who says his wife is just as enthusiastic about learning to operate a glider as he has been to continue to fly one of the sporting jobs.

Briefed for the invasion, he had to stay behind only after two attempts at a take-off, his glider finally being grounded as being too heavily loaded. However, as co-pilot of a C-47 towship, he did go into Normandy and "snatch" one of the invasion gliders and bring it back to England, thus inaugurating the first of many combat snatching services now possible thanks to development under Army auspices. He sees its possibilities in peace time, after a pilot has landed and wants to get back to his home port. Just call up the power plane tow service, and wait for the hook to come along. A day dream? Maybe. But a post-war prospect anyway.

So it went all through the interviewing of these lads. They agree they will refuse to stay on the ground after the war. They want to soar and to soar they will need the sailplanes; the LZ's, the launching and towing facilities; and last but not least, the proper amount of recognition for the part they have been playing overseas in the advancement of gliding as both a wartime arm of the U. S. Army; a possible commercial "shot in the arm" and a more popular sport for man and boy alike.

These boys have been your test pilots. They have shown the way—the motorless. The rest is up to you post-war planners most interested in the future of soaring in the United States.

LZ is the abbreviation for Landing Zone.



Photo by Sgt. C. J. Bonnell
Glider pilots milling around headquarters in Italy after being briefed for the southern France invasion.