

SKYLINES



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SKYLINE SOARING CLUB, LLC JUNE, 2006

Editorial

Phil Jordan

Your Skylines Editor is getting very close to being commissioned "Curdmugeon, Jg". It is an obvious fact not everyone reads all their email. We really don't need more evidence of that but here's one more case in point—email of May 25th from your editor to all members—I ask you to please indulge me by re-reading it.

"The June issue of Skylines, your newsletter, is probably light years beyond your Memorial Day weekend apogee—mine too. Unfortunately I will be working at my paying job on the holiday but on the 30th I'll start Skylines—that is IF there is anything to start it with!

Contrary to last year's evidence I can fly gliders but I ain't no writer as I have more than adequately demonstrated over the last few years. I'm not qualified to write on soaring techniques, sailplane anatomy, flight safety and I've not had a soaring experience in the last two years that would interest any of you....but I know a good story when I see one.

*Point is, I'm not seeing any for June. I wish I had time to call each one of you or speak to everyone in person about contributing to our Club newsletter/archive—but I don't. Skyline Soaring members provide a large repository of soaring knowledge and experience. **There are events in all our lives well worth sharing with your fellow members—soaring and non soaring related.***

*E-mail is without a doubt an essential indispensable communication tool but not everything I receive from SSC, or even my business, is so time urgent it needs to be circulated to everyone in this manner. In fact I suspect every one of us receives tons of this stuff each day that is blipped into cyber-purgatory with X-plane velocity. **Some of this would make pertinent items for the newsletter—but if I get it in my Club list e-mail it isn't news anymore.***

So I ask you all to consider contributing to the newsletter this go around (if that term isn't too alien to glider pilots) or in the future. To those who have contributed in the past, I thank you once more for us all."

Subsequently I received two nice and informative features to

start the issue with for which I am most thankful.

Then on the early morning of May 30th I sent the following: *"Last call for the June issue of Skylines. If you have news for this issue please have to our Editorial Review Board by the end of today at: flyingfish2@cox.net Thanks, Phil"*

Naive old boy that I am, I thought I'd get a response and that I might have a few hours to flesh out an issue—neither happened.

Instead, I worked three very long days, two days sequestered in an arctic-like hotel basement with a government committee—cruel and unusual punishment obviously applies only to formal prison sentences.

During that time I received three dynamite stories for June... unfortunately so did every Club member, rendering them somewhat impotent for newsletter purposes. Equally frustrating, one item that I had already put in place was circulated on the full member list as well.

In the words of the ranking Curdmugeon: *"Sigh"!*

Understandably that happens. Obviously I've not been successful in convincing everyone to at least **consider the newsletter before circulating material** with no time sensitive urgency.

It is equally obvious that not everyone reads all their email and conversely not everyone is going to read everything in Skylines. But Skylines offers a reservoir of similar subject stories and items that can be returned to and absorbed again and again. It also serves as a historical archive of SSC activities, personalities, images and experiences that are not only shared among us but available to every web viewer. Richard and Piet have said Skylines receives more hits on the site than any feature.

Our newsletter is not a free lancing player but rather a part of the Skyline Soaring Club Team. It can and does function to interest others in soaring, to position us as a vital part of our sport, the SSA and the local aviation community. Your contributions have been read by others over the U.S. and parts of the World.

E-mail is essential but it is only one tool we have in which to inform each other and to reach out to others. E-mail, Skylines, our web site, our Members are all communications tools.

"It is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, treat everything as if it were a nail."— Abraham Maslow

“Connections”

Jim Kellett, Resident Curmudgeon

There used to be a magazine column called “Connections” (I think it was in Scientific American) in which the author would start off with something (say, a ball point pen) and start talking about the ink in it which had a color that was similar to a natural dye which came from a tropical plant which was fertilized by a unique beetle that preferred paper to build its nests which paper usually came from trash cans full of paper which had been written on with ball point pens . . . you get the idea. Neat stuff. You’re connected to everyone on the planet through six degrees of separation . . . and if you hang around aviators long enough, you’ll find connections of your own to some wonderful people! There’s a lot more to soaring than just aircraft . . .

The July issue of Air and Space magazine has an article “Take Two” about making the movie “Flyboys”, actually filmed in the UK. It’s a movie about World War I aviators, and uses quite a bit of real airplane flying for authenticity. Here’s the URL to a 3 minute theater preview for the movie: http://www.webmasterphoto.com/flyboys_small.wmv

As you can imagine, it’s hard to find flyable WWI fighters – for example, there’s only one original Nieuport 17 in the world now, and the Royal Army and Military History Museum in Brus-



sels wasn’t about to let be used in a movie! There are more than a few very carefully constructed replicas of various WWI fighters, most of which are used in various airshows and displays. The moviemakers set out to find and use as many as they could for the movie.

One fellow they turned to for this task brought together two other pilot/builders to help - one was Andrew King, the United States Team Leader for a “Junkyard Wars” TV program on March 9, 2003 in which the teams were challenged to design and build an airplane from junk. Andrew did a LOT of flying for the movie, although only a few seconds of a hair-raising takeoff made it into the final cut. Above’s a photo shot Andrew made flying one of the WWI fighters, at what appears to be the aerodrome at Duxford (but I’m not sure).

Andrew also helped the other pilot/builder named (drum roll please) Ken Kellett! Ken is the conservator at the Fantasy of Flight

Museum in Florida, where he builds/rebuilds airplanes and flies them in daily demonstrations along with owner Kermit Weeks. Here’s a picture of Ken in his restoration facility at the Fantasy of Flight Museum.



With some help from Andrew, Ken restored a Nieuport 17 owned by Kermit Weeks to flyable condition in just six weeks for the movie. He also managed to find a rare Sopwith 1 1 2 “Strutter” - a precursor to the more widely recognized Camel - replica that had never been flown, and had it ready for the movie in a matter of days.

You may also have heard of Ken Kellett as one of the nation’s experts on Wright aircraft such as the Wright Flyer replica which he flew at Kitty Hawk for the 75th anniversary of the first flight. (There’s more about this airplane on the website <http://www.hfmgv.org/exhibits/pic/2004/replicas/flyer.asp>. The replica is now the centerpiece of the “Heroes of the Sky” exhibit in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI.

Now . . . for the connections. . . Andrew lives in Virginia, and currently keeps a Taylorcraft in one of the hangars at the Flying Cow Farm, a Gliderport in Lovettsville, VA owned by retired American Airlines pilot Jan Scott and his wife Mai. Andrew also built a beautiful Ryan replica that he used to keep at Jan’s - this picture of it was taken there. (This model of the airplane was used as the



Photo provided by Jim Kellett

base for extensive modification for another unique machine – the Spirit of St. Louis.) This is the same Jan Scott who’s the founder of the Vintage Sailplane Association and who offers Skyline Club members off-airport field selection training in his Scheibe SF-25 motorglider. Some of you may have seen him recently giving the author his Flight Review in that motorglider at Front Royal! I still

occasionally get to fly with my friends at the Flying Cow Farm, and for years I kept my personal glider in one of the hangars there. Anyhow, it was through Jan that I met Andrew and came to admire his craftsmanship as a builder and skill as a pilot.

In my genealogical research on Kelletts, I stumbled upon Ken Kellett In 2003. Ken lived in Virginia Beach for 12 years, where he came to know several local glider pilots – e.g., Joe Mathias and Tom Kelly. No, Ken and I aren't closely related, but with a name that unusual it's quite likely we have some common ancestor in the misty past – maybe the same ancestor to the founder of the Kellett Aircraft Company that used to be in King of Prussia, PA (That Kellett was an early competitor of Pitcairn in the autogiro competition.) But I digress . . .

In that same year (2003), my brother-in-law Larry Fortune, who lives in Jacksonville, FL, and I took a detour from our visit to EAA's Sun 'n Fun to drop by the Fantasy of Flight Museum to meet Ken, and were treated to a VIP tour of the back rooms of the museum, where Ken and his staff build and maintain an amazing variety of vintage airplanes. Imagine a huge room with a wall about 100' long, stacked to the 30' high ceiling with crated antique engines, all waiting to be used in some way, shape, or form in the construction of replicas! We had a fabulous afternoon there, met Kermit himself, and we still keep in touch.

So . . . when I opened the current issue of the Smithsonian Institution's aviation magazine to the article about "Take Two", a shiver ran up my spine to discover that, thanks to soaring and my many friends in the sport, I actually have personal "connections" of my own with a couple of the celebrities featured there! And I guess I will DEFINITELY have to see this movie!

PS: Speaking of Air and Space magazine, did I mention that I used to carpool to work with the editor? That was cool, too since I occasionally got to read the galley proofs of issues before they came out . . . and that our very own Skylines Editor Phil Jordan used to do the layout work for the same magazine?

It is truly a small, small world . . .

Editor's note: the connections are even more extensive than Jim is aware of.

In January 1979 my wife gave me a demo soaring flight for a birthday present. In early May I took a ride with Linda Meacher. I thought "damn...I can do this". In July I showed up again and took

another ride this time with Jim. In spite of that, I determined to learn to fly.

That year my business was in a tough period. I needed temp help on a big project and hired a man who needed work while his career was in transition. He was Scott Callendar, a soaring pilot.

Scott gave me another long ride which I filmed and watched often over the winter while I read everything I could find on soaring. In April 1980, I showed up at Warrenton Soaring Center, books in hand, ready to learn.

During this interval I was art directing and designing a 264 page coffee table book called "Fire of Life—The Smithsonian Book of the Sun". The book editor, Jake Page, and I would often talk about my experience of learning to fly.

About the time I got my PP-G I left to open my own business and Jake left to explore the feasibility of a second publication for Smithsonian to be called "Air & Space".

Jake got me the contract to develop a visual concept for the magazine which then went to the powers that be to research if there was a market, etc. Contract fulfilled, I heard no more from Jake other than "it's in their court now".

During a Christmas party at Smithsonian Books, Joe Bonsignore, Publisher of Smithsonian, and I passed down opposite sides of the buffet table. I had worked for many years on Smithsonian Magazine. After exchanging cocktail party chit-chat, he said "we've got an Editor for Air & Space but can't settle on a firm to do the design. Could you staff up to handle a major magazine"?

I convinced him that I could and he introduced me to the new Editor, George Larsen. Long story short—I got the job and kept at it for the next 15 years.

In 1990 I received a call from USPS. They were looking for an Art Director consultant for Stamp Development with extensive experience in aviation and space history. Many years with Air & Space and a thirty year history as a design contractor with NASA gave me a leg up for my present job.

In the production of many aviation and space stamps, I've used "The Wright Experience", Andrew King, Ken Hyde and Greg Coyne as consultants as well as the late Ted Park who wrote some of the Air & Space concept and Walter Boyne who originated the magazine.

Small world indeed..



Exclusive to Skylines:

FAA Sends #1 to Arrest Kellett for a Lifetime of Violations!



Photos by Dick Otis

Open Canopies as Learning Opportunities

I arrived at the field Thursday, May 25, to take a check ride with Jim Kellett in order to be checked off for solo in the Grob. We took a pattern tow to 1,500 feet made a normal pattern landing in the grass on 27.

Weather conditions that morning were high overcast, scattered light rain to the N.W., ceiling 3,000 winds calm. I staged the Grob for takeoff, completed my check list and took a tow to 2,500 feet. My plan for the flight was to further assess the differences between the K and the Grob, specifically trim settings, nose attitude at speeds between 50 and 60 kts wind noise at those speeds and to practice slips both clean and with various spoiler settings.

After release I came around to the West and, using Signal Knob as a reference, practiced slips clean. I next tried slips using differing levels of spoiler, 1/3, 2/3 and full. The procedure I used was to first slip left, deploy 1/3 spoiler close spoiler come back to straight flight, slip right deploy 1/3 spoiler close the spoiler come back to straight flight and repeat the maneuver increasing the amount of spoiler with each set of slips.

I started the last set as I had the others slipping left then deploying full spoiler. As I pulled the spoiler handle to the full position the canopy instantly came open. I'm now flying an open cockpit glider with wind and light rain blasting me full in the face. Now is good time to mention I'd not been trained for this sort of thing – or had I?

So here I am, flying along with no hat, wind and rain in the face and the need to do "The right thing" relatively quickly.

I'll tell everyone the next sequence of events happened very fast; close and lock the spoilers, come back to straight and level, how fast am I flying? What' my altitude? Where's the airport? I didn't look for numbers on the instruments; I scanned the panel and satisfied myself I was "OK". Altimeter was about 2:30 airspeed was 6:00. I then looked around and confirmed the airport was where I thought it was. The thought then occurred to me; "Now what are you gonna do...Dumb S~*T."

I half expected the canopy to leave the airplane and was very concerned if it did so it might hit something important; I decided I'd have to get closed. I ruled out any turns, I also ruled out trying to close it at my current airspeed so for better or worst I decided to fly with my left hand, initiate a stall and at the point just prior to stall reach up with my right hand, bring the canopy back down and lock it. Well it worked.

I came around and setup a normal pattern and landing. I reported the incident to Jim Kellett, our DO that day, and inspected the canopy for damage. I found a hairline crack at the bottom of the canopy frame extending aft from the forward locking pin hole about 10 to 12" back along the bottom of the frame. I went down to Front Royal Aero, explained what had happened and asked John or Shawn to take a look at it. They both came up and after going over the canopy system determined the damage was cosmetic in nature, the canopy, hinges and locking mechanism were OK. John said they would affect repairs by injecting some epoxy into the crack Friday.

The last thing to address is how I managed to trip the latch in flight. After regaining *tera firma* and assessing things, talking to John and Shawn I noticed I had cut myself between the knuckle and 1st joint of the little finger, left hand.

My usual way of grasping the spoiler handle is by placing my hand over the end and pulling back. As far as I can tell what I did

was to somehow rock my hand up as I pulled back and caught the canopy latch with knuckle of the little finger. The fix? Grasp the handle under the knob, which will keep me from doing another report on the same subject.—Rick Harris

...But don't we all know that, when something major happens, something that raises our adrenaline level, we can no longer remember even a simple sequence of events. So it's likely that Rick will never know exactly what happened either. Let's just remember that it can happen, it's not a disaster when it does, and that simple, reasoned actions can prevail and save the day.—George Hazelrigg

Interesting report, Rick. Also a wake up call about "training" for emergencies. No, I'm not aware of any operation that actually trains for this sort of thing, but curiously enough, opening canopies in flight, while rare, are certainly not unheard of. I've seen and been involved in several over the last 40 years. Maybe we ought to address the general topic somehow as part of "emergency preparedness".

You followed the dictum "aviate, navigate, communicate" priorities spot-on. I suspect now you appreciate the value of that old dictum!...canopies on different aircraft behave VERY differently, so it's hard/impossible to make hard rules on what to expect. For example, some will, when unlatched, just stay there! There's a classic video made in Europe of some pilots testing the canopy ejection system on a modern glider, and they couldn't get the thing to depart the aircraft, even though completely unlatched, without hard effort kicking it away! On the other hand, I've seen a side-opening rear canopy on a G-103 (just like ours) simply fail (no passenger in back seat) and shatter when hitting the wing – the glider flew more or less normally with the empty frame banging around. The rear canopy of a K-21 would be a very different animal, more than likely – since it opens rearward, it'd probably rip right off, possibly hitting the tailplane...—Jim Kellett

I once had my 1-26 canopy open on take-off. After my checklist, just before I started T/O sequence, the DO rapped on my canopy and I opened it. The Pawnee radio was on the fritz. Would I make the call?

I closed the canopy, took my mic out of the cradle. The K announced downwind. I winged up, waggled and announced "Pawnee 866 departing the active glider in tow".

As speed picked up the canopy came open. Instinctively I reached to close it with my left hand. The 1-26 ballooned up as I eased too far back on the stick. The canopy banged open and shut while sounds of every CFI ever to sit in the back seat with me shouted "FLY THE PLANE"!

So I settled down and let it bang down the runway behind the Pawnee. After I had about 500 feet, I slipped it shut but never could get it locked. It was fairly turbulent and I kept at it.

After one really big bump it opened and I slipped it shut and with luck the latch aligned perfectly and I just reached over and locked it. End of story.

I learned quite a few things that day. Had I bungled this rather benign occurrence into a disaster, the ultimate finding would have been that a series of insignificant events, each rather minor in and of themselves, could be fatal when combined.

After opening the canopy I obviously failed to confirm it was indeed latched when I closed it. An unexpected sequence of circumstances almost caused an ugly accident and darn sure produced the ugliest take off I ever made!—Phil Jordan 

Regional Ramblings

Jim Kellett, Director, SSA, Region IV

On Sunday, May 21, 2006, SSA Executive Director Dennis Wright visited the Atlantic Soaring Club in Churchville, MD. He met with about a dozen members (roughly half the membership), heard their concerns, and got a short flying tour of the gliderport with towpilot Jeff Matthews.

Here's a picture of Dennis chatting with Pat Valdata, another of Region IV's "unsung heroes", who serves as the coordinator for Soaring Magazine's articles about SSA's Affiliates and Divisions!

That's Jeff Matthews, Atlantic Towpilot (and the Club's Scout towplane) in the background



There seems to be quite a bit of "news" this Spring!!

1. In the last two years, I've heard anecdotally from individual leaders of several Clubs and individual SSA members that the SSA Group Program doesn't "compete" for a variety of reasons.

Examples: "I can get the same hull and liability coverage for my glider from XXXX (another insurance company) at lower cost." "We have to buy hangar coverage from another company because it's not offered by the SSA program." "I dropped my SSA insurance coverage (and got a better price for the same coverage from XXX) because they tried to 'trick' me into buying terrorist insurance" "It is unjustifiable to require SSA membership to get insurance".

2. As recently as 2004, no less than 14% of the claims submitted under the SSA Group Insurance program to Clubs and Chapters were for individuals where were NOT members of the SSA!! SOARING Magazine reported this situation (see page 9 – 10 of the May, 2005 issue) with a reminder that all participants in the program must be SSA members. (This worrisome situation is akin to teenagers getting AARP discounts on their motel rooms.) One outcome of that discovery was that Clubs or Chapters applying for SSA Group Insurance are now asked to document that all participants are SSA members, or that they soon will be.

3. Recently, a soaring Club in Region IV managed to obtain a renewal of their SSA Group Policy even after indicating on the application that they had no intention of becoming SSA members. While the renewal was approved for the current year (due to the unfortunate timing of the receipt of the premium and the application), the Club has indicated to me that it plans to seek other insurance vendors at the end of this policy's term rather than join SSA. My understanding is that they have found a vendor who will insure them for a higher premium – about as much higher as the current premium for group insurance plus SSA dues from all the members affected. (Put another way, this club could be getting, for the same price they're going to pay, SOARING magazine for every member, Soaring E-News, discounts on various soaring merchandise, insurance... and also help pay for the representation that keeps them from having to have medicals, transponders, inspections by the Transportation Security Administration, etc. etc. etc.)

4. In my own research, I found it to be a complex and difficult issue to get a grip on. Just a few examples: Just last weekend, a fellow Club member in my own Club, who had chosen to insure his personal glider outside the SSA Group program because of cost, was informed that his policy was being terminated because his aircraft – a Libelle – was "too old". Such a situation isn't news to those following aviation insurance issues – it's affecting all kinds

of aircraft that insurers – or mechanics! – view as high risk, such as Experimental, homebuilt, or "old". At least one repair shop in Colorado now refuses to work on piston engine airplanes more than 15 years old! The SSA Group Insurance Program makes a substantial contribution to the Soaring Safety Foundation which, in turn, has made a huge impact on improving training and safety in the US. Since this is a cost of doing business to the insurers, it becomes a significant fringe benefit of the program! Coverage for individual gliders is sometimes available at a lower premium through other Group policies or even directly from an insurance company. Only in a few cases have I been able to determine that the coverage really is comparable (sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't)... but... No one really knows what the insurance picture in the US would be like without the SSA group program which negotiates with many companies for full coverage of all individual and organizational needs! We know from experience with other aviation group policies (e.g., EAA, AOPA, etc.) that include (but do not focus on) sailplanes and sailplane operations that coverage can change in a heartbeat. Without a group negotiating with vendors for gliders and soaring operations it is not unreasonable to conclude that the sport needs such a program without regard to simple premiums if we, as a "niche" sport, are to continue to even GET insurance!

The bottom line is that after two years' serious study of the insurance program, and using the results of intensive research by several other SSA Directors (particularly Jim Skydell of Region XII and Vice Chair of the ExComm), I've concluded that the program optimally supports the individual and collective best interests of soaring pilots. As I said earlier, the situation IS complex – it's not simple shopping for price as you might for gasoline – and giving the topic the discussion it requires is beyond the capability of any e-mail newsletter. However, that doesn't mean that we might not be able to improve the program, provided we have a solid market with solid information about it.

Accordingly, I believe that the program benefits from constructive criticism that helps the SSA keep the Group Program on its toes and competitive. Anecdotes and isolated and incomplete examples don't really help your Society negotiate the best deal for all of us, and it's amazing how difficult it has been and still is to get solid, accurate and objective information. (I recently sent a request to thirteen (of the fourteen known) Region IV soaring organizations about documenting their insurance situation; we got some response from seven of them, all of which expressed general satisfaction with the SSA Group Insurance program!) If there are specific issues with the program that can be addressed, we need accurate and objective information to build the case.

I've prepared a PowerPoint presentation which outlines the key issues, it is available for your perusal by request (Jim@Kellett.com) and use as you see fit. In addition, I am quite willing to include a discussion of insurance in any meeting or group in Region IV that desires it. If you're interested, let me know and we'll schedule something.

Ain't nuttin' simple, is it?

At least one glider school in the US was approached recently by the Transportation Security Administration regarding their compliance with various rules, unaware that glider schools are formally exempt – and have been for nearly two years– from the requirements of CFR 49 Part 1552 which deals with certain recordkeeping and reporting. Just another example of how the Soaring Society of America helps keep us all in the air!

PS: Thanks to Cindy Brickner of SSA's Government Relations Committee, and Director for Region XII, for sharing their experience with TSA in her Region.

See the following from the SSA Govt. Liaison Committee

Transportation Security Administration Wakes Up, Blinks

Early in May, a Northern California soaring operation received a letter in the mail from the Transportation Security Administration office in San Jose. The glider school was reminded that they might be inspected at any time for compliance with security awareness training and student record keeping. TSA nicely provided a list of references for rules that flight schools must follow. TSA indicated that they received the list of flight training providers from the FAA. Apparently, TSA did not refer to the exemption which applies to GLIDER flight training that was secured by SSA in October of 2004, and benefits all glider flight instructors and glider students. This exemption saves glider instructors time and expense annually. Any glider instructor or school or club may be contacted by the TSA, either in person, or by mail. An appropriate response to that contact can be found at <http://www.ssa.org/test/docs/gliderexemption.pdf> explaining that the TSA themselves have exempted glider training from these requirements. If a member does have an interaction with TSA, please inform SSA as to the tone and substance of the conversation. We are interested in helping ease and educate both sides of the contact.

Copy That! *Selected flotsam and jetsam from the editor's daily Tsunami of email*

The pilot of a 1975 Schweizer sailplane was killed when he crashed into a house while on final approach to an airport near Pittsburgh ...—**AVwebFlash 12.22b**

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06149/694083-58.stm>

Have you ANY idea how much information is REALLY available on your Club's website?? Here's one feature I'll bet not many members know about....

Go to the "Members" section (it'll require an ID/password—do you know what yours is? If not, send an e-mail to Joe Lingeitch – jlingeitch@skylinesoaring.org or Piet Barber – pbarber@skylinesoaring.org and ask, then click on "Membership". Up will pop a list of members with home addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses AND (drum roll please!) for many of them an interesting biographical sketch (those which have "[Bio]" under their name and/or a photo of them (see the camera icon by each name).

It's fascinating to learn more about just who your colleagues in the air are! I guarantee you that they're more interesting than the people you met at your last cocktail party!

However—many of the newer members haven't provided either a bio or a picture to the Club's webmasters. so get on the stick and send one or both to webmaster@skylinesoaring.org!

The UK Airprox (aircraft proximity) Board has called for the development of a lightweight (presumably battery-powered) transponder that can be installed on gliders after one came within a whisker of being obliterated by a Tornado fighter jet flying at 450 knots. The Tornado and the glider passed within 50 feet of one another at 9,000 feet above the Scottish Highlands last October. Glider pilot David Smith told the board inquiry he felt a "terrific

thump from the slipstream and could smell the kerosene fumes" after the jet, one of 10 involved in an exercise, passed overhead. And while the world waits for an electronic solution, a British Air Force spokesman suggests that, in the meantime, adding a splash of color to gliders' paint scheme would help. Michael Mulford told the Scotsman newspaper that gliders "are white against a white sky, which can make them very difficult to see." Smith, the secretary of the Deeside Gliding Club, said he saw the Tornado coming at him and was just able to duck underneath it to avoid a collision. The pilot of the Tornado later reported he didn't see the glider until he was 200 yards away. The Airprox Board determined it was a category A incident (risk of collision) and noted that there had been four other close calls involving gliders in the past three years. It recommended that if some enterprising chap develops a glider-friendly transponder, that the Civil Aviation Authority make it compulsory equipment. Now . . . after reading THAT, I wonder how much the reporter really knows about gliders! For example, "glider-friendly" transponders have been around for ages – over a decade ago I installed one in a glider, and the one I now fly is so equipped - - with an instrument costing approximately as much as a good panel mounted radio (ca. \$1400). And back in 2000, the Cranfield institute in the UK conducted a RAF-sponsored study that concluded that a "splash of color" on a glider actually made conspicuously WORSE!

And, I understand there's been at least one glider/military MAC in the United States – I've met one pilot who survived it . . .

—**Jim Kellett Resident Curmudgeon**

One of the beautiful things about a single piloted sailplane is the quality of the social experience..



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Skyline Soaring Club, LLC

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<http://www.skylinesoaring.org>

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