

**Fred Weinholtz - (Germany)**  
**THE GLIDING WORLD'S GODFATHER !**

**PERSONALITIES**

I first met Fred Weinholtz at the World Gliding Championships at Leszno, Poland in 1968. It was the start of a friendship that has endured to this day.

We have managed to get together at some of the weirdest places over those intervening years and as pillar of strength to the German gliding movement, he has been an example that I have tried to emulate over all those years.

Fred gave me a copy of the book he had written, 'The Theory of Modern Cross Country Gliding' at Leszno. It was impressive. We translated it into English and it became a best seller in the gliding world. It was ultimately translated into six languages and sold 32,000 copies. It was the only book available on the subject at that time.

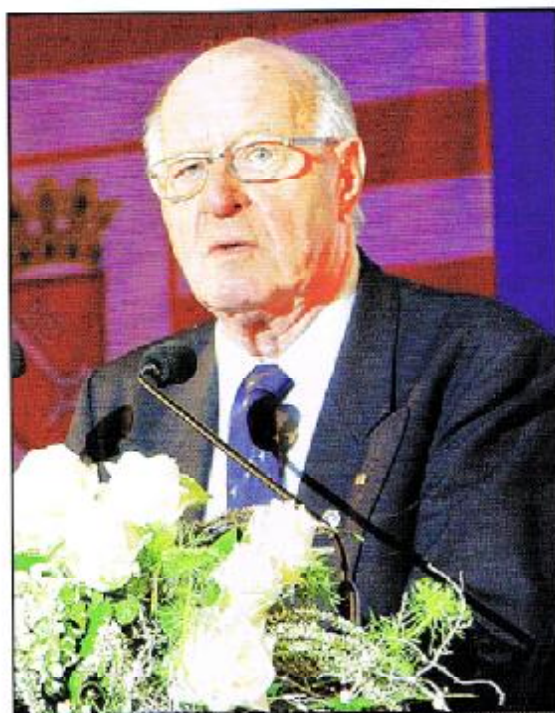
Always 'the gentleman,' 83 year old Fred has a C.V. on gliding that must be the envy of any soaring pilot/club instructor or gliding administrator.

Born in Genthin, Germany in 1926, Fred had his first contact with Gliding in 1933 when an aviation travelling circus performed outside his home town. As a seven year old youth, this inspired him to become active in model aircraft.

In 1940 he joined the "Flieger-Hitler-Jugend" organisation and learnt to fly, flying gliders, securing his A, B, C badges and pilot's licence. It followed that Fred undertook pilot training with the Luftwaffe Air War School securing his licence in February 1945. At war's end, and after a period of ground fighting, he was taken prisoner of war by USA forces and incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp at Lambach, Austria.

Still a prisoner in 1946, he escaped from the Soviet occupation zone and made his way to Herford in the British Zone. Herford was to become his home base for the rest of his life.

By 1951, Fred was very active re-establishing the 1912 Herford Club for Aviation. Now a life member of the club, he played a



variety of roles including that of President. But gliding was to become the all demanding part of his life.

He soon became a licenced gliding instructor with licences for power aircraft, motorgliders and ultra-light aircraft, accumulating 5,081 hours before he finally gave up flying for good in 2003.

Fred played an important part in the development of the gliding school at Oerlinghausen and was their president for 20 years.

It was inevitable that this school teacher would lead the development of gliding in Germany. From membership of Northrhine-Westfalia Gliding Commission, in 1967, he became a member of the German Gliding Commission and from 1972 to 1980 he was their president.

Fred and I were both to play a part in the development of I.G.C., both as vice-presidents, but Fred took on the role as I.G.C. secretary with his usual meticulous attention to every detail. He retired from this role in 1997 but not before being appointed Honor-



ary Secretary for Life.

OSTIV played an important part in Fred's gliding career, as was his role as a Board member of the German Gliding Museum on the Wasserkuppe.

The list of gliding achievements is almost endless. He competed in six German National Gliding Championships, Championship director of the 1981 World Championships at Paderborn in Germany, German team manager on occasions, and I.G.C. Steward or Jury member at 23 World and/or Continental Championships.

Telling me about securing the survival of older sailplanes, Fred wrote "With the appearance of fibre glass sailplanes, not only the performance in gliding but also the costs began to explode. In the Herford Gliding Club and on the airfield at Oerlinghausen, we discussed this problem with concern, and finally I had the idea of the Club Class. My friends and I hoped and expected, that this class would preserve the value of older high performance gliders, would provide inexpensive but high quality international championships, and would enable pilots who do not have access to gliders of the highest standard of performance, to take part in contests at the highest levels. And really, the class met these expectations, thanks to the assistance of many friends worldwide".

Meanwhile, during the seventies there was a major conflict of interests about airspace in Germany between the military, commercial interests and airsports. Fred represented gliding at the Schlieker Commission and was successful in defending equal rights for gliding on airspace availability. These rights were laid down in the "Decree on Aviation Personnel" (LuftPersV).

With the aim of more effective cooperation between the gliding clubs of Europe he arranged the "First Meeting of International Coaches" at Oerlinghausen, in 1974 which resulted in the creation of the OSTIV Training and Safety Panel.

Fred writes: "I am still grateful for having had so many opportunities, to influence worldwide gliding in a positive way. I always found friends who supported me and my

work. Without them, I certainly would not have had much success.

Fred Weinholtz's awards and commendations include:

- 1955 FAI Silver Badge, Gliding.
- 1965 Diploma Lilienthal of the German Aero Club.
- 1972 FAI Gold Badge with three Diamonds, Gliding.
- 1975 Federal Service Cross for "Merit about Airsports" (President of FR Germany, March 1975)
- 1977 Diploma Paul Tissandier, FAI.
- 1978 German Aero Club, Silver-Badge of Honour.
- 1981 Golden Badge of Honour for Gliding Instructors, German Aero Club.
- Daidalos medal in Gold, German Aero Club.
- 1985 Golden Badge of Honour, Gliding School Oerlinghausen.
- 1989 Yuri Gagarin Diploma, Aero Club of USSR
- 1990 Lilienthal-Medal of FAI. This medal was established in 1939 – (the sixth German and the 40th holder worldwide).
- 1996 Czeslaw Tanski Medal, Aero Club of Poland.
- 1998 FAI Bronze-Medal, for merits on the organisation of the 1st World Airgames 1997, Turkey.
- 1999 The "Golden Witch", female glider pilots of the German Aero Club.

Fred concludes "I am grateful to have been born into a time, in which the world experienced such an enormous performance explosion of aviation, and I am glad to have been able, to contribute a little bit to this".

**Fred - glider pilots world wide - salute you - your achievements have been remarkable - your dedication unsurpassed, your friendship a treasure.**

John Roake, Editor