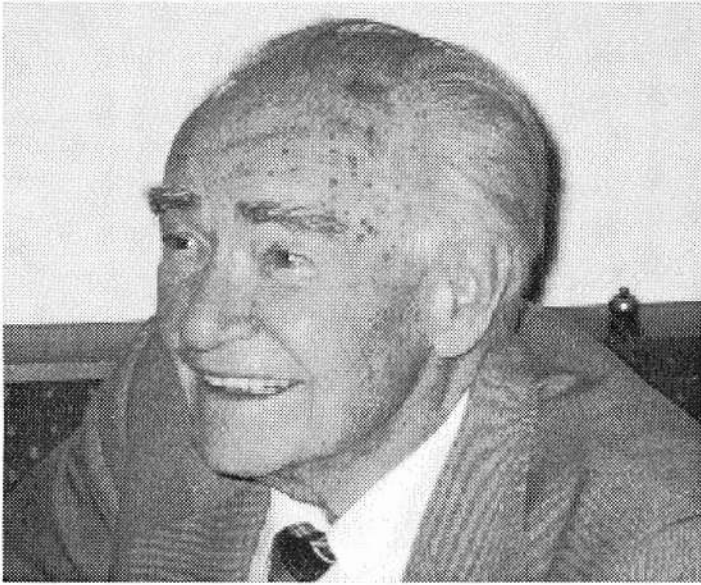


IN MEMORY OF HANS ZACHER November 22, 1912 – August 5, 2003

At the age of 90, Dipl.Ing. Hans Zacher passed away on August 5, 2003, after a short illness in Gauting, near Munich.



Through the death of Hans Zacher, the gliding movement in particular has lost one of the last great pioneers of the development of gliding in Germany since 1927, when he himself began gliding. Throughout his life, gliding, and everything connected with it, formed the centre of his professional activity. An exceptionally gifted engineer, he did his apprenticeship at the Polytechnic and the "Akademische Fliegergruppe" in Darmstadt. From there he went on to research and development at the "Deutsche Forschungsanstalt für Segelflug" (German Soaring Research Institute) in Darmstadt and later Berlin, Airing and Munich, before, during and after the war. Between 1952 and 1958, he played an important role in the Test Centre for Aeronautical Equipment in connection with the reconstruction of the German glider manufacturing industry, and above all, the introduction of the innovative fibre reinforced plastic materials and their approval for glider manufacture. At all times he was distinguished by expert knowledge and the courage to take far-reaching decisions, without being patronizing.

The motto "research, construction, flight" was for him an internal law and a guideline for his whole life. He had the invaluable gift of the ability to pass on to the young, upcoming glider designers and manufacturers and also pilots in countless conversations, talks, discussions and flying courses the basic knowledge which made possible the successful development of gliders and motor gliders. He did not miss a single meeting of the "Idaflieg" (the umbrella organisation of the "Akafliegs") since 1937, neither the flying and measurement camps in summer nor the discus-

sion meetings in winter. On those occasions he was amidst the young people, mentally one of them, always keeping himself in the background, but fully concentrated and quick-witted, and ready to help when his advice was sought, with his phenomenal memory and rich experience.

With almost visionary perception he foresaw the necessity of introducing standardized measurement and assessment procedures in the field of flight performance and characteristics, especially after the re-admission of gliding in Germany in 1952. These procedures had to include the comparison of gliders with each other up to the given safety limits within the allowed manoeuvre parameters. Through the Sailplane Development Panel of the OSTIV (the International Organization for the Science and Technology of Gliding), he presented his results and propositions to an international forum and received many awards, e.g. from the international air sports federation FAI (Fédération Aéronautique Internationale), and above all the German "Bundesverdienstkreuz." Nevertheless, he remained modestly in the background, despite all his merits regarding the advancement of science and the application of the results. With great confidence he made use of his native sense of humour to put things in order whilst keeping himself at a distance.

On many occasions he prevailed against external resistance in publishing the results of the measurement of flight performance and characteristics, in order to make possible an independent comparison of different glider types and at the same time to provide a neutral documentation of the progress achieved. An example of such documentation is the standard work on the history of glider development in Germany, "Die Evolution der Segelflugzeuge" (The Evolution of the Sailplane), which he published together with Günther Brinkmann in 1992 and 1999. For decades he was a voluntary advisor to the homebuilders of the Oskar-Ursinus-Vereinigung OUV.

Thus the procedure which Hans Zacher designed as a basis for the assessment of the flight characteristics of gliders and motor gliders became to be known as the "Zacherprotokoll," and the carrying out of the required measurements became known universally as "zachern" (to zacher). In a delightful article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on September 18, 2001, the journalist Dieter Vogt made a comparison to famous men of science, such as Pasteur (pasteurize): "He who becomes a verb is immortal. And Hans Zacher? Today 'to zacher' belongs to the vocabulary of the sailplane manufacturers and their 'nurseries', the Akademische Fliegergruppen (Akafliegs) at the universities." Can there be a greater praise?

The problem of supporting the young trainees and thus the continuation of the Akafliegs was a main concern of Hans Zacher up to the last weeks of his busy life. The gliding movement will miss an outstanding engineer and an endearing, enthusiastic person, teacher and friend.

We all owe him very much. On behalf of all his friends,
—Manfred E. Reinhardt.