

PARACHUTIST

MARCH-APRIL, 1959

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS



TELECHUTE

THE BIG DEBATE

PARACHUTIST devotes its editorial page and some of its news columns this month to letters from members expressing strong views on the controversy over the reorganization of the PCA, and on the arguments over the need for more or less regulations.

Space does not permit inclusion of the many letters from members requesting *more* regulations where accidents have occurred, or letters from some of the accident-free areas requesting *less* regulations.

PARACHUTIST reserves the right to excerpt or condense correspondence because of lack of space.

6 April 1959

Gentlemen:

Please cancel my membership in PCA. Although knowing that this move might sacrifice certain intentions that I had for competition, I feel that by protesting, your organization might reconsider the compulsory insurance requirements for military personnel. Please note:

(a) The only advantage to military personnel resulting from the insurance is when he jumps from civilian aircraft or over civilian property, which although possible is generally speaking improbable.

(b) The main advantage of being a member of PCA for a free fall jumper appears to be to compete in national competition. For some military jumpers this is not necessary. I foresee in the near future military units competing in skydiving, as they would in any major spectator sport, without civilian jumpers or PCA control.

(c) Knowing that many clubs, including military, were approached on the compulsory insurance, and that at Ft. Ord the response was negative, I feel that it is being forced on us. The military has recognized the sport as an on-duty activity and therefore as long as safety requirements are met, any accident or injury resulting is line of duty and receives full military insurance benefits and hospitalization.

(d) I feel that your organization has taken advantage of all military jumpers interested in free falling. This is the general comment available in our club.

(e) Knowing my own capabilities as an instructor and jumpmaster, I feel that . . . your requirements for licenses are primarily directed toward competition. Our training program at Ft. Ord is well organized and the safety record speaks for itself, although at present we have only one B license jumper.

(f) I believe that any future introduction to units when I leave this area and return to Ft. Bragg or to Europe will not be the license that I might have had, but the ability which I demonstrate as a jumper, instructor, jumpmaster and organizer of training, and the complete file of lesson plans and training aids which I have accumulated on free falling.

I have read the latest PARACHUTIST dated January, 1959, and while this organ expresses itself well on the insurance subject it is not a satisfactory explanation to me, nor is the token \$1.00 remittance

enough to quell my inquisitiveness as to who bears expenses for meets held at military installations in which civilians participate. I believe that I know these answers, which however are neglected in your article.

All is not sour, as I certainly respect the publication itself and the helpful training it offers. Without a doubt, the compulsory insurance is the only thing, at least at present, that prevents a mutual understanding. Knowing that you certainly won't miss my membership fees, and that it won't affect my body position in the air, I remain,

Msgrt. Stan Rubin

Vice-President, Ft. Ord Parachute Club

April 8, 1959

Gentlemen:

I am one of the original members of the Seattle Sky Divers. We are quite proud of this organization and our safety record . . .

Although not now an active P.C.A. member, my check will be in the mail shortly . . . It is certainly gratifying to see the advancement and growth of parachuting and to be part of it. Congratulations on the work you and your associates have done.

Respectfully,

George Butterfield

Edmonds, Washington

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing a check for \$11.75 per your form letter of 3 March, 1959 on the subject of the reorganization and insurance. Please accept my congratulations on securing the insurance. I am sure it will go a long way towards helping the PCA and the sport of parachuting.

I do not envy you in your tremendous paper-burden during this complex reorganization. If there is anything I can do to lighten your burden here on the West Coast, please don't hesitate to ask . . .

Yours truly,

Darrell C. Sonnichsen

Berkely, California

March 20, 1959

Gentlemen:

On the 15th of March 1959 a special meeting of the Seattle Sky Divers was held to discuss the newly reorganized Parachute Club of America, its Basic Safety Regulations and Insurance Plan. After much discussion the membership present voted unanimously to withdraw the Seattle Sky Divers from affiliation with the PCA.

In direct accord with the withdrawal of the Seattle Sky Divers Club, it was ruled that the club will require no present member or future recruit to join the PCA. Individuals may join at their discretion.

We feel this action is necessary because of our inability to comply with the safety regulations compiled solely by the PCA, and thus voiding any benefit gained from the compulsory insurance demanded of the membership. Exact compliance with these regulations

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PARACHUTIST

VOLUME II, NUMBER 6

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TELECHUTE

Sport parachuting and television—a 20th century sport and a 20th century invention—come together in a unique venture called Telechute, Inc.

The first Telechute closed-circuit aerial sports installation will be put into operation on May 2, the official opening day of the Sport Parachuting Center in Orange, Mass. For the first time in the history of the sport, spectators will be able to view greatly magnified images of aerial free-fall maneuvers on banks of 24-inch video monitor screens in the Telechute Pavilion.

The Telechute installation consists of two or more television cameras, one equipped with a telephoto, or extremely long focal-length lens. Newly developed tripod heads insure steady and precise tracking of free falls without resorting to cine-theodolite or radar mounts. It will be possible to see clearly every hand and body movement of a parachutist in free fall one mile away.

In the center triangle of the airport runways, and from an elevated position, another television camera with zoom-type lens will cover the parachutists landing on target. This means that spectators for the first time will be able to view and judge on Telechute both of the vital aspects of scoring: style and accuracy.

Telechute, Inc., with the Sport Parachuting Center, will present a coordinated program of parachuting and other aerial sport activities at Orange. Running commentary by the announcer and details about scoring, body control, and equipment, along with interviews and sidelights on the competing parachutists, will introduce parachuting to the spectators, and, it is anticipated, give them a working knowledge of the sport itself.

The Telechute Pavilion at the Sport Parachuting Center will include a loge section for judges and distinguished guests, the 'ready' area for parachutists, a control studio and restaurant unit. The Pavilion fronts on the taxiway, and will be in operation every day throughout the jumping season. Instructors and classes of the Sport Parachuting Center school will utilize the closed-circuit installation for instruction and observation of parachuting techniques, aerial maneuvers, relative work and canopy handling.

Two executives of Telechute, Inc., Gene Kearney and Roger Murphy, television and film producers, are supervising the installation and programming at the Sport Parachuting Center.

A Telechute audio-video control unit in a sound studio permits the Telechute program director to select one of several incoming pictures and audio lines for transmission to the monitors. The control unit, manufactured by Telechute, Inc., has been designed for one-man operation by an announcer-director. Video light shields have been designed by Telechute for the 24-inch monitors. These shields prevent spurious reflection and

glare on the face of the montior, whose circuitry has been modified to generate maximum brilliancy and contrast.

Telechute, Inc. will package and franchise outdoor closed-circuit television installation throughout the United States. For nationwide network pickups which will be made from the Parachuting Center, Telechute will install complete broadcast equipment for microwave or coaxial cable transmission.

GRAND OPENING AT ORANGE

On Saturday, May 2, the first sport parachuting center in the United States will be opened formally in Orange, Massachusetts. An enterprise of Parachutes, Inc., the center has scheduled an ambitious opening-day program. Among the distinguished guests will be General James M. Gavin, USA (ret.), Chairman of the Board of the PCA; the Honorable Foster Furcolo, Governor of Massachusetts; Charles de Pampelonne, Consul of France in Boston; senior representatives of the FAA; the Commanding General of Army Research and Development in Natick, Mass; a high ranking Air Force general for the Pentagon; and the U. S. Marine Corps and Navy representatives.

For the benefit of spectators, Telechutes, Inc. (see left) will televise parachute jumps by closed circuit on 24-inch monitors.

The opening day program follows:

- 9:00 a. m. — 11:15 a. m.—*Open parachuting for members of Parachute Club of America and official guests.*
- 11:30 a. m.—1:30 p. m.—*First jumps by first class of students.*
- 2:00 p. m.—*Opening ceremonies, introduction of distinguished guests.*
- 2:15 p. m.—*Free fall demonstration by 1958 United States Parachuting Team members: Lewis Sanborn (Captain), Nathan Pond, Dana Smith.*
- 2:20 p. m.—*Informal competition — West Point vs. Yale. First public appearance of West Point Sport Parachuting Team.*
- 3:15 p. m.—*Salute to France—Precision jump by Mrs. Monique Laroche Lamare, former World Champion and head of French team at 1958 World Championship, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.*
- 3:30 p. m.—*Presentation of Parachute Club of America Annual Award and Leo Stevens Award by Lt. General James M. Gavin, USA (ret.)*
- 3:45 p. m.—*Introduction and demonstration of new U. S. sport parachute in comparison jumps with Soviet, Yugoslav, Hungarian, and other European chutes.*
- 4:00 p. m.—*Informal open competition for accuracy.*

In case of rain, the program will be shifted to May 3. All PCA members who can possibly do so are cordially invited to attend the opening-day ceremonies.

ACCIDENT CORNER

The following is the model of what an accident report should be. It is printed in its entirety.

Report on Death of Robert Willard Clark
22 March, 1959

On Sunday, 22 March, 1959, Robert Clark and other members of the University of Texas Parachute Club went to San Marcos, Texas for regular training jumps. The day was very clear with only a very high haze. No moisture was on the ground or in the air. Temperature was about 60° with light, variable winds of approximately four mph on the surface. At one p. m. David Bradshaw, William B. Cassin and Clark took off in a Fairchild piloted by Jack Coleman of San Marcos. Coleman is a licensed commercial pilot who works as a flight instructor at Gary Army Air Base. Cassin was the jumpmaster and safety officer. Acting as safety officer on the ground was Lt. Echols I. Shedden who holds an old Class "C" license. Bradshaw made his jump at 2800 feet. It was a static line jump and his first civilian jump.

The plan had been that Clark would jump first after Bradshaw had left and the plane had reached altitude. Cassin was to follow Clark and try to keep him in sight during the delay. The plane proved too narrow, however, for Clark to get past Cassin to the door after Cassin had jumpmastered Bradshaw. The plan was then changed so that Cassin would go first and Clark would follow on the same pass but would make only a regular jump and would not try to keep up with Cassin. A 20-second delay was planned. Jump altitude was to be 5300 feet, calculated as follows: 2900 for delay (ground elevation 600 feet), 2200 for safety, 200 for chute opening. Actual jump altitude was about 5400 feet according both to the altimeter in the plane (indicating 6000) and the altimeter worn by Cassin.

Clark's chute had been packed in part by himself and in part by other members under his supervision. He wore coveralls, boots, goggles, and a helmet. His stop watch was borrowed along with a reserve from Lt. Shedden. He and Cassin checked the stop watch against the club watch for about 30 seconds and Clark checked it against his own watch.

Cassin left the plane after guiding it over the target. Clark left within four seconds. Coleman states that Clark did not hit any part of the plane on leaving. Shedden watched from the ground and says that Clark was unstable initially but straightened out quickly and fell in a very stable position. All witnesses agree that Clark was stable all the way into the ground. He hit flat on his stomach. He had turned approximately 150° from the direction of flight and had built up momentum on his new heading. Dirt was thrown forward along the ground from the point of impact and the stopwatch was knocked loose from the reserve and landed about 15 feet from the body in the final direction of fall. Impact was in a plowed field about one quarter mile from the target.

Dr. David White of San Marcos was watching the jump and examined the body where it lay. He noted the tight grip Clark still had on the rip cord and said that this almost conclusively proved that Clark did not have a heart attack or stroke during the fall. This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact

that Clark was stable during the entire fall. This would not have been possible without a conscious arch.

Clark barely missed some power lines in his fall. Several witnesses reported that just as he passed the power lines, which would have been about 50 feet from the ground they saw a flicker of white from his back. This should have been the pilot chute from his main. When the body was reached, it was seen that the pilot chute was open and lying free of the body. The back pack was opened fully and the main was still in the sleeve, with only one stow of lines pulled out. The main appeared not to have come off his back at all and was apparently still folded on the tray when he hit. He simply pulled too late. The impact had bounced the main off the tray and it lay by his left side. The rip cord had been pulled completely out of the guide channel and the handle was still in Clark's hand. The reserve had not been touched. Close examination by Cassin and Shedden revealed no mechanical defects in any of the equipment or evidence of any malfunction that had caused the accident, except that the stop watch read 26 seconds, which was about 8 seconds short of what it should have read. The stop watch, however, had been bounced along the ground, and its face had been shattered. The main hand was bent and the body was dented. If the watch could be believed despite these facts, either it had failed to run properly, which is unlikely in view of the check on it immediately prior to the jump, or Clark had failed to start it immediately after or before leaving the plane. If the latter were the case, this might explain Clark's initial instability. He may have been starting the watch as he fell.

There is absolutely no evidence that Clark's death was intentional. He had an extremely steady personality, was well liked and had no outstanding worries. He was in good spirits before the jump and had been in good health and humor for weeks. If there is any explanation for the accident it lies in the training program he followed. Clark started jumping on 2 March, 1958. Between then and 17 May, 58 he made 8 static-line jumps, the last five of which were supervised dummy rip cord jumps. He was an exceptionally steady jumper. He was well coordinated and built on stocky lines. He was about 6 feet tall and weighed 240 pounds but was not fat. He was 28 years old. He was very powerful. Up to 5 July, 1958 Clark made four free falls. In order they were 3, 5, 8, and 12 seconds long. On the 12-second delay Clark misjudged his pointing and came down through a tree. He sprained his ankle on this jump and did not jump again until 23 November, 1958 when he made a 20-second delay. Cassin witnessed this jump from the ground and Clark was stable and pulled right on 20 seconds. However, another member of UTPC says that Clark, in discussing the November jump, said that he had punched his stop watch but had not looked at it while falling and had pulled only when he thought 20 seconds were up. Clark had apparently not mentioned this again and none of the other members remembered him saying anything about it. The jump on 23 November was the last jump he made before the fatal one.

It is believed that Clark's death was caused by jumper error and could have been prevented by a more rigorous training program and a requirement that all

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What's Up?

FORTHCOMING VOTE FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Voting ballots for the Board of Directors of the Parachute Club of America will be mailed to all members on 15 June. In addition to present directors, new candidates will be entered on the ballot upon written nomination by twenty or more members on or before 14 June. Ballots must be returned by 14 July. The eleven persons receiving the most votes of the 14 July tally will be the new Board of Directors.

Please write in your nominations.

EXECUTIVES WILL CHANGE IN JUNE

Jacques A. Istel, Executive Vice-President and Lewis B. Sanborn, Secretary-Treasurer of the Parachute Club of America announced today that they could no longer bear the additional burden of work connected with executive positions in the Parachute Club of America and would be forced to refuse renominations as officers. Jacques Istel and Lew Sanborn have been consistently named as officers by the Board of Directors of the Parachute Club of America. Both announced that they would be pleased to continue to serve as members of the Board of Directors if elected in June. Neither Mr. Istel nor Mr. Sanborn have ever drawn salaries from the Parachute Club of America.

CHANGE TO PARAGRAPH 7 OF BASIC SAFETY REGULATIONS

At the request of members who requested waivers of Paragraph 7, the Executive Committee of the PCA, with the approval of the insurance company, have changed the last sentence of Paragraph 7 as follows: "Parachutes must meet minimum federal safety standards as set forth in FAA TSO C-23 and be stamped accordingly; *or* be approved by a certificated parachute loft and be stamped accordingly, such stamp to bear the number of loft and date of approval; *or* be approved by a qualified military board recognized by the PCA and be stamped and dated accordingly."

All United States Parachutists are cordially invited to meet Mrs. Monique Laroche Lamare, 1951 world champion and head of the 1958 French team, who will spend the month of May at Orange, Massachusetts.

Aid To Reorganization

During the reorganization of the PCA, and for the entire year of 1959, the following steps will be taken in order to permit PCA members to qualify more easily for insurance coverage.

FOR CLUBS:

PCA Safety Officers will have the right, during 1959, to exercise all rights and privileges of Class B license holders. Where necessary PCA Safety Officers may waive rules # 6 and # 16 *without* loss of insurance coverage, provided that student jumps are under their direct supervision.

SPECIAL PERMIT

FOR ISOLATED INDIVIDUALS

Individual parachutists who jump alone and therefore cannot comply with all PCA Safety Regulations may apply for an isolated individual waiver.

Application must include description of each par-

ticular case and must name each rule for which a waiver is requested.

CLARIFICATION OF INSURANCE COVERAGE:

The insurance plan of the PCA is monitored by the Board of Directors of the PCA and *not* by the insurance company. The Board of Directors of the PCA is relying in turn upon the reports of safety officers. Only in very rare cases will executives of the PCA personally investigate an accident report, since the PCA relies heavily upon the competence and integrity of its safety officers.

The Insurance Plan is monitored by the Parachutists Themselves:

The insurance company is protected by the fact that if either fraud or excessive accidents occur they have the right to cancel the plan and refund all premiums. If this were to happen it is doubtful that any insurance company would consider insuring parachutists for the next ten years.

Wilmington Meet Cancelled

Because the French team was unable to raise travel expenses, and because of general lack of funds, plans for the Wilmington-Delaware Cup Meet on June 6-7 have had to be cancelled.

Preparations are now being made for a large, nation-wide competition on Labor Day. Location, entry regulations and details about events will be announced in a future issue of PARACHTIST.

Debate

(Continued From Page Two)

would completely eliminate organized parachuting in Western Washington.

At present the Seattle Sky Divers carry \$5,000.00 property damage, \$10,000.00 bodily injury, and \$20,000.00 accident limit liability insurance on all its members (regardless of whose rules are broken.) Negotiations are in progress with several insurance underwriters for Group Accidental Injury coverage.

Further, the lack of interest shown by the PCA in the Western United States has led many parachutists to consider its operation solely for the benefit of the military and Eastern clubs. This is evident in the PCA's lack of consulting affiliated clubs on policies being compiled to govern them in parachuting.

It is regrettable that this situation has developed; however, we feel that within the next few years corrective action will be taken on the elimination of some safety regulations and regional representation will give the affiliated clubs a chance to voice an opinion as to their future. Until such time we wish you many enjoyable and successful years of parachuting and remain;

Sincerely,
The Seattle Sky Divers
L. J. Hoffman, President
Allen L. Zilk, Secretary

Evidently Mr. Zilk felt that the above was too temperate in tone, for he dashed off the following three days later:

Gentlemen:

In reply to your reorganization bulletin of the Parachute Club of America I find the desire of the

club in the attempted sale of compulsory insurance a direct insult to the intelligence of the membership. A person may belong to the AOPA, NAA, or AFA and many other organizations without buying their insurance. I surely would not buy insurance on my cars which would not cover me if I had an accident while breaking the law, hence I do not desire to invest in insurance which would not cover me if I should become injured while breaking your safety regulations.

It is my feeling your safety regulations have gone beyond the point of safety and now boarder (*sic*) on the ridiculous. Many of these regulations should be merely basic training rules and others are next to impossible to comply with in many locals. I have always parachuted with the greatest safety in mind and will continue to do so, but I will not stand for any foolishness jammed down my throat.

I see no great advantage in maintaining my membership in the PCA. The Parachute Club of America has done nothing to further Sport Parachuting in this part of the county and, as best I can see, very little in the United States in general, except for the military.

Please return the unused portion of my membership fee.

Allen L. Zilk

REBUTTAL

The letters reprinted above represent the minority point of view in the PCA. The editors of *Parachutist* have requested comments from executives of the PCA. These are reprinted below.

Lew Sanborn writes:

"All members were consulted in regard to the new insurance policy. The vote in favor of this step was 75%. All members were consulted regarding changes in the BSR. There were virtually no suggestions. We believe that the accident and liability coverage offered each PCA member is remarkable when compared to the cost involved.

"The reason for mandatory coverage has been explained in detail. We agree wholeheartedly that it is the most undesirable feature of the insurance plan, but without it there would be no insurance plan at all.

"The insurance plan is administered by the Board of Directors of the PCA. The Board depends heavily upon the judgement and recommendations of local safety officers. The Board has been generous in granting legal waivers of regulations to clubs experiencing difficulties in following exactly its regulations. Ironically enough, a letter from the PCA appointing Mr. Lyle Hoffman Safety Officer for the Seattle area and granting him the right for the year 1959 to waive such rules as he deemed desirable in order to permit efficient parachuting in his area crossed his letter in the mail."

Jacques Istel writes:

"Lyle Hoffman is well acquainted with the PCA and should know better than anyone what efforts it has made for parachuting. It is up to the clubs to inform the PCA of their opinions, but few letters have been received from Seattle in the years 1957 and 1958.

"We have often requested criticism and some of the points in these letters are well taken. The PCA needs some spark plugs out west and needs additional Western representation on the Board of Directors. The PCA

should certainly have regional directors and regional organizations.

"A proposal for regional representation will be submitted to the next meeting of the Board of Directors. Members are requested to make suggestions and submit plans.

"The whole membership has been requested to vote for directors. (see "What's Up"). Write-in candidates are encouraged.

"The letters from Seattle are having a constructive effect. We hope that the action of the Seattle group will eventually be reconsidered."

Accident Corner

(Continued From Page Four)

jumpers who are inactive for more than 60 days must make at least one satisfactory static line jump with dummy rip cord pull before going back to delays. All the safety regulations of the PCA were complied with. It is suggested that the PCA safety rules be modified to incorporate the 60 day rule and that the PCA establish a recommended progression of jumps following the static line phase.

The UTPC, which had received official university recognition only a month before this accident, has suspended operations pending the completion of all investigations of Clark's death. Indications are that the University will continue to recognize the club and at least eleven club members have indicated that they wish to continue to be active. The club will make no more jumps until all members have obtained the new PCA membership. Clark had not received the materials concerning the new membership and so was not insured. He was the first UTPC member to join the PCA under the old program, however.

No one factor can be pinpointed as the certain cause of Clark's death. To prevent a recurrence, action is necessary in several directions:

1. Intensified training programs to insure familiarity with current jump techniques by all jumpers, old and new.
2. Establishment of a standard program of progression in delayed falls to be followed by jumpers learning the delayed-fall technique.
3. Incorporation of the 60 day rule in the PCA Basic Safety Regulations.
4. The use of altimeters should be made mandatory on all delays over five seconds.
5. Publication of a manual containing the information known about sport parachuting at the present time.

William B. Cassin C-95 (Old)
Safety Officer, UTPC

As PARACHUTIST goes to press, the promised Army report on the death of James L. Scott has not been received. Scott, aged 28, was a PCA member in good standing. He held C License # 125 and had a record of 26 free falls. His last jump was a "line of duty military free fall test jump" from 11,500 feet with an attempted 50 second delay. Equipment was modified B-12.

Scott jumped in #5 position in a 9-man stick. He is reported to have entered a cloud at the 3,000 foot level and there are conflicting opinions on his jump stability. Scott had an altimeter, but no stop watch.

ORANGE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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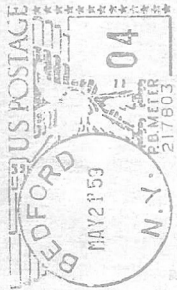
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