



Photo by Robert Lee Moore

Ed McClanahan in his Schweizer 1-23H sailplane.

scene was awesome, beautiful, humbling. The Sunday drive through the country was over. Without warning the Super Cub plunged earthward nose first. Seconds later my camera was dislodged from between my legs smashing the largest clear vision panel. Mud was liberally splattered about the cockpit and canopy. Then I grew heavy all over as we were catapulted upward. Later the barograph showed a solid trace two thousand feet high and three minutes wide for this segment of the flight. The game of brickbat between glider and towplane ended on a sustained bounce to 7,000 ft. asl. I released and climbed at 2,000 fpm to 12,000 ft. before losing the lift. My vision was very limited as a result of cracking the major frost shield and the smeared mud didn't help. It took an hour and a half to find the smooth wave lift which then took me to 21,500 ft.

The sun was beginning to sink behind the mountains when I started my search for Pincher Creek. During the day much of the snow over the countryside at lower elevations had melted and it now presented an entirely different picture to me. While I could make out the lights of several small towns—which one was Pincher Creek? Molly and Julien were giving me directions over the radio to no avail. It was growing darker by the minute and I had to make a choice.

Luckily it was the correct one. I located the field by the lights from the many automobiles which were placed on the end of the runway. At this time only Townsend had landed. Harold had achieved the highest altitude of the day, 25,000 ft. It is significant that the altitude obtained by each of us roughly approximated our take-off order. All the ships were securely tied down for the night except Alleman's. Rudy and Mary Ann had to return to Richland.

Monday's flight was almost an anticlimax to Sunday's. Activities at the airport started with the removal of each glider's main wheel to remove the accumulation of mud. I replaced the broken frost shield and topped my oxygen bottle. Take-off for me was at 1100. I was towed upwind of the secondary roll cloud where I released at 7,200 ft. asl about three miles north of Cowley. I climbed at 500 fpm in relatively smooth lift to 12,000 ft. then at 170 fpm to 22,000 ft. in the secondary wave. I had been watching the lenticular cloud caused by the primary wave from the Livingston Range and when it appeared well developed I felt I could no longer delay penetrating upwind. Julien had told me that he had lost 6,000 ft. in this process during his record flight. I had a similar experience at Wenatchee, Washington, a year ago. I detoured around the southern flank of the lenticular opposite the canyon leading to Crowsnest hoping to find less sink. I flew at 120 mph IAS for what seemed an eternity. Gradually the whirling hands of the unwinding altimeter slowed down as lift was contacted. I lost only 3,000 ft. and it was sheer relief that I wasn't going to renew my acquaintance with the rotor below me. I climbed at 450 fpm under the lenticular, crabbing at 45 mph, first to the N.W. then to the S.W. over an area about eight miles long. At 24,000 ft. the lift increased to 600 fpm and I found myself above and upwind of the lenticular only to find another but less well-defined lenticular cloud at approximately 40,000 ft. At 34,000 ft. I started the descent because my oxygen system was not suitable for sustained use at these altitudes.

There wasn't time to discuss each others flights in detail since most of us had long journeys ahead. The results as I remember them told through chattering teeth were: Bob Shirley and his passenger to 29,000 ft. in an L-K to claim a new Canadi-

an two-place record; Kurt Wiess in his Bergfalke, "Himmel Hund" to 27,000 ft. saving his record flight for a later date after his canopy cracked; Bob Cheston in his AV-36 to 25,500 ft; Frank Woodward in his Ka-6BR handicapped with a low capacity oxygen tank, to 18,500 ft; and Wilbur Ely in his 1-26 to 18,000 ft. The total: Three Gold altitudes and three Diamond altitudes.

We were very grateful to our Canadian friends for the hospitality shown us and hope that we can visit this area again. Julien Audette has indicated that the Regina group is planning another trip to Pincher this spring.

In Memoriam

A. H. "Hal" Cronkhite, age 47, of 1015 Brookhollow, Irving, Texas, passed away April 8, 1962. He is survived by his wife, Hannah, sons Hal, Jr., and Vince, and daughter, Susan.

Hal was widely known in soaring having been prominently identified with the sport for many years and having had also a brilliant career in the aviation sciences. He had earned U.S. C #657.

Hal Cronkhite was a charter member and one of the founders of the Texas Soaring Association. Perhaps he, more than any other individual, was responsible for the idea initially, for TSA's organization. He presided as Chairman for the group at its first organizational meeting.

Cronkhite, along with the Ross brothers, early advocated the possibilities of level country soaring. He directed the first and second Southwestern Soaring Contests which were the first major regional tournaments in that area. In 1950, when TSA organized their first Nationals, Hal was Contest Director. He was a contributor to *Soaring* in reports of contests and technical articles.

Mr. Cronkhite was a foremost scientist and attained distinction in his profession of Aero Engineering. His specialty was structures. He was a Design Engineering Representative for the Federal Aviation Agency. He was seven years with Consolidated at Forth Worth, Texas, and ten years with Aero Design of Oklahoma City. During the past five years, he acted as an independent consultant residing at Irving, Texas.

All who knew Hal Cronkhite loved him. He was a great family man; leader, technician, sportsman and a true gentleman.

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