

tion. In order to have a telephone Les had to dig a 1200-foot trench so that the line could be buried. Bit by bit the airport was taking shape and some of the people who now saw it for the first time began to realize the effort and investment that had gone into it.

Every step of the way Les had had to weigh the value of each improvement against the possibility of having to dismantle the whole operation and move it some place else. Now that six years have passed and we are still there, we are beginning to lose less sleep over the matter.

In the six years since moving to Sky Sailing Les has provided several thousand people with their first introduction to our fair sport. The sight of sailplanes on tow, or circling in thermals, or polishing the ridge, is an everyday occurrence to motorists on the Nimitz Freeway in the Fremont area. The airport is open every day 'til sunset, and in the summertime that's pretty late. We have a fine group of employees and are especially proud of our three full-time workers. John Slingerland, an ex-Marine Corps Colonel and jet pilot during the Korean War, has many fine qualities which make him very popular with our customers. He is an able manager and has relieved Les of much of the operational burden. Bob Fisher, who gained considerable fame by his coast-to-coast soaring flight in the summer of 1961, is an excellent instructor and very well liked by his students. Barry Jacobsen, the newest member of the team, has been with the operation since early in 1965 and has proved his worth as tow pilot and maintenance man. All three men work interchangeably, either towing or giving glider instruction. On the week ends our crew is rounded out by Cecil Leshner and Wendell Brown, tow pilots, Fisher Forrester and George Powers, instructors, and line boys Dick Butler and George Bernstein.

We make no great claims when it comes to the matter of soaring potential; we don't have the fabulous conditions found on the desert or in the Sierras. When we receive inquiries from people who want to make Gold or Diamond legs for their FAI badges we happily refer them to El Mirage, Tehachapi or Truckee. On a rare day, of which we have perhaps one or two a year, it is possible to make Diamond altitude. In February of 1964 the first one was made by a fledgling glider pilot on his third solo flight. Since then three more have been made, including the gain that permitted Bob Fisher to complete his Diamond badge (no. 48) early in 1966. I can't say that Diamond distance isn't possible, since Bruce Beebe has twice made the 314-mile trip to El Mirage, having begun at Sky Sailing. Of course that too is exceptional rather than the rule.

We feel that our conditions are ideal for training and we are kept busy month after month soloing new students. Our best weather for soaring comes in the winter and spring along with the storm fronts. Being grounded for an entire day because of weather is fairly rare at Fremont. Some of our best flying takes place between showers. The ridge is a perfect spot for five-hour duration attempts, especially in the spring. We do not encourage cross-country flights until May when the hay is cut and fields are more certain to be dry. Off-field landings near the airport are seldom happy occasions and are not looked upon with favor by either the farmers concerned or by Les.



The services offered at Sky Sailing range from the sales of Schweizer sailplanes (Les is the Schweizer dealer for Northern California) through instruction, glider rentals, tows, hangar and tie-down space, instrument and parachute rental and the sale of miscellaneous items. Only Schweizer aircraft are used for glider training. At present the equipment consists of three 2-22's, three 1-26's, one 2-32 and the lease-use of John Baird's 1-23. We also have four Super Cubs, a Cessna 150 and a Cessna 172. The Hummingbird is not used in general service.

The airport altitude is approximately 10 feet above sea level. There are 3000 feet of useable runway of which 1800 feet are paved. Numerous high-tension towers have been erected slightly northeast of the field but have not become any problem as far as the Sky Sailing operation is concerned. By shifting our flight pattern slightly we have been able to stay well clear of them. It would be well for people new to the area to be aware of them, however. The ridge is about four miles long and roughly 2500 feet high. Mission Peak, at the northwest end of the ridge, is its highest point and the most popular slope-soaring spot.

The nearest motel is the Fremont Motor Inn, about two miles away. Sky Sailing Airport is easily accessible from any point in the Bay Area via the freeways and can be reached from San Francisco in about an hour. May we mention that San Francisco is still a very attractive city. We invite you to come to see for yourselves and to keep in mind that the welcome mat is always out at Sky Sailing. We urge you to drop by and get acquainted. And if you want to fly we feel certain that can be arranged as well.