

# Soaring

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## Soaring OVER LEVEL COUNTRY

In our President's open letter to the Directors of the Elmira Area Soaring Corporation published last month he spoke of the possibilities of soaring from auto or winch tow over level country. As examples of what has been done he mentioned the soaring flights from airports at Miami, Florida and Akron, Ohio. To these we can add those of thermal flights at Minneapolis, Minnesota; Valley Stream, Long Island; and Wilmington, Delaware, all located in flat terrain.

We have known for many years that thermals do grow over open, flat country but have chiefly confined our soaring to thermals found near ridges. It has been our experience that very strong thermals originate along slopes, but we have also been able to find and use others over level terrain when soaring cross country.

Probably the strongest and most consistent thermal production will be found over our southwestern deserts in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. There is no question of the possibility of breaking the world's distance record in these conditions, but such a flight might easily end with a landing in rocky, cactus-covered country many miles from food or water. Instead, we

should first see what can be done over the great plains east of the Rocky Mountains. Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and the pan handle of Texas should provide wonderful sites for high performance soaring from winch or auto tow.

At certain seasons of the year the warm, moist gulf tropical air mass moves upward in a generally north-easterly direction, causing unstable conditions over great stretches of country. Lt. Commander Barnaby, working with the aerologist at Pensacola and your editor, compiling Weather Bureau statistics, collected over a period of many years, are studying the possibilities of this region with a view toward organizing a small expedition next spring to test soaring conditions. These conditions sometimes include storm fronts that travel as much as 500 miles cross country during the daylight hours. If we are successful in raising the necessary funds to finance this venture, we can definitely determine the advisability of basing operations for future regional and perhaps even national and international contests in that part of the country.

Lacking the actual flight experiences of such a test, we can already realize certain important advantages of a site located near Amarillo, Texas or Wichita, Kansas. Geographically it would be close to the center of our country, equidistant from California and New York. From a safety and practical viewpoint, the level terrain with mile square fields of farms and ranches provide the best flying country in the world. Last, but certainly not least, all the meteorological statistics that we have been able to gather show conditions for establishing new records for altitude and distance.

Winch tows to more than 1,000 feet altitude are possible on the huge airports and fields in that country and this height should be sufficient to make contact with thermals on an unstable day. Once a pilot has encountered one of these bodies of rising air he can turn his attention to spiralling up in it and heading downwind on his course without the mental hazard of starting off across forests, lakes or mountains.

We have the country and the conditions. It is up to us to go out to find and use them.

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