

Wings

by
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OVER WURTSBORO

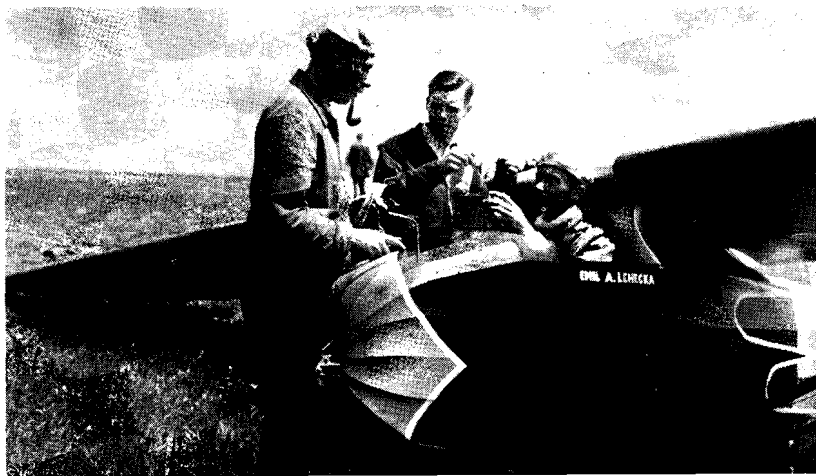
An Account of the Metropolitan Soaring Meet

THE hills and mountains provided a glorious setting with a colorful display of the autumn foliage. The gliders arrived from near and far with a goodly number of eager pilots. It was a beautiful clear morning and the meteorological forecasts were promising—but the weather refused to cooperate.

Thursday and Friday there had been strong northwest winds all day, but as soon as the ships arrived, Boreas departed elsewhere. Such was the condition of things on Saturday morning, October ninth, when we set up our ships at the Wurtsboro Airport. Wistar Brown with his Wolf in tow and I with the Wings Soaring Club's Stevens-Franklin had pulled into Ellenville about midnight Friday. Hearing that the Airhoppers were at Wurtsboro, we drove the ten miles there after an early breakfast.


Arriving on the field we heard the encouraging news that Emil Lehecka in his Cadet, followed by one of his students in a Franklin on his C flight, had succeeded the week before in taking off in auto tow, gliding back to the ridge and soaring up on the slope wind. With this proof of my theory of last Easter, which I had been unable to try out because of the condition of the field, we decided to base all operations at Wurtsboro rather than on Mt. Mongola if a soaring wind arrived. The superior safety of auto or winch tow over an airport as compared with shock cord on a small mountain clearing, plus the fun of taking off at the foot of a mountain and climbing above it, made this decision easy.

With "Sully" Sullivan as official timer, activities started at 11:00 a.m. with my flight in the Stevens-Franklin, which kept me aloft 2 minutes, 10 seconds while I made a 360° glide. This set the pace for most of the day's gliding, which varied from flights of 1 min. 10 sec. to 4 min. 30 sec. Altogether, 55 flights totalling 2 hrs. 1 min. 45 sec. were put in by five ships flown by twelve pilots before activities were stopped by darkness. The Wings ship was flown by Sam Freeman, Antelo Devereux and yours truly, making a total of 45 min. 29 sec. in eleven flights. The Airhoppers' Franklin, piloted by Art Hoffman, Brookhart, and Robert Brandt, put in a total of 16 flights and 33 min. 18 sec. Felix Chardon's Franklin, representing the North Jersey Soaring Association, was also flown by Carlton Schaub and Chet Decker on 13 flights covering 28 min. 28 sec. Seven flights



Sully talks to Emil Lehecka in his Cadet before take-off.

Fred T. Loomis


totalling 14 min. 30 sec. were put in by Gus Scheurer's Franklin flown by Gus and Don Lawrence, representing the Aero Club Albatross. The Göppingen Wolf, also enrolled under the banner of the Wings Soaring Club, was flown by its owner, Wistar Brown, and I for three flights totalling 9 min. 3 sec.

The light breeze, which had been west all day, swung around to south in the middle of the afternoon and, every now and then, picked up a bit. This made possible the only soaring flights of the day, 8 min. 1 sec. and 12 min. 6 sec., which I made with the Stevens-Franklin over the low, wooded knoll just across the highway north of the field. This "button", as someone called it, is about 125 feet high and 400 feet long. Soaring over it was quite an experience as I was rarely as high as 100 feet above the trees and often just skimming the red and yellow leaves. I remember getting a good bump right over a big scarlet colored maple as I turned steeply each time at one end of the "ridge". Both flights could have been longer but I dropped down and landed to make room when I saw someone else come up to try it. Gus Scheurer, Felix Chardon, Art Hoffman and one or two others almost held on in standard Franklins but had to give up to the cries of "Come on down!"—"Give up"—from fellow club members who saw their ships whistling along almost in the branches.

Sunday morning turned out to be a miserable day, with a nor'easter bringing in rain and a low ceiling, so we all turned over again after shutting off our alarm clocks and slept until late. About eleven, an expedition of five car loads of soaring enthusiasts drove up to Sam's Point to