

Soaring

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
SOARING SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.

EDITORIAL OFFICES: ROOM 502, 1500 LOCUST STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

STATE RECORDS

Recently it has come to our attention that we have overlooked the potentialities of a new incentive—state records for best soaring performances. To the average glider pilot, newly initiated into the thrills of gliding and soaring, national and international records seem about as far away as the moon, so why not encourage the recognition of lesser records for each of the forty-eight states?

For publicity purposes, there is something almost magic about the word "record". We have found that the local press will give almost as much headline space to a new record for its particular state as to a national record. As we must always watch the soaring publicity possibilities, this is another way to keep motorless flying before the public.

In the matter of friendly rivalry between groups in various states, this idea would also seem to have real merit. A Californian holds the duration record among the states (the Hawaiian Islands not counted as a state). Yet Michigan came close to taking it away from the sunshine state, when Dick Randolph made his night flight and established the new Michigan record of 12 hr. 8 min.

In pursuing this subject further it soon becomes apparent that many states have yet to have a record of any sort made. For instance, there had never been more than a very short soaring flight in Tennessee or in Texas until the SSA expedition last spring. The Tennessee endurance record is now 4 hr., the altitude record 6,000 ft. Unless Harland Ross has since eclipsed it, the Texas endurance record stands at 5 hr. 47 min., and the distance at 212 miles. (Distance will have to count for the state where the flight originated.) The fine new Texas altitude record of 7,000 ft., by Harland Ross, is described in this issue.

This brings us to the subject of recognition of state records. As they are not national, there is no need for official witnessing by representatives of the NAA. However, to be accepted by the SSA and listed in SOARING, we must have either the word of someone well known to us or the barograph trace and information sent us by one of our officers, directors, or heads of regional associations. For instance, if Jay Buxton, director of the SSA, writes that some Southern California pilot has exceeded John Robinson's California altitude record, we will take his word for it, and so report.

As this is intended as an informal discussion of this subject, as well as a request for new information and ideas, as much as an editorial, we propose that new distance records exceed former ones by at least five miles—not five per cent. It has always seemed that this ruling of the F.A.I. was unfair and inconsistent with the requirements for new altitude and duration records being definite measurements over the old marks. These remain constant at 100 meters and 1 hr., so should be continued. The five per cent over required for the distance record makes it increasingly hard to establish a new record, in view of the great distances being made. We feel that Bob Stanley should hold the American distance record today, as he actually exceeded the old mark by 7 miles.

To go back to state records, we would very much like to get a list of as many state records as have been made, no matter how unofficially. As we now have members in all states where gliding has a foothold (our membership includes all states except South Dakota), we should be able to get these figures, if only you all will cooperate. If you know of a flight of several hours duration, several thousand feet altitude, or more than 5 miles distance, having been made in your locality, this may constitute a mark for your state for others to shoot at. So please let us hear about it—who, when, where and how much. We want soon to list all existing state records.

In the matter of raising prize money or trophies for regional meets, it would be worthwhile using some suggestion such as is in effect with the duPont Altitude Trophies and the Bendix Distance Trophies at Elmira,

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