



Upper: "Sloanto" turning over sand hills of Redondo Beach, the "Peapod" in the background.
Lower: Looking due east with tow road in center.

Another crack-up, fatal to a well-known maker of primary gliders, almost caused the abandonment of the site. He was notorious for diving at any person within reach. This day he was flying an old long wing sailplane that he boasted had never been under a roof since it was made. The wings were so flexible that he put on an extra set of flying wires outboard of the original set, to avoid having to fly with reverse aileron. That is, when left aileron was pulled down, instead of the wing going up normally, it would flex up at the rear and down at the nose. This "hunting" around of the wings made it almost unmanageable at anything above slow cruising speeds. With a strong wind blowing, and altitude easy to make, he couldn't resist diving at another ship ahead. He never pulled out. The wing folded back over the fuselage and it hit the edge of the cliff and tumbled to the beach below.

Also, there were accidents that were amusing, even to the victim. One fellow in a primary tried flying through a barbed wire fence that he "forgot about". A barb wire made a deep scratch clear across his stomach, and another wire removed his shirt. He got quite a kick out of showing his gash and was quite proud of the resulting scar. In the last few years, there has been a lot of flying time piled up by all types of ships, without an accident of any kind. As all the pilots now, even Don Stevens, use a reasonable amount of judgment, this would seem to prove that sane flying is safe, even at Palos Verdes.

Perhaps this site has the most picturesque setting of any regularly used field in America. Situated at the south of the Santa Monica Bay, over thirty miles of interesting beach is in plain sight, even from the take-off. With a little altitude, Anacapa Island is visible at sea, forty miles to the northwest. From about 5000 feet, on a clear day, Catalina Island, 20 miles southwest, looks

like an easy glide. Then, looking back inland, and to the southeast, around the hills, is San Pedro harbor, where, behind the five mile breakwater, just now most of the major battleships of our Navy are anchored. From San Pedro, northward forty miles to San Fernando, are many towns, all within the city limits of Los Angeles, which, from the air, seems to take in most of Southern California. When flying at night, the lights of all the beach cities, Hollywood and Los Angeles (Hawthorne, too), make an unbelievably beautiful sight, not exceeded by even the colorful sunsets at sea. When making my first flight lasting into the night, I got a great kick out of seeing the setting sun shine on the underside of my wings as I faced the west wind. Also, as daylight disappears, one is impressed by his time in the air when he sees the lights pop on in one town after another.

The Palos Verdes Hills are fifteen hundred feet high, eight miles long and four miles wide, with the shore line reaching two-thirds of the way around. The land side is for the most part low and wet, so there is very little chance of picking up a thermal with which to start a distance flight. This isolation of the hills has, so far at least, restricted their use to slope soaring, although altitudes of 5000 feet are frequently reached. A mile high would seem like a good start for cross-country flights most any place, but not so here, as yet.

The north winds, which are the strongest and last longer than any others, come frequently after a rain. Our rains are restricted to the late winter and spring months. These winds strike the hills broadside, permitting flights east and west of nearly twelve miles, as the lift often holds for a mile or two beyond where the hill ends. To fly down or cross wind would carry you out to sea from either east or west, and, so far, no one has made more than seven miles inland into the wind.

The west winds on warm days start about 9 a.m., reaching their maximum velocity late in the afternoon, and frequently hold up into the night. They strike the cliffs and west shore line head on, so north and south flights of over fifteen miles have been possible. The hills, from our present take-off site, are useless when the wind occasionally comes from the southeast or southwest. The southeast winds make a downwind, downhill take-off with no lift, and the southwest winds, if they reach us at all in the lee of the point, are very turbulent.

We used to launch from various good places on the hilltop, but, after some of the fellows specialized in spot landings in the numerous Jap vegetable gardens, we were discouraged in their further use, especially if the sheriff pointed out the disadvantages. However, once launched from our field at the bottom, we are as free as the gulls to roam above the "big hill".

If in the summer time you take your glider out and the wind fails, your day is not lost entirely. An easy scramble down the cliffs and you are on the beach, where you can get a lot of swimming or sunburn. Nearby is Malaga Cove, a favorite surf for paddle boards. If you like sea fishing, there are two large barges off shore. Then, Redondo, too, is a typical beach town, with the usual amusements.