



Fritz Asbeck
Sanborn taking off Mt. Diablo Site.

Back in 1932, Mt. Diablo was suggested by Secretary Faxon Atherton, of the Soaring Society of Northern California, as a launching site for a formation flight of the club's sailplanes on a possible distance flight. Nothing was done about it at the time, but we understand that a member of the Martinez Glider Club, then in existence, took off from somewhere near the top of the 3,800 foot peak in a primary glider for a long glide. Fred Barnes was a member of that club and probably had something to do with the flight.

Gil Walters explored the peak in the first part of this year and selected Deer Flat, at 2,800 feet elevation and facing west, as the best looking site. Through the kindness of Mr. A. E. Henning, Chief of the Division of State Parks, and J. H. Covington, executive secretary of the State Park Commission, permission was secured to use this site for one day.

On Sunday, April 24th, Dan Sanborn, with his Grunau 8, and Walters, with the "Pegasus", took off from the site during a lull in a light storm and were easily able to contact cloud currents. Walters made a short goal flight back to Livermore Airport, where the ships were hangared, while Sanborn landed at "Campis", a practice site where Steves and Doyle happened to be flying their utility at the time. The distances were 16½ and 9½ miles respectively.

Because of the success of the first flights, Atherton was able to secure from Messrs. Henning and Covington and the California Division of Parks, permission to use the Mt. Diablo State Park Site at any time. Next flights were made by Dan Sanborn in September during a strong inversion. No updrafts were encountered during a seven-mile glide from the site to Clayton. There was no wind during the flight, but the shock cord launching was easily negotiated from the site.

Sanborn again tried Diablo during the passage of another storm front. It was raining this morning when the members arrived at the Livermore hangar to get out the ship, but the storm lifted when the ship was part way to the Mt. Diablo site. When they arrived at the site, the ceiling was below the take-off point, in other words, the cloud base was below 2,800 feet. However, it gradually began to rise when the ship was being assembled. As the club members went up the mountain, they noticed

Soaring SITES - XI MT. DIABLO, California

by A. F. HOEFELICH

that the passage through the cloud base level was defined by a big drop in temperature, which denoted a super-adiabatic lapse rate and very favorable cloud flying conditions.

Wind velocity at the time was about 10 miles per hour, the highest on the three trials of the site, the first flight take-offs having been made in wind velocity of only about 3 miles per hour. A good take-off was made with only five persons on the cord. Sanborn was able to get most of the data for his article published in this issue on this flight, during which he made about two and a half hours duration and 13 miles distance.

Thanks to Warden R. S. Coon, of the Mt. Diablo State Park, all our tests have gone off without hitch. The Warden has even helped out on the shock cord when we were short handed. Also all telephone calls for tow car directions have been handled through his office so that much time has been saved in retrieving the ships.

Diablo has proven a fine addition to the Altamont Pass Site, which lies 18 miles to the southwest of this mountain. (See SOARING, January 1938, page 4). From the observation platform at 3,804 feet on the top of Diablo, one can follow the flight of a sailplane from 12 to 15 miles with the naked eye and can see over a greater area of the United States than from any other soaring site in the country. This is a valuable point for spectators, as on distance flights, the ships can be followed for considerable periods instead of being immediately lost to sight.

We hope that some of the eastern soaring pilots with their high performance ships will visit us during our World's Fair Meet and show what kind of distance can be accomplished from this site.

THE REIHER

(Continued from Page 4)

trimming tab mechanism. E is the trimming tab control cable and f is the elevator horn.

Flown by Hanna Reitsch, the Reiher placed sixth in the 1937 International Contest, during which it made a goal flight of 218 miles. With the same pilot, it placed first in the Goal Flight Contest from the Island of Sylt to Breslau in 1938. Flown by Spaete that year, it placed first in the 19th Rohen Contest on the Wasserkuppe with best distance of the meet of 278 miles.

SPECIFICATIONS

Span: 19 m (62.7 ft.)
Wing area: 19.36 m² (208 sq. ft.)
Aspect ratio: 1:18.64
Weight empty: 220 kg (484 lbs.)
Disposable load: 100 kg (220 lbs.)
Best sinking speed (@ 55 km or 35 mph) .53 m/sec.
Best gliding ratio: (@ 67 km or 42 mph) 1:33