

Contest

AMERICAN OPEN

by Victor Saudek

L. D. "Monty" Montgomery, of Detroit, flying the XYZ "Wolf," swept into first place in the American Open with a remarkable cross-country goal flight from the Sleeping Bear sand dune to Northport Airport, some 32.5 miles north. Riding ahead of a black cloud in a lift that reached 20 feet per second, for several minutes at a time, "Monty" left the stiff, rough, ridge, flying for the exhilarating altitude of 6790 feet above point of release. He crossed over his goal with about 2500 feet left and, rather than make a tricky seven-mile hop from there to the next spot of land, he spiraled down, content with having attained "Silver C" altitude and distance, and the first cross-country goal flight from a sand dune.

At the award banquet he was informed that he was the new American Open Champion and was ceremoniously presented with two silver cups, one for himself and one for the XYZ Soaring Club of Detroit, of which he is President.

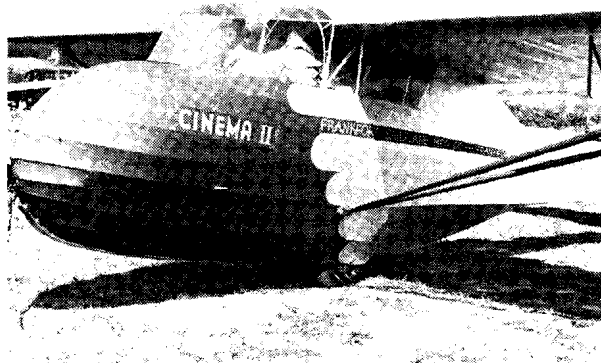
On the whole, the weather conditions for the Meet were very flat. A stagnant, high-pressure area over Ontario, Canada, jammed up the whole works and either dissolved, halted or devitalized the fronts that would have meant fresh North or West winds. The conditions over the new Thermal Site, which was known as "Siberia," due to lonesomeness of the country-side, were far below par, and only four cross-country flights of over seven miles were made. Two of these were 23 mile goal flights to Traverse City. The first one, Stan Corcoran's, in the "Cinema II," won the \$50.00 goal prize put up by the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce. This flight put Stan in second place in points. Alcide Santilli, flying the XYZ Wolf followed Stan a short time later the same afternoon. The first distance flight from "Siberia" was 7½ miles, made by Harland McHenry, who landed near

Copemish, and, on the last day, after the Meet was officially closed, Santilli again, in the Wolf, made 8½ miles. Dallas Wise was the most consistent performer in Siberia, working his Franklin to 3100 feet above an 1100 feet release, and 2200 feet above an 1150 feet release, both in the same afternoon. The best altitudes made here, under the poor prevailing conditions, ranged from 2300 to 3550 feet.

A great many ridge flights of from 1 to 5 hours, 20 minutes, were made on the dunes at the old "Sleeping Bear" site, off Milton Peterson's Beach over Crystal Downs, and from Benson's Field over the Elberta dunes. The first Sunday of the Meet saw nearly every ship at Frankfort Airport, where over 100 flights were put in on that quiet day, to the great enjoyment of a crowd of over 8000 people.

During the days of no slope winds, many pilots trekked inland to Siberia. Siberia is a fairly smooth series of fields which form two straight runways of 4000 feet by 200 feet, running both north and south and east and west. One of these fields is so large that diagonal runways of 3200 feet can be put in very easily. The runways, as used during the Meet, were just dragged and rolled roads. Special level landing fields are indicated near the ends of each runway. At the east end of the E. W. runway, across the road, is a barn, which, with a little work, could easily hold five gliders, with trailers and equipment. There are also two cabins which, we are assured, could be lived in, if a lot of cleaning were done. These last items are quite important, for the field now lies 19 miles by road from Frankfort. A new diagonal concrete highway is being put through which will bring Siberia within 14 miles of Frankfort in the next year or so.

The day after the Meet, Corcoran, in the Cinema II,
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Stan Corcoran about to take off in the Cinema II with airmail



Contest manager John Novak, left, and contest winner L. I. Montgomery