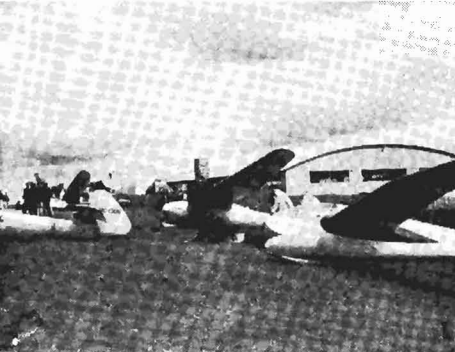


# ALL Soaring CONTEST



Contest officials, front row, left to right Ralph Sweet, Assistant; Floyd J. Sweet, Chairman of Contest; Maurice L. Waters, General Manager, Nowak, and R. E. Franklin, Head Timers. Back row, left to right, John Mulligan, Radio Communicator; Ray Buxton, Contest Director; Gustave Scheurer, Bernard L. Wiggin, Meteorologist. G. Grant Mason, member Civil Aeronautics Board, from his first soaring flight with Lewin B. Barstow. Planes awaiting their turn at the towplane. 1940 National Soaring Champion, John Robinson, Elmer, California. Chester J. Decker, Hawthorne, New Jersey, won the 1940 contest.



The peak attendance of the contest was on Sunday, July 7, when 15,000 persons visited Harris Hill. Sunday was another day for testing the skill and patience of the pilots. John Robinson led with a flight of 108 miles to Utica, New York. Chester Decker was second with a flight of 77 miles and William Putnam third with a flight of 75 miles. The crowd was given a real treat when Helen Montgomery, the only woman contestant, gave a beautiful exhibition of aerobatics with the XYZ Club's new "Midwest." Other aerobatic exhibitions were given by Randy Chapman, Emil Lehecka, and Floyd Sweet. Over 70 winch and airplane launchings were made from the hill during the day.

Lady Luck dealt John Robinson a hard blow on his return from Utica Sunday night, when his trailer left the road and rolled over. Fortunately, the damage was not severe and the ship was ready for flight again in two days due to the unceasing efforts of the students and instructors of the Elmira Aviation Ground School. This school played an important part in keeping the ships in competition.

Monday, July 8, showed the lead for championship change hands, when Chester Decker succeeded in overtaking John Robinson when he utilized mediocre soaring conditions to turn in the only performance of the day which exceeded minimum requirements, with a distance flight of 55 miles to Binghamton, New York.

Tuesday, July 9, was another unfavorable day but resulted in a social get-together with all pilots present, the occasion being the annual picnic supper given the pilots by the service clubs of Elmira.

Wednesday, July 10, was a day of considerable activity with 140 launchings from Harris Hill. Cross country flights did not start until Richard Johnson, the youngest pilot, succeeded in catching a thermal at 1:30 P. M.

He was followed immediately by Chester Decker who succeeded in catching the same thermal. Decker turned in the best performance of the day with a 101 mile flight to Hawley, Pa. Richard Johnson landed at Walton, New York, 92 miles from Harris Hill. John Robinson landed in Binghamton, New York, a distance of 55 miles, after an airplane tow from Harris Hill. William Putnam, Howard Blossom, and Robert Buell also made official flights, 21, 20, and 13 miles respectively. Stanley Smith, 1933 champion, flew a Schweizer 2-place with passenger to an altitude of 4200 feet, which placed him in position to win the \$25.00 "Smilin' Jack" award for the greatest altitude with passenger.

Milton Girton, our enthusiastic CAA inspector, slightly damaged the Airhoppers' 2-place Schweizer when he made a forced landing on a 35° slope of a pasture near Harris Hill. With him at the time was August Raspet of College Park, Maryland, who was running some tests on his thermal "sniffers" with which he had equipped the ship. Gus has obtained considerable valuable information regarding the structure of thermals by the use of lateral "sniffers" on the wingtips and fore and aft "sniffers" on the fuselage. The instruments he used this year were much more sensitive than those used in last year's experiment.

In the evening the Junior League of Elmira entertained the pilots with a delightful picnic supper in the mess hall at Harris Hill. Good food, songs and good fellowship were enjoyed by all.

Thursday, July 11, was a day of rain and fog. John Robinson attempted to catch a thunder storm but he was unsuccessful since the storm broke so sharply that the lift before the storm passed before he could be launched. Chester Decker was leading Robinson at this point, by a margin of 200 points.

Friday, July 12, was another dull day so far as soaring was concerned, since weather conditions did not permit a single official flight. However, in the evening the pilots were very graciously entertained at a lawn party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William L. McGrath. Mr. McGrath has been a director of the SSA and a booster for soaring in Elmira for many years. The pilots look forward to this party with much pleasure each year.

Saturday, July 13, was one of those days that always makes a successful meet. The wind was from the northwest, cumuli were forming at about 4,000 feet early in the morning, and the wind was fairly strong. This meant but one thing, that if national records were to be broken, this was the day! John Robinson was first off by airplane tow at 11:45 A. M. He was immediately followed by Chester Decker who was less successful in catching a thermal and he was forced to land in the valley and return for a second start. Following in rapid succession were Robert Stanley with Earnest Schweizer as passenger in a Schweizer 2-place sailplane, Udo Fischer in his "Wolf," William Putnam in a "Midwest," Richard Johnson in a "Baby Albatross," Randy Chapman in an LIT sailplane, Dana Darling in his "Cadet" and Craig Miller in the Purdue "LaPaloma," and Walter White in the AITI sailplane.

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