

usually 6,000 to 8,000. Silver C altitude flights present the least of our Silver C problems. Almost anybody can knock off 3,000 or 4,000 feet once they connect. Lifts vary from 6 in., up to as much as 40 feet in dry thermals.

But you will see that a flight of 7,000 feet or so here is an absolute of 12,000 or more, and it's darned cold up there. Our national altitude record, a particularly creditable cloud flight carried out in Hjordis with only an air speed, cross level and compass, by Evert Dommissee, is 12,624 feet. Dommissee was floating about at somewhere near 18,000 feet in a jacket, shirt and trousers, and he has never been so cold in his life.

Our skies swarm with vultures, and we estimate that superb soaring conditions exist for at least 300 out of 365 days a year, to be utilized by any unit properly equipped. The only dud days are those whereon the whole club has turned out, machines are mended, winches are in perfect order and cars and trailers ready.

These are the South African licences:

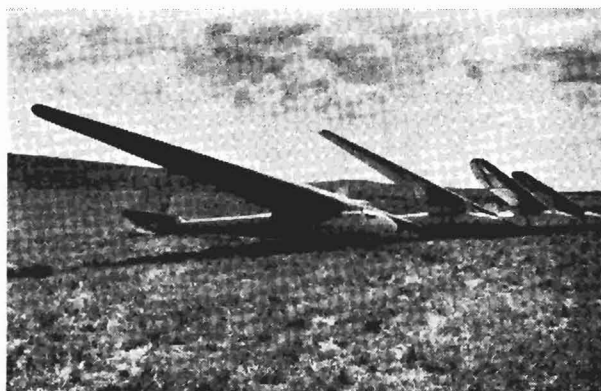
A Licence: One straight glide of at least 30 seconds duration in a primary from 200 feet. At least 12 successful glides must precede the test.

B Licence: Four flights of at least a minute, including two spot landings, machine to touch down inside, and stop within, a circle of 60 yards in diameter. All flights to include S turns.

C Licence: A five minute flight above the launching point if the machine is bungy-launched from the ridge and an official observer is noting the flight; or above the lowest point on the barogram if the winch is used for the launch.

We demand a very high standard of spot-landing here because of our permanent hazards in the veld of anthraps and rock outcrops, the ever-present and ubiquitous barbed wire fences and party telephone lines which are a national agricultural feature.

After an immense amount of skulduggery at Quagga-poort—the name, by the way, means a gap in the hills through which quaggas (extinct things which looked like zebras) used to run—we persuaded the government to make us a road down the front of the ridge, and another up an old artillery track up the back of the ridge. Quagga-poort site is adjacent to a military rifle and machine-gun range. We are quite accustomed to soaring while practice is in progress; and ricochets mean nothing to us. We use the low bungalow of the shooting range as a club-house and work-shop, and share a hangar at



By the pale light of the dawn. Rand Gliding Club's fleet ready for action. Note cumulus already forming (8 A. M.)

the top of the ridge with the Defence Gliding Club. This hangar is made from an old war-time Bessoneau portable hangar. The Defence Club mounted it in concrete and covered it with galvanized corrugated iron instead of canvas. It is very good indeed, and holds 12 machines easily, fully-rigged.

We use winch launching almost exclusively here. Our winch is a Studebaker President Eight motor installed in a Studebaker chassis behind a tremendous Morris lorry (truck) radiator. Though heavy it is portable, very powerful and highly satisfactory. We used for a year aircraft control cable (3/16 in. flexible) and got launches of 1200 feet. Now we use 5/16 in. locally made stuff with seven strands and hemp cords, and it works fairly well.

The Transvaal Pioneer for years used auto-launching, but have been converted to winch launching, and now have the most luxurious thing imaginable. It is a 1939 Cadillac motor ex a crash, with hydraulic brakes and whathaveyou. It is mounted on a Ford V-8 lorry.

At Swakopmund, a former port in the midst of an appalling desert of sand-dunes in South West Africa, there is Segelflug Swakopmund, a small but effective school for boys. The desert is flat and hard like a tennis court, and they simply auto-launch about 15 miles one way, and then 15 miles the other way. Their primary has wheels. Then they soar in the trade-winds off the sea against the Roaring Dunes, which are about 300 feet high and make a thrumming noise in the wind. The gliding club is the only thing Swakopmund possesses or breeds besides politics and, of all things, wooden window-frames. It has the run of the town, and may trundle its machines on its trailer fully rigged about the streets.

We have suffered for some time for lack of cross-country facilities, trailers being the main difficulty. The Transvaal Pioneer, which imported beautiful trailers from Germany, has done the most cross-country work.

For three years the movement was given a subsidy of L750 from the government to split up and spend. This worked out at from L60 to L100 per club, and was useless to all but the smallest. Then a local millionaire, Sir Abe Bailey, gave L10,000 to encourage Civil Aviation.

This was given to the Aero Club of South Africa to administer. At that time we were the only section of civil flying under a controlling body—the South African Gliding Association, which represents all clubs, governs records, provides F.A.I. observers and so on. We were



Quagga-poort Winch-Launching site. Ridge in background