

A VISIT TO AMERICA

from "Avia"

In July, when Europe was not aware of the nearness of war, Mr. Albracht sailed on the Statendam for a speedy trip to New York where he was met by his brother. After a short visit to the New York World's Fair, they travelled to the soaring center, Elmira, approximately 250 miles from New York.

On this special small soaring mountain they were greeted by the head instructor, and it wasn't long before he was invited for a trip in a two seater. The lift seemed to be very strong. Immediately after the take-off, they went up at the rate of seven feet per second and had a beautiful panorama of the surroundings. For soaring, Elmira is ideally situated. A small start with an automobile and you soar for hours with a solo or two seater above the hills.

After Elmira, the trip was via Niagara Falls to Frankfort on Lake Michigan. This place is the most ideal soaring center of the United States; the high dunes and the lake face in three directions and for that reason offer ideal soaring with any wind direction. Besides that, in the middle of these hills is a beautiful flying field which is used very much by the soarsers.

"Is the sport there on the same scale as in Western Europe or is it encouraged as, for instance, in Germany?"

"Well, really," he said, "in the United States there is a sort of in-between. The government is very much interested in soaring but does not bother itself with the organization of the various schools and clubs. You can compare those with our soaring clubs and the Institute of Soaring."

"To give you proof of this most of the schools, as for instance at Elmira and Frankfort, receive \$200 per pupil for which amount the entire course is given and they receive a 'B' license [CAA Training Program]." *Ed.*

"You spoke about the record flight of Ted Bellak. Was the ship used on this flight an American make or one that is used in these parts?"

"The flight was made with a Minimoa which Bellak himself brought from Germany. So you see that the New World with its soaring cannot entirely do without the old. While in the United States I saw some very good ships, but there were not very many high performance ships. They use mostly the Smith two place, with seats side by side, the Franklin gull-wing and the Franklin utility. Corcoran, a very able young engineer, builds the Cinema, a very excellent ship, in which I made several flights. It loses only two and a quarter feet per second and is so maneuverable that it is excellent to learn stunting."

"On the invitation of the Goodyear factories I made a flight in one of their well-known blimps, a 30 meter long compressed air ship. Starting from Bendix Airport near New York we travelled for an hour and a half over the city and the Hudson river, a majestic sight above all the skyscrapers. Part of this time I managed the ship and was surprised by the great maneuverability. One of these things has the advantages of an airplane and a balloon."

"I made several trips on the airlines, but to understand the comfort and convenience of the modern Douglas and Lockheed, it is not necessary to go to the United States."

GOLDEN "C" SOARING FLIGHT

by John Robinson

On Sunday morning June 11, 1939, weather conditions seemed favorable for a distance soaring flight on this last day of the Southwestern Soaring Contest at Wichita Falls, Texas. I set Amarillo, Texas as my official goal, and then told my ground crew I might head toward Garden City, Kansas, depending on the upper air wind directions.

I checked my equipment, climbed into my sailplane "Robin," and was towed to 300 feet altitude by the winch. Quickly finding a thermal (a rising current of air), I flew in circles to stay within it and thus climbed to about 2500 feet while drifting to the northwest. Plotting my course on my map, I alternately glided down between thermals and climbed within them to as high as 4,000 feet while making good progress on my course toward Amarillo.

When I was within sight of Childress, Texas, I found it increasingly difficult to make headway, and by checking my drift I found the wind direction had changed from southeast to nearly southwest and was getting stronger. Therefore, I headed north toward Garden City as the only alternative. Until this time the sky had been clear, but soon some small cumulus clouds (indicating thermals) appeared ahead. When I caught up with them, they speeded up my progress, but I was out ahead of them in clear sky again before I reached Elk City, Oklahoma

at only 1,000 feet altitude.

There was a baseball game in progress on the only field suitable to land on close to town. Of course I didn't want to stop a ball game, but—then suddenly I found a good thermal, the strongest of the day. I was climbing at the rate of 15 feet per second and soon I was looking back at Elk City from 6,000 feet altitude and feeling relieved.

From this point on I found thermals quite regularly and was able to keep above 3,000 feet altitude constantly. Shortly after I flew over the Canadian River I found a few isolated clouds, and in one of them I reached the highest altitude of the day—7,600 feet above my starting point. By this time I had flown beyond the limits of my airways map, and was endeavoring to continue by road map. Just as I decided I must be about 20 miles south of Woodward, Oklahoma, I found I was over a large airport marked Woodward and an adjacent city. This was fine progress, but it was getting late and this was the last airport shown on my maps. It would be easy to land here, but I needed over 186 miles by airline to get credit for a Golden "C" award, and I wasn't sure this was quite far enough. As I still had 5,000 feet altitude, I glided over Woodward and out over some rough looking country to the north, while the highway I wanted to keep in sight veered northwest.

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