

## Annual West Coast Contest

The 4th Annual Western Championship Contest held at Arvin, Kern County, California, has now passed into history as another glorious milestone in the annals of American soaring. The contest, held from April 12 to April 20, was marked by numerous outstanding events, record flights and a good attendance of both pilots and spectators.

Probably the most notable achievement was the altitude flight by Henry Stiglmeier in which he undoubtedly shattered the American altitude record. Unfortunately, the base setting of his barograph was so far up the drum that the stylus went off the drum long before he had reached his maximum altitude. The pen went off the drum at 19,150 ft., or 16,800 ft. above the field. Deducting 400 ft., the altitude gained on his winch tow, gives Henry an official altitude of approximately 16,400 ft. This falls short of the official record established by Lt. Robert Stanley in 1939. This flight, however, gives Henry the altitude requirement for his Golden "C."

Henry's brother, Herman Stiglmeier, won his "C" on April 19, and a few days later, made his Silver "C" altitude and distance requirements, but he fell short of the 5 hours required for the duration leg.

Howard Morrison earned all three legs for his Silver "C" during the contest. Walter White and Walter Nugent also made legs on their Silver "C" licenses.

Through consistent performances daily, Alan Essery of San Diego won the trophy emblematic of the western championship. Alan compiled a total of 3,377 points as against his nearest rival, Howard Morrison of San Fernando, who had 2,905 points.

Distance flights radiated from the Arvin soaring site through an arc of 180°. The longest flight was 65 miles to Saugus. There were three flights into the Mojave desert terminating on U. S. highway 466. These were respectively, 39, 46, and 53 miles long. There were three flights to Maricopa, a distance of 41 miles and numerous flights to Grapevine and Bakersfield, 25 miles and 22 miles respectively. The longest duration was 5½ hours.

The Arvin contest this year emphasized goal with return flights, the longest being one to Maricopa and return, a distance of 41 miles. Goal flights and return with passengers were made by Alan Essery as follows: town of Arvin (8 miles) five times; Grapevine (25 miles) once; and Maricopa (41 miles) on which flight he fell 5 miles short of completing the circuit.

The following statistics best summarize the accomplishments of the contest:

Number of pilots, 31.

Total number of miles flown, 574.

Total number of hours flown, 247, not counting flights under 10 minutes or airplane tow flights.

Total number of flights made, 308, most by winch and a few by auto, horses, and shock-cord.

4 triple tows and 2 double tows by airplane from Bakersfield.

The first 10 contestants finished as follows:

1. Alan Essery, San Diego, 3377 points.

2. Howard Morrison, San Fernando, 2905 points.

3. Harold Huber, San Fernando, 1594 points.

4. Henry Stiglmeier, Inglewood, 1502 points.

5. Ray Parker, San Diego, 1307 points.

6. Herman Stiglmeier, Inglewood, 1243 points.

7. Richard Johnson, Los Altos, 1161 points.

8. Harland Ross.

9. Volmer Jensen.

10. Walter White.

The CAA was ably represented by the following: Joseph S. Marriott, Regional Manager; Benjamin F. Mayhew, Associate Aeronautical Engineer; John S. Fouche, Jr., Associate Aeronautical Inspector; Theodore E. Hoffman, Associate Aircraft Inspector; and Hugh Brewster, Aeronautical Inspector.

The contest officials provided a headquarters building from which these men transacted such business as was necessary.

An important feature of the 4th Annual Western Soaring Championship Meet was the regular glider stunting show staged by three pilots. This was a great crowd pleaser and helped to swell the attendance. It also demonstrated the practicability of multiple towing and that gliders are built to withstand and are capable of performing all the maneuvers expected of power planes. This demonstrated, too, that motorless pilots can be trained in advanced aerobatics. The stunting exhibitions are described by "Gus" Briegleb as follows:

"Three stunt pilots collaborated in staging six stunt shows during the three week-ends of the 1941 Arvin gliding and soaring contest. This event proved very popular with the crowds and helped to give us a record attendance at the meet. The three pilots participating were Max Archer, flying a Baker-MacMillan Cadet; Don Stevens, flying a Bowlus Baby Albatross; and the writer, piloting one of his own Briegleb BG-6 secondaries. Our tow pilot was Les Buechner, flying a 160 h.p. Challenger-Travelair.

"All six flights were made from Kern County Airport, Bakersfield, with all three gliders in row and there was no difficulty at any time in getting off the ground in good shape and arriving over the gliderport as scheduled, a distance of some twenty miles to the southeast. Towing speed averaged 60-65 m.p.h. and the gliders were each towed on a separate line so that we could maintain a



Alan Essery receives championship trophy from Bob Buhl of contest committee, and Claire Dodd, screen star. Bailey