



The 1941 National Contest Ships lined up for the start. Harris Hill

Loomis.

## TO THE *Atlantic*

By Dick Johnson

On July 8th, 1941, a twenty mile an hour wind was blowing at the slopes of Harris Hill. Cumulus clouds had formed long before we were ready to fly. My ship was a Schweizer two-place and my passenger was Mr. Marion White. I chose him because of his enthusiasm, resistance to air sickness—and also because his 190 lbs. would give us a faster cruising speed.

We took off with a good winch tow at 10:30 A. M. and went out on the ridge to ride the rough air. After gaining 1,000 feet above the ridge, we flew straight into the wind for about a mile in search of lift. There were too many ships to circle in a thermal at the ridge. On the third try, we found a good thermal. The Harvard Baby Albatross had also caught the lift and we climbed to 3,300 feet while drifting far behind Harris Hill. The Baby and I went for two different clouds in search of lift. I found a weak one—and he, evidently, didn't find any as he soon came to our cloud.

The thermals were weak and we used every bit of lift for fear of being forced down before conditions could pick up. Near Sayre we lost sight of the "Baby" but we con-

tinued following down the Susquehanna River at 2500 to 3500 feet altitude.

It was not until we reached Towanda that the thermal became stronger and we could reach the cloud base. Between there and the Pocono Mountains we could see in either direction.

We continued at a fair rate on our southeast course. The cloud base had not been reached for over an hour, although the thermals were at times moderate but short-lived. Every cloud we came to had little or no lift. We reached Plainfield, New Jersey, with 3000 feet, and hopefully hunted for thermals. But we found none. Then we grew desperate and looked for zero sink to lift with. Marion figured we were close to Golden "C" distance, and we wanted at least to reach the Atlantic Ocean. We flew straight down wind and reached a factory at 1200 feet. I hoped to get some lift from a large smoke stack, but there was none. We could see an airport at the edge of the ocean. We arrived there with 400 feet, made a 180° turn over the beach and slid in over a baseball game to a land-

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