



GOAL AND RETURN-Maricopa

by Herman Stiglmeier

(On April 25, under weak soaring conditions, Herman Stiglmeier made a flight from Arvin to Maricopa and return, a distance of 41 miles each way. This was his longest distance flight during his gliding experience and also equalled his best duration record. This particular trip is notable for the fact that the 41 miles outbound was made directly in the face of a 15 m.p.h. wind and across almost absolutely flat country. The flight was made in a Sailplane built by the pilot.)

CONDITIONS on April 25, during the recent Arvin soaring contest (1941), were not very good. The sky was generally overcast and a wind of about 15 m.p.h. was blowing from the west. There were a few thunder clouds coming in occasionally. My brother Henry, flying his Bowlus Baby Albatross, had taken off earlier on a goal and return flight to Arvin, a distance of ten miles each way.

I took off at exactly 1:00 p.m. on an announced goal flight to Maricopa, 41 miles almost due west, and immediately headed out over the valley. But in about 10 seconds from releasing I found a strong thermal of about 10 ft. per second and easily spiralled in it up to the cloud base at 8,400 ft. This was about 6,200 ft. above the takeoff and it had only taken me 20 minutes. At this time Henry came along on the return from his Arvin flight, at about the same altitude as my plane. Since we both had radio equipment for sending as well as receiving, I tried twice to call him, but without success. Later he told me that he had tried twice to contact me. Ap-

parently we both had our sets switched off at the wrong times. We played around for a while at about the same level and flying from 500 to 1,500 feet apart. The updraft area was general over a radius of about half a mile and we both circled easily in the thermal. By now we were almost two miles east of the take-off, while my goal was 41 miles west of it.

Leaving Henry playing around the cloud base I headed for Maricopa. Later I learned that he had gone into the cloud and reached an altitude of more than 20,000 ft. I headed for the next thunder cloud west of me, flying at a speed of 50 m.p.h. and with a sink of about 12 ft. per second. This cloud was about seven miles away and when I arrived under it my altitude had dropped to 7,000 ft., and I was a good thousand feet below the cloud. However, the updraft was strong and with only five or six turns I found myself up to the cloud base. The thermal hit a velocity of 30 ft. per sec. and it was necessary for me to open the spoilers and dive at better than 80 m.p.h. to keep from being sucked into the cloud, even though I purposely kept away from the center of it. As it was I was momentarily sucked into the base for a few moments before diving clear.

Leaving the cloud I flew another three miles to a small cloud almost directly over Arvin but found very little lift and flew right under this one and three other successive clouds as I headed west. Each gave me only weak lift and I circled only once or twice. Heading south in

(Continued on page 12)