

# THE SWEDISH CHAMPIONSHIP COMPETITION

By CHARLES BIRCH-JENSEN

THE Swedish Soaring Championship Competitions took place at Alleberg Mountain, the central school for soaring in Sweden. No doubt this yearly competition is at present the most important event of its kind in the world since the German Rhoen competitions, with good reason, are finished. Sweden is the only country, except Switzerland, where real interest has been shown in soaring during the last six years. This fact is evident when we regard the results achieved.

The competitions were arranged by the Royal Aero Club of Sweden and controlled by Colonel Lt. Hugosson from the Swedish Air Force, a well-known soaring pilot. Eighteen pilots took part in it with as many sailplanes of various types. There was also one Danish pilot who had built his own plane. Thirteen pilots were officers in the Air Force and these men were equipped with the famous German standard plane, Weihe. Two of the civilians were flying the very interesting Swiss type Moswey III, one had an Olympia plane, and the author of this article flew the extremely slow German type Mu 13.

The competition started on July 4th and ran for ten days. Only six were flight days, the rest being reserved for bad weather or rest.

For a northern country Sweden has remarkably good thermals; Alleberg had been especially chosen for its masses of thunderstorms and cold fronts and this period of the summer is considered to be the most suitable for long distance flights. So, when the competition started all conditions should have been first class—and so they proved to be to the last day.

The first day was chiefly used as a warm-up by the pilots. Nobody made more than 34 miles distance and the heights achieved were not high. But it always is lucky when the records don't come the first day—they come with greater safety several days later.

Points were given as follows: Before every start the pilots had a choice of one of 52 numbered fields ranging in distance from 40 to 590 miles. No points were given for landing within a circle of 13 miles from Alleberg. Outside of this circle the pilots received one point per kilometer of flight. Landing on the target field meant an addition of 50% to the distance points, passing the target meant an addition of 25%. Points were also given for height achieved after towing and proportionate pointage was given for small or great heights.

The second day there were no competition flights, however, there was a strange crash. One of the officers, Lt. Lundgren, landed some 20 miles from Alleberg and telephoned to the mountain to be brought back. A thunderstorm was in progress and while he was standing at his plane holding the wingtip, a flash suddenly hit the plane and made him lose his grip. At that



The Author, Mr. Birch-Jensen, Before Take-Off

moment a strong gust of wind lifted the plane up into the air and smashed it back to the ground. No more was left of the ship than some bags full of little wooden sticks. However, the following day he had another plane from the Air Force.

On the second day of competition the weather was not particularly good but good enough to enable Lt. Alm to fly 62 miles and gain 5000 feet of altitude. Many of the other pilots had similar flights that day.

The third day's best flight achieved a distance of 93 miles and more than 10,000 feet of altitude. This and three other flights of the day were better than the one which acquired the most points. The fact that the winner of the day was lucky enough to land on his target enabled him to get the additional distance points.

On the following day of competition many rather long flights were made, four of which were more than 140 miles. There was no possibility of making them any longer because they all stopped at the coast and even if the skillful pilots could have crossed the Baltic in their ships it would not have meant additional points.

The next day opened well but only 125 miles to the south of Alleberg local low pressure stopped all soaring, so that the maximum distance of the day stopped at that figure. More than 10,000 feet of altitude were achieved though. It was now getting exciting—there was only one day left and winners were tipped.

The sixth and last day of the competitions was a good exit. Many excellent flights were made. The best was for 175 miles of distance and 16,700 feet of altitude; the second 158 miles and 13,500 feet; the third 143 miles and 11,500 feet. Most of the other flights were about 125 miles and only a few of the pilots reached less than 10,000 feet. Lt. Holm, who made the longest flight of the day, placed fourth at the end of the competition (from twelfth the day before). Unfortunately he had not designated his landing field as his target or otherwise he would have been the Swedish champion. The new champion was Mr. Brink of the Air Force, who had made a series of very good