



Some Top Performers: Don Pollard, Paul MacCready, Eric Nessler, Ginny Bennis, Myron Wells, Ray Parker, Kemp Trager, and Charles Wingfield.

He started losing the applied numbers off his L-K. He had oxygen, but most of the time he was holding his breath for the airspeed to come down below (censored) so when he finally did steady out, he was happy with the 17,600 feet gained—the contest's top.

Came the 19th and Johnny Robinson crammed an extra lump of sugar into Zanonia's mouth and took off for Honolulu, by Heck! He got a "fur piece" on the way there, too, when after 8½ hours in the air, he landed at Pecos, Texas, fairly close to Old Mexico, 333 miles from home to set a new national single-place distance record. That champion blood did it! That day four pilots soared over 200 miles—substantially over 200 miles!

"OH, MY ACHING BACK!"—literally. The last day, Sunday, permitted no contest points—Thank Goodness! But there they were, back in the air for the final fling at acrobatics and spot landings. Thermal soaring technique demonstrated right over the field for all to see. A lot of people did see; but somewhat sadly, a very large percentage of them came only to see if they would be the lucky one to win the new Ford that was given away. At one time there were 14 sailplanes in the same thermal! Such a sight it was. As usual everyone was going around in the same direction but one! The gang was too tired to check up on who the traffic violator was; besides it made it more thrilling.

On Sunday, the 20th, the Awards Banquet, wound up the show. The fine air-cooled ballroom was filled with tables and the array of trophies behind the speakers' table was quite impressive. There was the usual last minute scramble for two things: Seats at the tables (Why won't people reserve in advance?) and of course, the final scoring and awards decisions came through just as the program started. The highlight was a good earthy talk by the Navy's Rear Admiral C. A. F. Sprague. It was quite significant that the Contest was opened by the Army Air Forces' General Vandenberg, closed by the Navy's Admiral Sprague. Soaring's Captain Ralph Barnaby, of course, introduced Admiral Sprague and told of having given him his first flight in a glider the day before. Jaycee President, Porter Oakes, started the awards ball rolling and new President, E. J. Reeves, did the honors as Master of Ceremonies. Elsewhere are listed the winners of the trophies and prizes. It was fun to see the true sur-



Capt. Barnaby, E. J. Reeves and Admiral Sprague.

prise replace the tension when many of the awards were announced. There was a note however of disappointment as it was realized how highly inflated the point value had become. The Meet had developed into such a super colossal soaring spree, and the field was so packed with high performers that the size of the checks was pretty sad. True, the point award fund was greater than it had been before, but, Oh, Elmer! the points earned totaled to figures like the war debt!

So the 14th was wrapped up and Sheppard Field grew suddenly still and deserted again. But wait, this sketch doesn't give the color, the bright spots, the many thing that helped make it great; at least not in proportion. Let's analyze some of the things that made the wheels go round:

THE OPERATIONS:

Never before had such a top star group of experienced men been on the field at a soaring event in America. This is a measured statement. In charge was Johnny Nowak, the old timer who could tell them what was what and not only make it stick, but make them like it besides. John had handled field operations during the 24-hours-a-day schedule at Lamesa Field during the war when gliders blackened the skies for Uncle Sam. His lieutenants here were Joe Steinhauser, Gus Scheurer on the line, with Stan Corcoran and Bill Putnam working as the smoothest team in the business. They got more sailplanes into the air in shorter order than the most hopeful had hoped—and safely! Hawley Bowlus did the big job of timing to perfection. There was a job. Sixty takeoffs at a rate of one every 1¾ minutes most days. Landings mixed in, goal announcements, passenger names, takeoff cards; everything happened at once, but Hawley, the old master of motorless flying, kept everything straight out there in the sun on top of his and Johnny's mobile operations tower. That was an inspiration. Built on top of an Army surplus "recon truck," 15 feet high, it made the spectacular operation possible. Speaking of being out there in the sun, Steinhauser, Scheurer, Putnam, Corcoran, and their assistants, Art Hoffman, Gene Ardel, Harry Smith (Chief Tow Plane Pilot) really found out what heat was. They got it from both ends. That Texas sun wasn't fooling as it broiled them from the top,