

SIXTH ANNUAL WESTERN CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST

Bishop, California

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ALTHOUGH the Bishop contest was held from June 14 to 21 an interesting account of it has been received and is as follows:

Pibal equipment arrived at Bishop in time to set up and take a first pilot balloon observation on June 13. Since only two members of the Bishop Weather Bureau staff were trained in pilot balloon work, only two such observations a day were attempted. These were taken at times most likely to obtain the data required by the soaring contestants. Generally, an early morning and early afternoon run were taken.

Airway and State forecasts from the teletype were supplemented by several discussions over the telephone with the forecaster on duty at Los Angeles. No formal pilot briefing was employed, but practically continuous use was made of the Weather Bureau facilities by all contestants and the ground crews.

Pilots Reports of conditions aloft were made by Robert Symons and Herman Stiglmeier who had radio transmitters in their sailplanes. In two instances Symons reported temperatures aloft using a very accurate thermopile thermometer of his own design and manufacture. Reconnaissance flights made by Harland Ross in the Bishop Flying Service's Cessna 140 plane were reported to the ground and also picked up by the Weather Bureau on a Hammerlund Receiver. Ross, on June 16, flying the Cessna 140, with a service ceiling of 15,000 feet, investigated an area of altocumulus lenticularis clouds east of the crest of the Sierras. He found a wave in the upper atmosphere at approximately 10,000 feet, reached 19,600 feet—nearly 5000 feet above the ship's ceiling. He carried a passenger, a full gas load and three barographs to record the flight. The climb was due entirely to wave lift since he kept the ship in level flight and even throttled back when he felt the lift. He reported the air was quite rough upon entering the wave, but on the crest, was exceedingly smooth.

Although soaring conditions were considered up to average for this area only two days of the eight, they were plenty good enough, with close attention to weather reports and forecasts.

On the first day of the meet Mr. Robert Symons, president of the Inyo Mono Soaring Association, exceeded the United States record for "Goal and Return" flight by soaring from Bishop Airport to Lone Pine and back—a distance of 112 miles. On the same day four pilots; Symons, Harland, Ross of Bishop,

Stiglmeier of Inglewood, and Myron Wells of Van Nuys, made flights attaining altitudes in excess of 10,000 feet above point of release to satisfy the altitude requirement for Golden "C" awards.

Soaring continued Sunday and Monday, but conditions were only fair. Wells, however, remained aloft more than five hours to satisfy his Golden "C" requirement for duration. This flight on June 15, made up for his missing the five hours the day before by only 15 minutes due to a wrong setting of his watch.

Ross' reconnaissance flight on the 16th and the Monday and Tuesday Pibals showed strong winds aloft within reach of ridge lift to windward and over the White Mountain range east of Bishop. Counting on tail winds, four pilots set Las Vegas, Nevada, for a goal and towed off about noon. Myron Wells of Van Nuys and Don Bernard of Livermore were flying small, light Bowlus Super-Albatross ships, and were forced back to the airport by heavy turbulence. Both pilots were considerably shaken up by small violent thermals over the White Mountains.

Fred Walters of Hawthorne, in a Laister-Kauffman was forced down by a downdraft into a mud lake near Deep Springs in the White Mountains without injury to himself or his ship. The ship was retrieved by him and his brother by means of a jeep the next day without much difficulty. Harland Ross remained aloft for five hours and 48 minutes satisfying the Golden "C" duration requirements, but he failed to make the 186 miles distance requirement when he had to land at Coso Junction in Owens Valley. He made several attempts to cross the White Mountains during this flight, but finally drifted too far south to try for Las Vegas, so he crossed the lower levels of the Sierra range. Knowing from winds aloft reports that the wind at lower levels had a more northerly trajectory, he was enabled to use lift over the east-west spurs of the range and keep aloft. Only exact knowledge of the terrain and winds aloft made this maneuver possible.

Robert Symons released from tow near Black Mountain at 8000 feet at 12:50 P. M. and reached Las Vegas at 6:26 P. M. on a goal flight. He completed the requirements for his Golden "C" award. The distance from point of release was 192 miles, time aloft, five hours and 36 minutes and he reached 15,500 feet during the flight, although he was also nearly forced to land twice.