



Starting out at 3000 ft. over Elmira in the Polish-built "Orlik."

## West to Ohio

By PAUL MacCREADY, Jr.

Here National Champion MacCready gives a first-hand account of his 222-mile flight from Elmira, N. Y., to Middlefield, Ohio. Not only was this the longest flight made from Harris Hill since 1941 and the longest flight ever made in a westerly direction from Elmira, but it is believed to be the longest soaring flight made anywhere in the world in 1948.—Ed.

**W**EATHER Man Barney Wiggins was just about as specific as a weather forecaster could be when he addressed the pilots' meeting on July 8 at Elmira's 1948 National Contest.

With the minimum use of such words as "probably," "generally" and "perhaps," Barney told us that the big thick slice of cold air we had been tracking for days had finally arrived. The air mass was very unstable and about 8000 feet thick. Potentially, he concluded, the day appeared to be as good as any he had seen at Elmira.

With these words the meeting broke up and the pilots and their ground crews fell to the work of setting up their ships. I and my "Orlik" had a slight lead in the Contest, but Johnny Robinson and his "Zanonia" were close behind.

By 10 A.M., just as a few clouds were beginning to appear, the Orlik was all set up and ready to go. The clouds were good looking cumulus, of the sort asso-

ciated with strong upcurrents. As they grew more numerous a guinea pig sailplane was sent up—only to come down immediately.

By 11:30 the clouds made one think even a primary glider could soar with spoilers open—and yet another test sailplane was barely able to keep aloft. The weather looked so wonderful, however, that the pilots voted to get started, and by noon the very rapid production-line launching was underway.

The wind was very light; its forecasted direction was principally from the North and it was expected to swing around to Northeast if one flew South from Elmira. Consequently, all the pilots, including myself, designated spots to the South or Southwest as their goals.

Around noon the Orlik was on the line and my crew was taping the canopy shut after tuning the radio. On each flight of the Contest we had tried a different antenna installation because the one tried previously had never worked as well as desired, and thus last minute adjustments were always necessary.

Then the Orlik was airborne. The tow pilot did his usual fine job—he towed the glider so that it was under the center of the best looking cumulus when the altitude for release was reached. I cut loose and ambled about looking for the upcurrent that was supposed to be near—but there was none.