concerting visions kept appearing before my eyes, spending the night shivering under one thin blanket, a seven or eight mile walk to a telephone, an uncomfortable longing for a well-lighted airport where there was food and a bed. At this point, the one crumb of comfort was highway 80, leisurely outstretched below, its wide gravel shoulders ready to be of service.

The airspeed indicated 60 mph for absolute maximum glide, wings level, air very smooth, no need to move the controls for any reason. It was a matter of sliding down a hill of air with eyes straining for some sign of habitation.

The rate of sink showed 150 feet per minute. In ten minutes, only 1500 feet of altitude was lost. A small pond reflected the last fading light of the western sky as I sank past 3000 feet on the altimeter. The ground was close now. An upwind landing seemed unnecessary, for the drift in the last smoke thermal had indicated only a four mile an hour tailwind.

At 2900 feet on the altimeter, the highway was less than 200 feet below. Soon the tops of the telephone poles began whizzing by the wing tips. Then I was looking up at the telephone poles, but gliding on!

The terrain seemed to be slightly downhill. Suddenly, as I made contact with the pavement, a building loomed into view in the semi-darkness. With a controlled landing run, I turned off the pavement onto the gravel to stop directly in front of the C & B Cafe and Service Station just three miles short of Barstow, Texas, at 8:10 p.m. A dog began to bark, and Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Swafford, owners of the cafe, came out to investigate the apparition.

Requesting use of their telephone, I explained that I was a contestant in the glider contest at Wichita Falls, over 320 miles away. Mrs. Swafford was very genial and knew quite a bit about the Contest. "By the way," she said, "Have they raffled off that Ford yet? I have a ticket on it!" It could happen only in Texas!

A phone call to excited headquarters at Wichita Falls determined that I had flown 333 miles, as measured on their maps. I had glided 14 miles in 13 minutes with that last 2000 feet of altitude, producing a glide ratio of 35 to 1 in very smooth air with a slight tailwind.

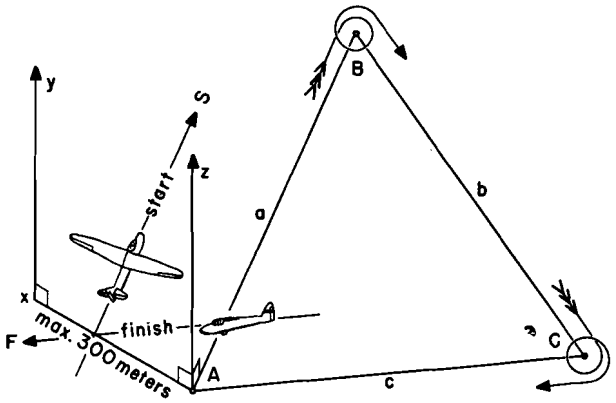
Due to the change in wind direction during the early part of the afternoon, my ground crew, John Olley of Van Nuys, Calif., and Burt Eldredge of Elmira, N. Y., plenty worried, was standing by in Abilene.

Two-way radio would have been a great aid in keeping contact with the crew. During later months, working with the FCC, we did develop one. Olley, my crew chief, has done an amazing job of tracking my whereabouts during past Nationals, frequently appearing at a distant airport only minutes after I had landed. Experienced contest pilots know they can never underestimate the importance of a good crew, for the pilot's success is largely due to the crew's ability to make decisions which will result in the pilot's being retrieved speedily and safely, with equipment intact and ready for the next day's flying.

Later calculations of the flight by the National Aeronautic Association, using the radius of the earth's surface as a means of computing the distance, resulted in the official figure of 325 miles as the new Official U. S. Distance Record for single-place gliders.

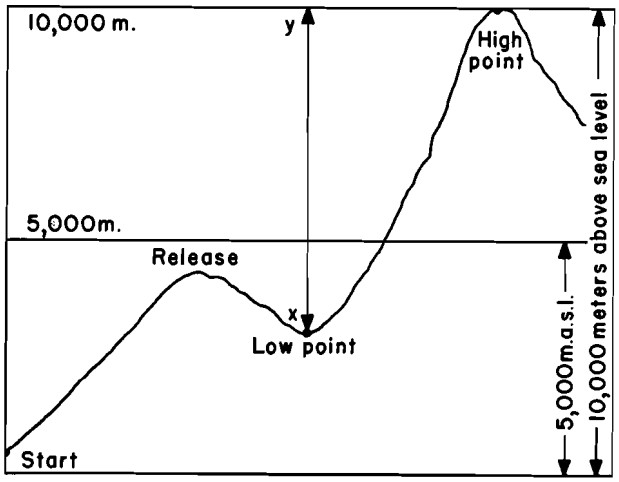
NEW RECORD CATEGORIES

Here is the latest information available on the two new soaring record categories: Speed Around 100 km. Triangular Course and Absolute Altitude.



Speed—legs a, b and c must be a minimum of 30 km. each; total distance must be at least 100 km; the loss in altitude between the starting height and landing must not exceed 1% of the distance covered; a 360° turn must be done around B and C; height of glider at point A, B and C is left to the discretion of the pilot; the figure certified to will be the mean speed on the course; the times of departure and arrival are clocked when the glider passes through the verticaltical plane A-x-y-z-; x-A must be at right angles to A-B; previous record must be exceeded by 2 km. per hour.

Present regulations state "a watch of the usual precision is sufficient, provided that it has been tested in the preceding hour or that it is under control." They also state that a barograph should be carried in the tow plane.



Absolute Altitude—the requirements are the same as those for Altitude Above Low Point with these exceptions: the gain in altitude from low point to high point must be at least 5000 meters; release may be made at any altitude; the Record Height will be the Absolute Altitude reached.

For more detailed information on the above contact Fritz Compton, Chairman SSA Contest Committee, 2244 S. W. 23rd Terrace, Miami 33, Florida.

100 km. equals 62.137 miles. 1000 meters equals 3280 ft. 10 in.

The Swiss have established a single-place mark of approximately 43.25 mph. and the Russians claim a speed of 37.66 mph. in a two-place glider.