

flew over the field in formation and the crowds below watched in fascinated silence—silence that bespoke a keen appreciation of the grace and beauty of the sailplanes. The seeming ease and effortless motion of a soaring plane offers a thrill that requires no hazardous stunts to prove the pilot's skill.

The group broke formation and moved into single file for a snake dance, slow ships taking the lead, followed by those with more flexible speed ranges. The snake—a series of dips performed in roller coaster fashion—was even more graceful and more enthusiastically received by the spectators than the same performance executed by the Navy planes. At 800 feet, the line of sailplanes began long, shallow dives across the field, passing a safe distance from the crowd at 100 mph before fanning out in wide circles to land. All rolled smoothly to the finish line, where retrieving trucks waited, to end a splendid performance.

During intermission, Mr. Wright of Grand Prairie flew his radio-controlled model plane, a clever stunt which captured the jubilant mood of the crowd.

Next Ralph Watkins in his Cloud Buster LK and Cooley in the Wiener were on tow, going up for ribbon-cutting. Precision formation aerobatics by Parker and Dick Lyon in LK's followed, and won the admiration of the 2000 onlookers.

The weather took over here, with threatening rain and wind from the east. The auto tow and sailplane assembly acts were cancelled and the competition aerobatics began. Reeves, Parker and Jim Simmons all used the 1-23. Wally Wiberg flew an LK. First honors went to Parker, Wiberg and Reeves.

The wind velocity had increased to 30 or 40 mph and because of this and several eager spectators who had won glider rides, other events were postponed. The show, even in its abbreviated form, won high praise, and a number of spectators remained to inspect gliders and ask questions. The many who wanted to buy rides were invited to come back later.

The show's success was in large measure due to the careful planning of the experienced ground personnel. A vote of thanks goes to S. S. Montgomery, Gordon Graff, H. Woodring, Uel Stephens, Jr., Walt Wheeler, Bob Thompson, W. A. Hotchkiss, and others who lent valuable assistance. Herb Gibbons did an excellent job with the public address system.

The show over, the soaring competition began early Monday, August 8. By 6:00 A. M., Lyon, Gibbons and Hall were making performance runs with Gibbons' TG-3 high above the field in the smooth morning air. Within a short time, however, the weather again went bad. Low clouds darkened the sky and forecaster Ted Lange offered little encouragement for the anxious pilots. By noon, there were some signs of thermal activity, but heavy thunderheads threatened from the south and east.

First off was Pop Krohne in Mini at 12:30 P. M., followed by Reeves in 1-23, Herb Gibbons in TG-3, Watkins in LK, Wiberg in Ross Ranger, Yerian in TG-3, Parker in Flat Top and Lambros in BG-6, all out to see how far they could get on this Class I (free distance) day.

Pop held on close by at 2500 feet. Watkins, Lambros and Yerian managed to stay in the air only a short

time. Reeves and Krohne fought for a break that would send them off. Gibbons, Parker and Wiberg played long shots, heading northwest and north at maximum glides to escape the coming storm. Pop, who soon disappeared, was believed to be following them. Reeves was forced back on the field.

The first call came in shortly. Pop was down at Midway Airport seven miles to the north. The storm had struck Midway, Fort Worth's great international airport, the Mini was menaced by a 50-mile an hour gale, but fast action by airport workers who rushed to the rescue with a portable pile driver, lashing the plane to three big, quickly driven stakes, saved the ship.

Gibbons was forced down by rain at Haltom City, fifteen miles out. He and his ship were drenched and threatened by the high wind. Wiberg and Parker managed contest flights over the 25-mile minimum, landing at Decatur, 42 miles, and Forestburg, 56 miles, respectively.



The Silvaire SW Soaring Trophy on display.

Monday evening at the barracks was time for discussions. Dr. Raspet told about the research program at Mississippi State, and E. J.'s color movies were shown.

A south-southwest wind was blowing early Tuesday morning, August 9, with the lower scud thin and somewhat scattered. The sky clear of high overcast, Dr. Raspet, Wiberg and others were up collecting performance data on E.J.'s 1-23. But again the forecast was not too good. A set goal flight (Class II) was selected for the day—a speed dash to Gainesville, 64.5 miles. The wind was favorable and Lange reported that some of the pilots might make it.

Wiberg, off at 12:52 P. M. was followed by Gibbons, Krohne, Watkins, Reeves, Parker, Yerian, Cooley, Lambros and Thompson. Wiberg attained 4000 feet and streaked off to the north, sacrificing considerable altitude before finding lift. Parker, Krohne and Yerian were the only ones able to follow Wiberg toward Gainesville. Yerian landed first, 31 miles out. Krohne landed at 2:45 P. M. near Denton, after 37 miles. Wiberg came down at 2:35 P. M., ten miles east of the goal. A rainstorm had forced him to vary his course.

Parker made the goal, just skimming over the south fence of Gainesville Airport, after a 30-mile glide from