

● Dick Johnson

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countered, which thrust my machine up to 1100 feet per minute for a time. The cloudbase was now 12,000 feet ASL.

After Big Springs was passed, the thermals started to weaken somewhat and the crosswind increased to about 20 mph. This wind became increasingly difficult to cope with as the thermals grew weaker and towards the end of the flight my course looked like the cutting edge of a woodsaw. From here on I utilized thermals as weak as 1 meter per second as my altitude was not as great as to make me anywhere near sure of arriving at my goal.

There were by now only a few wispy pieces of cumulus left but weak lift was always found below and upwind of them. After climbing to 7000 feet over Midland Airport, I felt sure of reaching the goal since Odessa airport was now in sight. Upon flying a straight course, several areas of lift were encountered and I arrived over my goal with 4000 feet to spare. The next 30 minutes were spent in a relaxing glide over town and thinking how happy I was to have finally made a really worthwhile flight instead of underestimating the conditions as I had on the two days before. The landing was made at 6:58 p.m. I am sure that the same flight, or even better ones, could have been made on the two previous days, had I the foresight to recognize it.

I wish to thank my hard working crew, Ralph and Bob Todd and Joan Brouillette, who, even on this trip, arrived with the trailer at 9 p.m. They would have had me back in time to compete the next morning, had the contest continued.

● Dave Johnson

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at this point we had 100 miles to go and it was 6:00 p.m., but we were going as far as we could anyway. We had just reached an area of big cumulus which were already showing the effects of evening since they were not very thick, but they still had good lift. By circling occasionally and following a zigzag course we were able to stay close to the cloud bases around 16-17,000 feet altitude. By following this semi cloud street in this manner we made very good time for the next 40 miles which brought us near Las Vegas and the end of the clouds. Our hopes of reaching the goal had been renewed during the last stretch but there was quit a problem coming up: How to glide 60 miles with no thermals. The time was now 7:00 p.m. and we knew that when we left the clouds it was going to be just one long glide to the ground. Almost 90 degrees to the left of our course and about five miles away there was one last big flat cumulus which we decided to head for and take it for all it was worth. It was quite a long glide to the cloud and after we got there we almost gave up gaining any altitude before we found the lift area, which was very gratifying since we were able to get 2 and 3 meter life from it. We took this one last thermal up to 17,800 feet where it was really cold. This was our high point for the flight. We had 55 miles more to go and as we had guessed there were no more thermals. The air was smooth as glass, so we set our airspeed on about 43 mph which should give about maximum glide angle. According to previous observations of cloud shadow movements

there was little if any wind aloft so we weren't going to get any help with drift.

Bob was very helpful in figuring how we were making out during the long glide. Every little while we figured our altitude against the remaining miles to go to see if we were gaining or losing on our angle to our goal. We had plenty of time to do this since the glide lasted about an hour. With the exception of our anxiety we had a very pleasant ride during this part of the flight. Lake Meade about sunset is very beautiful. We came to the scenic part of Nevada near Lake Meade called the Valley of Fire. The last rays of sunlight were on that area and it was very colorful. I was busy taking color shots with my 35 mm.

Every time we checked on how we were doing we figured that we were just holding our own in respect to altitude versus miles to go. I had visions of possibly landing a mile or two short of the Airport at Overton or possibly in the desolate Valley of Fire, so we altered our course slightly to not get too far from the highway just in case. Our Horn rate of climb indicator read a very steady one meter sink all the way except when we were about half way down it came up to zero sink for a minute or two. It wasn't until we were about ten miles away from Overton that we decided we were going to make it and maybe have a little extra. Due to the dusk and haze we could not see Overton until we were almost on top of it but we could tell where it was from the shore of Lake Meade. We arrived over the Overton airport with 4000 feet to spare, took our time going down and looked the town over. We landed at 7:50 p.m., which was well after sunset. The duration of this flight was 6 hours and 50 minutes which was the longest duration of the meet.

Mr. Richardson, the airport manager, and his wife were there to help us secure the ship. We were not entirely a novelty around there since John Robinson had made a flight there the first day of the meet with the Zanonias and Bill Ivans made it there the second day with his Schweizer 123.

We had all of our record forms with us and Mr. Richardson was very helpful in getting witness signatures and even found a notary public to notarize everything necessary. By the time we got the papers signed and notarized and had our dinner our crew drove in and we flagged them down. Debby had Kal Saufaneur with her to help crew. It was 8:00 a.m. before we got back to El Mirage, but we all took turns sleeping on the double mattress in the back of the car so we were in fair shape for the next day's flying.

I would like to mention that my wife Debby did an excellent job of crewing during the entire meet. Broiling 120 degree temperatures that prevailed during the meet did not make her job any easier either.

This flight will be a memorable one to me inasmuch as we really had to work for it and we got the breaks when we needed them with so little to spare.

● The 17th National Contest

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The best flight of the contest was made on this day by Dick Johnson, who made Odessa his goal for F. A. I. purposes and completed it for a new (Subject to Homologation) American Predetermined Goal Record. Great circle distance 317.408 miles.

CONCLUSIONS

From a standpoint of competition, the weather was in a true sense most favorable, testing the skill of the