

# SOARING RECORDS

By FRITZ COMPTON, Chairman Records Committee S.S.A.

U. S. Soaring Records have taken a great leap upward in the past four years. From 1934 until 1947, the United States held no International soaring records. During the 1947 National Soaring Contest, Paul MacCready broke the ice with a 212-mile out-and-return goal flight which was recognized and approved as a new International soaring record.

John Robinson, on January 1, 1949, brought the International Absolute Altitude record to the United States with a flight to 33,500 feet in the standing wave at Bishop, California. This was the beginning of a series of new records at Bishop.

Gus Briegleb successfully claimed the multi place 100 kilometer international speed record on August 12, 1949.

The year 1950 saw the soaring pilots of the United States successfully challenge and claim ALL International Altitude Gained and Absolute Altitude glider records except single-place feminine.

Harland Ross and George Deibert started the parade of new 1950 International Records for the United States with a flight on January 17 to 36,500 feet, claiming both Altitude Gained and Absolute Altitude for Multi-place gliders. Betsy Woodward and Vera Gere at El Mirage, California, captured the International Feminine Altitude Multiplace records in April with a flight to 17,589 feet.

While these international records were being brought home to the U. S. A., William S. Ivans, Jr., was busy grooming his new Schweizer 1-23 for a carefully planned altitude assault in the Bishop Wave. Radio was installed, three oxygen systems, layers of fiberglass insulation, anti-frost panels, and special instruments added. Awaiting the right weather for a week, Ivans, on December 30th, climaxed the banner year of 1950 with a climb to 42,100 feet above sea level, taking the Absolute Altitude record from Johnny Robinson and the International Altitude Gained record from Lt. Person of Sweden.

Ivan's altitude of 42,100 feet is believed to be the highest altitude ever attained by a non-military type heavier-than-air aircraft, either motorless or powered.

1951 has already seen Bob Symons and Dr. Keutner, flying in the Bishop Wave, exceed Harland Ross' multiplace record by several thousand feet. (Symons' flight still subject to homologation and approval by F.A.I.)

When a pilot believes he has established a new record, it is necessary for him to complete the record claim forms which have been prepared by the Soaring Society of America and the National Aeronautic Association. These forms are based upon requirements for records set up by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, the international sport flying organization.

The record claim forms, when completed, are submitted by the Soaring Society to the National Aeronautic Association. The N.A.A. represents the F.A.I. in this country, and homologates and approves National record claims.

If a new National record exceeds the existing International record of that classification, the N.A.A. forwards the claim to F.A.I. for approval as an International record.

A pilot contemplating a record attempt should

# SOARING SITES

You are a novice at soaring, and you are the proud possessor of your first sailplane. Shiny and new, it sits on its trailer in your back yard. Soon you will fly it for the first time. But where will you make this maiden voyage?

If you are the only soaring enthusiast in the area, a bit of serious meditation is necessary before choosing your locale for sailplane operations.

The fundamental requirements are sufficient space for safe take-off, and a method of launching. Launching is most easily solved by making a deal with a power plane owner to install a tow hook on his ship. Sufficient space for safe take-off indicates that undoubtedly the chosen site will be an existing airport in the area.

No longer are mountains, cliffs, or steep hills a prerequisite for a soaring site. They were a necessity in the days of the primary and utility gliders, but the advent of the modern high performance sailplane and the development of thermal soaring techniques has made almost every airport, in flat land, or hilly, a potential soaring site.

If there are several airports in your area, factors influencing choice will be:

(1) Is hangar space available? Hangar space is a near-necessity. Otherwise there is added time and effort consumed in assembly and disassembly of the sailplane each flying day.

Staking a sailplane down in the open is not satisfactory, as maintenance is greatly increased, deterioration is rapid, and there is considerable danger of wind damage due to the large wing area and light weight of the ship.

(2) Which airport has the best soaring conditions? All airports in flat country have the same general soaring conditions for the immediate area. If there is

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secure the record claim forms from the Soaring Society prior to his record attempt. He should study the requirements carefully, so that he will be certain to comply with F.A.I. requirements.

When a pilot believes he has established a new record, he should notify SSA immediately after landing, by air mail, of the pertinent facts of the flight. His National record claim must be in the hands of the N.A.A. within 3 months.

If the pilot believes he has set an International record, he should wire N.A.A. immediately with pertinent information on the flight, so they can inform F.A.I. Completed record claim forms for an International record must be in the hands of N.A.A. within 30 days.

During the past four years, numerous National records have been established which did not exceed existing International records, however, many of these National records closely approach International records held by other countries.

1951 may see the U. S. with all altitude records, if some soaring Miss will go after the single-place feminine altitude records in the Bishop Wave. U. S. pilots will undoubtedly make well-planned attempts to exceed International distance records. The amazing performance of Dick Johnson and his RJ-5 sailplane in the 1950 National Competitions adds to our hopes for 1951.