

## ● We Break 500!

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to get better tailwinds I decided not to climb very high but try to stay in the layer of air with the best winds. Also as usual I would pass up a thermal if it couldn't give a 350 ft./min. rate of climb or better.

This worked well until my luck ran out south of Amarillo. I found myself down to 1,800 ft. above the ground and only zero sink available. This was costing me and I knew it. There was one small dust devil to my left about two miles, but I did not go there but kept on downwind hoping to save time. 1,600 ft.—that darn ground looked awfully close—what a sad ending to my 500 mile flight this would make. By the time I saw another small dust devil two miles upwind I was ready for anything and turned around to get it. When I arrived there only 1400 precious feet of altitude was left but I was going up in the weak lift.

That cured me on the low altitude flying and I stayed high after that. The ground speed dropped to a mere 36.5 m.p.h. between Canyon and there I was determined not to let that happen again. Also here at Amarillo the wind had shifted to the southwest so I decided to change my course for the maximum distance. My goal, Colly, Kansas which is 527 miles straight north of Odessa, had to be abandoned but it did not matter much if I could beat the Russians.

Ground speed picked up nicely to 82.7 m.p.h. from Amarillo to Borger. It was here that one of my best thermals was found over a carbon plant. It averaged 620 ft./min. to 12,400' A.S.L.

Now I increased the cruising speed to 80 m.p.h. indicated which when corrected for altitude gave me about 92 m.p.h. plus a tailwind of about 25 m.p.h. At 04.05 P.M. I arrived over the Texas-Oklahoma border and soon thereafter reached 13,000' A.S.L. at the cloud base on several occasions. I pulled the nose of RJ-5 up into the base just high enough to read an even 13,000' and then pushed it back down to 80 m.p.h. and went quickly on my way.

To me the next part of the flight now was the most critical. I was about 365 miles out and from the altitude now on hand I could glide close to 100 miles without further help, if I slowed down to the speed at which best glide ratio is obtained (50 m.p.h.). It seemed sort of silly to go that slow because the chances were I would find more lift—it wasn't late yet. Therefore I decided to use a compromise speed of 65 m.p.h. until I had that 465 miles safely in hand.

There still were some thermals but they were decidedly weaker so I moved along more cautiously now. When the Kansas border came by (04.50 P.M.) I was working anything that could make the variometer read 1 meter/sec. I now had almost 12,000' near Ashland, Kansas but there was not much between me and some beautiful large cumuli west of Kinsley, which was 50 miles away. I shifted to high L/D cruise and painfully waited until I got there. By utilizing one weak thermal I got there with 9,000' and was very pleased to find 1 meter/sec. lift at my end of this long line of large cumuli that appeared to be a weak squall line or front.

I climbed slowly to 11,400 feet and should have stayed there and climbed to the cloud base, but I had visions of cruising along at a fearful clip under

## N.A.A. APPROVES NEW RECORDS

The Record Committee of SSA reports that the National Aeronautic Association has approved as official national records, the following performances:

March 5, 1951—Robert F. Symons, Pilot, and Dr. Joachim Kuettner, multi-place absolute altitude record, 38,305 feet, at Bishop, California. This flight has also been approved by F.A.I. as the INTERNATIONAL MULTI-PLACE ABSOLUTE ALTITUDE RECORD.

April 29, 1951—Les Arnold and Harry Perl, multi-place duration, 12 hours, 03 minutes.

July 6, 1951—Richard H. Johnson, single-place distance in a straight line, Elmira, N. Y. to Norfolk, Va., 363.208 miles, RJ-5 sailplane.

On July 27, 1951—Richard H. Johnson made a flight from Odessa, Texas to Garden City, Kansas, of approximately 420 miles, but no record was claimed because of his succeeding flight on August 5th.

August 5, 1951—Richard H. Johnson, single-place distance in a straight line, from Odessa, Texas, to Salina, Kansas, 543.666 corrected to 535.169 miles account new F.A.I. regulations for release altitude. This record has been submitted by NAA to F.A.I. for approval as a NEW INTERNATIONAL SINGLE PLACE DISTANCE RECORD.

August 5, 1951—Wally Wiberg, Odessa, Texas, to Guymon, Oklahoma. Single-place distant to predetermined destination, 332.903 miles, LK-10-A sailplane.

FRITZ COMPTON, Chairman,  
Records Committee.

the beautiful cloud street until dark and not having to circle at all. If I had been there an hour earlier this might have happened, but it didn't. Outside of three spots of zero sink there was nothing and I soon realized that my journey was drawing to an end.

I now slowed down to 50 m.p.h. and while holding a downwind course I started some calculations as to where I was going to land. At 05:58 the final glide started. Even at this altitude my sink was less than 2 ft./sec. and I had my 40 to 1 glide ratio working for all it was worth.

At 06:15 P.M. I had 9,530 ft. A.S.L. Salina, Kansas was directly on course but its closest airport was 79 miles away still and it was 1,270 ft. A.S.L. This gave me 8,260 ft. to cover the 79 miles in, a minimum glide ratio of 50.5 was necessary to get there for a downward landing. I wasn't too optimistic about it but kept on course anyway.

At 06:55 I arrived over Geneseo, Kansas with 4,900 A.S.L. and 29 miles to go. Now a minimum glide ratio was 42.2 was all that was necessary, so I was going to make it after all. At 07.18 I arrived at Sky Village Airport, Salina, Kansas with an even 1,000 feet to spare and decided this would be a good place to stop. What with the tail wind, the RJ-5 had actually glided at a 57.5 ratio for the last 79 miles.

The maps showed the flight to be 575 miles by my route or 545 miles in a straight line—HAPPY DAY!!!