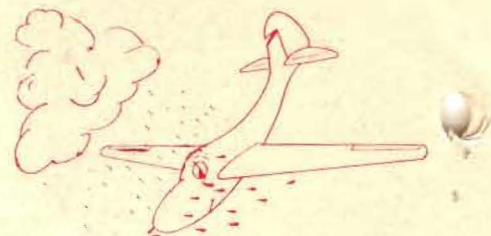


THE WORLD CONTEST



By B. L. WIGGIN
(Manager, American International
Soaring Team, 1954)



Photo: Canadian Pacific Railway

Barney Wiggin, with Stan Smith, the Schweizer 2-25 pilot, on the dock at Montreal prior to embarkation.

Never in the history of World Soaring Competitions did so many fine and sincere people do so much work with so few apparent rewards as did our hosts of the 1954 contests at Great Hucklow, July 21-August 3, 1954. Along with us and representatives from 17 other countries they found fridity and fluid frustration. Camphill became "damp hill" as persistent fog, drizzle, wind and rain kept all but the Schweizer aircraft disassembled most of the time and stored in their snug trailers. Cold statistics show that only seven sailplanes of the 43 competing were able to score points on the four official contest days. And some of these points were as sharp as mashed potatoes (which will be further explained).

Statistics also show that our team placed well. In fact we had our highest team score ever obtained in international competitions. This in spite of the fact that we scored in only eight out of twelve possible periods. Depending on how the competitors are

grouped our team placed second on position or third based on points. We had the men, the ships and all but the breaks to have placed first in both categories—as a team, and as individual champions as well.

In my analysis there is no other villain but the weather. In my notes there is every official figure on it for both the practice period and the actual contest. But let me summarize it by anecdote: An elderly Miss of the neighborhood on reaching her 102nd birthday in early August was asked by the press to make remarks which might be of interest. What should she remark about? Why anything at all, current events for example. The sage lady looked at her rain-streaked window and remarked—"I've never seen such a stinking summer in all my life."

The sun shone wanly as the Empress of France slid through the murky Mersey to her unloading dock

promptly got lost in the environs of Manchester. He didn't tell us he got lost. The second time around the city with the same flock of sheep being driven down the same main street, the same sequence of pretty front-yard flower gardens, the same shopping centers appearing again and we all knew we were lost. A cumulus cloud to starboard got Nick back on course. In no time at all we were in the land of the stone walls.

In the good-natured hurly burly of meeting old and new faces, signing papers, drawing bedding allotments and watching a few ships already airborne we came to the end of Wednesday, July 14th with a convincing demonstration of the Darwin Hypothesis on the survival of the fittest . . . the young folks had the caravans (trailers) while Dr. MacCready, Sr., and yours truly were wrapped up in damp tents. Walt Hausler wise in the ways of the world brought his own caravan. Hugh Whitney or rather Hugh The Indispensable (an earned title) with pity in his heart shared the tent with me.

Thursday was a day of tragedy. A new sailplane, the Austrian Zugvogel, took off with Alois Hasenknopf at the

After a feverish 4th of July at Schweizer's, ships and trailers hit the trail for Camphill.

Photo: R. Kidder



at Liverpool. As the sailplanes came up the hatch, down came the rain. Thereafter it rained at some time or other every day we remained in England.

It was a lovely day from Liverpool to Camphill. Navigator Goodhart, his acuity dulled in conflicts with the teaming traffic circles of Washington,

controls. It was a fair soaring day with large patches of blue sky between convective cells. Apparently a wing came off while flying in cloud. The pilot left the ship but was too low for his parachute to become effective. Most of us didn't learn of the accident until the following day. Possibly the most impressive event of the