THE CONQUEST of PIKES PEAK

By DAVID C. JOHNSON

For some time I had considered soaring over Pikes Peak, and finally the flight took place on August 28 starting with a low 400 foot winch tow. (Those "must-have-an-aero-two-for-soaring" types—please note. Ed.) I found a weak thermal at the end of the tow and worked it up to 2,000 ft. then headed toward the lower mountains just to the west of the airport. I found better lift there and before long I was working thermals which showed a rate of climb of around 1,500 ft. per minute. I put on the oxygen at 11,000 ft. and went on up to 16,500 ft. which was getting pretty close to cloud base. Pikes Peak

Dave Johnson built the winch which launched him on this epic flight. It is used by the Denver Soaring Club of which Dave is a member.

looked like it wouldn't be too much of a job to fly over from this point, so I planned the attack.

Since the winds aloft here nearly always come from the west or southwest I thought it would be better to work around the peak and keep several miles away until I was on the upwind side. The cloud pattern substantiated this idea so I headed around the north side over Ute Pass, finding good thermals all the way. When I got over Woodland Peak I was on the northwest side of the peak and needed more altitude before heading for it. There were no cumulus clouds near the peak but about six miles west of it a nice looking one was forming. I headed for this cumulus which was quite a distance away, with hope of finding a thermal or two on the way but none showed up. As I was getting near this big cloud I had visions of having to land in the high meadows near Divide if I did not find lift. My altitude was not very high above ground since ground elevation on this side was around 8,000 ft. I finally hit some fairly weak lift but after a few turns it picked up a little better, and before long it worked into a really good thermal which was going right up into the cloud. I worked this one right up to cloud base at 17,000 feet.

As far as I could see this would be the best place to start over the peak, and things looked pretty good from this altitude, with the peak directly ahead and Colorado Springs beyond. I headed out toward the 14,110 ft. summit with hope of finding some lift over the top. As I was getting closer I tried to make out the wind direction and velocity from the flags on top of the summit house and they appeared to indicate a light wind from the southwest. I got over the peak with 16,500 ft. on my altimeter, which was a good margin for comfort.

There was no lift over the top, as I thought there might be, except for some reduced sink in which I circled to see if it would show lift, but it didn't. I would have liked to put on a soaring demonstration for the visitors on the peak but with no lift I decided it would he better to go on over the lee side toward Colorado Springs. As I had expected there was quite an area of downdraft on the lee side for several miles. I lost around 5,000 ft. in about five miles but still had good altitude to reach the lift of the cumulus clouds near my starting point. I soared for about another hour then came into the airport for a landing after a very enjoyable flight.

I might add that the Pine Valley Airport used by the Denver Soaring Club and myself for winch tow operations all summer, is part of the land that the Air Academy has chosen for its site.

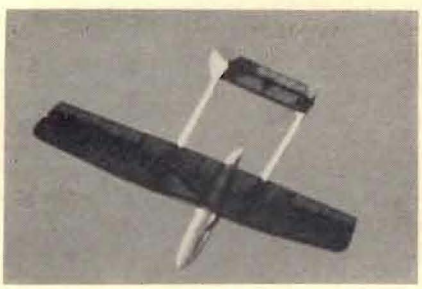
INTERESTING GLIDERS

By JURIO TSUCHIYA

(Ed.'s Note: For almost a year this column has been written by Peter M. Bowers. Soaring readers will be sorry to know that Mr. Bowers has been injured in a taxying fracas involving a motor car, and will all wish him a speedy recovery. The picture below shows Mr. Bowers' "Borrowed Aeronca C-3 after a car plowed into it. Both car and plane spun 180 degrees from the impact . . ." to use his own words.)

During the Second World War the Japanese manufactured many types of gliders, mainly for the initial training of power pilots. The best known were the KU-1, KU-7 and KU-8, and the MXY5 used by the Navy as a troop transport.

The KU-7 was similar to the German GO-242 and was used for transporting troops and tanks. This machine had a heavy wing loading and



The Japanese SM-206

large aspect ratio, and used the compound laminar aerofoil used by the long range plane A-26. The maximum glide ratio was 20 to 1, minimum sink was 2 metres per second, and it could carry an 8-ton tank or 32 fully equipped soldiers.

The KI-105 was a powered version of the KU-7 and used HA-26 950 horse power engines. This machine

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