

also, navigating would be easy for air team and ground crew. So, Hagerstown it is — for the second time.

It is one o'clock. Everyone has signed up for take-offs ahead of us. We cannot beg, borrow or steal an earlier tow. Nothing to do but wait out; but, when we do get up, conditions are wonderful.

The Williamsport ridge, which is about 65 miles out, shows in 1 hour and 30 minutes, and out ahead, a prominent wave condition showing at maybe, 20,000 and some 20 miles away.

Today we push. Everything goes to 6000 and, for the next two hours, that wave stays about 20 miles ahead, just can't catch up with it, hard as we try. At any rate, Carlisle again hovers into view, but conditions are so good today, we do not hesitate

(22 miles away) or turn in to Martinsburg, a sure thing? Considering all angles, one an easy retrieve at Martinsburg against a farmers field, we finally pull up, do a 180, a few lazy 8's, a DC-3 pattern, and set down at Martinsburg at 7:15.

Recognizing the somewhat dubious strain 'Alibi's' pilot has been under, Gene Miller, Crew Chief for today's flight, insisted on driving the entire retrieve. Also, John Bierens stayed on the Hill to get recharged. This was a real break to get some much needed rest in order to start us off with flying colors on the last flight of the Meet.

It is a task day — and what a task! Only to Utica and return. About 210 miles. The Contest Board must be punch-drunk. However, it is our vacation from work, and all in fun, so let's try anyhow.

said ships swooped down and every last one (led by Bennis) started a left spiral. Well, that many are just too much to keep track of, and as a result, 'Alibi' kept giving a little here and there, until she found herself alone in the down port. By this time, those other buzzards had everything to themselves, and were going up in a tight dog-fight. Anyhow Fellows, it was fun to see them move out one by one, as 'Alibi' and her stubborn pilot screwed up through the middle, still turning to the right.

The going is quite marginal and again we seemed to go off alone. I think perhaps we felt there was too much to lose in trying to work weak lifts along with several other ships. I know that when the going is tough, we do better alone, with only the instruments to concentrate on. At any rate, we set sail for Cortland with only 4,000 M.S.L.

With the airport at Cortland as a safety, a weak thermal at 1,200 feet finally develops to the best lift so far, and in short order, we are skipping from one dry thermal to the next. Just about three of them, and trying to catch up with Stan Smith, who seems to have some motive power that enables him to glide along without losing altitude. This bit of amusement is over in a short time and Stan is lost from view and everything is going soft, but fast, and after a long straight glide, we find ourselves eye level with a small ridge just a mile or so north of Hamilton. I had noticed two fires burning on top of this ridge and figured if nothing developed from them, we could slide off the top, and have a hundred feet or more to play with in getting landed.

Fortunately, a small airport lay at the base of my ridge. This was swell because first of all, it was not on my maps and came as a pleasant surprise. Also it allowed me to concentrate on one grass fire, which smelled up the thermal, but nevertheless got us back to 4,000. With this much altitude, I felt 'Alibi' could stretch it into Utica, and because things had been so rough for the last two hours, had just about decided to land at our turning point. I am sure we would have followed this plan if Bill Coverdale had not shown up along with another ship I did not recognize at the time and on the way back. That sure set us back on our heels and of course, there was nothing to do but get to Utica, check the marker, and start for home. It

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*Kempes Trager being presented a watch (the prize donated by the Buffalo, N. Y., Aero Club) by former National Soaring Champion Stan Smith.*

Staff Photo



about a course, and steer across the ridges for Hagerstown. It is 6:00 o'clock and we are riding an easy lift. Our goal is right below us. Should we land or try for our second unofficial goal of Winchester, Virginia?

The remains of an old cloud street is just to the West and strung out on a parallel course. So we stay with our lift to 6,000, unhook and sail over to grab the tail end and some mediocre lift, which puts us back to cloud base. Then for the first time, we notice a rather strong East wind. This is drifting us too rapidly to the West, and as we are approximately 10 miles West, we slide off the middle of said cloud street at about 6,500 and commenced that long glide that one recognizes as the last one of the day. Martinsburg is in view on the left and with 3,500 of fuel, it is a hard decision to make. Should we stretch it along the way to Winchester

It's take-off time, but something is wrong. 'Alibi's' ground crew have finally solved the mysterious combination of colored tow cards, take-off schedules and everything, and what do you know — we're first to go and nearly to come back, with the wheel extended and 100' left in base leg position. We finally find a stopping thermal and work it to 5,000 feet. Bill Coverdale is about and I would like to go hunting with him, but his blue 'Skylark' is hard to keep track of and we finally drift apart. Striking off alone, we locate a bit of lift near West Danby about 25 miles from the hill, and in a flash, three or four other ships sailed in — where they had been lurking I will never know. But, they set the stage for a very satisfactory bit of flying.

'Alibi' seems to handle thermals better in a right spiral, and had already established this pattern when