

# THEY CALL IT A "VACATION"

by H. C. N. GOODHART

I wouldn't have missed it for anything but I surely was glad to get back to work for a rest. I think that about sums up the 22nd Nationals as far as I was concerned. Continuous hard work and some wonderful soaring made up the most strenuous vacation I have ever had and they tell me that it's been even tougher. I guess I must be soft or something (too much good living in these United States?) but I certainly would settle for at least one rest day and maybe even two.

My decision to enter the contests was made for me by Bill Ivans who called me from San Diego 10 days before the meet to say that he would probably bring his standard 1-23 over to the East Coast if I would like to use it in the meet; naturally I jumped at the offer, so Bill trailered it the 3,000 odd miles from San Diego to Elmira and got it there on the Saturday before the meet. The ship had no instruments so I had to collect enough to make up a panel. Here Del Pierce, my crew chief, came to my rescue with some instruments from his Cessna; from this and various other sources I ended up with a basic panel including a standard variometer and a total energy variometer. This latter instrument took the first 3 days of the meet to get anywhere near calibrated but after that proved very useful.

## Highlights of the Meet

There remains in my mind a delightful kaleidoscope of impressions—of lovely thermals high over sun-dappled fields and cities, of awful moments of scraping in zero sink at negligible altitude, of other ships glinting in the sunlight as they swung around with that poetry of motion that only soaring pilots know, of the wonderful sense of triumph when the goal is definitely made, and a thousand and one other brilliantly colored mind-pictures.

Of particular incidents there are several that stand out. En route to Troy, N. Y. I recollect all too clearly

the dead look of the air on reaching the Hudson Valley. Fortunately a cement factory at the edge of the Valley, was putting out a very good thermal, in which I scraped every last foot and then out into the dead air. It was worse even than dead, it had definite slight smooth sink. With not a ripple of encouragement we sank lower until a landing at Albany seemed inevitable, but suddenly zero sink at 700' and after 15 minutes of agonizing concentration we are at 1300'

Nick Goodhart receives SSA Trophy for highest points score in the 22nd National from E. J. Reeves, SSA Treasurer and banquet, M. C.



but the thermal is gone. There are fields ahead and every mile counts so we drift again. At about 700' there is a surge and almost immediately we have 300 ft/min up in a narrow thermal over a traffic circle. Ten minutes later we have 4000' and Troy is in the bag. I throw a couple of loops for joy and bore into Troy, hoping to find Bill Ivans there as he also had declared Troy; but it seems he has not been as lucky and has landed 3 or so miles to the north.

And then there was the day I flew to Wilmington, Delaware with the car keys in my pocket. My ever-resourceful crew were not much put out by this, however they were without overdrive and had a pretty tedious run. The highlight of that flight was the run into Wilmington and the pleasant reception there by the All

American Engineering Co. On the run in I had inevitably too much height and it was a wonderful sensation to have an excuse for a straight approach at 120 m.p.h. Steve Bennis had already arrived and four more ships came in after me. Not bad going for six ships out of 27 odd to complete a 177 mile task.

We got back from the Wilmington flight at 4:40 a.m. and the next day was the Troy from which we got to bed at about 3:30 a.m. so thereafter I was tired despite the fact that I had an air mattress in the back of the car. How my crew—Del Pierce and Jerry Astl—stood the strain, I shall never know and yet they were ready to go and had the ship rigged by pilots' meeting every morning.

I had no radio equipment and consequently was dependent entirely on telephone calls for meeting up with my crew. This turned out to be the weakest link in our organization sim-

ply because my crew would frequently spend up to an hour or even more in getting a phone call through, and thus got hopelessly delayed and behind. The simplest solution to this is more telephones and if this is not possible then some rationing system is necessary. If 28 crews call in every hour and each call ties the telephone up for 3 minutes then some crews are going to be unlucky. On one occasion my crew were within 8 miles of me when I landed; we actually got together 4½ hours later, and that without any complication like getting lost.

Finally I cannot close without mentioning my gratitude to the SSA for the very nice silver bowl presented to me at the final dinner—I was very happy indeed to receive it but I consider myself fully rewarded in being privileged as a foreigner to compete at all.