

23rd ANNUAL U.S. NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

by CAPTAIN R. S. BARNABY USN (Ret)

While I have not actually added up the totals, I believe it is safe to say that the 23rd Annual National Championships just completed at Grand Prairie, Texas, were the greatest to date in more ways than one. Certainly, in no other contest in this country and perhaps in the world have so many sailplanes flown so far.

The formal opening ceremonies were held Tuesday morning, July 31 in front of the row of flagpoles carrying the flags of the countries and states of the more than 40 contestants. Guests of honor, introduced by E. J. Reeves, the Contest Director, included Major General Albert S. Johnson, Commander of the 49th Armored "Lone Star" Division of the National Guard; Brigadier General Clayton P. Kerr, Artillery Commander of the 49th Division, and Captain David A. Sooy, USN, Commanding Officer of the Dallas Naval Air Station. Following the brief ceremonies, the contest got under way with a bang!

Ted Lange, Contest Meteorologist, had predicted favorable conditions and the Contest Committee had decreed the task of the day a speed dash to Mineral Wells and back, a



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Flags of various nations and states fly high over the contestants and crews during the opening ceremonies at the start of the 23rd U.S. National Soaring Championships.

Below: Some of the pilots pose for a group photograph while the hot sun beats down unmercifully upon them.

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round trip distance of 124 miles. Launchings, using the TSA Waco, a Ryan and three CAP Piper Cubs started at 10:38. By 1:22 the 46th and last contestant was on his way. From that time the officials and spectators had less than a two-hour wait before the homeward rush started. First back was George Cavaiani of Miami, Florida. The fastest time was made by Lyle Maxey of Downey, California, in his sleek little "Jenny Mae," 2 hours and 20 minutes, for an average speed of 52 miles per hour, with Graham Thomson, Paul Bikle, Paul Schweizer and Stan Smith close behind. Thirty-fifth and last to complete the course was Lou Rehr, of Bridgeton, New Jersey, who came in at 6:19 p.m. after a flight of over six hours for a speed of 20 miles an hour.

The end of the first day found Maxey in the lead (a spot he held throughout the contest) with 1000 points, followed by Thomson 887, Bikle 845, Schweizer 798 and Smith 768. In the two-place field Del Reed in the L-K took the lead, completing the course at a speed of 37.2 miles per hour, closely followed by Harold Hutchinson at a speed of 36.2 miles per hour, also in an L-K. Nearly