

THE 11th ANNUAL TORREY PINES MEET

by COLONEL T. W. SANFORD, JR.

The 11th Annual Pacific Coast Midwinter Soaring Championships was held at Torrey Pines Gliderport, San Diego, California, on the 9th and 10th of March 1957. This event was sponsored by the Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California, Ltd., and the San Diego Junior Chamber of Commerce. The meet was sanctioned by the Soaring Society of America and authorized by the local CAA Safety Inspector. Sixteen pilots registered fifteen sailplanes, 4 LK's. 3 Schweizer 1-26's, 1 Briegleb BG-12, 2 Cherokee's, 1 Schweizer 1-23, 1 Pratt Reid, 1 Mitchell Nimbus, 1 Schweizer TG-2, and Ray Parker's Tiny Mite.

During the last year the Torrey Pines Gliderport received quite a face lifting. A public golf course was built on the north side of the gliderport. This required moving the gliderport about 200 feet south, with the resultant regrading and relocating of both the glider landing and take-off runways. The grading job was an excellent one, however, and most old timers among the glider pilots who have known the gliderport for most of its history readily agree that our gliderport has been greatly improved. The golf course does make an excellent neighbor for the gliderport.

This year's meet was scheduled for the 23rd and 24th of February; however, much heavy rain during the night of the 22nd and the morning of the 23rd turned the newly graded runways, spectator area and automobile parking areas, into a sea of mud. Because of this soft field condition, the meet was postponed at 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning of the 23rd of February and scheduled for the 9th and 10th of March. This was a big disappointment for all. A group of six pilots and four sailplanes had been brought all the way from Phoenix, Arizona, and many pilots were down from Los Angeles. All agreed to try and make the meet on its newly scheduled days and with very few exceptions, they did.

The Soaring Championships Committee included John Sommerfield and Jack Stoops as Joint Chairmen, Ernie Shattuck and Duke Stallings as winch operators, Milt Fankhauser and Devon North as tow plane pilots. Mum Masaki and Sterling Starr as operations managers, Harry Parker glider inspector, Earl Myers CAA Safety Inspector, Jim Spurgeon as master of ceremonies, Gene Whigham and Lyle McClain as starters, Frank Robbins, information, Ada Spurgeon. Henrietta Kecskes, and Helen Dick registration, Dr. W. E. Cowell, Dr. G. R. Freeman, Dr. J. E. Wilson, and Dr. C. M. Whitlock, doctors, and Ted Sanford, pilot briefing and scorer.

The meet opened at 10:50 a.m. Saturday the 9th of March, when Robert Schnelker lifted his Schweizer 1-26 into a very gray cloud-filled sky. Bob released after a smooth winch tow and after a couple of trips north and south along the cliff, landed back aboard the gliderport. The wind was light and almost directly out of the south, lift was marginal and the temperature was in the low fifties. At 11:15 a.m. Duke Mancuso lifted his 1-23 on the end of a steady winch tow and began sustained continuous soaring along the cliffs. Conditions generally improved until at 1:50 p.m. twelve gliders were flying the cliffs in a smooth, graceful pattern. At 1:53 p.m. the cold front passage accompanied by rain arrived just as the weather man had predicted, and by 1:55 p.m. all except two of the gliders were back on the ground at the gliderport. Reports of the impending arrival of an ocean tide wave caused by an earthquake in the Aleutian Islands undoubtedly caused many pilots to terminate flight by landing at the gliderport rather than continue in rain and very marginal lift and risk a landing on the beach. Thus began the duration and altitude duel between Jack Lambie and Duke Mancuso, the two brave lads that weathered the storm.

The storm continued to produce

rain shower after rain shower, and alternately good lift and marginal lift along the cliffs. Dave Boone began to work over the bomb target and spot landing managing to drop a bomb 34 feet from the target, and stop his LK twelve inches from the spot. These were the best Saturday scores in these two events. Larry Bell took a winch tow, attained 1,000 feet and flew up the beach some seven miles for the best solo distance of the day. John Williams off airplane tow in his two place LK managed to make the Del Mar Airport some 5 miles north of the gliderport. The duel between Jack Lambie and Duke Mancuso continued almost to 5:00 p.m., 4:35 p.m. forced Duke to land on the beach and also caught Jack at 4:50 p.m. Thus ended the first day's soaring of the meet. Oh yes, and as Lambie landed back on the Gliderport at about 5:10 p.m., the rain began to come down in quite a steady and rather heavy fashion, so all hands secured quickly.

The weather man was again right and Sunday, 10 March dawned clear, with sunshine and widely scattered clouds, but no rain showers. After 9:30 a.m. pilots briefing, all hands readied their gliders and at 10:05 Bob Schnelker drew first winch tow and started the second day's soaring activities. The wind was in the west, but very weak and Bob could not sustain flight on the cliffs and landed after about ten minutes. The sun was warm, the crowd of spectators grew bigger and bigger, but it was not until about 2:00 p.m. that the wind was strong enough to sustain continuous soaring along the cliffs. As a result, Duke Mancuso and Jack Lambie began a duel at the bomb drop and the spot landing. John Williams (Big Brother) and Jack Green his passenger (Little Brother) took an airplane tow and shoved off on a north-heading cross country. Dave Boone tried his hand at an airplane tow for cross country and headed northwest along the beach. At noon Ray Parker was towed by Fankhauser to about 5,000 feet ASL and put on a beautiful demonstration of acrobatics out over the Pacific Ocean in his trim little "Tiny Mite." About this time Jack Lambie dropped a bomb 15 feet from the mark only to be followed by Duke Mancuso who placed his bomb 5 feet from the old pipper. Carl Walters found the range on the spot landing and stopped 5 1/4 inches away from the mark to be followed closely by Jack Lambie at