

day. When I arrived Pat's father informed me that Pat and Mike had been in a little scrape with the police the night before and could not leave town for two weeks. Their case was scheduled to come up in court at that time. A fine thing; the nationals were starting in 48 hours, more than a thousand miles away. A little pushing and pulling and a few telephone calls had everything fixed up in a few hours, during which time I drilled them in rigging and derigging the Bowlus. A call came in and the judge of juvenile court said fine, take them away, but of course they're your responsibility. Report in two weeks. We pulled out at 3 P.M. and got to Grand Prairie 28 hours later during a pilots' meeting.

That first night remains a little confused. There was the pilots' meeting and registration, and the happy discovery that I could compete the first day even without the Silver distance requirement. There was the rush to the Lennox Hotel, then back to the field where we left the Baby and saw the RJ-5 for the first time. Then the meeting with Wally Wiberg, having Dick Johnson pointed out, and getting the name Reeves attached to the "E.J." I was astounded both at the horn rimmed spectacles and to see him without helmet and chin strap which I had assumed he was born in. Outside the TSA clubhouse four men were engaged in a violent argument over how E. J. had busted his 1-23. There were four distinct schools of thought represented. By midnight we had unpacked and collapsed in bed.

First Contest Day

After the pilot's meeting at 8:00 A.M. we rigged the Baby and were finished just in time for opening ceremonies. There were speeches and pictures, then the Hummingbird went aloft with a General for the first flight of the Contest. I began to connect faces to the names I had seen in the SSA Directory, champions and record holders. After seeing the Jenny Mae go off on her first flight we got set for our own initial tow.

I was one of the last off behind a towplane which seemed ready to crack that sound barrier. After the little unpleasantness in April the Baby had been fixed up as an open cockpit ship and I was realizing a lifelong ambition to fly in the open. Now, at twenty miles an hour over the red line, I was hearing some amazing sounds. The wheel was held nearly rigid to keep from loading the wings any more than necessary, but I

kept thinking of the words of Barnard: "It's a fine little aircraft if you don't push it past its limitations. Very lightly built you know." Maybe I should have gone fishing this summer instead? At 1800 feet the towplane went into a 30 degree angle dive. I took the hint that he wanted to go home and released the line which was taut as a violin string.

It was during the strongest part of the day and I soared rapidly up to 7000 before striking west. Slowly Arlington went by, then Fort Worth, and after a time the lake north of Mineral Wells came into sight. Of course after the hot morning I had left my jacket with the crew and it



Photomart Photo

Dick Johnson presents the class "C" Championship Award to Mr. Joseph C. Lincoln after the 23rd National Soaring Contest. Joe is still trying to discover who the others were competing in class "C."

was amazingly cold at 8000. At last the upwind beat into Mineral Wells, identification of markers and the turn. We were getting low now, conditions were weak in the late afternoon and no amount of work seemed to gain us altitude. We shot a landing at turn point after a short retreat. The crew was magnificent; they arrived in five minutes. Silver C distance! I got Connie Ripley to sign my landing card, also the airport man-

ager, the airline people, and the girl behind the food counter. This thing had to be sure. We all returned in triumph, then Wally Wiberg reduced my head of steam. "You've got to have a barograph trace," he said, "Would you like to use this barograph tomorrow?" Carefully guarding the precious instrument we returned to the hotel.

Second Day

The only time for reading during the contest was at breakfast where the crew and I shared a paper and quickly glanced over the news of yesterday's happenings in the meet. The local coverage was interesting and varied—at least to my wandering newspaper eye:

EERIE QUIET FLYING ON WINGS OF WIND

Aloft in a sailplane, a captive passenger hundreds of feet above the shimmering earth, you have but two friends—your pilot and the wind.

GRACE EXPECTING BABY IN FEBRUARY

Today was open and a downwind run was indicated. The Baby and I got off much earlier but had a slow start during which all the other sailplanes were being very careful and holding on to every foot of altitude. After an hour things picked up and we went north of Denton before getting into any kind of trouble. Then

altitude ran out and we were down to 1400 before getting any kind of lift. After some desperate work it got better and we flew on, getting under a cloud street just south of the Red River. This was my first time under a street and the feel of roaring along at a steady 45 mph without circling was a tremendous thrill. Came the time of reckoning. The cloud street got wet; I began to circle

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