

only the most skillful and resourceful pilot could hope to cope with. His red and white Bellanca, followed by a succession of Piper aircraft, was a familiar sight over the Sierras, the White Mountains and over the desert to the South and East as he made trips to isolated mining camps, counted game for conservation authorities, made aerial snow surveys and searched for power line breaks. One of his routine, if somewhat startling, charter activities was flying the bodies of people killed in mountain or desert accidents back to their home cities. The body would be neatly stuffed into a large canvas bag and secured in the rear seat, with Coffee, Bob's dachshund and oft-time traveling companion, an interested onlooker. Bob would say with a grin that these were his best-behaved passengers by far.

His greatest popular recognition came from his search and rescue work, in close cooperation with local and regional law enforcement agencies. He made many hundreds of flights in search of downed fliers and lost hunting parties, and landed many times in extremely hazardous terrain, far from roads, in order to rescue people who had sustained injuries. His intimate knowledge of the country and great skill as a pilot permitted him to fly low into country which others dared not enter. He knew where one was likely to find trouble, and where to land nearby. The single-handed rescue exploits, one after another, were widely publicized and established his reputation as a mountain pilot without equal.

One of the great joys for visitors was a flight into the mountains with Bob. He would smoothly and casually fly into the high Sierra, usually well below mountain top height, over ice fields and into narrow passes with rocky overhangs, always knowing exactly what was beyond and probably enjoying the fact that his passengers did not.

Despite the adventurous life he led, Bob could never be described as rash or foolhardy. All of his activities were characterized by intense and exhaustive preparation and a keen awareness of danger and his ability to deal with it.

As a public spirited citizen of his town and state, Bob's activities were manifold. He served many years on the Bishop City Council, and had served as Fire Commissioner in addition to being an active member of

the Volunteer Fire Department. He was at one time President of the Inyo-Mono County Coordinating Council. He had appeared many times before federal and state legislative bodies to testify in behalf of his county and community. At the time of his death, he was President of the Bishop Chamber of Commerce.

Bob had long been active in Soaring Society affairs, serving many years as a Director. He had helped to organize the Inyo-Mono Soaring Association and the Bishop Wave Workers. He had great faith in the potential of the Bishop area as a year-round soaring site and was the driving force behind the efforts which led to the choice of Bishop as the site of the 1958 U.S. National Soaring Competitions.

Bob Symons made deep and lasting contributions to his community and to the growth of soaring. We mourn him as a fallen hero, and as a dear friend.

IN MEMORIAM

to ROBERT SYMONS

*In his infancy in some magic way
He was touched by an eagle's wing,
For his eyes looked skyward ev'ry day,
There were stars in his voice's ring.
He knew the clouds and the whims of air
And each canyon and lake and glen;
Each meadow land where the blooms were fair
And far off from the haunts of men.*

*He marked new trails with his silver wings
Over mountain and peak and plain;
He knew each spot where the glacier clings
To the rim of a rough terrain.
He sought and found fellowmen in pain
In a storm or in mountains lost;
And without pause he would try again
Never counting the effort cost.*

*His wings swept low o'er the valley green
In the counting of fleet, sleek deer;
And few men have joyed in the vistas seen
When his wings swept by cliff side sheer.
In mountain glade would he blithely land,
And at warning his grin would scoff;*

*Ever quick was he with a helping hand
And a wave when his plane took off.*

*Now some will say he has met his fate
'Twas written no doubt in the book;
But where he is gone he will never wait
For the cautious who pause to look.
He scouts new trails in the other land
Where the good and the brave hold sway;
I know he will tell of vistas grand
When we meet him again someday.*

David S. Bromley
April, 1958

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15 METER CLASS

As a first step toward national Standard Class competition, the sponsors of the 1958 U.S. National Soaring Competitions have proposed to add a National 15 Meter Class to the other championship categories (Open, Two-Place, Club, etc.) in place of the National Standard Class Category defined in paragraph 3.6 of the rules. Any sailplane having a span of 15 meters (49 ft., 2.54 in.) or less is eligible to compete in this class.

The SSA Contest Board Chairman (W. S. Ivans) has approved the 15 Meter Class competition in 1958. It is expected that future national competitions will include a Standard Class category which fully complies with the OSTIV definitions; i.e., 15 meter maximum span, cloud-flying certifications, terminal velocity limiting air brakes, no flaps or other similar devices, etc.

A pilot flying in the 15 Meter Class is also eligible to win the National Championship. The contest sponsors will be asked to score the 15 Meter Class separately, however, so that the best flight in this class on a given day will be awarded 1000 points, etc. Thus, a pilot flying in the 15 Meter Class will have two scores, usually different, for a day's flight—a 15 Meter Class score and an Open score. The intent is to properly highlight the accomplishments of pilots flying 15 Meter Class sailplanes.

All tasks will be common to both Open and 15 Meter classes. No distinction between classes will be made with respect to order of take-off.