

# The South Rises Again

by DR. J. M. BATTLE

The Jim Swearengen Soaring Contest got under way promptly (Oh yeah?) at 9 A.M., 4th of July, at Twinkletown Airport, Walls, Miss., 10 miles south of Memphis, Tenn. Gathered in the quest of the Golden Grail were seven sailplanes and assorted sleepy pilots, who had arrived in the wee hours. Jim Rhine, the biggest Oakie, from Tulsa, had left the wing bolts for the Tulsa TG-2 in the motel. Snuffy Smith, the smallest Oakie, had a small army assembling his flat-top L-K. Pat Mulloy sat in the shade and ordered his home grown army in assembling the 1-23. Fred Friedewald got his eyes off his wife long enough to push wing bolts into the St. Louis 1-26, while Willi Geiselmann, also of St. Louis, who had no crew, tried to assemble his F-T L-K by himself. His arms weren't long enough. Dr. Gus Raspet and assorted kindren assembled the Starkville Olympia, as Dave rounded up his Texas hat. At 9:30 A.M. small Cu were popping over the Delta cotton fields, and the battleground was ready. John Karlovich had already taken the TSA Weihe to 6,000' July 3rd, had his practice and was mentally polishing off his mantle for the BIG CUP. The Memphis club, with it's 1-26, nervously eyed all this high-powered talent, and hoped their experience with local conditions would give them an edge.

The weather man said conditions were to be good, cloud bases 4 to 5,000 in the afternoon, NO RAIN IN SIGHT. Wind 10 to 15, SSW. After a hurried briefing, and a warning not to cross the Canadian border, the

rush began. Scoring was to be 1 mile equals one point, Devil take the hindmost. It was declared an open day, and goal flights gained you an extra 20%. Mulloy declared for Paducah, Kentucky, all the way to the Ohio River, and Lil Gen'l Raspet figgered on a raid to Marion, Ill. Gold C distance if he made it. The rest of the field said nothing, but had a glint in their eyes as they prepared. With two towplanes in operation, the entire group was launched in 40 minutes, as the small Cu began to tower toward the east. Enter the villian. Now a mass of hot, stable air began to creep toward us from the depths of the Delta, revealing its presence by a cessation of thermal activity and the Cu fading in its path. Soon it reached the field, and pushed its hot and humid breath toward the north and east. Rain, a heavy shower, made up 10 miles east of the field and moved north toward Memphis, squarely across the path of most of the contestants, while they were blocked to the west by the dead air over the river, and to the north by the sizeable city of Memphis. Nobody had more than 4,000 feet in hand. It was a hard nut to crack. Karlovich, Friedewald and Jimmy Boyle in the Memphis 1-26 had planned to cross the Mighty Muddy and go north on the Arkansas side. Cu were towering to 10,000 feet over there, about five miles west of the big river, but not a wisp between the airfield and that heavenly sight. Friedewald, first up, nosed out to midstream; nothing but sink, so he fled back to the east bank. Karlovich

thought there was no hope, so turned NE with Pat. They worked a thermal together, going in opposite directions, Pat counting Karlovich's shining teeth as they went by. The rain approached them, and something had to move. Pat chose to turn SE, cut through a thin spot in the rain, found weak lift at 1800 feet and slowly and painfully worked back to the east and north, gradually gaining altitude as he got further in front of the stable air. Snakebit Karlovich thought to use his 30 to 1 glide in the Weihe, penetrate the rain to the NE, and get ahead of it. He judged wrong, and was forced to land by the dead air surrounding the rain, 18 miles from home.

Meanwhile, back on the home ranch, Jim Rhine had given up the ghost. Jimmy Boyle figured it was impossible to get away, and Snuffy Smith was downed near the river. Willi Geiselmann and Dave Raspet, off late, with goals to the NE, struggled up, and were off. Willi, in Bob Smith's old slick no wheel F-T L-K, saw things looking bad to the S and E and chose to chance the river crossing. He headed for a big island, found lift, made it across in fine style, and was off to the north like a Focke-Wulf under the long lines of towering Cu. 'Lil Dave, picking his way carefully, working every little puff of lift, managed to make his way across the wet zone behind the rain shower, and old snake-bit K. had to suffer the torture of watching this juvenile upstart twist and turn his ancient Olympia past him to the north, as he waited for aero tow home.

Undaunted by J. Boyle's return, Painless Battle leaped into the saddle of Memphis' 1-26, goal Humboldt, Tenn., determined to keep our cup at it's proper home. Soon he was sweating blood, praying for even zero sink, in the confused mixture of clear dead rivers of air flowing around a few acres of weak lift capped by a ragged handful of cotton Cu which Terence Horsley says are like a spent lover. He had to decide to continue the struggle north across Memphis with only 3,000 feet in hand, or go east into a clear lake of probably dead air. He, also, chose wrongly and wound up in a cotton patch 12 miles out.

Now action back at the airport. Nancy Friedewald followed Fred til he headed out over the river, lost sight of him and sped across the bridge and up the west bank. Willi's hastily formed crew departed toward



MSS President James H. Boyle and Mrs. Jules Rozier, donor of the Jim Swearengen Memorial (a 2-22 for MSS), hold the Memorial Cup awarded to Pat Mulloy.

Photo: Dr. J. M. Battle