

DIAMOND C GOAL FLIGHT TO CAPE COD

by F. P. BUNDY

There are many examples of good cross-country soaring flights having been made without much planning or preparation. This is an account of such a flight made pretty much on the spur of the moment when excellent conditions developed. It was a relatively easy flight which does not illustrate any particular pilot skill but rather shows that soaring conditions can be very good once in a while over a wide area. On the same day two Canadians soared from Brantford, Ontario, to Elmira, N. Y., and at Wurtsboro in SE New York State thermals up to 8000 feet were enjoyed.

Late in the afternoon of 16 August a cool front pushed across eastern New York and New England. The morning of the 17th—a Saturday strangely enough—looked good. But one couldn't judge how good. Hal Bovenkerk and I had some work to do on the Club's 2-22 so about 9:00 o'clock we went to the airport in old work clothes to get it done. About 11 o'clock Hazel (my wife) and Jim Norton, our fellow soaring enthusiast and tow plane pilot, arrived at the airport and commented about how the cumulus were

forming. We looked up and agreed that it did look pretty good. Hazel suggested that one of us ought to try that long flight to Hyannis on Cape Cod. I ventured that it might be a good idea but that my old work clothes wouldn't be very presentable at some distant landing place. However the sky looked so good that we decided to get the 1-23D out and give the trip a whirl. I stuffed my old threadbare poplin jacket back of the seat, checked the maps, ship and radio and was ready to go.

Take-off was at 11:38. The main part of the tow took us through a few scraggly thermals which were nothing to get excited about. After towing around a little at 2000 feet we hit a terrific thermal SE of Schenectady County Airport over the freight yards. I released, peeled off to the right, and held a steady right spiral at 6 to 8 feet per second up to 5000 feet, which was cloud base. I decided this was it! I radioed the control tower that I was going cross-country and to please inform my crew.

The next thermal was over Albany Airport. It was good for nearly 5600 feet. The next one was over the Hud-

son River south of Troy. It was a rather slow one and I finally decided to continue on toward the mountains where the clouds looked better. In a few minutes I encountered lift of medium strength and worked it to cloudbase at 6500 feet. From here a fast glide took me to the mountain ridge NW of Pittsfield where I climbed to about 6800. This was great! Only a little over an hour out and I was abreast of Pittsfield. It looked good ahead and I began to believe I might make it to Cape Cod. It was rather cold at this altitude so I rolled down my shirt sleeves and wished I could get at my old jacket.

Over the basin NE of Pittsfield the thermals were rather scraggly. After conservatively working eastward to the high land a strong thermal was hit which carried up to cloudbase at 7000 feet. Now I was in good position to glide across the wilderness mountain area to the Connecticut Valley. As on my flight across this region last spring, strong "down" was encountered in the middle of this area followed by some fair lift which was finally good for 7000. From this height I headed straight for Northampton going through some strong "down," then a thermal to a little over 6000, followed by more strong "down." At 4600 feet over Northampton I began to wonder if I were going to get up high and on my way again. The answer came right over LaFleur Airport where a good thermal whooshed me up to nearly 6800 once more.

With this altitude in hand I pressed on toward the south end of the Quabbin Reservoir. At the Reservoir I ran into a patch of extremely lively air with very strong ups and downs. I tried circling in the strong "ups" patches but they were so small and the accompanying "down" was so close and strong that I couldn't net any climb, so I went on. There was no point in "oil-canning" the wings in this rough stuff to no avail. I passed over Ware Airport again, as in my flight last spring, and as I was getting relatively low considered gliding NE to Hiller Airport to land if I didn't hit some lift soon.

Luck was with me, for just a little east of Ware I struck some steady lift which finally carried the ship up to 7500 feet. Worcester loomed up ahead to the left. I continued on course to the south of it. SW of Worcester a patch of "down" sent me scooting along at high speed to

A map of lower New England showing the path of Bundy's flight from Schenectady to Hyannis.

