



Photo: Eugene V. Martz

Flight line during soaring weekend, from R. to L.: Reno TG-3A, Sacramento TG-3A, Reno L-K and Bob Gomes' 1-26. Just about to land is the Ames Club TG-3A.



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Each evening found the group enjoying soaring fellowship around the fire. Full days and bellies and cool nights made for good sleeping.

protrusions facing the wind. Winds being what they are in the area, flights of several hours can be made over the ridge. In addition, thermals regularly broke from the ridge and could be flown on up to cloud base. If a thermal was lost, one could usually get back to the ridge to wait for another. If ridge lift suddenly quit, it was a simple matter to pop the nose and make a normal approach to the lake.

Another technique used by the Reno Club was spotting thermals as they broke from the lake, stirring up dust devils. By properly timing his tow and release, a pilot could easily pick one up and get away.

Still another condition discovered by Ed Blalock was the rise of huge masses of air from the lake basin at sunset. He theorizes that as the sun sets, cool air cascades down the slopes of the foothills displacing warm air held in the basin. On several occasions he had flown the entire length and width of the basin several times in the Nimbus with zero sink.

Hearing from the Reno gang what to expect, we were all anxious to try our skill at this new and virtually untapped site. On the first day wind conditions were perfect for the ridge. John Flynn, president of the Sacramento Club had been launched shortly after we arrived and was on the ridge going for his five-hour duration.

The members in our group chalked up nice flights testing the ridge, but limited them to one hour each so that all would have a chance. George Congdon and I took the last flight of the day, and were treated to a beautiful desert sunset as well as an exceptionally smooth flight on that amazing ridge.

A fine finish was put on the day's activities with a wonderful dinner

prepared by Vi Blalock, assisted by several wives of Reno Club members. How they turned out enough food for that tribe in the galley of a 12 foot house trailer, we'll never know. After dinner, the group, which numbered about 20, settled down to a memorable evening of fellowship accompanied by much soaring talk. Needless to say, when we headed for our respective tents, station wagons, or sleeping bags beneath sailplane wings, sleep came easily in the clear desert night.

The following morning, Sunday, found us starting the day with a real western camp breakfast. One could sense the anticipation of the pilots for the day's flying. Conditions proved to be marginal, though, because the wind wasn't quite strong enough to provide good lift on the ridge. Tows were made and some succeeded in staying up for short

periods by diligently working every contour facing the wind. The Reno boys proved to be much better at working the ridge under light conditions than any of us from the Bay Area.

On Labor Day, conditions improved again, and almost everyone was able to get in some good thermal soaring. Cloud base was high, and Bob Gomes got up to 13,500 (8,500 ft. above the lake) in the "I-Soar." Not to be outdone, Ames Club member Bill Bullis took the club's TG-3A above Gomes in the 1-26! We all suspect that Bill will never quite be the same after that feat! That the thermals were good is more than proven in the fact that as a fledgling pilot, I was able to fly the first one after release to 9,500 ft. about sea level. I later lost it all trying to find something better, but fortunately was able to stay up for my hour.

The Reno TG-3A soaring at about 8,500 ft. Lake is to right and in background is ridge, beyond which is another dry lake.

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