

GOLD C DISTANCE

by GLEB DERUJINSKY, JR.

The following is an account of my Gold C distance flight, made to qualify for entry in the Nationals, which also earned the Diamond C goal leg.

The flight started at 13:00 EST June 9, 1960, from the airport at Middletown, N.Y., and terminated at Fort Meade, Maryland, at 19:30 EST. As usual I began by calling the weather bureau at Idlewild Airport at 9:00 EST for weather information, concerning soaring. This is always a difficult discussion as even weather men seem to think that a glider stays up by force of wind. We finally ascertained that the lapse rate was fairly high with convection possibly between 4,000 and 9,000 feet, that there would be a scattered cloud formation without cirrus and stratus. The winds were to be from 330 to 30 degrees at 8 to 15 knots up to 7,000 feet. This looked good for a distance flight but not wishing to rush conditions, I took off at 13:00 EST when the cu's were already well developed. I noticed a long trough of clear blue running the length of the valley with the cu's forming NE and SW of it. I headed towards the SE banks and after a 40 minute struggle, approached cloud base indicating 5,500 feet. The cu's towards the NE seemed to be growing larger so I crossed the valley south of Port Jervis.

The lift was good and allowed an average rise of about 300 to 400 feet a minute. Since the sky indicated little or no lift in the blue trough, I continued on course to the Delaware water gap, cruising constantly between 5500 and 4000 feet. My course lay across eastern Pennsylvania. This meant crossing the valley again but there was still no lift in the trough area. However, since the distance was only approximately 10 miles, I had no difficulty.

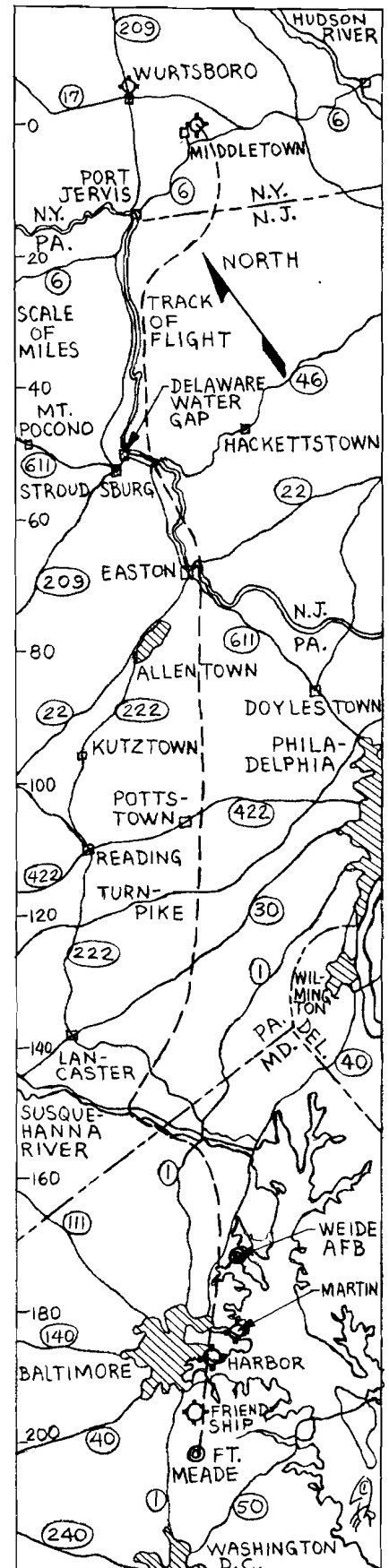
I had hoped to average 40 miles an hour, but so far was behind schedule. I had figured the speed on the map in terms of average convection and ground heating but it was difficult to maintain it with little help from the wind. Crossing Easton, Pa., the cloud base was approximately 7500 feet.

Now I had been out for two hours and had been averaging 30 miles an hour. I continued to follow large cloud streets to Pottstown, Pa.,

where at about 16:00 EST I crossed the river and headed on course. Now I was in for a surprise; through a very carefully coordinated effort, I managed during the next hour and a half to work my way down to 1900 feet! I began to look for places to land or to climb. Since the ground heating had diminished because of the heavy cloud cover, thermals seemed scarce. I could find zero sink or fifty feet a minute up but could discover none of the 500 foot stuff. I kept looking at the ground and I saw many beautiful farms with race tracks and swimming pools and I wondered how I could coordinate a landing, a race track and a swimming pool and good old Pennsylvania Dutch cooking which at this time seemed imminent. In my past cross-countries I have learned not to land near towns, but preferably five miles out-of-town as it is not the landing that destroys the fields and crops but the spectators, visiting firemen, police chiefs and curiosity seekers. Also, I once caused a traffic jam near Grotten landing too near a highway. As a consolation, about this time I noticed that the cu's above me were still building. My greatest fear was running into a down area. I noticed that the cu's had dissipated to the NE and that the sun was beating heavily only a few miles away from me. So I decided to forego the swimming pools and race tracks and take the chance that a recveling had begun and I would find lift in that area. As soon as I turned in that direction. I hit first the down and then the up which indicated on my Memphis from 5 to 1100 feet a minute rate of climb. This latter averaged out to be 400 feet a minute on the barographic tape. I rolled in and was soon near cloud base which was approximately 8,000 feet. Now I was cold as it was 30°F. Looking around, I saw large cu's in streets again.

On course once more, I arrived over the Susquehanna River with no effort. From there, Chesapeake Bay was clearly visible and the GOLD was in sight. I had marked on my map the altitude versus the distance to my goal. I picked out Weide Air Force base and held a compass course to the Glenn Martin airport. Since I could not see Fort Mead and as I knew I would be fairly low on ar-

(Concluded on page 15)



Map showing territory covered by Gleb Derujinsky on his Gold C distance and Diamond C goal flight.