

SUMMARY OF SILVER C FLIGHT

by HARRY M. SIMS

(Editor's note: The following was submitted with the author's Silver C distance leg application as his description of the flight.)

The flight took place on Sept. 5, 1960, the third and final day of the 3rd Annual Rocky Mountain Soaring Contest. The task for the day was a rather optimistic Diamond C goal and return of 199 miles from East Colfax Airpark, Denver, to Pueblo Airport and return. Winds aloft were predicted to be 10-15 knots from 190° to 15,000', but were later experienced to be 10-15 knots more from 90° to 100° giving cross-winds to the course.

After two days of contest flying, the Skylark 3F with Gale Abels was in first place, the Skylark 3B with Jim Klein and the TG-3A flown by Denver Soaring Club members were tied for second, the L-K with Merv Hicks was third and the 1-26 flown by Holland, Biaz, and Smith was in fourth. Take-off times were established for Hicks 10:45, Klein 11:00, Abels 11:15, Sims 11:30 and Smull 11:45.

Take-offs went according to schedule. Merv Hicks, trying to make the early start, couldn't get away and had to return for another tow at the end of the line. Jim Klein got away rather slowly and started around the course. Gale Abels got away nicely and was working a fair thermal when it was time for me and the TG-3A to do our stuff. The tow was very routine with lift encountered at 600', then a large circle coming back into the lift zone at about 1300 feet. The red knob was pulled at 7100' asl 11:34 a.m., immediately over the S.E. corner fence post. I climbed in that thermal between 200'/min. and 400'/min. for around 15 min. getting a little over 9000' asl before it died down. I could see the 1-26 being towed off so the decision was made to set sail immediately. About five miles down range rather good lift was encountered so I stopped to work that for a few minutes until I looked back toward the field and saw the 1-26 just crossing the horizon in "5 meter" lift. He was gaining time rapidly and I knew full well that time lost to Smull would be hard to recover. So, leaving good lift, I set a course for Castle Rock, Colo., where I would intersect Highway 85-87 which I intended to fol-

low from there to Pueblo. "Streaking" along at 75 mph with thermos bottle in hand, cookies in mouth, and a 1-26 in high tow position, I was delighted to see directly ahead the high AR, red and white wings of a Skylark 3F over Castle Rock. The old "War Weary" had gained 15 minutes in 30 miles of cross-country with a Skylark!! And Ed's 1-26 had gained 30 minutes!! So, almost bursting with pride, we two charged over and joined Gale in his thermal. Also joining us in a few minutes were the four Blue Angels of the Navy making a high-speed climbing turn in tight formation only a few hundred feet away. I wonder what they thought?

Gale Abels didn't think too highly of our tactics and antics in his thermal and in his own words "decided it was time to get serious about this cross-country." Now, as everyone knows, when the Skylark gets "serious" it's goodbye for the little boys. So he turned on the afterburner and disappeared over the south horizon programming over into a perfect polar orbit.

Left to ourselves now, Ed and I played a little Polish Team-type flying, circling together in the narrow twisting thermals and diving through the heavy sink areas side by side. The conditions were becoming very treacherous with the ground elevation rising to over 7400' asl and our altimeters showing only 8500'-9000' most of the time. No thermals were passed by and progress was very slow for the next hour. Finally, Ed and I became separated near Palmer Lake as he went west five miles to the foothills of the Rockies to work ridge lift and I continued down the valley occasionally looking up at the surrounding terrain.

There ahead, no more than 10 miles directly on course, was a wedge-shaped area of beautifully forming cu clouds which beckoned the weary pilots. So struggling and scratching, some zero sink turned into 200'/min. lift and I milked it to better than 11,000'. Now with my faith in soaring restored and within easy reach of the clouds I again set sail—directly into 600'/min. sink! By the time I realized that I couldn't make it, it was too late to turn back. Drawing heavily on all my experience of meteorology, terrain, optimum air-speed, etc. . . . I flew

straight until I contacted the ground 1½ miles south of Monument.

Sitting there in the cockpit at 1:55 p.m. looking up at the cu clouds now almost directly overhead and still singing their song of Lorelei, I was the most dejected pilot in the world.

I was trying to look at the brighter side — after all it was early (ugh), wouldn't be a long retrieve (ugh), only a hundred feet from the main hiway (umm), and only a mile or so back to the beer joint (Ahh!) when suddenly an Indian appeared riding a Harley-Davidson and said, "You couldn't make it to Pueblo, huh?" "No, how did you know I was going to Pueblo?" "I saw another one of these things land about six miles back." "What color?" "White." "1-26!!!" So Ed didn't make it either and I later learned that Merv Hicks was also suckered in by the clouds and went down just a few miles east. The only sailplanes making it through were the two Skylarks.

So the flight and the contest ended with the TG-3A in third place keeping pretty fast company and proving itself to be a real fine old soaring machine.

RADIO POSSIBILITY

The need for a low cost, dry battery powered VHF airborne radio transceiver is well-known. It now appears that such a unit is capable of being put into production if 100 or more units could be sold. At least one organization has expressed interest in putting out, for approximately \$150, a transistorized, crystal-controlled transceiver utilizing printed circuits and fitting the whole into a 9" long package, 3¼" square which would mount in a standard instrument panel hole. Total weight would be 3 to 4 lbs., including one 12-volt battery, the only power needed. Performance would meet or exceed that of radios now available.

An expression of interest is needed. Such a radio could do much to promote the enjoyment of soaring in the U.S. Advise SSA of your interest and this information will be passed on to all concerned radio manufacturers. Specify whether a simplex transceiver is preferred over one with a tunable receiver.

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