

# GOING FOR DISTANCE

In the March *Soaring*, Dick Schreder introduced some of the comments he had solicited from numerous well-known soaring pilots on how best to break the world soaring distance record of 535.169 miles (861.272 km.) set by Dick Johnson in the RJ-5 sailplane on August 5, 1951. Anyone having thoughts on this subject is invited to send them to Dick Schreder at 1150 Nebraska Ave., Toledo 7, Ohio. Each month, the comments of a few more pilots will be published, as space permits. Some follow.

## Paul Schweizer's Comments

In one of your recent letters, you asked whether I'd like to make any comments about the U.S.A.'s getting as many soaring records as possible to meet the Russian challenge.

I am sure that you will agree that contests are not the best place to do this. In the past, most records were set at the National contests mainly because this was the only time that most pilots had a chance to go all out for distance. Now, however, task flying and a limited number of free distance days in a Nationals make the chances of setting a record in this fashion quite remote.

The logical answer would be to encourage more record expeditions or camps, such as have been tried at Odessa and Bishop. However, since these only covered a very limited span of time, it would seem that we should organize expeditions that would extend for the maximum duration of the best weather for a given site and then schedule various experienced pilots with high-performance ships to cover this period. I am sure in this way, with full period coverage, we would have a much better chance of setting records. As you know, it always seems that the best weather occurs just before or immediately after a specific period of flying. By using this approach, it would open up many more possible areas, since distance and speed records are possible in many parts of the country if one is there to use the best weather conditions.

What might also help to give some impetus to this program might be to have some special prizes to encourage more record attempts. Possibly, financial support might be received to help cover some of the costs to carry out these attempts. These are

just some ideas that come to my mind at the present. If I think of any more, I will send them on.

## Bill Ivans' Comments

There are, of course, some extremely interesting possibilities if one starts from a wave condition anywhere along the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range from Reno down to the Mojave Desert. If one can pick the day when there is a strong westerly or southwesterly flow across most of the western U.S., and there are a few such days each year, then it should be possible to start from, say, Bishop and reach Denver the same day, with the entire flight made in daylight. This would require a very early morning tow, perhaps in semi-darkness, and would involve flying over some pretty rough terrain if the flight were made on a direct line to Denver. It should be possible, however, to remain 10,000' or so above the ground for practically the entire flight. If we choose a 40,000' limit on climb and assume a 20,000' loss of altitude before reaching the next wave and further assume an average sinking speed of perhaps 10'/sec. between updrafts and a 200 mph ground speed flying downwind, this would indicate a 2000 second (33 minute) time spacing between waves, or roughly 100 miles, which does not seem to be unreasonable if the route is carefully chosen.

If we assume an average 600'/minute climb, we then must spend half our time climbing and the realized ground speed is then 100 mph. We might squeeze ten such hours out of a late spring day (a good time of year for waves in western U.S.) and have, thus, the possibility of the 1000 mile flight.

The practical problems outside of navigation, etc., are, of course, of some concern on a flight of this sort. A ten-hour oxygen supply is involved plus a very substantial battery set-up to provide heat for electric socks, communication, etc. None of this looks too formidable to me. Probably the best sort of a ship for an effort like this would be the Schweizer 2-25 or, better yet, the 2-32, flown solo with the back seat taken up with batteries, oxygen, survival gear, etc., etc.

A much less rigorous way of breaking the Johnson record would involve thermal flying in the western mountains. You will of course recall

some of the terrain northeast of Bishop. If one could get an earlier start, say from the east side of the White Mountains somewhat south of Bishop (perhaps 100 miles south), it should be easily possible to go 600 miles, using comparatively modest performance equipment, on a good summer day. Cloud flying would without doubt help matters, but I don't believe it is essential. I believe that such a flight could be made with no help whatever from the wind. The secret of success would be to use the mountain ranges as thermal sources, flying the tops of the ranges much as one would fly cloud streets, keeping enough altitude in hand to jump to the next range when required. This would require a five or six hour oxygen supply, and the major portion of the flight could be made below 20,000' asl. The exact route chosen would depend upon the immediate weather situation; preflight planning would involve selection of a broken flight, choosing mountain ranges which appear to provide paths leading, generally, in the right direction. It should be possible to fly from Bishop into Wyoming if an early enough start is made, or if a southwest wind prevails over a good portion of the course.

## THE HP-11

(Concluded from page 6)

formed over a plastic and concrete form.

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Most of the specifications for the HP-11 are given with the accompanying three-view.

Expected performance at a gross weight of 600 pounds is expected to be:

Max. L/D, 42 to 1 at 55 mph.

Min. sink, 1.54 ft./sec.

Stalling speed (10° flap), 37.6 mph.

Best thermalling speed, 42 mph.

At a gross weight of 832 pounds:

Max. L/D, 40 to 1 at 70 mph.

Min. sink, 1.84 ft./sec.

Stalling speed (10° flap), 44.3 mph.

Best thermalling speed, 50 mph.

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