

CBSA "MEMORIAL DAY" SOARING MEET

Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.
by ROBERT LEE MOORE

Since Memorial Day came in the middle of the week this year, the Columbia Basin Soaring Association's traditional Memorial Day soaring contest was held on the two successive weekends bracketing the holiday. The contest was held at Vista Field, Kennewick, Wash., and, this year, determined the Northwest Soaring Champion since the Seattle Glider Council had decided not to host their customary, week-long "Fourth of July" soaring contest at Wenatchee. Competition was in two classes, Open and Class II (for sailplanes of no better performance than the Schweizer 1-26). Either individual or team entries (two or more pilots flying the same ship) were accepted. Rules were similar to those of the 1958 Nationals, with bonus points for successfully completed, pilot-set, goal or goal-and-return flights. The rules were modified at the first pilots' meeting to provide for scoring only the two best days for each entry, to give a chance to those who could not compete on both weekends, and more paid entries!

The month of May may set new records for wetness in the "dry" Columbia Basin. In fact, it rained solidly for a week prior to the contest and the sky didn't clear till the first morning of the contest. Result was lots of imposing clouds, a very low, "Eastern" style cloud base, and soaked ground which produced nary a dust devil. Task for the first day was a 140-mile speed triangle (Vista Field to a point north of Sunnyside, Wn., to Bickleton, Wn., and return)

for the Open-class ships. Only Paul Pallmer, flying his Schweizer 1-23H sailplane, completed the task, in 5:37 hr. Every one else fell out of the sky about half way around. (Bob Moore's alibi was that he lost an essential aileron pin and had to land at Sunnyside when flutter developed.) Rudy Allemann was forced down on the side of Rattlesnake Mtn., trailer-ed back and tried again, but still got only half-way around. Class II flew a 100-kilometer triangle, which Jim Hard, the only entry, completed.

The second day, May 27th, was declared "open" (each pilot picking his own goal). Most attempted out-and-return flights in the Columbia Basin, with only Rudy Allemann going straight out, across the Blue Mtns. and down toward Idaho. Again the cloud base was miserably low, by Western standards, and a strong wind in the afternoon, which blew the thermals away, spoiled the plans of the goal-and-return boys (no bonus points). Rudy "snuck" across the Blues in the vanishing gap between clouds and mountains and reached Ontario, Oregon, for the greatest distance of the day (187 miles), but fell far short of his declared goal — so no bonus points for him, either! Paul Pallmer flew 180 miles, Bob Moore 168, Al Wilson 144, and Joe Robertson 110. A navigational error cost Joe dearly. Seems he turned around a few times under a cloud and then went off at 90 degrees to his intended course! Didn't realize his error till he landed near Pullman and couldn't convince the

stubborn farmer that he was really in the outskirts of Spokane! Probably just as well Joe didn't find another thermal since the Idaho primitive area was just beyond! we might have been a long time retrieving his blue Schleicher Ka-6 sailplane! Jim Hard didn't complete his more modest task either, but he got 1000 points anyway since he had no competition. Having scored two perfect days, he could retire and take things easy.

Several of the visitors with vacation time stayed around for the week and reported several outstanding days *during* (naturally!) the week while the rest of us had to work. A front decided to go through on Saturday and took all day doing it, so June 2nd ended up a "no contest" day, much to the disappointment of Ed McClanahan who had only just entered the contest due to some secret Pacific bomb test work the first weekend. However, the front brought cool, unstable air and good soaring on Sunday. With the promise of "super" conditions, an ambitious 220-mile goal-and-return race to Wilbur, Wash., was set, probably with the sneaky idea that those completing the task could fly back to Wilbur to earn Diamond distance. As it turned out, everyone reached Wilbur but an afternoon storm, high winds and cloud cover in the Kennewick area prevented anyone from completing the task. Most came to earth near Eltopia or Connell, 10 or 20 miles short of Vista. However, there was an exciting and "suspenseful" photo finish. Paul Pallmer and Rudy Allemann both landed only a few miles north of Pasco, and neither the sectional chart nor the road map was accurate enough to tell who had won the day, and the contest. So, we had to wait till Monday when a large-scale county-engineer-style road map could be consulted to learn that Paul had "aced" out Rudy by one mile to become the 1962 Pacific Northwest Soaring Champion.

Frank Brame, Joe Robertson's partner in the blue Ka-6, probably had the most interesting, and frustrating, flight of the day. Seems he, too, got lost (is the blue Ka-6 jinxed?), found himself over Spokane rather than Wilbur, about 65 miles off course, then flew to Wilbur, thence to Coulee City, and then to Moses Lake — truly a grand tour of the Columbia Basin! A surreptitious look in the Ka-6 later revealed that they own *three* variometers, but only one compass. Would inverting this ratio help? Also, just what Jim



At the awards ceremony, champion Paul Pallmer on the left with Mary Ann and Rudy Allemann, runner-up.

Photo by R. L. Moore