

# W-2 FORM

by R. T. ALLEMANN

My income tax for this year might have to include the income of a diamond. Washington diamond #2. Somehow it doesn't seem possible that I finally made it — 500 kilometers! After attempts in all the right places; California-Nevada, 1958; Texas, 1960; Colorado and Kansas, 1961; it is quite gratifying to have done it at home in Washington State.

On Saturday, June 9th, the wet spring had definitely ended. It was hot on the ground and dust devils were plentiful, but only occasional cloud formed above 3600-ft.-high, Rattlesnake Mountain (the highest ground near Richland). The sky had become a burning blue more typical of early August. Columbia Basin Soaring Association members Bob Moore, Ed McClanahan and I had been tapped to perform in an airshow at Sunnyside to help promote soaring. Although there were plenty of thermals to hold us aloft, the 5000-ft.—7000-ft. inversion told us that we were not missing a "super" cross-country day, and I did not have much hope for Sunday.

The next morning I glanced out the window and saw another blue sky day. "Take your time dear, wash your hair if you like. We won't be flying early." Later I went outside and saw cumuli popping already. "Hurry up! We've got to get to the field!" A mad rush to Vista Field to assemble the Ka-6CR, prepare the declaration, lay out tow rope, etc., was followed by an aero tow at 11:00 A.M. behind Jim Smith's Cessna 140. Ed McClanahan, who had called for me to get a move on, found himself without his barograph and had to return home for it. He took off 45 minutes after I did in his 1-23H. The delay snowballed on him and prevented him from going more than out and return.

Ed and I agreed after the last task of the Northwest Championships the previous Sunday, that the 218-mile goal-and-return to Wilbur was ideal as the first two legs for Diamond distance, if one arrived back at Vista in time. Although we all had been forced down by rain squalls (Paul Pallmer nicely won the glide-out and the championship by a mile), we had averaged 40-45 mph for the course. We would have been back at Vista

by 3:30 P.M. with time to go the additional 100 miles for 500 km. Therefore Wilbur and back it was.

I released in a good thermal almost over the field, climbed nearly to cloud base at 6000 ft. and was on my way. The clouds were thin and only the best thermals were able to push into the inversion. Lift was but 500 fpm, unlike the previous week's 800 fpm. Although the clouds improved as I moved northward it took me nearly an hour longer to reach Wilbur than it had a week earlier. The wind, predicted as SW 20 knots, was due west and only strong at the northern part of the course.

After taking the pictures at Wilbur I suffered several periods of 1000-fpm down draft. A short, slow climb and I would dive to a new dust devil which was moving rapidly across the fields. At last I found a strong one which lifted me to 8500 ft. As I pushed on to the lower south Columbia Basin the clouds thinned out and I was gliding silently alone above the desert sagebrush, with the deep blue Columbia River slipping southward on my right. In a cloudless sky one has the impression of being high up in a sailplane. But one comes down!

Lower and lower with only occasional nibbles of weak lift. Soon I saw that I would make it to Vista but the prospect of returning to the clouds to the north through the clear area did not look likely. I was expressing as much to my wife, Mary Ann, on the radio when I ran into

Map showing track of Rudy Allemann's Diamond distance flight.

