

395 MILES FROM PINCHER CREEK, ALBERTA

by JULIEN J. AUDETTE

(Editor's note: On April 22nd, the author made a flight of 395 miles from Pincher Creek which should complete his Diamond soaring badge and become a new Canadian national distance record after homologation. The following is taken from a letter he wrote to Fred Nagel telling of the expeditions he mounted to achieve this flight and a description of the flight itself.)

The following is a quick resumé of our wave soaring expeditions of April 14-15 and April 20-22, 1962, at Pincher Creek, Alberta.

Our Regina Gliding and Soaring Club Directors approved the use of the Club's Super Cub towplane at Pincher Creek for both weekends. All interested clubs were advised of this through *Cloud Street*, the Club's newsletter, early in April. I left for Pincher on April 13th with my Schweizer 1-23G on trailer and with son Bob and his friend Herb Schlottter as crew. Doug Currie, with passenger Jim Gibson, left with the Super Cub the same day. We all arrived at Cook Field early enough to assemble the 1-23G and do a flight test before dark. Alvie Cook had given the strip a new look by blading the whole area level, which will be a wonderful improvement after the grass grows. New fuel pump facilities, as well as a comfortable club house, are other well-appreciated improvements.

Saturday the 14th was a beautiful, clear day. Ed McClanahan, Jim Hard and Don Brown from Richland, Washington, arrived at dawn with Ed's Schweizer 1-23H in tow.

Two tows were made into the mountains in the Waterton area for Bruce Moss of *Weekend* magazine to

take pictures of my machine and the mountains. This day was a loss otherwise. Ed tried vainly to explore the area but to no avail.

Sunday the 15th was a very poor day with strong winds and unstable air in the area. Ed made one attempt but nothing developed. Leaving the Super Cub and my 1-23G at the field, we left for Regina taking Doug and Jim with us. We drove through one of the worst dust storms we had seen with winds to 75 mph. Ed took his 1-23H home as he would be unable to return Easter weekend.

With a forecast for good chances of waves over Easter weekend, my two sons Bob and Douglas, and I with Doug Currie left on Thursday the 19th for Pincher. Bob Shirley of Moose Jaw was already there with his L-K when we arrived. By morning five other machines had arrived: the Calgary TG-2; George LeMay and his beautiful Tiger Moth with Ralph White as tow pilot; Bill Thudium of Calgary with his BG-12A; George Redzick of Saskatoon with his Fauvel AV-36; the Edmonton Club TG-2; and Al Wilson of Seattle, Washington, with a Weihe sailplane. Al certainly is an enthusiastic pilot as he came by himself with big hopes of Gold and Diamond altitude, as well as Diamond distance. We enjoyed his company very much. Acquaintances were made again with many friends, in addition to the above.

The air mass was unstable on Friday and Saturday and no waves developed either day. On Friday everyone did some local thermal soaring and Saturday was hopeless. In the evening the usual Cook hospitality prevailed with the Cooks showing us

movies of their recent trip to Hawaii.

From dawn to approximately 0730 on Sunday morning, April 22nd, the sky was full of lenticulars with no one in the air. These all dissipated except for a couple which persisted approximately 20 to 25 miles north-east of the Cook Strip. No one seemed anxious to try an expensive tow to explore the area, so I volunteered to tow off as long as I would get preference for a future tow if I returned unsuccessful. I declared Indian Head, Saskatchewan, as a goal and briefed Bob when to leave downwind to retrieve if I didn't return by a certain time. After having discussed with tow pilot Doug Currie the area to explore, take-off was made at 0947 M.S.T. behind the Super Cub. While proceeding west approximately ten miles west of the field, two small lenticulars which looked like a primary and secondary started to develop slightly east of the Livingstone Range N.N.W. of our position. Doug struck a course for this area. A slightly turbulent lift was contacted at approximately 8500 feet, after maintaining a fairly constant rate of climb of 500 to 600 feet per minute. Release was made eighteen minutes after take-off at 9500 feet one mile west and four miles north of Cowley Airport. All heights mentioned are above sea level with Cook Airstrip elevation being 3640 feet. A low of 9400 feet was established. A slow climb in front of the secondary lenticular was made to 20,540 feet in 35 minutes, giving an average rate of climb of 316 fpm. Both primary and secondary lenticulars had dissipated by this time. I would estimate wind to be from the W.N.W. at 25 to 30 mph. Seeing two lenticulars still active east of my position an easterly course was set, after losing approximately 1500 feet. Lift was again felt ahead of the lenticular, approximately eight miles northwest of Fort McLeod. The lift was quite smooth, but with a low rate of climb averaging 313 fpm to a maximum altitude of 27,300 feet. At this height lift was still 300 to 400 fpm but a solid overcoat was reached. I decided to discontinue climb and set course for my goal, 73 minutes after release. My average rate of climb from release to maximum altitude was 244 fpm. I was not to see the rate of climb indicators again in the climb area for 91 minutes, during which time I lost 19,600 feet and was down to 7,700 feet. This averages out to a sink rate of 226 fpm.

Map showing places mentioned in Julien Audette's flight description.

