

and received word that I should call Operator 86 in Las Vegas. "Very important." I placed the call. "Hello . . . Smith Service Station. A car and trailer? . . . No. Nothing like that here . . . Bob Johnson? . . . No one by that name here. We don't allow long distance calls from here anyway! You must have the wrong number!!!" In the background I could hear someone talking about an accident in which a car had rolled over, etc., etc. I could get no satisfaction from the person on the other end of the line so I reluctantly hung up and spent a half hour of imaginative compounded misery, picturing my crew, car and trailer scattered along the desert highway.

Finally Bob called back to report that the aft trailer tubing had failed in front of the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas. I told him to simply cut off the damaged back half and come on out to get me. By now it was midnight so I walked back to the glider and stretched out under the wing.

Never pick an alfalfa field to stay, too many bugs and mosquitoes. However, the book says a glider pilot should never hesitate to use his 'chute when needed so I pulled the ripcord and rolled up in comfort.

The brilliance of the stars in the high desert is as bad as television for keeping one awake but I finally dropped off still staring into the milky way. My eyes opened at dawn to the sound of feet crunching through the alfalfa. Bob and Mike had arrived. We loaded the ship in five minutes and started back. \$24.00 to have the trailer welded in Las Vegas, two loads of ice cubes, drinks, wet towels, etc., and we started for home.

The Sunday weather was even better than Saturday because the moist air from the south had moved in and

perfect little cu's were formed by 10:30 A.M. The kind of day that makes you want to quit work just to fly conditions like that.

Driving through the hot but brilliantly colorful desert is very different from flying over it in the sailplane but after such a satisfying flight the drive back is always pleasant, too. Lots of stops for cold drinks and talk about gliding and thermals and how we are going to get an *early* start and go 400 miles *next* weekend. We arrived down at Elsinore by 9:00 P.M., tucked the Wing in the hangar and drove back to Los Angeles.

This flight was certainly one of the most exciting and exhilarating I have ever made. Following the clouds brought me over completely barren and apparently trackless desert. Looking down to the isolated 7,000-foot high desert peaks is always weird and exciting, like looking at the other side of the moon. The rugged, colorful rocks near Lake Mead, the Grand Canyon in the distance, that final long, slow glide as we settle into the heat below, slipping over the fence to set down in a small grassy field is — I mean—like—crazy, man!

C BADGE FLIGHT

by JIM WHITACRE

(Editor's note: The following is taken from a letter which accompanied Jim's application for the C Badge for a flight of 40 minutes he made on April 13, 1962, at Odessa, Texas. Next to Gold and Diamond distance flight stories and talk of breaking the distance record or starting the 1000.kilometer Club a C flight seems rather insignificant. But it is the way most of us started so here's one to inspire those who have yet to start.)

The enclosed application blank

represents the realization at last, of the primary goal, to soar.

The flight was a thrill all the way, Solo the 2-22C and try to keep it up there. I was off the aero tow at 2,000 feet and began frustratingly to search. Then frantically searching now as the altimeter unwound to 1,300 feet and still losing altitude. Where is it? Something now to the right. Here we go and it's there; a really good thermal, but I am not all the way in. That's better. The variometer is green all the way around the 360-degree mark. Up to 2,000 feet. Out and back to the field and upwind at 1,000 feet. That must be all for today. No, on the left; hank and we're in the middle this time. All the way to 2,300 feet. Out and work up wind to the field. In another thermal and up to 2,700 feet. Perspiration all the way but sheer joy to go with it.

I hope many others in the near future experience the thrill of soaring and know the pleasure I experienced on this flight.

(From the Editor again: Here's another one, this by a pilot who helped build from a kit the Schweizer 1-26 in which he made the flight, at Kutztown, Pa., in April.)

by LUTHER W. MOYER

I have fulfilled a lifelong desire by learning to fly and have added to it the grace and beauty of soaring. The following is a brief summary of my flight to earn the C Badge.

I have had several sailplane flights, but never quite like this. Having taken an aero tow to 3500 feet MSL above our local field, I immediately found myself in a thermal. It produced a total of 200 feet gain and left me. I felt the usual depression of an inexperienced pilot and kept a keen eye on the field. Searching for further lift, I succeeded in finding some after descending to 2500 feet MSL. The soaring pilot's eloquent description of a strong thermal was finally captured. To the best of my soaring ability, I worked and hoped and succeeded in gaining 1100 feet and found myself completely thrilled in what, up until then, was only talk. The desire for further thrills was greater than the ability for finding thermals. Unable to find any more. I had no choice but to land. Greeted by a huge smile and familiar "Well, how was it?," I felt as though I finally had captured some of the thrill and proceeded to relate my experience. Now I am looking forward to far more thrilling experiences and also perhaps some awards.

FLY WITH THE FLYING GEHRLEINS

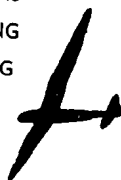
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