

# 2nd EASTERN OPEN SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Harris Hill, Elmira, N.Y. — July 1-7, 1962

*Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.*

by ROBERT K. OWENS, *Contest Manager*  
HUGH H. WHITNEY, *Competition Director*  
JACK REYNOLDS, *EASC President*

This SSA-sanctioned regional contest was sponsored by the Elmira Area Soaring Corporation (EASC). The purpose of this contest was to name the Eastern Open Soaring Champion by means of a serious and strict competition atmosphere, run under National Contest type rules and conditions. EASC hopes that more of these major contests will be conducted throughout the country with SSA coordination, so good soaring pilots may obtain top competition experience. Also, established soaring pilots may keep their skill in shape and eventually high ranking regional competitors may be the logical entrants in the National Championships each year.

Twenty-three pilots entered the Eastern Open to compete for trophies and prizes in both the individual and team competition categories. Every day during the contest was a competition day with interesting weather to both confuse and delight all of the pilots and their respective crews.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 30th

This precontest day was devoted to ground organization, registration, re-

newing old acquaintances and acquiring new ones. Some local practice flying was accomplished, but the weather was a rather stable, warm, noninviting element. Things were to change!

Opening ceremonies were conducted under the gala display of flags representing EASC, Canada, and the various states from which there were competing pilots. The Mayor of Elmira joined with other dignitaries to welcome the contestants, crews, contest officials and visitors to Harris Hill and the surrounding area. Earl Southee, former SSA General Manager, gave a thumbnail sketch of the history of soaring at Harris Hill and following this, Jackson Reynolds, EASC President, proclaimed the 2nd Eastern Open Soaring Championships officially opened. After the ceremonies, a picnic supper was sponsored by the Soaring Seven Syndicate, an EASC soaring group.

Just as people were preparing to retire and obtain the rest needed to start a soaring contest, a dramatic thunderstorm drenched, lashed and lighted Harris Hill. In addition to proving the tie-down adequacy of

sailplanes, the weather tightness of the cabins, and the failure of a power line, the rainfall kept the dust down for several days.

## SUNDAY, JULY 1st

Various contest personnel were on the job bright and early and the first pilots' meeting set the ground rules for the contest. Mr. Barney Wiggin of the U.S. Weather Bureau, Contest Meteorologist, provided the weather diagnosis. Mr. Ben Shupack was introduced as the chief of scoring and statistics, Hugh Whitney as Competition Director, Robert Owens as Contest Manager and Warren Austin as Field Operations Chief. True McLean provided barograph and instrument calibrating services.

After the passage of frontal weather activity of the preceding night, the atmosphere was fresh and cool with winds from the northeast. With the prediction of thermals, both wet and dry, the Contest Committee (Bob Owens, Hugh Whitney, Bud Briggs, Bob Court and Otto Zauner) deliberated on the task for the day. The selected task was a speed dash to Tunkhannock, Pa., a 65-mile trip. Carris turned in the best performance for this task, with Cannon 2nd and Paul Schweizer 3rd. Sixteen ships completed the task. This was the first surprise that the Contest Committee received. The large number of contestants completing the goal indicated pilots and/or weather better than estimated.

## MONDAY, JULY 2nd

Barney Wiggin's weather for the day — "great." The fine soaring weather of the previous day seemed to be available again as a ridge of high pressure moved ever so slowly over the northeastern part of the country. Most of the surface and air moisture had departed by this time, so thermals were of the dry type. The Contest Committee sent the competitors in the opposite direction of the day previous, and over a greater distance. Dansville, N.Y., and return was selected as the task, which is a route of 104 miles. The course was basically cross-wind, but less wind velocity was expected than during the previous day.

Nearly all the pilots completed the task, with Cannon taking first place for the day, Carris 2nd and Otto Zauner 3rd.

Special entertainment was provided in the evening by way of a visit to the Gold Seal Wineries on beautiful

Pilots, crews and contest personnel pose for a group photo after a pilots' meeting before heading for the flight line to prepare for the day's task.

Photo by Michael F. Rice

