



"Ah kept telling glider guiders, coming to Odessa for soaring badges and record attempts," started Al Parker, "if they see me out on the field at 8:00 A.M. running about cross-eyed and not wanting to talk to anybody except my crew, that'll be the day."

"August 26th, 1963, was a good cross-country day," continued Al, "but studying the weather maps for years, Ah figured August 27th should be a better one."

"On August 27th, Ah was on the airfield early, cross-eyed, rushing madly about, in accord with my predictions."

"Ah was on tow at 10:25 A.M. behind my L-19 towplane, leaving runway 16 of Ector County Airport, Odessa, Texas. Taking off in a left hand pattern," Al continued, "my tow pilot noticed a hawk circling to our right and turned immediately toward it. Ah released south of the hawk and started circling to the right, but remembered the need for a notch on the barograph trace, did a diving turn to the left and then joined the hawk. From just below release, Ah climbed from 4800 ft. to 5400 ft. MSL. Con-

sidering that to be the top of the thermal, and the fact that Ah was well above the hawk, made me decide to set off down wind to the NE. Headed toward a dry buffalo wallow on Buzz Hurt's ranch and found the expected thermal waiting there for me and was lifted to 5300 ft. MSL. Worked another weak thermal and headed in the direction of a dry lake that we call "Turn point No. 1," it being one of our favorite turn points for speed triangles. The lift was there all right and carried me to 6000 ft. Ah left with 75 mph IAS in the direction of another hawk who guided me to 7000 ft. and obligingly reversed his turn to the less efficient left to help me to the top. With 80 mph Ah by-passed the city of Lamesa."

"Climed gradually higher and higher in the now cumulus-marked thermals," continued Al Parker with increasing excitement. "NW of Lamesa I missed the birth of a thermal and went down to about 1000 ft. above the ground. But luck was on my side, found lift and used it."

"North of Odessa there is a

heavily irrigated area about 200 miles long (in a northerly direction) and about 100 miles wide," explained Al. "My original plan was to keep to the east of that, but gave up trying and flew for the rest of the flight straight north. Passed west of Lubbock Municipal Airport at 8000 ft. and on across a very wet irrigated area to an excellent thermal SE of Amarillo and made my best climb till now to 11,000 ft. Ah left Texas, crossed over the Oklahoma panhandle and entered the state of Kansas with the most amazing performance, beyond imagination, actually!" continued Al with sparkling eye and the enthusiasm of a true soaring pilot. "The Sisu would gain back, in one 360° chandelle, the altitude lost at 120 mph IAS between cu's which were about 20 miles apart. Man, Ah say, this is f-a-n-t-a-s-tic. Of course this breathtaking performance went to my head and after six such passes almost flew into the ground near Sitka, Kansas, but luck did not desert me and from 1200 ft. Ah climbed back in a real hurry to 10,500 ft."

"As the lift began to die and be-