

# EL MIRAGE SOARING CAMP

by EARL J. SEAGARS

A summer records and award camp was held at El Mirage Field, California, from July 20th through August 4, 1963. Participants from virtually all the Southern California Soaring Clubs and one representative from Alaska signed in during the two-week session. Six pilots completed Silver badges, three completed Gold badges and many others completed FAI achievements. No new soaring records were established.

The period selected concurred with the same time of last year's 29th Nationals when excellent soaring weather is usually experienced, but this year it failed to materialize. A stable air mass that prevailed during the first week was replaced by a high-pressure area of moist, hot, tropical air that developed mid-afternoon cumulo-nimbus.

The most interesting event of the camp occurred on Thursday, August 1st, when James McCarrier in his Cherokee, Earl J. Seagars in a 1-26 and Stanley O'Donnell in a 1-26 declared Dry Lake, Nevada, as their Diamond goal and Gold distance flight. Elmer Katinszky in his L-Spatz-55 joined the group and hoped to continue on course to Cedar City, Utah, for his Diamond distance. Forty miles north-east of El Mirage the pilots encountered a large towering cumu-

lo-nimbus astride their course. McCarrier landed at Barstow-Daggett Airport, beating by seconds a torrential downpour. Seagars detoured around the rain and landed 70 miles away on a section of freeway under construction for Highway 91. O'Donnell landed at the 130-mile point at Halloran Springs on the Baker Grade before Clark Mtn. Katinszky was lifted into the thunderhead, spent 25 minutes on needle, ball and air-speed amid rain, hail and lightning, after which he emerged some 30 miles north of course. He landed on remote Nelson Dry Lake and walked 18 miles across the



Photo by George Uveges

Earl Seagars congratulating Elmer Katinszky upon being presented with the special badge he wears for his 30-km. trek during the Camp.

## Summary of Achievements — El Mirage Soaring Camp

Date; Pilot; Aircraft; FAI Award Legs Achieved; Remarks.

- 7-21; Harvey Rechsteiner; 1-26; Silver dist.; to Daggett, completed Silver badge.
- 7-22; Earl J. Seagars; 1-26; 5-hour duration; Completed Silver badge.
- 7-23; Geza L. Vass; L-Spatz-55; Gold altitude; Completed Gold badge.
- 7-25; Chuck Kirschner; 1-26; 5-hour duration; 2nd leg.
- 7-25; Bob Hillard; TG-3A; 5-hour duration; Completed Silver badge.
- 7-25; Lyman Beman; 1-26; Silver dist.; to Needles, completed Silver badge.
- 7-27; Robert E. Lee; 1-26; Silver altitude; 1st leg.
- 7-29; Robert H. Gurr; 1-26; Gold dist. & Dia. goal; to Dry Lake, Nev., completed Silver badge.
- 7-30; Lyman Beman; 1-26; Gold dist. & Dia. goal; to Yucca, Ariz., completed Gold badge.
- 7-30; Stanley O'Donnell; 1-26; Gold altitude & 5-hour duration; Completed Silver badge.
- 7-31; Robert H. Gurr; 1-26; Gold altitude; Completed Gold badge.
- 7-31; Earl J. Seagars; 1-23E; Gold altitude; 2nd leg.
- 7-31; James C. McCarrier; Cherokee II; Gold altitude.

A hangar party sponsored by SCSA was held during the Camp on the Saturday evening of July 27th to climax the first week's activities. Shown at the watermelon table are Janet Seagars, Eva Katinszky, Ray McAlpine, Earl Seagars, Jack Gravance and Dana Seagars.

Photo by George Uveges



desert to Camp Irwin. He had blisters on blisters. The area was inaccessible to automobile and trailer so the sailplane was retrieved by aerotow the next day. Upon his return to El Mirage, Elmer was presented with a new first, a mammoth badge emphasizing walking out shoes and emblematic of his 30-kilometer desert trek.

Bob Hillard took the silent enthusiastic award for coming from the farthest distance, Fairbanks, Alaska. Lyman Beman won the GRIM DETERMINATION award for continuing to scratch his way to Yucca, Arizona, for Diamond goal and Gold distance to complete his Gold badge.

The participants thank Gus, Ann and Ross Briegleb for providing full soaring facilities, equipment and accommodations during the