

# PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

by MAJ. EDWARD H. BUTTS, JR., USAF, Competition Director

The Northwest Regional Soaring Championships was conducted as scheduled, from 22 July through 26 July 1963. There were fourteen sailplanes entered in the open class competition. A class II category competition and an FAI Badge camp was held in conjunction with the Regional "Open." Four sailplanes competed in class II and four others were entered in the Badge camp. A grand total of 24 ships were on hand. This included two local sailplanes.

The contest was won by Lyle A. Maxey in the open class and Rose Marie Licher was top in class II. Daily results and final standings for all entrants are given in a separate table of scores. There were four contest days and one rest day. The contest was held at Hailey airport (elev. 5300 feet), which serves the Sun Valley, Idaho, area. It has a 5300-foot-long runway with a parallel gravel taxiway, and is well maintained. It is virtually dust free. The airport is located in a valley which is about one mile wide and is bordered by excellent soaring ridges that reach as high as 3000 feet above the airport.

Towing was provided by two Cessna 180's and two Super Cubs.

A four-minute interval for launching was set up and easily maintained with three tow planes. Additional tie-down space was provided by an anchored 1000-foot cable, since permanent tie-down facilities on site were not adequate for 22 ships. A large tent was used for pilots' meetings, with provisions to seat 35 persons. Blackboards and bulletin boards were used to display tasks, weather, and other items of interest such as turn point photographs, etc. This tent also served as contest headquarters and contained a telephone, two-way radio on 123.3 megacycles and other necessary equipment. Weather information was obtained by telephone from Detachment 5, 9th Weather Squadron, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, on a prearranged format and presented on a large blackboard with some verbal educated guesses by the competition director. A starting gate and finish line with an official timer were utilized for all speed tasks. Oxygen was made available for all contestants by Dr. James D. Ball of the Sun Valley Hospital.

Task setting, as usual, left something to be desired on the first day. Weather was clear, thermals were

forecast to reach 12-14,000 feet on the first contest day. A speed task to Woody ranch and return (141 miles) was set. Unfortunately, no one completed it. The task setters did not fully believe the winds aloft forecast, which was 43k/220° at 15,000 feet. It was obvious that a cross-wind course was desirable, however, there was no suitable turn point northwest of Hailey, because of rugged terrain and the southerly course leads into stable valley air. The task distance probably should have been about 90 miles. Class II was given a shorter task of 61 miles, crosswind. However, no one completed this either.

The speed task on the second contest day was a bit of an improvement. Five out of 13 starters completed. This was a flat-triangle course, 59.5 miles across the wind. One of the turn points was Baldy Mountain Fire Tower (elev 9250) which overlooks Sun Valley and is also a famous ski run. This was our poorest thermal day. Winds aloft remained the same as the previous day, fairly strong at all levels. Class II was given a shorter task, but no one completed it.

The third contest day, 24 July, was a free distance task. Weather had advised that the thermal low was building in our area and conditions would probably continue to improve over the next three days. The strong southwest flow aloft continued 45k/220° at 15,000 feet

Mrs. Gail Stur presents Pacific Northwest Regional Soaring Champion Lyle Maxey with his first place trophy, a silver bowl filled with ice and a bottle of champagne.



Photo by Sun Valley News Bureau

Bob Moore gets strapped in his red Schweizer 1-21 by wife Elisabeth prior to making the longest flight of his life, 368 miles on the free distance day. Bob won the third place trophy for the contest.



Photo by Sun Valley News Bureau