

SUGARBUSH WAVE FLIGHTS

Canadian Gold badge heights are being claimed in quite a rash as a result of the first Annual Green Mountain Wave Soaring Encampment held at Sugarbush Valley, Warren, Vermont, during the last 2 weeks of October. John Macone of the Sugarbush Soaring Club is really offering the Canadian lads a sensational situation in their lovely little setting, located on Route 100, 12 miles southwest of Montpelier. The Alpen Inn is the registration point, and the site of the soaring operation is conducted at Estey Airpark, 4 miles north of Waitsfield. They really supplied the promised waves, and some 30-odd Canadians have participated from the Montreal area.

Henri Chabot, Ben Price and Kurt Kovacs of the Montreal Soaring Council have attained their Gold badge heights with flights in the wave to 14,500 ft. a.s.l. Henri and Ben tell us their stories as follows:

Gold Height — Oct. 12th

by HENRI CHABOT

From a previous expedition of a few members of MSC the week end before, plans were made to pay a soaring visit to this intriguing site. But before the end of the week most everybody seemed to have changed their mind, and only Garth Scheib and myself with the L-Spatz, and Ben Price with the Skylark 4 were going. Friday night, Oct. 11th, it was raining and the forecast for Saturday was not too promising. Without enthusiasm I

drove out to Hawkesbury to pick up the sailplane. After several hours' work, I finally got the trailer lights to work and I was back in Montreal at 1:00 A.M., having started out at 6:30 P.M.

In the morning I went to pick up Garth and we left for Sugarbush, arriving there at noon to find Dave King of Ottawa already there from Pendleton, rigged and taking off in the Fauvette. The sky was clear and the wind was quite gusty, even on the ground. Watching Dave on tow, one could easily see that the air was already very turbulent. Minutes later he was back on the ground. A quick word with him confirmed the turbulent conditions. Ben Price had arrived and was feverishly busy rigging the Skylark 4. We rigged the L-Spatz and soon were ready to fly with barograph wound up and ticking.

Arthur Klinge took off in the Fauvette and disappeared on tow behind the ridge. Minutes later, the L-5 landed and took off with Ben Price in the Skylark 4. Man, that turbulence certainly was not decreasing! After a half-hearted attempt at trying to get Garth to go up (he turned it down because his chances of 5-hour duration was slim and he preferred to try it Sunday) and watching the Skylark 4 coming down fast to the field, I almost decided not to go up at all, but instead elect to wait for further developments.

A few minutes later, the Skylark 4 which was almost back to the field earlier, was spotted high in

the clear blue sky standing still and seemingly going up at a fast rate.

I then decided to have a try even though I was expecting the turbulence. I spent a hairy 10 minutes on tow wondering if the L-Spatz would break up in the air before we were back over the field to release. Finally the field seemed within reach and, not being able to stand any more of this back-breaking business, I released at 3500 feet above ground.

I immediately got sink of 2-3 meters/sec. and headed back towards the field when I realized what the strength of the wind was. I was wondering if I was going to make it when the turbulence increased a little more and sink and climb averaged out.

When I reached 2500 feet I hit what was probably the updraft side of the rotor because the variometer went right up against the stop at 5 m./sec. up. In a matter of minutes, I was up to 6000 feet, and all of a sudden everything went quiet and silk-smooth. I was in the WAVE!! At 9000 feet the lift was down to 2 m./sec. and then went down to zero. I then realized that I was drifting out of the wave. Nose down, speed up to 100 km./hr., slowly the variometer needle went up and settled on 1 m./sec. up.

At 10,000 feet the climb was only ½ m./sec. Since I was not too sure of my low point, I assumed it was 3000 feet, and in order to get my Gold height, I knew I needed roughly a 10,000-foot gain, so I had to reach at least 13,000 feet above the ground. At that point, 10,000 feet, I spotted the Fauvette way up at least 3000 to 4000 feet higher, hanging motionless in the blue sky. At 12,000 feet, I spotted the Skylark 4 about 500 feet higher and about ¼ mile away upwind. I was beginning to feel the lack of oxygen and mostly the cold; in spite of heavy boots my feet were very cold.

Since there was still some lift, and for good measure, I decided to ride it to the top. At 14,000 feet I was so uncomfortable from the cold, and since I was getting a little dizzy, I decided to call it quits. The view from that point was grandiose. The whole Lake Champlain region was visible. After enjoying the spectacle for a few minutes I pulled out the air brakes and started down. I made a few turns in the downside of the wave and soon found myself



GGC member Ed. Laenen flying his shared Slingsby Skylark 4 sailplane near Pendleton, Ont.

Photo by Dave King