

North-Northwest, and the sun going down—I climbed slowly back to 8,300 feet (12,300 feet MSL). These frontal conditions were just as the weatherman forecast. Feeling that this was all the altitude I could use before dark, I drew a bead on the rotating beacon of an airport I thought to be Kimball, Wyoming. At 85 mph indicated after a glide of about 15 miles, the Sisu carried me over the 1,000 km magic arc! I glided into the beacon with about half a mile to spare. It was 20:19.

It is to be noted that near here is where the three states, Wyoming, Nebraska and Colorado meet. As busy as Parker was at this time sparingly paying out the last precious feet of altitude, he needed not be concerned as to the state Kimball was located in.

He made a safe and smooth landing and says, "I struggled out of the Sisu after those ten and one half hours and looked around for landing witnesses. There was no one in sight—just the rotating beacon, the runway lights and I. I staggered around the hangars to a lighted house trailer and called from a distance, "Anybody home?". Two young men came to the door. I asked them to witness my land-

ing and help me put my sailplane in a hangar. The younger of the two said, "I didn't hear a plane land." I told him it was not an airplane but a sailplane. He then said, "I didn't hear one of them either." The other young man aptly suggested that a sailplane didn't make any noise and further suggested that they go and look. As we walked toward the sailplane, I remarked, "This is Kimball, Wyoming, isn't it?". I then learned that I was in Kimball, Nebraska, back in the land of McCook. He asked me where I had come from. When I told him, Odessa, Texas, he seemed very skeptical . . . I am sure both boys thought I was either drunk or crazy. After seeing the sailplane they became more friendly but still seemed to doubt my story. However, they did sign my landing witness form, helped me hangar the ship, drove me into town to a motel, and to a cafe and were late for their evening dates."

"While I was waiting for my food at the cafe, I called home a second time to see if Ian had called in. The hostess at the cafe overheard part of my conversation, noticed my Sagebrush Soaring Society patch and after asking questions as to who I was, where I was from

and what flight I had made, seemed to be the only person in town who actually believed my story of a 646 mile sailplane flight."

The faithful and hearty Ian had completed the launching of the other pilots back at Odessa that morning, then had taken off solo with Al's car and trailer. Al's earlier start and 60 mph clip had so outdistanced the crewcar that Ian was never able to communicate with him by radio. By 21:00 hours, he had reached, the town of Springfield, in Southeast Colorado where he learned of the landing and contacted his pilot. At Al's insistence he slept a few hours and reached Kimball about 11:30 the next morning. The round trip crew distance on this flight was in excess of 1,600 road miles.

Al Parker with his usual modesty gives all credit for this great world's record flight to Len Niemi, the designer and constructor of the famous Sisu sailplane.

Al is fully convinced that soaring records are made to be broken and when this reporter left Odessa, all of the pilots gathered there including Parker were planning assaults on his 646 mile mark. Soaring men are like that.

RECORD DISTANCE FLIGHTS—COMPARISON AND COMMENTS

by RICHARD H. JOHNSON

The new editor of *Soaring* magazine has asked me to write my personal comments on Al Parker's magnificent flight, principally because I established a previous world's record by a less magnificent flight from the same airport 13 years earlier. I am most happy to do this because Al is such a fine person and his flight was most outstanding.

I offer my apologies at the start for my rather impersonal dissection of the data from Al's superb flight. My only excuse is that I was trained as an engineer, and probably because of this I wanted to know from a fact and figure analysis just how Al carried out his flight. An ulterior motive was that by performing a careful study of his flight, I would learn and be in a better position to improve my distance flying capability.

First of all I want it known that

Al Parker was at Odessa during the two weeks that I and others were trying for records in 1951, and that he and his tow plane were of considerable assistance to us all. I never dreamed at the time that he would be the one to exceed my record; however, I did notice he was much more inclined to listen and look than to talk.

Now to the analysis of Al's flight and the comparison of it to my 1951 record flight of 535 miles. We both planned to go almost due north from Odessa. My goal was Colby, Kansas, 527 miles on a course 6° east of true north, and Al's goal was Julesburg, Colorado, which is 630 miles due north of Odessa. I think we both knew a fairly good south wind was needed so we waited for a day with wind and good thermal convection. As to early convection, I think Al's day was better because he was able to

start soaring soon after releasing at 9:52 AM. On my day in 1951, I made an aero tow at 10:15 AM and found no indication of convection. It was just as well because I had forgotten to turn on my barograph for the first tow. I made my second takeoff at 10:29 AM and found that by then the air had changed from smooth to bumpy. Al's early start gave him an even 45 minute head start over my less spectacular flight of 1951. Had Al not made this early start, his flight probably would not have been able to reach the 1000 km goal he sought.

From here on my analysis and comparison centers principally on the barograms. The barogram cannot tell everything that I would like to know, but it does contain a wealth of data. Fortunately, both Al Parker and I carried Peravia barographs, and this makes the