

At last I had the goal in hand, working slowly up to 9,500 MSL on the altimeter, just north of Sharon Springs. Guess I had better go on in and land. Great feeling. I had been flying at 55 mph indicated for some time now, so I increased the airspeed a little. I would arrive at Goodland with altitude left, but had talked myself into taking the goal. Somewhere, some pilot may be getting ready to land with 510 miles flown to his goal, and if he beats me to the ground, all is for naught. Out of the clear blue sky and five miles south of Goodland I stumble into a thermal with 400 and 500 fpm lift. I turn into it and work it. It is a thermal, and a good one. With this I know I can get back up to 10,000 or so. This is my opportunity, and working out just as I had hoped for so many months. I hit the thermal at about 7,000 MSL, and was now at about 7,500. Gosh I have been working hard all day, for that goal. What about that other pilot somewhere, getting ready to steal my goal. How far can I go from 10,000 feet. Another 35 miles at least, not counting good drift down low.

I can put the distance record out there at about 560 or better. This day hasn't really been too good, and 560 won't stand long. I will still have the big one to shoot for, and know that I can break it with a good day. Then my hand eases forward on the control stick and I head for the airport. "Hello Goodland radio. This is sailplane 04 Sugar. Come in." "Sailplane 04 Sugar, this is Goodland radio, over." "04 Sugar to Goodland, I am now approaching the south boundary of the Goodland airport. I think I may have set a new sailplane world record and will land at Goodland. Will you please call the airport management and notify them that I will need them to witness my landing." "Roger 04 Sugar, stand by." — "Goodland radio to sailplane 04 Sugar, the airport management has been notified. Are you a two place sailplane or singleplace?" "I am single place, Goodland, and am now descending thru 6,300 MSL, circling over the field." "Roger 04 Sugar, you may land on runway one six, etc., etc." "Please get a time hack on my landing, Goodland, and I will land on the south-east runway, in order to be closer to the taxi strip, if that is OK". . . . and down I go.

FASTER! FASTER!

by GEORGE B. MOFFAT, JR.

The first time I ever heard of the 300 km triangle record, back in the summer of 1959 when I was first starting to fly seriously in the elderly Olympias and AV-36s of L'Aero Club Gaston Caudron, it was an astronomical 77 kmh, a speed that completely passed my comprehension of possibility. The first time I flew a 300 triangle, still in France, it took a hardworking six and a half hours. There seems, then, something almost indecent about having whipped around the same distance in two hours and forty minutes.

The day, August 6th, did not look especially promising, with a stability index of plus four. Wally Scott dutifully declared a goal and return record attempt as did I. He took off at about 10:15 and half an hour later was still in sight of the field — low. I thought about my 7.85 lbs. wing loading and stayed put. By lunchtime Wally was back, there wasn't a cloud in the sky, and we were all—Ben Greene, Red Wright and Wally—tearing up our later declarations for the 500 km. triangle record. At one thirty the cu began to pop so I got out a piece of paper and wearily wrote out a 300 km triangle declaration. The others had writer's cramp by this time and didn't bother. They agreed to come along for the ride, however—after all, what's a 300-triangle in Odessa?

Airborn at just after two, I flew for about 20 minutes waiting for the others, as Ian Burgin, the tow pilot, was also to time us. At about 14:25 he radioed that he was ready so I lined up a dust devil some five miles down course and split Sed over the line. Apparently I got a little carried away and was alarmed to see the airspeed swing past 180 mph just as I hit a terrific bump and Ian called me up to say I would have to try again as I was slightly out of position. Five minutes later I got a good start at a modest 160 mph and headed out.

Needless to say my dust devil had disappeared and I got rapidly lower and lower, plugging along at 110 IAS. Ten miles out I was forced to work several little thermals, deserting each one as soon as I could to press on to the boomer which I knew I had to find for the

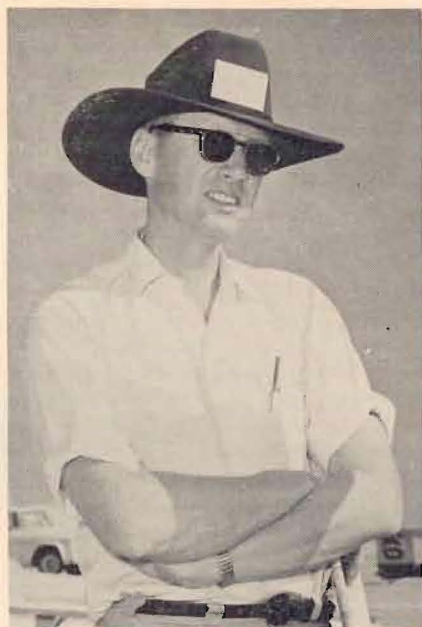


Photo by Geo. Uveges

George B. Moffat, Jr.

first long climb. The others, starting unofficially about five minutes later, were conversing happily about their 1,200 fpm climb while I struggled along below 3,000 feet. Finally, about 20 miles out, I got a real thermal and carried it to base, only to find Wally Scott just above me in his Ka-6 after a later start. Ben was well ahead. Thinking to catch up, I went on up "in the shade" (Texas euphemism for cloud flying) the variometer dropped slightly, but I stuck it out for 1,500 feet above base (13,000 MSL), hoping for better things. This excursion wasted me about a minute, so, disgusted, I pushed over to 120 mph and went for the first turn. Fortunately the clouds streeted for the rest of the leg so I caught Red and Wally. Ben was a couple of thousand feet over me as we thermaled up over the first turn from about 4,000 above the terrain. The thermal was a good one, averaging perhaps 750 fpm up to base, now at 13,500. Wally Scott and Red Wright in his new Sisu 1A had cut the corner a bit to scout the clouds ahead and reported excellent lift under a street leading to the second turn.

Average on the first leg worked out just under 70 mph. The second leg was a breeze with excellent lift cells along the street often giving as much as 1,000 feet in straight flight. Half way along the leg at Seminole, I paused to thermal up from about 7,500 MSL after seeing