

On February 22, 1965, Marshall Claybourn, who already had his goal Diamond, got his altitude Diamond at Black Forest Gliderport and thus drew even with John Brittingham who had the same two Diamonds. At this stage the 1-26 race became two with two against one with one. I was able to make it a horse race on May 20th when Marion Cruce towed me to a point south of Guthrie at 10:30 A.M. and I landed seven and a half hours later in Bruning, Nebraska, 318 miles away.

I don't think there is any easy way to fly a 1-26 300 miles. It takes good winds, good lift and the conviction that even when you are down to 800 feet you are going to continue flying it until you get there. I am quite certain that if I had ever picked a landing spot, even as a precaution, the flight would have ended. The flight included two hours of patty-cake flying followed by an hour of hanging on wondering where the thermals went, followed by just enough good lift to rejuvenate the spirit, followed by the dreaded sight of developing high cirrus. After that I remember only that the green ball on the Robinson (my only variometer) was barely off the peg but that it managed to stay unstruck more than did the red ball. By this time the lift was so light that I was flying with thumb and forefinger on the stick, concentrating on the variometer and the yaw string and paying little attention to the terrain. To this day I don't know what the northern part of Kansas looks like.

Early in the summer John Brittingham had a flight of over 320 miles which was disqualified because of his initial altitude inasmuch as he had started in the wave a Colorado Springs. I believe he told me that he

covered something like 150 miles his first hour out! Marshall Claybourn kept coming up with minor scares throughout the summer and finally threw a major one at us with a 290 mile flight made in August. John Brittingham bought a Dart and withdrew from active 1-26 competition and I made a couple of abortive attempts at needle-balling my way to the altitude Diamond in the Guthrie area. I called that off after deciding that I either needed a horizon gyro or a head less susceptible to vertigo.

The finale came on November 15 with a 30,950 foot flight, again at the Black Forest Gliderport. I had flown our trusty 182 to the Black Forest on Friday, November 12, and spent Saturday helping Dave Johnson, Mark Wild, Joe Conn and some others assemble Dave and Mark's beautiful new 2-32. Despite the fact that there was virtually no soaring that day it was great to be back at Black Forest. The Gliderport is located about ten miles east of the mountains near Colorado Springs and at the south edge of the Black Forest. It is on a high area that slopes gently both west and east and has a 5,000 foot runway that I believe could handle a Lockheed Constellation.

A magnificent glass-walled clubhouse overlooks the runway and flight area to the south and the Rampart Range and Pikes Peak to the west. Behind the club room there is a very fine bunk room with kitchen and shower, and behind it there is still another bunk room which was then being built and which I understand is now completed. Next to the club house is a 40 by 80 foot hangar with an enormous electric door. It houses an unbelievable number of sailplanes and while in Colorado Springs I heard an unconfirmed

About Bill Cleary

The "Show Me" State provided us with a glider pilot who did! On the eighth day of the first month in the 21st year of this century, in the State of Missouri, was born one William B. Cleary. Young Bill migrated immediately to Ponca City, Oklahoma. As time passed he could be found in various institutions devoted to the knowledge of man. His diligence at those institutions is attested to by the learned men who affixed their signatures to a B.A. Degree at Yale University in 1942.

Young Bill got early experience at the ups and downs of the world as a young naval officer aboard a destroyer during World War II, knowledge he was to put to good use later—mostly the up part. His lifelong interest in aviation started with his first airplane ride in 1926. He became a private pilot in 1940 and got his instrument rating in 1956 and his glider rating in 1962. He admits to "something over 2,000 hours" in the air.

He displayed the rare good judgment needed of a glider pilot by marrying Miss Helen Brown Prentice in Ponca City in 1948, the year he established residence in Oklahoma City. From that city he directs the fortunes of his family (three children) and Cleary Petroleum, Inc., which he founded in 1950. He is also closely associated as a Director or Committee Chairman with a number of Petroleum Associations. A many-faceted man, he is a Trustee of the Mummers Theatre, Inc., the Oklahoma Science and Arts Foundation, Inc., and is President of

the Oklahoma City Symphony and of Sailplanes, Inc.

The latter organization is the Schweizer dealer in Oklahoma and the fountainhead of soaring in central Oklahoma. Being a good businessman Bill set out to show what an excellent product he has to sell. He did this by earning a Diamond for a goal flight from *Sailplane's* home at Guthrie, Oklahoma, to Salina, Kansas on June 28, 1964—a 200-mile flight. In a 1-26, of course!

Come the 20th of May, 1965, Bill set sail on a seven-and-a-half-hour flight from Guthrie, Oklahoma, to Bruning, Nebraska. The 317-mile flight, good for Diamond number two, was also made in a 1-26. What else? The ship was a new swept-tail demonstrator equipped with airspeed indicator, altimeter, Robinson variometer and barograph.

On November 15, 1965, the skies of Colorado along the Rampart Range were abounding with sailplanes fighting their way, salmon-like, upstream. Snug in one sat Bill. As the altimeter slowly wound its way, finally to 30,950 feet, it admitted Bill to that exclusive Diamond Pilot Club and the first ever to have completed all three in one of Schweizer's ubiquitous 1-26's. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

The son of Missouri had, indeed, shown us! And now that he has, many, many more will take heart with their little "second-class" performers and, with first class effort, go on their own successful Diamond hunt.

—MARSHALL CLAYBOURN