

Bob Brower of Kansas City checked the barograph trace with the current calibration trace and found that my maximum altitude during the flight was not 35,400 as indicated on the altimeter but was 37,500 for



Dr. Ernst Steinhoff smiles after completion of a wave flight which netted him his altitude Diamond. This completes a Diamond badge begun three decades ago at the Wasserkuppe in Germany.

a gain of 23,700 feet above low point. A Winter barograph was used on the flight which had a range up to over 45,000 feet. As suspected the altimeter in 49 Romeo was a 35,000 feet instrument.

The Schweizer 1-26, N2749R, is well equipped for high altitude with a pressure-demand oxygen system and a 38-cu.ft. high-pressure bottle. I still had several hundred pounds of oxygen when I landed. The ship also has a separate standby oxygen system which has its own regulator and is good for around 20 minutes. This additional system is for emergency use only in case the main system should fail at high altitude. Four-nine Romeo now has a 50,000-foot altimeter.

A Thirty-Year Diamond

"I think that you might be interested in one of the pilots in particular. He is Dr. Ernst Steinhoff of Alamogordo, N.M. His flight last Saturday completes his Diamond badge. Dr. Steinhoff completed his Diamond distance 30 years ago on a flight from the Wasserkuppe in Germany to Brno, Czechoslovakia in company with three other German pilots. The distance was 315 miles. He completed his Diamond goal last summer on a flight from Alamogordo to Corona, N.M., and return for a total of 203 miles. His altitude flight from the Black Forest Gliderport to an altitude of 29,000 feet in a 1-26 completes his Diamond. His altitude gain was 19,050 feet.

"Dr. Steinhoff started flying in 1923 at Doernberg near Kassel in Germany. From 1923 until 1928, when he got his A and B awards, none of his flights lasted over 25 seconds. He got his Silver badge (number 198) in 1935. He is married and has seven children. The two youngest soloed recently in sailplanes when they turned 14. Dr. Steinhoff is Chief Scientist at the Air Force Missile Development Center at Holloman Air Force Base near Alamogordo."

—DAVID C. JOHNSON

DIAMONDS A GO-GO

The wind hardly moved the leafless branches of the trees on the morning of December 29, 1965, in Denver, Colorado. On the day before the sky was loaded with beautiful lenticular clouds, but the answer to my telephone call from Black Forest Gliderport was not proportional with the cloud display.

I spent the week between Christmas and New Years visiting my good friend Ivan Jaszlics in Littleton, Colorado. We planned to pass time with skiing and high-altitude flying, hoping that the weather would cooperate. Although the sky did not look promising we decided to go on and see Black Forest Gliderport. It turned out to be a worthwhile trip indeed.

The field is located at the edge of a pine forest on a gentle southerly slope on a pleasantly rolling hill. Two well-constructed hangars and a very well-designed and built operations and bunk facility offer all the comforts necessary to make soaring a real recreational activity. Radio transmissions of the airborne pilots can be heard at all times through cleverly located loudspeakers both inside and outside the clubhouse. Either from the terrace or from the lounge of the clubhouse a spectator can have a magnificent view of Pikes Peak and the surrounding mountains. The loud speakers created a race track-like atmosphere since an average of three sailplanes were transmitting quite regularly their quickly changing altimeter readings. These would be interrupted only by Mark Wild, who was busily fixing barograph traces, with the standard transmission of the day: "Congratulations, you just made your Diamond altitude gain."

We arrived at 11:00 A.M. and they had already made five of these coveted goodies. To my surprise there wasn't any wind on the ground! After some anxious waiting, a careful briefing and the friendly reception by Dave Johnson, Mark and Ruth Wild, the time arrived when I had a chance to try my luck with the wave in a 1-26. The equipment was indeed superb. All sailplanes had a Bayside radio, diluter-demand type oxygen equipment and a jump bottle. Radio contact between the towplane and the sailplanes was helpful in the rotor turbulence and the last minute on the spot briefing immediately before release was an excellent idea. After a 12,500 foot asl release I reached 24,000 feet, but I was flying a bit fast and flew out of the wave against the wind. Another 1-26 from the Air Force Academy was flying about 4,000 feet below me and advised a 180-degree turn to return closer to a noticeable rotor cloud a few miles downwind. I contacted 500-fpm lift there and soon happily watched the altimeter passing the 29,000 foot mark.

At 30,000 feet I radioed my altitude back to the field and got the reassuring standard message. I left at 31,200 feet and started my descent. On the way down I waved good-bye to the other 1-26 and 17 minutes later I was on the ground. Thirteen diamond gain wave flights were made on that day. Seeing such a remarkable operation, meeting such wonderful people and witnessing the remarkable progress of a beautiful soaring sight really boosted my happiness after an interesting flight.

—Elmer Katinsky