

100° and the minimum 29°. Precipitation is infrequent. Only eleven days out of the one-hundred days checked had any precipitation at all, and most of these were traces. Precipitation during this period of the year is usually due to thunderstorms. Soaring weather is normally good at this time of the year, with the cloud bases six to eight thousand feet above the ground. The elevation of Stead AFB is near 5,000 feet. Mountain waves are rare at this time of the year although they have occurred prior to the passage of a cold front. The ground is much dryer than normal this year. We had heavy snows and rain during the fall and early winter. From January 1 through April 13 this year we have had only .26 inches of precipitation—less than 10 percent of normal. The average precipitation for May is .52 inches, for June .37 inches.

BRUCE BEEBE

Desert soaring is as safe as soaring anyplace, but the application of technique is quite different. In the central valley of California I pick a landing field at 1000 feet. In Nevada I pick a landing field at 5000 feet. This is not necessarily directly below me, but, say, 15 to 20 miles away in the direction I'm going.

The largest factor I keep in mind is the desolation of some parts I fly over. I get high enough to cross unpopulated areas before committing myself to cross them. With the tremendous altitudes sometimes available—15,000 to 18,000 feet MSL—one is safe in venturing almost anyplace, when, if he doesn't get back up, he is sure to land near some kind of civilization. Landing fields are sometimes scarce, sometimes abundant. Therefore my basic advice is to get the altitude necessary to make jumps. One should stick around a suitable place to land until he works back up or lands.

When making short field landings one should keep in mind that, at 5,000 to 6,000 feet, the ground speed on landing is noticeably in excess of the landing speed at sea level. This makes for a longer run-out. A short field which may do at sea level may be too short at these higher elevations. Taking this increased speed into account, I always try to pick a field that is much longer than necessary. Of course an airport landing is most desirable.

So really the old standby still applies—Get High and Stay High.

WILLIAM S. IVANS

Here is a quick summary of my feeling about flying out of the Reno area. First of all I would liken it to flying out of Bishop or El Mirage in many particulars, with the exception that the ground temperatures appear to be much more tolerable than at either of these California sites. I recall hearing Les Gould describing the area as one of the few "cool deserts of the world," and I believe that this phrase may be singularly appropriate.

Thermal strengths are typical of good desert areas. Rates of climb to 1,000 feet per minute and above are to be expected in the better parts of the better days. Also, and this seems to be the case anywhere, there will be plenty of occasions during a contest where one will have to scratch.

The presence of the Sierra and other smaller ranges brings up the possibility of all of the major mountain effects: ridge soaring; thermal enhancement through afternoon sun warming the western-facing slopes,

sometimes aided by a westerly wind; wave phenomena if the wind is strong enough; and very often a heavy downwash in the lee of the mountains, especially in late afternoon when a steady westerly wind may be blowing.

Cloud bases are apt to be relatively high above the desert terrain, but perhaps uncomfortably close to mountain tops.

I would rate the availability of emergency landing areas in the three major quadrants in which one may expect to fly as probably better than in the Mojave Desert or the Owens Valley. There are a number of outstanding exceptions to this, including a long stretch that I can recall on the route from Minden to Lovelock along the western edge of the Carson Sink.

I noticed distinct air-mass changes on a number of the contest days. This I would regard as typical of flying in the western mountains where the alternate structure of mountains and deep valleys appears to favor retention of air masses in basins.

I noticed one thing at Minden that was enormously reassuring. Despite standing water (cows up to their knees) all around the airfield, thermals appeared to generate at about the usual 11:00 AM onward, so that the air masses present, at least during that period, appeared to be unstable enough to compensate for less-than-normal ground heating.

All in all, I feel that the week's flying out of Minden was about as exciting and satisfying as any I have ever done in a glider. The soaring was good, the scenery, (especially toward Lake Tahoe) magnificent, and the retrieving routes more than adequate.

I look forward to returning!

THE SCHEMPP-HIRTH SHK



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