

NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS, JUNE 28-JULY 8, 1966

ENTRY DEADLINE—MARCH 30, 1966

NATIONAL'S RULES PROVIDE FOR ELIGIBILITY IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

Deadline for application to enter the National Championships will be ninety days prior to start of the contest. If it is necessary to restrict the number of entrants because of available facilities, applicants with Diamond goal or Diamond distance awards who apply before the deadline will be assured of acceptance. Gold badge distance award holders will then be accepted in sequence of application postmark. All entries will be made on official blanks requested from the sponsor and accompanied by one-half of the entry fee, which will not be returned if the entry is accepted. After the deadline, applications from all those having at least the Gold badge distance award will be accepted in order of their application postmark until the maximum number of permissible entrants is obtained.

Request Application From Nevada Soaring Assn., Box 1064, Reno, Nevada

tween two hay stacks. I decided to go to Las Vegas, but 20 minutes later I was scratching the deck below take-off-site altitude in the middle of nowhere above a VOR station. Since the memory of my 18 mile hike in the desert was still quite vivid I desperately milked the zero sink until it grew to a healthy three m/sec., and soon Crisis Number One was over.

While circling over the Cronise Dry Lake a white speck appeared below. After some vigorous circling I was able to notice the black nose of the 1-23 and I knew that it was Bob Seamans. After a while he got up with me and from there on we traveled together to Clark Mountain. The 1-23 reached first the beautiful cumulus standing guard above the Clark Mountain like an angel in the gates of Paradise.

Indeed, it guarded a soaring pilot's paradise because north of this mountain stretched a beautiful cloud street and the faithful Spatz never had it so good, maintaining 85 to 90 mph until the middle of Las Vegas. By that time the 1-23 was about 30 miles ahead of me and, to my embarrassment, I discovered that the last point on my quickly gathered maps was Jean, Nevada. From there on, I had no maps until St. George, Utah. Crisis Number Two was solved with the help of Bob Seamans, my crew, and a Mormon Mesa radio. To my embarrassment I didn't even have a compass in the airplane. But the information received on the radio was sufficient to keep me on course although I had to slow down somewhat.

Aside of navigational worries I could not resist to enjoy the breathtaking scenery. The contrast of the deep blueness of Lake Mead and the rich red of Valley of Fire National Monument spontaneously reminded me to pay silent tribute to the Artist who created all this beauty.

I left the last cloud at the end of Lake Mead and started along the Virgin River Valley. One peaceful little village—their names unknown to me—passed one after the other under the Spatz's wings. The river valley was a beautiful green ribbon disappearing in a canyon at the north end of the valley. I found my last and rather weak thermal at the south end of the can-

yon and tried to gain as much altitude as I could. The terrain ahead of me was far from inviting, but I kept pushing on. Perhaps the next town ahead of me is Cedar City? After passing over the Virgin River Canyon my hopes were all shattered when I found the big "D" on the hillside. The airport on the typical table top of Utah was, indeed, St. George. I still had 40 miles to go. Even the L-Spatz couldn't climb up hill, so I kept on gliding to the next airport, Hurricane.

It was 7:30 when I made what I thought was the last widely sweeping turn toward the field. Beyond the field there was a long eastwesterly ridge, its face perpendicular to the sunshine. If there is any decency in this air (I thought) there must be some abend thermik (evening thermal) on the cliff. With this idea, I turned right away from the airport and started to polish that cliff which gave me a steady, soft, half meter lift. In the meantime I tried desperately to create contact with my crew. They were driving in the mountains and occasionally I could hear their transmission. In one garbled message they offered me a submarine sandwich for dinner.

Soon I was about 300 feet above the ridge and started to play on the idea of going further. But I was trapped in a valley and I realized that, without risking the integrity of the aircraft, I could not leave Hurricane. Cedar City was about 2,000 feet above my altitude and the time was 8:00 o'clock. I decided to enjoy the beautiful sunset flying up and down on that ridge and landed at 8:30 p.m.

After the airplane was rolled into the hangar a local pilot gave me a ride to St. George where I met my crew and started the long journey back to El Mirage. I missed Diamond distance by 14 miles, but I had the most beautiful flight in my life. And the next day . . . ? The weather was so poor that I witnessed the historical event of seeing Paul Bikle, Graham Thomson and Bud Mears falling back after a sleigh ride to El Mirage from tow.

Shouldn't we declare this phenomenon of having the best weather on rest days as Murphy's Third Law?

ELEMER KATINZSKY