

WAVES, EAST AND WEST

By a rare bit of good fortune photographer George Uveges was over Great Western Soaring School at Pearlblossom, Calif. on the same day Carle Conway made his Diamond altitude flight, and obtained this remarkable shot of the north side of the San Gabriel Mountains. The view is towards the east. The story of Carle's flight follows Allan MacNichol's account of the recent Mount Washington Wave Camp.

Now it came to pass that up New England way there was a group of eager soaring enthusiasts whose wave-flying frustrations have been satisfied recently — to a degree — by the conditions found in the high air over Vermont. There still existed a feeling, however, that Fred Harris and Dave Johnson were primarily interested in having us Easterners subsidize the airlines in shuttle flights to and from the west in search of Lennie pins.

Well, it happens that not too far away from us is one Mount Washington. The experts do say you need, first of all, a good hill, and this one is the second highest east of the Rockies. Next, say the experts, make sure the wind blows. It's been recorded here at 231 m.p.h. Now make certain you have a gradual upward slope (yes, yes, we're getting close) and finally locate a base of operations whose manager knows a sailplane from a balloon. Wylie Apte does. He was the pilot who towed Lewin Barringer, back in October

of 1938, on what proved to be the first North American wave flight of any consequence. It took 28 years to follow Lewin's lead, but we've finally gotten around to it.

You know, we're beginning to get a little excited. Better get a good towplane for the caper. Okay, Jim Doyle will let us have one of his Ector L-19's. Hey, the whole thing is looking good! Rudy Opitz says he'll take a chance, even though he has to drive six hours from Connecticut. He even promises to bring Grayson Brown, a fact that should make the chaps at Sugarbush happy because now *they* won't have to look up at him in that helium-filled L-26. Yes, we're shaping up. Bob Salvo will bring the Libelle. Can't blame failure on poor equipment in this case. Mike Stevenson is coming from New York with his 2-32. We're making progress.

How do we start? Well, MacNicol was lucky at Tehachapi once, so we'll call him the leader. Very

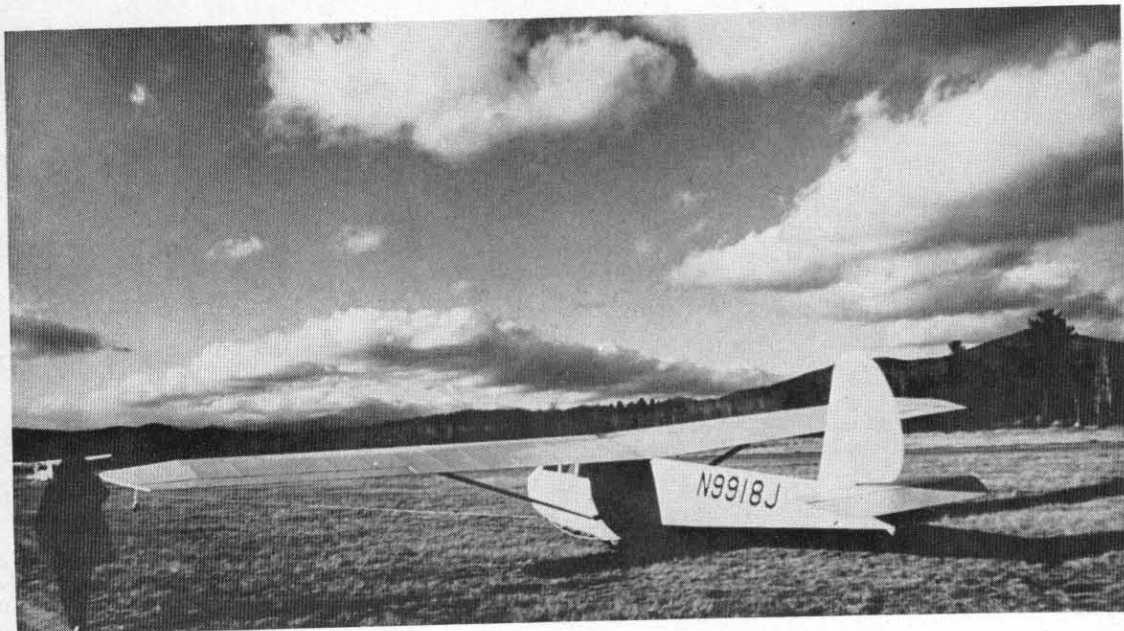
relative term. Anyhow, he gets to drive the towplane all day. Roy McMaster has a 1-23H-15 all equipped (he thinks). Also Roy and wife Ellen have their VW camper right on the field, so we'll count on them to wake up early — a little-recognized duty of an SSA Governor.

First morning. Six A.M. Lots of banging and beating. Must be a cold front. No, it's Roy beating on my bus. Wake up, man the scrapers! Wait, what's that cloud up by the mountain? Would you believe a lennie! It is, and the only cloud in the sky.

Quick, before it gets away. Dress. Eat. Ship out. Hook up. Take off. Man that cloud looks big! And it's 15 miles away. Nice smooth air on the way. We'll never get there at 60. Better pick it up. How does 80

in again with Herb Bals in his K-6. Release. He's in lift, but now he's not. Low. Going to have to land. Look ma, no fields, just plenty of trees. **CRUNCH!** Who's that walking out of the woods with an armload of instruments? Mr. Bals I presume. He's not hurt, but the Six looks like it's ready to provide fuel for a marshmallow roast.

A little slow, but we're learning. The hard way. Seems you have to tow *over* the rotor — and seems Fred Harris mentioned that once before. Now we're getting the hang of it. Four Diamonds today. Everybody happy. Everybody except Herb, although he felt a little better the next day and made a 20,000-ft. trip in a borrowed 1-26. Now what's this? An awful headache. Didn't we tell you to stay low when you don't



Getting the 2-22
to the flight line,
October 30, 1966.
Photo by James
Nash-Webber

feel Roy? (Bless that Bayside.) Can you handle 90? That's an improvement. The L-19 is still climbing out at almost 1000 f.p.m. and the 1-23 doesn't seem to feel the difference. Now we're in front of the cloud. It's like a giant grain scoop. Good lift, so off Roy goes. We're barely back to the field when we hear a groan on 123.3:

"Will a Peravia keep a continuous trace when it's a 20,000-ft. model and topped out?"

A louder moan from the pilot's wife comes next:

"He assured me that a \$250 barograph was all we would need for the rest of our lives."

Anyone need a good used 20,000-ft. Peravia?

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Now another noise on 123.3. It's Salvo.

"Hey you guys, isn't there some rule about 24,000 feet?"

Too bad. Got to stop. No waiver this week end. Who ever thought we would have *that* problem.

Next there's Tom Richter from Nutmeg. He wants a good low point on his barogram, so off we go toward the action. **BANG!** What was it those western pilots said about rotors? Which way do I turn? Doesn't seem to make much difference since I don't have control of this airplane anyway. Richter gets off and in a little while he's home again with a 22,000-ft. gain.

Did we learn anything from that rotor ride? Nope,

have oxygen? Close call, but still learning. No more tows to wave without oxygen. The temptation is just too great.

Next day. Nobody can get over 22,000 feet. Mike Stevenson sets a new two-place state record with Ruth in the rear pit. That's one way to keep the wife interested in soaring.

So it goes for three week ends and we're still learning. Comes the final week end. Air on Saturday is warm, but the front is coming. That Stevenson again! He's on the ridge next to the field. Looks like a good turn for base leg. No, back up the ridge. Low. Seems to be no higher than 500 feet above the field. Wind's picking up. Here's the front. Thirty to 40 m.p.h. winds on the ground. Most of the birds come home, but not Mike. Off the ridge to Barringer's wave. Up to 8000 feet. North now to the big one. Variometer pegged at 1500 f.p.m. he says. It's getting dark. Oxygen not turned on. Break it off at 15,000 feet with steady 1000 f.p.m. lift. Just a little too late! Was this our 30,000-ft. day?

Sunday. Last day. Cold front's gone. Take off at 6:30 with Lou Hilton. He's back awfully soon. Too cold. The early sun doesn't give much heat through the turtle deck of a 1-26 at 32,000 feet. Temperature up there is -40°. Centigrade or Fahrenheit, it doesn't make much difference! The wave is so good now we'll

only take short tows as far as the secondary. The lift at 3,000 MSL is 2400 f.p.m. on tow.

Now across the secondary window to the primary. What this? Engine trouble? Ice? Smooth 1000 f.p.m. down at full throttle. This feels like a J-3, not like one of Al Parker's thoroughbreds. A fast 180 back to the secondary and up to 12,000 feet. That 1000 f.p.m. down again. Forget it. Back to the secondary for release. Go up yourself and get across! (And Eric Tasker did, for a Diamond.)

Next tow. Still learning. Sedgeley in the LK. No sense in repeating all that towing. Let him off in the secondary. Great lift, but the LK's getting tired after four trips to 18,000 feet. She just can't make it across to the primary. Sorry Bob, only Gold this year.

The Cannon boys have been patient. Brother Laurie had been sandblasting their 1-23 all over Red Dog's front yard in Texas so Walter and Woodie have no airplane. Roy's 1-23 is available, however, and the boys aren't asking much.

"Just one flight apiece, please. You see, that's all we need to complete a couple of badges."

That's how Walter earned his third Diamond and Woody got his Gold badge. Poor brother Phillip! Without a Gold badge you eat in the kitchen in *that* house.

In conclusion, a few numbers. We scheduled a total of nine days and had 10,000-ft gains on six of them. Forty tows were made into the wave, resulting in 30 gains of 10,000 feet or better, 17 of which went to over 20,000 feet. This gave six Diamond and 14 Gold badge altitude claims. All done with a maximum of nine sailplanes on any given week end, one towplane, some 25 pilots — and an awful lot of cooperation and mature behavior.

Well, it's all over. As usual, there are lots of stories, opinions and tall tales. We have our own experts now. We're a little smarter at least. Next year we should have quite a gathering. Hope to see you there.

ALLAN MAC NICOL