

D O N S T E V E N S ' P A G E

From The Ninth Air Force

Flight Officer Don C. Stevens, holder of the official world's record for consecutive loops in a single-seater sailplane, (93



Don—looking for the horizon in one of those loops.

loops from 11,000 ft.) has recently broken another record, this time in a CG-4A cargo and troop-carrying glider.

Flt. O. Stevens, accompanied by 2nd Lt. Wilbur A. Brown as co-pilot, Flt. O. Earl H. Jarrett and 1st Lt. William N. Schneider as passengers, set out on an altitude test flight. In the tow plane were 1st Lt. Donald E. Sanders and 1st Lt. Jack L. Saulsbury.

At an altitude of 12,500 feet, the glider cut loose from the tow plane and immediately pulled up into a loop, since loss of altitude was then desired. Flying conditions were not ideal, because the 25 MPH wind tended to force the glider away from the base during the descent and it was necessary for the pilots to check their position frequently. The passengers in the

glider kept a count of the number of loops by marking them on a sheet of paper during the descent. Flt. O. Jarrett (Not shown in photograph), equipped with a camera, had a trying time to take photos as they were looping. Special rigging was necessary to hold him down while he took action photos of the loops.

Thirty-one consecutive loops were executed before the wind had forced them sufficiently far away from the base to necessitate a change in position. Flt. O. Stevens turned the glider and started looping towards the field and executed an additional 15 loops. At 3,500 feet, Flt. O. Stevens again checked his position. He turned toward the field again nosed her down, and continued looping. As the glider looped, right wing heavy, it was difficult to loop in the direction they wanted to. Eight more loops were completed, the final one being executed off the end of the runway into a strong wind, at an altitude of 100 feet. As the glider hung on its back, a bare 100 ft. off the ground, one of the passengers exclaimed: "I sure hope she goes on over, 'cause if she doesn't—." By the time we were around and as we leveled off, the wheels touched for a landing.

Constant pull of centrifugal force and the tugging of the safety belt exert a terrific strain on physical reserve and the pilots and passengers of the glider expressed extreme fatigue upon landing. A total of 54 inside loops were completed during the descent. Taking 12 minutes of continuous looping, the pilots claim that under favorable conditions, 75 to 80 loops could be made easily.

DON STEVENS is at it again—here is his last letter:

"I made a solo flight today in the Big Job and took a dog with me as co-pilot. I sat him down on the seat and showed him how he could stick his nose out the window. We took off, the dog and I, and circled the field—the dog thought it was great stuff and really enjoyed it. I cut loose at the end of the runway at 1000 feet and dove to 150 M.P.H. The dog held on all fours to keep from sliding off the seat. As

I levelled a bare 25 ft. off the ground, I pulled into a loop. I looked over at the dog and the G-force had spreadeagled his two front paws and his jaw, as well as his big ears, were flat on the seat. On the top of the loop the dog, ears and four feet, left the seat and he was resting on top of the windshield up side down (had 400 ft. on top of loop and 60 M.P.H.). As I came on around and levelled off the ground for a landing, the dog flew back to the seat, spreadeagled, his eyes as big as dollars. As I landed and stopped, the dog jumped off the seat, made a Bee-line for the door and when I opened it, dashed out. I tried later to get him into a glider, but he had had enough—no dice!

"I also made another flight with a friend of mine, Lt. P. W. Mousseau. We cut loose at 3000 ft. and found a nice thermal under the base of a nice black looking cloud. At first we indicated 100 ft./min. rise at 45 M.P.H. This increased as we reached the base. At the base it was 500 to 600 ft./min. As we both had chutes, we thought we would go on in a way. I increased my speed to 70 M.P.H. and as we entered (30° bank all the time) the first two or three minutes our rate of climb increased to 1000 to 1200 ft./min. Then Hell broke loose,—first my turn indicator flew clear right, my ball went left, my airspeed increased to 100, then to 50, then to 120, then to 30, then to 150, then to zero. My rate of climb increased to 3000 ft./min. I was fighting those controls like mad all the time. My airspeed started going up—80, 90, 100, 110 and I kept pulling back more and more trying to slow it down (at times I was applying 100 lbs. to make it answer control). When it indicated 160 M.P.H. I realized I must be on my back. At that second a terrific vertical current snapped us right side up and naturally I pulled back too fast and the old clunk shot straight up into a whip-stall. As soon as I felt her slipping backward, I shot all the controls into neutral and froze. Well she came out all right. As we did so, Mousseau yelled 'I see some green trees—let's get some fresh air.' We were pushed out the side of the cloud—at 5500 feet. If we had been sucked up into the really turbulent air upstairs—well, I don't think the Old Boy (Big Job) would have hung together. We decided then and there to fly under the cloud base only. After about an hour and a half of spiralling both of us were pretty dizzy (guess I am sure rusty and out of practice) so we came on in. We looked the ship over and she was O.K. I say—never again!

"I picked up a little 6 H.P. gas engine today and four of us glider pilots are going to buy a utility sailplane (English) and mount the motor (retractable type). Will let you know all about it as we progress. Going to run the motor up tomorrow and make plans for increasing the H.P. and mounting a thrust bearing. We're also building a propeller."



Left to right: Don Stevens, 2nd Lt. Wilbur A. Brown, 1st Lt. William N. Schneider. Photo taken after landing. Lt. Schneider tabulated the loops.



Don Stevens and Steve Solanic in their CG-4A. Note the dual instrument board, and the central two rope angle indicator designed by them.