

HELP ME, PLEASE! Please read attentively:

AT THE LANDING PLACE

1. I am the glider pilot taking part in the 11th World Gliding Championships which are being held at Leszno near Poznan from 2 to 23 of June, 1968.

2. I ask two persons present here to certify my landing on the Flight Control Card. Please write in the proper blank places of this card: name of locality where I have landed, commune, district, as well as enter in a readable manner full names and addresses of both persons.

3. I must report my landing in this locality as soon as possible—by telephone—to the Direction of the Championships at Leszno. Please, take me then to the nearest telephone. If it is far away from here, please give me a ride in a vehicle or lend to me a bicycle and offer the assistance of a guide on bicycle.

5. During my absence please take care of the glider, and if it is possible would you let the post of militia know about my landing and ask the post to guard the glider? My glider is costly and precise

equipment and therefore do not allow anybody to touch it or smoke in the vicinity of it.

6. After the telephone settlement I shall return to my glider and shall wait for a motor car to take me and my glider back to Leszno.

BY TELEPHONE

7. Please order the telephone call with Leszno near Poznan, using the catchword and telephone number as given below. (I shall pay for the call at once, please inform me of the cost after the call. Catchword Lot-Zaw, Leszno Nr. (one of the following): 641, 643, 662,684, 857, 891.

8. When the call comes, I shall speak myself. If I have some troubles in understanding, please convey through the phone the data specified in the Landing Certificate (on reverse side of the Flight Control Card).

I thank you all for your assistance in my own name as well as in the name of the Direction of the World Gliding Championships.

This information card (in Polish, of course) was carried and used by every foreign competing pilot. Although the official languages were English and Polish, amazingly few could speak both well. With the usual American naivete I expected more Poles to speak English, although John Novak of Toledo, Ohio, the translator of the U. S. team, was the only American who could speak Polish. But those who spoke German with any degree of fluency fared well and didn't face the challenge of sign language.

We all picked up a small vocabulary beginning with "uvaga, uvaga!" (attention, attention!), which preceded each announcement over the P.A. system. This remarkable sound system was activated early in the morning and penetrated the entire field with startling clarity.

Three Polish dictionaries soon had me sending my Polish friends into gales of laughter. Either way many found themselves eating and drinking things they hadn't originally considered. All crews soon knew *levo*, *pravo*, and *prosto* to get them left, right, or straight ahead when searching for their pilots.

Leszno is an agricultural town of 32,000, located on the nearly flat plains of western Poland. In June the countryside is lush with grain and potatoes. A Westerner is initially surprised at the lack of crop

irrigating equipment. Six solid rainy days later as jungle rot sets in, the lack of rice paddies is surprising.

The airfield (*lotnisko*) is located 2.5 kilometers west of town (a kilometer being a shade over six tenths of a mile) and also beyond the railroad tracks. The tracks and their candy-striped protective barriers soon made the retrieves similar to a large-scale Monopoly game—don't pass GO, return to_____

Welcome signs and pennants marked the entrance to the most impressive glider field in the world. The vast grass field was blocked from view by a series of hangars. On arrival I entered the first one to register. After picking up the required identification, I decided to locate the press facilities upstairs.

In addition to numerous official offices, this hangar housed repair shops for instruments and gliders. Most of the ground floor served as an enormous coffee, tea (*herbata*), or beer (*pivo*) hall. To the west was a new building, housing four 85-foot-long repair stalls that could accommodate eight gliders. These stalls were especially good as they freed hangars for other use and could be used for glider storage later.

Further on were twin 85-foot x 105-foot hangars. The first was set up for pilot briefings with the usual long rows of tables and chairs. The east wall featured numerous en-

larged photographs of villages and airfields that would soon become familiar turn-points. The tongue twister names such as Sulmierzyce, Przylep, and Piotrkow never did roll off the tip of our tongues, but radio coding gave them new names or numbers anyway. Overhead, parachutes were pinioned under the rafters to protect the briefing assemblage from the local bird colony.

Various non-competing Polish gliders, including the delightful two-place Bocian and the new standard-class Pirat, were languishing in the third hangar.

Seeing no familiar faces in the apron area, I headed north past newly planted lawns bordered by long rows of scarlet roses toward the newest permanent building. A cantilevered control tower dominated the two-story rock and concrete administration and residence building. The second floor housed most of the pilots in two-to-a-room accommodations with bath; while the main floor featured a lounge, meeting hall, doctor's office, and small restaurant. Next were some bungalow units where the remaining pilots lived. The last permanent structure was the dining hall/kitchen which was also used at the '58 Internationals.

A row of red poppies and a Polish-speaking guard marked the entrance to the huge tent city for crews. To the left was a large concrete swimming pool—logically unoccupied since it was cold and windy. Once past the pool, several people were observed lunging along my anticipated route through the crew tents. The reason soon became apparent. Large concrete stepping stones were awkwardly spaced through the tent streets so that with every stride one foot landed between the blocks. The U.S. team's crew (male section) was housed in the last row north (closest to the parking lot and take-off area) adjacent to the Russian crew. A drawling Texan "Well, I'll be" told me that Fritz Kahl of Marfa was a third the way around the world also. Marshall Claybourn, team captain, offered me coffee that could straighten eyelashes and a French roll of questionable age. A look around the tent indicated the Internationals was a duration event also. Comfortable cots, bedding, adequate

clothes poles, and tables were provided by the hosts. Electrical outlets and lights were in each tent. The tent floor was heavy rubber and several pop-out plastic port-holes provided adequate ventilation. Most teams brought coffee pots or soon purchased them. The laundry hanging on the tent ropes completed that lived-in look.

After confirming my suspicions about the leaden skies of Leszno, I hastened to set up my newly purchased tent. George and Suzanne Moffat innocently ambled by and soon we were guessing what the German tent directions meant.

Dinner time produced the remainder of the team. A. J. Smith's crew included Bob Klemmedson of Orinda, California, and Harold Drew of Surrey, England; Ralph Boehm of Sinsbury, Connecticut, crewed with Suzanne for George Moffat; Dick Johnson's crew included his wife Alice and Steve Baird of Richardson, Texas; Angie Schreder crewed for her Dick, backed up by Jim Rhine of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Fritz Kahl of Marfa pitched in where needed and observed the scene with the awareness of a man who will host the next Internationals in 1970.

The majority of teams arrived at the beginning of the practice week, June 2nd through the 8th. Although three practice tasks were anticipated, only one (on June 5th) was possible due to inhospitable weather. A total of 15 pilots completed a 106-kilometer (66-mile) triangle between Leszno, Wasosz, Gola, and home. For many, local flying was sufficient challenge.

George Moffat and A. J. Smith had just recently participated in the Hahnweide contest near Kirchheim Tech, West Germany, in May and were therefore already accustomed to their Swiss Elfe's (standard-class S-3's), as well as unseasonable weather.

In the open class Dick Johnson was intimately familiar with his HP-13; however, Dick Schreder would be competing in a new, T-tailed version of the HP-14 which had first flown the month before.

On June 8th the official roll call of each team was made, the longest in Internationals history — 105 pilots from 32 nations. An announcement revealed that the International OSTIV Jury had decided the two Czechoslovakian M-35s could



compete in the standard class despite flaps which would be sealed.

The launching procedure, using ten sailplanes in each row, was described. Each day the order to take-off would progress by ten. No take-off selection time by the pilot would be permitted. If a relight was necessary, the pilot would follow his class, and if the other class' launching was in progress, he would be launched alongside that class. Twenty-five towplanes, manned by Polish Gold-badge pilots, were expected to launch both classes within 90 minutes.

The British team manager, Ann Welch, asked whether team flying was prohibited. This procedure entails pilots exploring a task route independently, but pooling their findings by radio, thus providing more choices of action for each pilot involved. This question was especially provocative as in the past the Polish pilots have used this tactic to produce high standings—the best example being at the '65 Internationals at South Cerney, England, where all Polish pilots finished within the top four in both classes. It was anticipated that they would have a field day over their own country, utilizing their secret code—Polish.

The management responded that cooperation between competing pilots was not forbidden. Admittedly it sounds unnatural to help a competitor if you think of the championships as an individual effort (where there is no official team championship), But if the pilot is flying for national glory, team flying makes a lot of sense. However, it does require a high degree of unselfishness and trust.

Although the practice task that day was canceled, the official meteorologist, Wiktor Gorczynski, delivered his scientific explanation for the precipitation. At breakfast that morning Marshall had remarked that the radishes and onions we were served were the Polish Dristan and could clear up anything. All except the rain.

The following day, June 9th, it was well worth the 80-some steps up the control tower to watch as the opening ceremonies began. Not only are 15,000 people at a glider meet rather unique, but there was a knowledgeable excitement among the spectators. Gliding is to the Poles much as baseball is to many Americans.

The solemnities began with welcoming speeches by the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland and the