

2008 Straight-Out Cross-Country Soaring Results

Newsletter for Straight-Out Soaring Enthusiasts (SOSES)

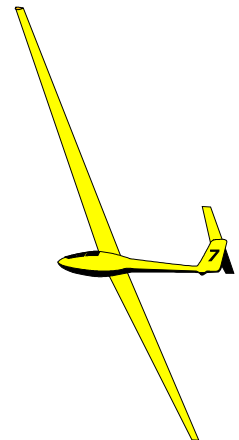
Results as of September 16, 2008

Henry Combs, a pioneering soaring pilot and mentor, flew with a very simple philosophy. He repeatedly stressed that **flying the farthest distance each Saturday** was always his primary objective and achieving diamond distance was secondary.

“When I release the tow rope, I know I am going to have a forced landing. The question is how long can I put it off and how far away can I go?”



Henry Combs
Artist: Mary Scarborough



The Original Purpose

The original purpose of this newsletter was to summarize the flights of the “Crystal Squadron”, a group of soaring pilots flying out of Crystallaire airport in Llano, CA. Our group follows Henry’s philosophy by **flying straight out as far as possible** on a regular basis each **Saturday** and sometimes on holidays between late-April and mid-September.

The only requirement for membership in the **Crystal Squadron** is to fly straight out with us from the Great Western Soaring School, Crystallaire Airport, 32810 N. 165th Street East, Llano, CA, 93544 (Tel. 661-944-9449) on a Saturday. Great Western’s website is <http://www.greatwesternsoaring.com>.

Expanded Reporting

As time passes as time does, other types of straight outs have emerged. Pilots are flying during the week, from other airports, in motorgliders, etc. I have expanded the newsletter to recognize these other types of straight outs while remaining true to the original philosophy of this report.

I will still list the **Crystal Squadron** results separately, but I will also list any straight-out flight from anywhere to anywhere, diamond or otherwise. All you have to do is tell me. *See page 2 for the details.*



The Henry Trophy

*This newsletter is an informal list of straight-out cross-country flights and **not** the official Henry Combs Trophy standings. If you are competing, you must claim each diamond by contacting John Graybill (**SKY**) at 619-287-8857 or at jog@autodocorp.com. We are in the process of establishing an official website for the Henry Trophy.*

*The results are distributed weekly from May to mid-September. If I inadvertently left off your Saturday flight or if you want to be on the distribution list, please contact me, Bob Maronde (**BAT**), at RGMaronde@MarondeAssoc.com.*

Table of Contents

Keeping Score	2
2008 News	3
2008 Crystal Squadron Stats	4
2008 Crystal Squadron Flights	5
Other 2008 Straight-Out Cross-Country Flights	8
The Henry Trophy	10
Brief History of the Crystal Squadron	11

Keeping Score

What is a Crystal Squadron Diamond?

Henry used diamond distance (500 km) as a way to simply “keep score”, and his flights always involved a landing. So, the **Crystal Squadron’s** cross-country “rules” are very simple, and they follow the Henry Combs tradition and philosophy. The object is to fly **straight out as far as possible** on Saturday with distance calculated from Crystallaire (Piñon Ridge a.k.a. the Second Ridge) to **landing**; therefore, out and returns, triangles, turn points, dog legs, etc., **do not** count.

◆=A **Crystal Squadron** diamond flight from Crystallaire to any **landing** of **at least 500 km or 310.7 miles** distance.

What is a Straight-Out, Cross-Country (SOCC) Diamond?

The purpose of the **Straight-Out, Cross-Country (SOCC)** section is to recognize other types of straight outs while remaining true to the original philosophy of this newsletter. It is also an attempt to address the “**two glider pilots, three opinions**” conundrum about reporting cross-country soaring results. So, tell me about your straight-out flight, diamond or otherwise, and I will list it.

I have defined a diamond for this group as per the FAI rules but with no altitude penalty, declarations or documentation. It’s all on the honor system. Therefore, I will list weekday flights originating from Crystallaire airport, flights not originating from Crystal, flights returning to Crystal, flights not returning to Crystal, motorglider flights where starting the engine terminates the flight per the FAI rules, flights that use remote starts and/or finishes to determine diamond distance as per FAI rules, etc., etc., etc.. But, a flight must still be **straight out** with the distance calculated from Point “A” to Point “B”. You name the two points and tell me the distance.

◆=A **SOCC** diamond flight from Point A to Point B with a distance of **at least 500 km or 310.7 miles**.

Why the Distinction?

One type of diamond honors the Henry Combs tradition while the other recognizes the current reality of soaring. Also, I have Crystal Squadron statics going back to **1987** listing the number of flights versus the number of diamonds. I would like to keep this data consistent for historical reasons. For the **SOCC** group, listing diamond flights without the corresponding number of “attempts” keeps it fairly simple.

Why Diamonds at All?

Again, it was Henry’s traditional way of “keeping score”. And, ...why not?

2008 News

- On Thursday, June 5, Steve Arndt flew his homebuilt "Magic Dragon" ultra-light glider from Wallaby Ranch, FL, to Montezuma, GA, for a distance of 311.6 nm (+500k) for straight-out diamond. Steve said it took him 10 hrs., 28 min. because his VNE is only 60 mph and the thermals were low.

2008 Crystal Squadron Stats

Results as of September 16, 2008

Crystal Squadron 2008 Flights Over 400 Statue Miles

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Landing</u>
Jun 22	Mike Koerner	Ventus C	CF	551	Cortez, CO
Jun 14	Mike Koerner	Ventus C	CF	523	Green River, UT
Jun 22	Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	459	Manti Ephraim, UT
Jul 19	Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	431	Battle Mountain, NV
Jul 19	Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	431	Battle Mountain, NV

(♦) Crystal Squadron 2008 Diamonds

Dave Raspet	13				
Karl Sommer	6				
Sean Eckstein	3				
Mike Koerner	3				
Bob Maronde	3				
Jim Ketcham	1				
Peter Kovari	1				
				Total Diamonds	30

Note: A Crystal Squadron diamond is a straight-out flight from Crystallaire to any landing of at least 500 km or 310.7 statue miles on a Saturday or holiday.

Crystal Squadron 2008 Cross-Country Flights

Dave Raspet	14				
Sean Eckstein	8				
Karl Sommer	8				
Peter Kovari	5				
Bob Maronde	5				
Mike Koerner	3				
Barry McGarraugh	2				
Limus Anusauskus	1				
Jim Ketcham	1				
				Total Flights	47

2008 Current Henry Trophy Standings

<u>East Zone</u>	<u>Central Zone</u>	<u>West Zone</u>
Steve Arndt 1	Jim Hard 1 Chris Prince 1	Dave Raspet 13

Note: Henry Diamonds include ALL diamond flights regardless of day flown or takeoff airport.

The official Henry Combs Perpetual Trophy website is under construction, and it will list all Henry flights along with the rules for the Trophy. Please report all Henry Diamond claims by contacting John Graybill (**SKY**) at 619-287-8857 or at jog@autodocorp.com.

2008 Crystal Squadron Flights

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Landing</u>
Sat., Sep 13	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	284	Lunning Dry Lake, NV
<p><i>Sean's report: "It ain't over till it's over. I just had to get one more X/C flight, and I landed at Luning Dry Lake, NV. It was a fun flight, but we had to fight all the way to the Inyos. Then it got good. Climbed to 17,500 at White Mtn. and from that point on I was on final glide to Luning Dry Lake and never hit another thermal. Dave 'SAS' and Carl 'C3' made it to Gabbs, NV. that was Diamond No. 160 for Carl. Brad White 'Viper' launched from Inyokern and also made it to Luning Dry Lake."</i></p> <p><i>Again, congratulations to Karl for Diamond No. 160!</i></p>					
Sat., Sep 6	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	339	Carefree, AZ
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	319	Pleasant Valley (Turf), AZ
<p><i>While some of us elected to fly in the Dust Devil Dash out of Tehachapi, SAS and C3 made unusually late-season run east to Arizona, both for diamond distance. SAS said, "Karl showed me how to fly Arizona right- 14-15k not that silly belly crawling. Karl also heard some one out of Warner got 1092 k Saturday".</i></p>					
Sat., Aug 30	◆ Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Bob Maronde	ASW 27	BAT	208	Bishop, CA
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	87	Inyokern, CA
<p><i>PT and SAS did a great job working through the low spots between Lone Pine and Independence and getting to Gabbs. C3 got low at Walker Pass and after being banged around decided to call it a day. BAT arrived Bishop totally thrashed and decided to pull spoilers marking his first time ever landing at Bishop.</i></p>					
Sat., Aug 23	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Peter Kovari	DG 300	6PK	152	Lone Pine, CA
<p><i>SAS said he left Crystal around noon at 10.5K but didn't get to Boomer Ridge until 2:45. Once at Inyokern, the lift became good.</i></p>					
Sat., Aug 16	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	327	Yerington, NV
	◆ Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	38	Ave. E & 80th, CA
<p><i>Both SAS and PT could only climb to 10K at Crystal. SAS reported he struggled at the Honda Track but eventually connected with Boomer Ridge at Inyokern.</i></p>					
Sat., Aug 9	◆ Jim Ketcham	ASH 26E	JK	357	Fallon, NV
	◆ Bob Maronde	ASW 27	BAT	357	Fallon, NV
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	352	Austin, NV
<p><i>The choice was either to go toward Vegas into the sinkhole around Jean and the "wet" dry lakes or go north through the Antelope Valley sink hole and the west winds of Inyokern. Aaarrgg! Thanks to JK leading the way, we worked our way north. BAT favored the west side of the Inyos (big mistake) and bounced along at 12-14K, but once SAS worked himself over to the east side, he got to 17K+. The flight tracks were parallel to each other but only 1-2 miles apart. VIPER also launched, but once he heard us struggling, he decided to checkout the route to Vegas. At Manix he choose to return.</i></p>					
Sat., Aug 02	◆ Mike Koerner	Ventus C	CF	314	Hurricane, UT
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	314	Hurricane, UT
	◆ Peter Kovari	DG 300	6PK	268	Mesquite, NV
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	54	California City, CA
<p><i>SAS said it was a low, slow flight to Hurricane, 6PK discovered 031 Dry Lake was a wet lake, and C3 was seduced by the clouds to the north of Crystal.</i></p>					
Sat., Jul 26	◆ Bob Maronde	ASW 27	BAT	357	Fallon, NV
	◆ Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	313	Gabbs, NV
	◆ Barry McGarraugh	Libelle 301	01Q	41	Rosamond, CA
<p><i>BAT's report: "After my glide from Crystal, I found myself low over Mojave Airport with my gear down talking on the radio to the nice unicorn person. Bat Ground then announced, 'Hey, I can read your contest numbers'. Déjà Vu all over again! Fortunately, I found a thermal, got high and joined the fun on the Sierras, Inyos and Whites."</i></p>					

2008 Crystal Squadron Flights

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Landing</u>
Sat., Jul 19	◆ Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	431	Battle Mountain, NV
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	431	Battle Mountain, NV
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	352	Austin, NV
	Barry McGarraugh	Libelle 301	01Q	44	Backus Road, CA

Congratulations to Sean Eckstein (PT) for his first flight over 400 miles.

Sat., Jul 5	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	314	Hurricane, UT
	Bob Maronde	ASW 27	BAT	64	Barstow, CA

BAT's account: "C3 took off first but landed back to turn on his oxygen. I now had a 1/2 hour headstart, got to 10,500 over Wrightwood and headed out. There were some bumps here and there, but not much was happening. I over flew the Barstow-Daggett airport, headed to the Calico Mountains and found nothing. About 1/2 hour after landing, the haze was clearing out and the lift started working. Good for C3, bad for BAT." C3 said, "I thought I worked hard on this one, but looking at SeeYou, it does not look that way. 6hrs it not bad. Roller coaster thermals."

Fri., Jul 4	Peter Kovari	DG 300	6PK	64	Barstow, CA
-------------	--------------	--------	-----	----	-------------

6PK reported, "I had a great start from Crystal, left at 12K and flew all the way in buoyant air to Barstow without turning in anything to speak of. Than I struggled around Barstow airport low in 100 degree heat for as long as could stand it and before I gave up. Sean and I made the observation, after we were driving passed Osborne that the winds have finally changed and now it was probably good but than it was around 3 pm." CF said, "With crew ready to go I launched, could not stay up more than 50 minutes, landed back at Crystal and gave up for the day."

Sat., Jun 28	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	314	Hurricane, UT
	Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	268	Mesquite, NV

SAS said, "I ended up in Hurricane and Sean was glad to have made it over Las Vegas successfully for the first time and landed at Mesquite. The lift was not as strong as last Saturday but I thought Baker was easier-better lift and higher tops to the thermals. Slight winds, 4-5, from SW. I made the valley at Hurricane by about 5:15 but couldn't find enough lift to get on to Cedar City."

Sat., Jun 21	◆ Mike Koerner	Ventus C	CF	551	Cortez, CO
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	459	Manti Ephraim, UT
	◆ Peter Kovari	DG 300	6PK	347	Cedar City, UT
	◆ Bob Maronde	ASW 27	BAT	347	Cedar City, UT

For the last 15 years, CF has been trying to get to Colorado, and he finally did it. Congratulations! SAS said he was attacked by swarms of mosquitos after he landed and had to seek refuge in the 8'x8' screened-in pilots lounge. He didn't seem to mind the bites because he was so stoked on getting to Manti Epharim.

Three of us struggled at Baker for what seemed like forever at altitudes as low as 6,500 ft. with the surface temperature around 110°/113°. Both 6PK and BAT said the effects of the high temperatures at Baker played a major role in their decision to land at Cedar City.

It was a slow climb up to Clark Mountain, but at Clark that's when it started to get good. We had altitudes up to 17,500' south of Boulder with clouds marking the way.

(Addendum: SAS reported that his cockpit thermometer said 93° as he was working his way out of a 4,060' hole at Baker, and it took 62 minutes to cover the 28 miles from Baker to Clark Mountain.)

Sat., Jun 14	◆ Mike Koerner	Ventus C	CF	523	Green River, UT
	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	388	Beaver, UT
	◆ Karl Sommer	Libelle 301	C3	314	Hurricane, UT

CF flew crewless. The glider is at the Green River airport and Mike took a bus from Green River to Victorville. The "plan" is to get back to Crystal and take the car and trailer to retrieve the plane. Both C3 and SAS said the conditions were about the same as last week - 2.7 knots average verses 2.6 the week before with rough patches at Baker, Jean and Virgin Mountain. The lift did not get strong until the Virgin River Gorge. RED was at Baker when he had to return to Crystal because of a patient emergency.

Sat., June 7	◆ Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	314	Hurricane, UT
	Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	163	Roach Dry Lake, NV

SAS said his average rate of climb was 2.6 kts.

2008 Crystal Squadron Flights

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Landing</u>
Sat., May 31	Dave Raspet	Ventus A	SAS	226	Kingman, AZ
	Peter Kovari	DG 300	6PK	190	Laughlin, NV

SAS reported, "The day wasn't as good a Dr Jack forecast. Particularly, critical height was lower. My climb rate averaged 1.9 knots and my highest was 10,564 at Searchlight. Getting from Baker to Cima Dry Lake was sporty-my maximum altitude was 7700'."

Sat., May 24

Very poor weather. No flights.

Sat., May 17	Sean Eckstein	Libelle 201B	PT	208	Bishop, CA
--------------	---------------	--------------	----	-----	------------

Sean reported he was the only one to depart Crystal.

Sat., May 10	Limus Anusauskus	LAK 17	LA	208	Bishop, CA
--------------	------------------	--------	----	-----	------------

*Limus reported he "flew from Crystal to Bishop this Sat. Took off around 12 and spent 1h working spotty lift before climbing to 11K. Plenty of lift around Mojave, not very high but enough to keep going. Had to hang out at Barren ridge to regain contact with a crew. Got to 11K at Owens Peak and couldn't get higher for the rest of the way. There was a shareline marked by clouds, but way into the west and out of reach. It was moving east, but by the time it got closer to the crest I was already below the mountains east of Olancho peak. **ST** (John Gonsalex flying out of Inyokern) was able to connect with shear line and reported very good lift to over 13K.. I worked couple weak termals over Lone Pine and pushed for Inyos where I got to 11K again and with a help of tailwind and few pull ups in the lift got to the Bishop, around 5:30 PM."*

Other 2008 Straight-Out Cross-Country Flights

Results as of September 16, 2008

Other 2007 Flights Over 400 Statue Miles

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Takeoff/Landing</u>
Jun 22	Russ Barry	DG-600	1DV	566	Crystal to Mina, Cerro Gordo, 15 mi S of Boundary Peak/ Landed Lone Pine
Jun 19	Philippe Athuil	ASH 25Mi	RED	551	Crystal to Salina Gunnison, UT/ Landed Parowan, UT
Jun 21	Eric Rupp	DG-300	ER	444	Hollister, CA/Calexico, CA

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Takeoff (Start)/ Landing (Finish)</u>
Sat., Aug 30	Philippe Athuil	ASH 25Mi	RED	304	Crystal/Lone Pine/Crystal
Sun., July 13	✦ Chris Pince	Schweizer 1-35	ZT	327	Osceola, WI/Sandwich, IL
Sun., Jun 22	✦ Russ Barry	DG-600	1DV	566	Crystal to Mina, Cerro Gordo, 15 mi S of Boundary Peak/ Landed Lone Pine

Note: If Russ had gotten to Cinder Cone, he would have had a 1,000k flight.

Sat., Jun 21	✦ Eric Rupp	DG-300	ER	444	Hollister, CA/Calexico, CA
--------------	-------------	--------	----	-----	----------------------------

Note: I received the following report from Eric, and I included it in its entirety because we all can learn - "BAT"

Hollister to Calexico - June 21, 2008:

First, let me say that I'm overwhelmed at the attention I've received from my soaring family after this flight. Having the respect of one's peers and attention from the many who make soaring happen at Hollister is near the best thing anybody could ask for. Thank you and many thanks again.

A good place to start this story is where most flights begin, with the BlipMaps.

With boundary layers to nineteen thousand feet (!) at San Benito Mountain, it looked like an exceptional event on the first full day of summer! And, as luck would have it, my brother Loren arrived in town the night before, ready for adventure. That confirmed my decision to make a straight-out flight with him in chase.

With a 2/3rds load of water, I was on tow in my trusty DG-300 at 11:20 a.m. Saturday, June 21st. The flight started slowly, 8000 feet at Elevator 1, but scraping past Elevator 2 and doing no better than 7500 feet at Elevator 4. After a long two and a half hours, I reached the first clouds at 7000 feet near the California Valley and was relieved to find a solid climb, first to 10,000 feet, then to fourteen! This was the beginning of a nice cloud street that allowed me to switch gears and cruise at 80+ knots IAS toward New Cuyama. (When you're fast and that high, the ground goes by at around 115 knots!)

New Cuyama came up quickly and, from there, I could see the clouds bending around toward Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, then east toward the Mojave Desert. I mostly cruised on the western upwind and sunny side of the clouds until just west of I-5. There I found a 30 mile cloud gap, downshifted to McCready 0, and glided at best L/D to arrive above Palmdale at 9000 feet at the northern end of another fine looking cloud street.

Soon back at 13,000, I overflew Crystal glider port and found another large blue patch over Big Bear and the San Bernardino Mountains. In the distance I could see a good looking cloud mass on the southern slopes of San Gregorio peak - some 40 miles away! There was also a ragged line of convergence clouds off to the east and a little closer, but somewhat east of the best course south. Debating which way to go, I heard a voice say "Respect the convergence!" by staying with the ragged convergence clouds. Impatience won out, though, and I elected to start toward the larger cloud mass, then turn back if need be.

Many days this would have been a flight ending decision (ask me how I know), but this day it worked! With Big Bear below me as a landing option, I had a 40:1 plus glide and cleared the last ridge before the clouds at around 1500' AGL. The clouds were again working (some days it breaks your way!) and I climbed to 14k.

2008 Straight-Out Cross-Country Flights

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pilot</u>	<u>Glider</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Takeoff (Start)/ Landing (Finish)</u>
<p><i>The cloud mass turned out to be the beginning of the third and highest cloud street of the day, this one running south-east into the Sonoran Desert which stretched out underneath me, awesome in its desolation. Now 5 p.m. and with lift weakening, the voice was saying "Get high, stay high." Plus, I was getting tired and not sure if I'd have the heart to struggle for too long if I got low. Fortunately, I didn't have to and was able to climb flying straight and reached 17,300 feet. From that lofty perch I had the luxury of distraction to evaluate my options, opening the maps and flying poorly for a while. Arizona was well in glide but, much to my chagrin, I suddenly realized that my waypoints (even using the Warner Springs database) stopped in California! Ditto for the LA sectional! Doh! I had Blythe on the CA/AZ state line in glide by 5000', but no data beyond!</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, as I continued on the cloud street, Calexico/Mexicali on the US/Mexican border (38 nm east of Jacumba) was starting to look doable, especially with a number of intermediate airports on course. But, complicating matters, if I delayed my decision I risked getting blocked by a large area of restricted airspace over the Chocolate Mountains. I called for a clearance, but found no one home.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, I was winding down physically. I did my best to relax (deep breathing my oxygen and Ooommmmm-ing). Really wanting to get on the ground, I turned south, and realized I really was on final glide for Calexico! Se Habla Espanol?!!! I was also starting to feel a little queasy and fought that as well as pushing back growing excitement that the goal was almost in hand! "Fly the plane" said the voice.</i></p> <p><i>Gliding fast, I dog legged slightly west to get around the restricted area and left the wild Sonoran Desert to overfly the Salton Sea and the tamer cultivated fields surrounding it. After almost an hour on final glide, I finally arrived over Calexico International (elevation 3 feet) at 4000, pulled a celebratory loop, and, after 7-1/2 hours, landed at 6:50 p.m., an hour before sunset!</i></p> <p>http://www.onlinecontest.org/olc-2.0/gliding/flightinfo.html?flightId=-1269226351</p> <p><i>Calexico International is a hot, dry, lonely airport on the edge of town with the border fence a 100 yards off the runway. With no one around, I pushed my glider off the runway and, owing to my SPOT messenger and its real-time tracking, I got congratulatory calls from Steve Brockman and Joy Pierce! Thanks guys! I tied down, called a cab, and got a hotel room. Exhausted. Loren arrived with the trailer a few hours later after driving 11-1/2 hours! Exhausted! High fives! (Thank you, thank you, thank you Loren! My desert rat brother!)</i></p> <p><i>Years ago I remember Sergio talking about his 1000k FAI triangle out of Truckee. While Sergio makes it look easy, this flight took him years and flight after flight before he got it right. Great flights don't just happen, they're an "enterprise": the product of a lot of flying, expanding the flight range, and mostly, I think, expanding what we think is possible.</i></p> <p><i>It's easy to credit all of Hollister's pilots in this "enterprise". We've all worked and played together to develop Hollister's XC, to challenge each other, to make 300k's a milk run, and to make 500k's very doable on a decent day. With good conditions beyond New Cuyama - and a willingness for a long retrieve - I'm still sure we've not found our limits.</i></p> <p><i>I'm feeling pleased, lucky, and thankful for the chance to make this flight and to share it. Thanks to all, see you at the airport! Eric</i></p>					
Sat., Jun 21	Christian Makin	ASW 27B	33	174	Parowan, UT/Boulder City, NV
Fri., Jun 20	✦ Christian Makin	ASW 27B	33	344	Cal City, CA/Parowan, UT
Fri., Jun 20	✦ Philippe Athuil	ASH 25Mi	RED	367	Parowan, UT/Crystal
Thurs., Jun 19	✦ Philippe Athuil	ASH 25Mi	RED	551	Crystal/Turned Salina Gunnison, UT/Landed Parowan, UT
Thur., June 5	✦ Steve Arndt	Magic Dragon		312	Wallaby Ranch, FL/Montezuma, GA
Sun., May 18	✦ Jim Hard	SGS 1-26A		339	Faribault, MN/Pontiac, IL
	Ramy Yanetz	ASW 27	TG	211	Hemet (Mt. San Jacinto), CA /Lost Hills, CA
Sat., May 17	✦ Ramy Yanetz	ASW 27	TG	316	Hollister, CA/Hemet, CA

The Henry Trophy



The Henry Trophy
To be permanently displayed at the
National Soaring Museum

The Henry Combs Perpetual Trophy was founded April 15, 1995, by members of the Crystal Squadron to honor Henry Combs, his love of cross-country soaring and the type of flying he inspired in the rest of us. Henry retired from flying in 1999 after achieving 205 straight-out 500k diamonds, all in his Libelle H-301 (01Q) which he bought in 1967.

Henry repeatedly stressed that going **straight out as far as possible** was always his primary objective while achieving diamond distance was secondary. He also wanted to make the entire experience fun by involving his crew in activities like fishing, scenic drives and visiting points of interest during the drive home.

In 2000, the Henry Trophy became an **SSA-recognized national award**. It is awarded annually by the Soaring Society of America to the person or persons completing the greatest number of straight-out, diamond-distance, non-motorized glider flights during the previous year in each of three zones - East, Central and West.

The trophy founders hope that this award will carry forth the tradition of flying straight out as far as possible and serve to encourage glider pilots and ground crews everywhere to become active, safety-conscious participants in the sport of straight-out, cross-country soaring.

The official the Henry Trophy websit is under construction. It will list the rules, reporting requirements, current results, etc.

Henry Trophy Recipients (Number of Straight-Out Diamonds)			
	East Zone	Central Zone	West Zone
2007	Leo Benetti-Longhini (1)	No entry	Karl Somer (9)
2006	No entry	No entry	Karl Sommer (9)
2005	No entry	Jim Hard (1) Bob Wander (1)	Norm Page (9)
2004	No entry	Kathleen Winters (1)	Mike Koerner (6) Barry McGarraugh (6) Dave Raspert (6)
2003	No entry	No entry	Norm Page (13)
2002	No entry	No entry	Philippe Athuil (12)
2001	No entry	No entry	Mike Koerner (16)
2000	Doug Jacobs (1)	Jim Hard (1)	Norm Page (13)
1999			Norm Page (12)
1998			Norm Page (13)
1997			Norm Page (22)
1996			Hank Marlowe (14)
1995			Henry Combs (11)

Brief History of the Crystal Squadron

In the Beginning

It all started with Henry Combs (01Q), a pioneering soaring pilot, who has been our inspiration and mentor. Henry started flying straight out in the 1960s from Crystallaire, El Mirage and Tehachapi and was the first to fly straight out each Saturday on a regular basis. During this same time, Wally Scott in Midland-Odessa, Texas, also was flying straight out. As time went on, more and more pilots became attracted to this type of soaring.

On May 4, 1968, Henry did his first straight-out 500k diamond flight from Crystallaire to Phoenix. From 1968 to 1978, Henry racked up 39 straight-out diamond flights including some very long flights to Elko, Nevada (458 miles), and to 30 miles north of Winnemucca, Nevada (484 miles).

The Philosophy is Formed

Henry developed a very simple philosophy regarding straight-out, cross-country soaring:

- “I already paid for the tow, so I might as well stay up.”
- “When I release the tow rope, I know I am going to have a forced landing. The question is how long can I put it off and how far away can I go?”

Slowly It Builds

By 1986, Henry had 104 straight-out 500k diamonds and had attracted a core group of other straight-out pilots:

- Tom Edwards (AJ)
- Mike Koerner (CF)
- Robert Nethercutt (3U)
- John Graybill (SKY)
- Fritz Seger (BO)
- Karl Sommer (C3)

These “pathfinders” were very important to the later pilots joining the Crystal Squadron. They found the alternate landing spots, knew the various routes and weather patterns. They made the rest of our lives much easier.

Remember, in the early days it was all pilotage with just charts and a scale:

- No GPS
- No satellite imagery
- No weather models
- No flight computers (at first)
- No flight recorders
- No cell phones

The Name - The Crystal Squadron

In 1990, we were sitting in Barstow after a humiliating flight talking about giving the Crystal Soaring owner/operator, John Stevenson, a thank-you plaque for all his efforts. We were struggling with how to sign the plaque. We thought “From the guys who fly straight out on Saturdays” was too awkward even though it was humorous. At that moment, Rock Swanson (ROC) said, “How about ‘The Crystal Squadron’?” The name stuck!

The only requirement for membership is to fly straight out with us from Crystallaire airport (Great Western Soaring School) on any Saturday during the season (April through September).



Brief History of the Crystal Squadron

The Great Basin

This is the hydrological definition of the Great Basin - all stream water flows into the basin and never reaches the ocean. Within these boundaries, we can experience two or three distinct weather patterns during the same straight-out flight.

Crystallaire is uniquely situated for straight-out, cross-country soaring because both the pilot and ground crew can easily go one of three directions:

East toward Phoenix, Arizona. This usually happens early in the season (May, June). The challenge is crossing the Colorado River because it and the large agricultural areas around it usually "kill" the lift over a wide section.

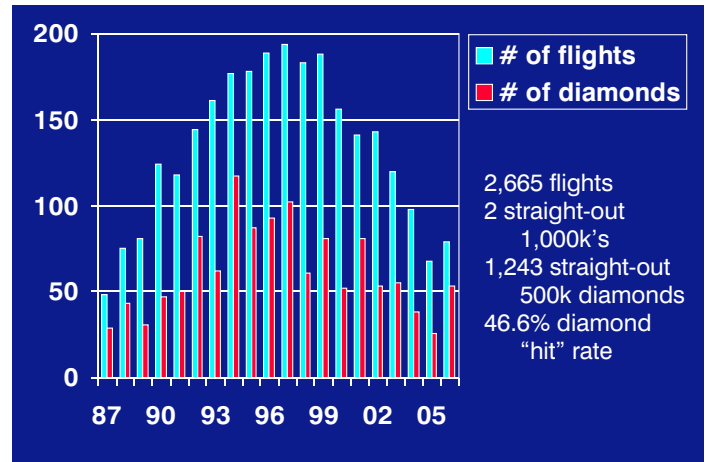
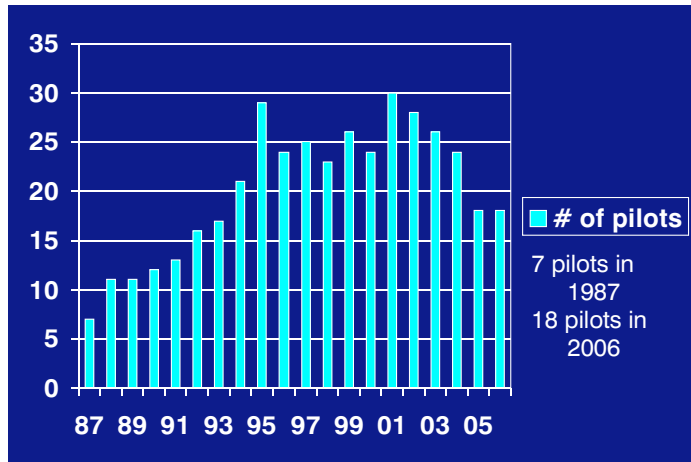
Northeast toward Cedar City, Utah. The two challenges here are getting past Baker (elev. 922) and the Las Vegas Class B airspace, which is the 9th busiest airport in the United States.

North toward Boundary Peak where we go one of three ways: toward Reno, toward Fallon and beyond or toward Austin.



The longest straight-out flight from Crystallaire was in 1994 to Weiser, Idaho, by Mike Koerner (**CF**) and Hank Marlowe (**11W**) for a distance of 680 sm. In 2003, Jim Ketcham (**JK**) went to American Falls, Idaho, for 643 sm and Philippe Athuil (**RED**) went to Aberdeen, Idaho, for 645 sm. All four flights are 1,000Ks.

Interesting Statistics:



Brief History of the Crystal Squadron

More Interesting Statistics:

Crystal Squadron Longest Flights			
Year	Pilot	Landing	Dist.
2007	John Gonzalez	Elko, NV	457 sm
2006	John Gonzalez Mike Koerner	Paisley, OR	594 sm
2005	Mike Koerner	Burley, ID	603 sm
2004	Mike Koerner	Moab, Ut	537 sm
2003	John Gonzalez John Graybill	Alturas, CA	512 sm
2002	Mike Koerner	Lakeview, OR	555 sm
2001	Mike Koerner	Heber City, UT	546 sm
2000	Philippe Athuil John Graybill Bob Maronde Kelly Scarborough	Mount Pleasant, UT	497 sm
1999	Mike Koerner	Heber City, UT	546 sm
1998	Mike Koerner	Wells, NV	490 sm
1997	Hank Marlowe	McDermitt, OR	525 sm
1996	John Graybill Hank Marlowe	McDermitt, OR	525 sm
1995	Mike Koerner	Lakeview, OR	555 sm
1994	Mike Koerner Hank Marlowe	Weiser, ID	680 sm
1993	Mike Koerner	Alturas, CA	512 sm
1992	Mike Koerner	Lakeview, OR	555 sm
1991	Henry Combs	Orovada, NV	494 sm

Crystal Squadron Barringer Trophy Winners			
Year	Pilot	Landing	Dist.
2006	Mike Koerner	Paisley, OR	594 sm
2005	Mike Koerner	Burley, ID	603 sm
2002	Mike Koerner	Lakeview, OR	555 sm
2001	Mike Koerner	Heber City, UT	546 sm
2000	Philippe Athuil John Graybill Bob Maronde	Mount Pleasant, UT	497 sm
1999	Mike Koerner	Heber City, UT	546 sm
1998	Hank Marlowe	Battle Mountain, NV	431 sm
1996	John Graybill Hank Marlowe	McDermitt, OR	525 sm

Note: On Wednesday, June 18, 2003, Philippe Athuil (**RED** ASH 25Mi) flew from Crystalaire to Aberdeen, ID, for a distance of **1,040.8 km (645.3 sm)** to win the 2003 Barringer Trophy.

Note: On Wednesday, May 28, 2003, Jim Ketcham (**JK** ASH 26E) took off from Agua Dulce, CA, shut down the engine near Crystal and proceeded to soar to and land at American Falls, ID, for **1,036.6 km (642.7sm)**.

Note: On Thursday, July 5, 2007, Jim Ketcham (**JK** ASH 26E) took off from Agua Dulce, CA, shut down the engine near Crystal and proceeded to soar to and land at Bend, OR, for **1,120.8 km (694.9 sm)** to win the 2007 Barringer Trophy .

Why Fly Straight Out?

Why not!