



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of SHERWIN ARCULIS

Born November 17, 1929

Started modeling in 1936



Written by SA (2003); Transcribed, edited, and formatted by JS (11/2007), Reformatted by JS (06/2009)

The following autobiography was in the publication Who's Who in AMA, 2003, District V.

I was born on November 17, 1929, in Providence, Rhode Island. I moved to Rock Hill, South Carolina in 1931. While in grammar school, my parents decided I was going to learn music, so I studied the violin for seven or eight years, with some piano thrown in. However, I was neither a musician nor a great student, somewhat dumb in fact, except in things I liked such as the sciences and aeronautics.

In my neighborhood, there were several friends who all became modelers, building in each other's homes, as the fumes caused us to move from home to home. I became an avid airplane modeler, beginning when I was seven, building Strombecker solid models and every balsa, tissue, and dope model I could get my hands on. I flew rubber-powered models off my roof, in fields, in the house, and wherever else I could think. In 1939, I received my first engine, a Rogers .29, and later a Brown Jr. I moved into Free Flight with gasoline, coils, condensers, and lousy batteries. Some flew and some did not, but I continued to build during the war years.

In 1946, Tommy King came to town with U-Control and a glow plug! His airplane was a converted Free Flight and I found a new world. I converted my Berkeley *Buccaneer* with an Ohlsson .23 into a glow-powered U-Control and I was in flying heaven. I flew U-Control day and night it seems. I have had pauses in modeling, but the love continues to this day. If it flies, I love it! I even learned to fly the real airplanes, soloing in a *J3 Cub* before I was 16. I continued to fly until the cost was too much for my paycheck.

After high school, I planned to attend Parks Air College to become an aeronautical engineer. However, this never came to pass. I elected to go to the Citadel. At the Citadel, I continued modeling, flying U-Control when I could. The *Drone Diesel* and I became either friends or enemies, and I still cannot stand the smell of ether. I graduated in 1951 with a degree and a commission in the Army. It was the time of the Korean War, so I reported to Fort Benning in Georgia on June 28, 1951 to begin active duty and remained in the Army for 28 years, serving in a variety of command and staff positions until February of 1980.

Of course, I continued modeling and flew U-Control when and where I could. In 1968, while serving in Okinawa, I saw some modelers flying Radio Control. I was hooked like a hungry trout! I ordered a PCS radio (remember Charlene?), a Goldberg *Senior Falcon*, and an Enya .60. I flew this airplane until the color came off the Monokote, rebuilding it numerous times. Then I built the airplane of all times, a Jenson *Ugly Stick*! However, Vietnam called, so the family and models went home and I went elsewhere.

In May of 1971, I was assigned to the Intelligence Agency and School at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, serving as the agency deputy commander and as director of three combat development divisions. I was now into Radio Control big time and became president of the Mesquite Modelers of Sierra Vista club.

With my background in radio-controlled airplanes, I gravitated to the Remotely Piloted Vehicle (RPV) programs. They were fun and I met many wonderful people, including Maynard Hill and Don Lowe. I traveled all over the world, working RPVs and flying Radio Control every weekend. In 1975, I was assigned to Fort Sill in Oklahoma as chief of an RPV development program, and later became the TRADOC RPV systems manager. There I built and flew Pattern and Sport airplanes with the Lawton Area Fun Flyers and again served as President. I convinced the Army to build an asphalt runway for the club. I retired from the Army as a Colonel in February of 1980.

After retiring, I was employed by Lockheed and was a Program Manager responsible for development and deployment of an RPV early operational capability system. I was a member and trustee of the Association of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and have contributed to several RPV/UAV studies. In California, I flew Radio Control with the PAL club and continued flying, moving into Quickie 500 and managing to acquire several trophies. However, between RPVs and racing, I was burned out with Radio Control and took a modeling hiatus. After working RPVs with Lockheed in Austin, Texas, I was moved to Huntsville, Alabama in 1989, but not in RPVs. In Huntsville, I became a staff engineer and worked on several programs and proposals.

In April of 1985, I kissed them all goodbye and retired from Lockheed. I joined the Rocket City Radio Controllers (RCRC) of Huntsville, Alabama and was back into Radio Control full-time, flying Sport models. I became Secretary of RCRC and have been Publicity Chair for five years. Jim McNeill made me an Associate Vice President in District V, so I now try to make every day a Saturday, to enjoy life and living, and to build and fly model airplanes whenever.

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