



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of RILEY WOOTEN

Born February 3, 1934

Modeler since 1941

AMA #8362



Written & Submitted by RW (11/2002); Transcribed & Edited by SS (11/2002), Updated by JS (10/2008), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

Career:

- Starting flying gas power in 1948; flew mostly Control Line throughout high school
- Entered his first contest in 1954 and his first Nationals (Nats) in 1956
- 1956: His Quicker combat design was kitted by California Model Company after its success at the Nats
- Won many local and regional contests flying stunt; only competed in stunt at three Nats and placed fifth each time
- 1956, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1967, and 1968: Won combat at the Nats
- Designed an automatic cutter and built the first foam (expanded polystyrene) combat planes in the early 1960s; produced these planes in kits starting in 1964 and they won open combat at the Nats from 1965 to 1968
- 1957 -: Leader member and contest director
- 1961: Designed the Voodoo that was kitted by Carl Goldberg Models; it became one of the most popular kits of all time
- Directed many local, regional and state contests as well as served as event director at the Nats
- Helped start several model clubs and eventually served as officer or president of all of them
- Published several designs and articles in Model Airplane News and Flying Models magazines
- Served as newsletter editor for the Texas Eagles model airplane club
- 1962-1964: President of Waynes Distribution when he went into kit manufacturing full-time
- 1963: Started Flite Line Products; built ready-to-cover Radio Controlled models in Mexico in the early 1980s under the corporate name Models Magnifico
- 1981: Started Lone Star Models, a mail order balsa supplier

Honors:

- 2002: Model Aviation Hall of Fame

I started modeling around 1941 carving solid models using wood from old orange crates. During World War II, I built Joe Ott rubber-powered kits (cardboard formers and ribs with pine spars and stringers). I also built Comet kits when I could find and afford them. I was living with my mother, brother, and grandparents in the small town of Anton, Texas, at the time.

About 1946 I flew my first model successfully. It was a Comet rubber-powered kit – a Dick Korda design, I believe, but I do not remember its name.

I started flying gas power in 1948 when I received my first engine, a Merlin 23. I mostly flew Control Line during high school, but it was second to girls and sports, so I did not fly that much. I was very successful in sports, winning many individual and team awards.

After getting married, I started flying competition Control Line stunt and combat. I also flew some gas Free Flight and hand-launched gliders. I entered my first contest in 1954 and went to my first Nationals (Nats) in Dallas in 1956. I won first in open combat and fifth in open stunt. My Quicker combat design won first and second in open, first in junior and first in senior combat that year. The model was then kitted by California Model Company. I was very successful in stunt, winning many local and regional contests with my Texan design. I only flew in three Nats and placed fifth in all of them.



2002: Me at the balsa mill in Ecuador

Combat and stunt finals were always flown on the same day at the Nats, so it was very hard to compete in both events. I won combat at the Nats in 1956, 1959, 1962, 1966, 1967, and 1968.

I did a lot of experimenting with designs and construction. I designed an automatic cutter and built the first foam (expanded polystyrene) combat planes in 1961 or 1962. We produced these in kit form in 1964 and they won open combat at the Nats in 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1968. This started the modern “foam” planes in combat as well as foam wings in all types of modeling.

I also designed the Voodoo, which Carl Goldberg Models kitted in 1961. It became one of the most popular kits of all time, selling thousands per year for many years.

I have been a leader member and contest director since 1957. I have directed many local, regional, and state contests including the old AYSC state championships for Texas. I have been an event director at the Nats and helped behind the scenes many times. I was one of the groups instrumental in having the 1991 Nats in Lubbock, Texas.

I helped start several model clubs and served as an officer or president of all at one time or another.

I published several designs in Model Airplane News and Flying Models magazine. Some of these are the Pirate (1956), Quicker (1957), Comfai (1957), Watzit (1958), Rocket (1959), Bullit

(1960), and Voodoo (1961). Plus I published articles on custom tuning engines and one on getting started in combat. I also wrote articles covering some Nats events during this timeframe. At one time, I served as editor of Eagle Squawks newsletter for the Texas Eagles model airplane club.

I was president of Waynes Distributing, a full line hobby distributor, from its start in 1962 until 1964 when I went into the kit manufacturing business full-time.

I started Flite Line Products in 1963, producing Control Line model kits. The first kits were the Sneeker for combat and the Quickie Rat for rat race. Many other kits followed these over the years, including the Foam Vampire, Shadow and Sizzor design. My first Radio Control kit was Skooter II (very successful).

Our Scat Cat 500 kit was and still is the most popular Quickie 500 kit of all time. Actually, the current Quickie 500 AMA rules were written using the Scat Cat 500 as the guide for model specifications.

We built ready-to-cover Radio Control models in Mexico in the early 1980s under the corporate name of Models Magnifico, marketed by Flite Line Products. We also started Lone Star Models as a mail order balsa supplier in 1981. It has evolved into a major supplier of balsa to the world market and now has exclusive contracts with South American mills. We are also involved in plantation growing of balsa trees in Ecuador.

*(signed) Riley Wooten
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