



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of SAL CANNIZZO

Born January 2, 1928 Started modeling in 1936
AMA #159



Written and Submitted by SC (2002); Transcribed and Edited by SS (06/2002)

Career:

- As a young modeler was involved with the growth of the newly formed Richmond Model Flying Club of Staten Island, New York
 - Put on U-Control model shows for his fellow serviceman in the mid-1940s
 - Taught local Boy Scout troops about model aviation
 - Won a place on the 1958 and 1963 Wakefield teams
 - Set a national record during his first Wakefield qualification in 1957
 - Ran a mail order supply business starting in the mid-1960s, called the “New England Wakefield Supply”
 - Became a contest director leader member in the late 1960s
 - Has served as president and treasurer of the Pine Barren Modelers
 - Current instructor of Radio Controlled models
 - Made the FAI indoor team in 1972
 - Held a FAI indoor national record
 - Made a movie of his modeling life at the request of New York City Major John Lindsey
-

I became interested in modeling at the age of eight – 1936. I became a member of the newly formed Richmond Model Flying Club of Staten Island, New York, which is the oldest active club in the U.S. Although I was young, I became involved with the growth of the club and am still an honorary member. I am also the master of ceremonies for the annual air show, which is held at Gateway Park, Staten Island, New York.

My early model building included kits from Megow, Comet, etc. I won the contests at the skyscraper Gas Monkey meets, including high point awards.

During military service, 1946 to 1948, I was active in putting on some U-Control shows for the G.I.s. I once succeeded in getting some G.I.s to build models and fly them. After completing my military service, I again began to build models, mostly in Free Flight. I helped Boy Scout groups on Staten Island to understand that most opportunities that exist in aviation start by model airplane building and flying.

In 1956, I became interested in international competition – Wakefield, Nordic and Power. The following year, 1957, I won a place on the 1958 Wakefield team. Competition was held at Solberg Airport, New Jersey. On the same day I made the Wakefield team, I established a national record of 41 minutes and 39 seconds. The model I won with was designed by Powers Lefebres in 1941. I took the model, redesigned it and was published in Model Airplane News magazine in 1958. In 1963, I again made the Wakefield team. During this period, I acquired a

small mail order business from my friend, Ed Dolby. The business was called “New England Wakefield Supply.” I imported Pirelli stripped rubber, which was used by most rubber model builders. In fact, I gave George Reich a skein of my best rubber and George ended up winning the Wakefield Cup. Today, the business is known by the name of “FAI Model Supply.” I no longer operate this business.

During the years in the late 1960s, I became a contest director leader member. I have been a contest director for several contests at Galesville. This was during the time I helped the Thunderbirds Free Flight Club. I have been and still am the contest director for the annual Society of Antique Modelers’ (SAM) contest sponsored by my present club – the Pine Barren Modelers.

I have served this club as president and treasurer. We have an annual “show and tell” at our local middle school, which draws a lot of interest with students and faculty. I am presently an instructor for Radio Controlled (RC) models.

During my interest in FAI events, I was able to master the art of indoor model building and flying. Within a two-year period flying FAI indoor models, I made the indoor team in 1972. I also held the FAI indoor national record.

My employment during a good part of my modeling career was with the city of New York. The achievements in Wakefield and indoor were made known to the Office of the Mayor of New York City, John Lindsey. They asked me to be on a committee to help find those in the employment by the city of New York who had hobbies in any category and promote such hobbies.

The Office of the Mayor asked me if I would make a movie showing my models and achievements. I agreed and the movie was shown on the John Tillman show.

My present interests are in giant scale RC models, but I still have my hands in Free Flight.

(signed) Sal Cannizzo

This PDF is property of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Permission must be granted by the AMA History Project for any reprint or duplication for public use.

AMA History Project
National Model Aviation Museum
5151 E. Memorial Dr.
Muncie IN 47302
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

