



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of HAROLD (HAL) CARSTENS 1925-2009



---

Written by FF (09/2009) ; Reformatted by JS (11/2010)

---

*The following was published in the September 2009 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the AMA News section. The information was provided by Frank Fanelli, Editor of Flying Models magazine.*

---

## **Harold Carstens: 1925-2009**

Modeling enthusiast, author, and publisher Harold “Hal” Carstens passed away June 23, 2009. He was a lifelong resident of New Jersey.

As president and former publisher of Carstens Publications, Inc., the firm publishes three internationally distributed monthly magazines: *Railroad Model Craftsman*, *Flying Models*, and *Railfan & Railroad*. Carstens also publishes soft- and hard-cover books, primarily in the model hobby and railroad fields.

Hal joined the publishing firm in 1952 as associate editor of *Railroad Model Craftsman* and *Toy Trains* magazines while attending Fairleigh Dickinson University at night. He studied journalism and art at the Philippine Institute for the Armed Forces in Manila. He was appointed managing editor of the two magazines in 1954, becoming editor and vice president in 1957 and president in 1962 following retirement of founder Charles A. Penn. He had his first article published in *Railroad Model Craftsman* while a student at Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey.

Hal graduated from the Army School of Roentgenology in Memphis, and served in the Philippines with the 103<sup>rd</sup> Medical Service Company, U.S. Army Medical Department, during World War II. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Hal Carstens was listed in *Who's Who in America*, and *Who's Who in the World*, and was a past president and secretary of the Hobby Industries of America, Inc., a 2000-member trade association, in 1971-1972, and served for 11 years on its board of directors. He served as chairman of the organization's Public Relations, Management Review, Education and Awards committees. He was chairman of the Publishers Section and the Model Railroad Division, and was vice president of the Educational Foundation of the Hobby Industry Association.

He authored many articles on model railroading, railroads, photography, the lumber industry, and motor cars. Publications in which his articles and photographs have appeared include *Railroad Model Craftsman*, *Toy Trains*, *Railroad Magazine*, *Railfan & Railroad*, *Creative Crafts & Miniatures*, *Flying Models*, *PSA Journal*, *The Lutheran*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *New York Lumber Trade Journal*, *Book of Knowledge* encyclopedia, *The Morganeer*, and *Hobby Merchandiser*. He edited many books on model railroading, railroads, crafts, miniatures, and

model aviation. His *150 Years of Train Models*, published in 1999, covered the history of the model railroad hobby industry.

This is just a small sampling of Hal Carstens' countless accomplishments in and outside of the modeling and hobby industry. You can learn more about him on the *Flying Models* Web site at [www.flying-models.com](http://www.flying-models.com).



---

**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](mailto:historyproject@modelaircraft.org)

