



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of CHARLES EDDY (CHUCK) CUNNINGHAM



November 30, 1929 - February 28, 2004

Written by SE (2015), transcribed, edited, and reformatted by JS (01/2016)

The following was written by Steve Ehlers for Chuck Cunningham's AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame application. Chuck was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2015. Minor edits have been made to the writing below.

Chuck Cunningham – Charles Eddy Cunningham was born on November 30, 1929 and died on February 28, 2004.

1. *Radio Control Modeler (RCM)* magazine: Chuck Cunningham was co-owner and associate editor from 1963 to 2004. Chuck was very well known in the R/C hobby for his long-running “Cunningham on R/C” column in *RCM* and for his many plans published in *RCM*.
2. Sky Master Industries: Chuck started Sky Master Industries to make kits and plans available for many of his popular designs. One of their most popular kits was Chuck’s famous “Lazy Ace” biplanes.
3. Chuck created the new-at-the-time .15 Quarter Midget racing class, and wrote the rules as well. The Thunderbirds held the first pylon race in the country, circa the late 1960s, with Chuck serving as Contest Director.
4. Chuck held the first giant scale fly-in event: The Southwestern Jumbo R/C Fly-In was held in 1978. This landmark event was organized by Chuck. He wrote the rules for IMAA.
5. He was instrumental in helping the Fort Worth Thunderbirds become the first club in the USA to establish a model flying field on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property (1958). Thunderbird Field became the first paved runway on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property (1967) and the first club to fund and build a paved flying field in Texas (1967).
6. Chuck was one of the first four charter members of the historic Fort Worth Thunderbirds R/C Club. He served as president for the first five years of the club (1962-1966).

Chuck Cunningham Designs

Chuck designed more than 19 aircraft that were also featured in *RCM*. These were complete with write-ups, build articles, and plans. Full-sized plans have been made available online on various websites. The following is a list of what has been available.

1. Lazy Ace – One of Chuck’s most remembered designs. 76” wingspan, 1800 sq. in, .60, 4-channel, built-up balsa, plywood and spruce, two sheets, 40” x 60” and 28” x 40”. Model PL-706, featured in the November 1977 issue of *RCM*.

2. A-Hoy Flying Boat

11. Miss Texas

3. Druine Turbulent (.40)

12. New Era

4. Flybaby (7 feet)

13. New Era II

5. Fokker DVII

14. Professor

6. Hooker

15. Rivets Quarter Midget

7. Instructor

16. Scotch lass

8. Li'l Swinger

17. Showoff

9. Mai Tai

18. Sporty Ace

10. Miss Bikini

19. Tequila

Many people didn't know that Chuck started *RCM* with Don Dewey in 1963, and the magazine ran until Chuck passed away in 2004. [Editor's note: *RCM*'s last issue was June 2005.] These airplanes are only part of Chuck's portfolio, not to mention the years of his monthly articles of anything from designing and scratch-building your own airplane to building floats and flying off water. Chuck was quite the writer and storyteller; everyone could relate to him. In his monthly columns, he also promoted the Fort Worth Thunderbird Contests (such as the Southwestern Jumbo Fly-In.)

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