



## The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of RONALD E. (RON) MORGAN

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Transcribed by JS (05/2006), Reformatted by JS (10/2009); Updated by JS (01/2016)

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*The following was printed in the October 1964 issue of Model Aviation, in the "About the Nominees" article. Ron Morgan was running for District III RC Content Board.*

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**DIST. III, RC CONTEST BOARD: Ron Morgan** - Active member for 21 years, building and flying nearly all types of model aircraft. Primarily RC since 1960. Member since 1959; LM since 1962, CD since 1963. President of Chambersburg Modelairs. Served as Event Director at 1962 Nats, was Asst. Nats Manager in 1963 and 1964. Will be CD at 1965 Nats. Employed as Vocational Instructor.

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*The following was printed in the July 1971 issue of American Aircraft Modeler, with other District VP nominee information. Ron Morgan was running for District III Vice President.*

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### **RON MORGAN**

#### **AMA District III Vice-President (Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia)**

Ronald E. Morgan has enjoyed model airplaning for 27 of his 35 years. Ron lives with his wife, Jane, in the small community of Scotland, Pa., about 50 miles southwest of the State Capitol at Harrisburg. He is employed as a school teacher (vocational type) by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at the Scotland School for Veterans' Children and holds a degree of Bachelor of Science in Education, teaching grades 1 through 12. There is a greater-than-usual demand on Ron's time and devotion since the school is one for orphan children. Many of Ron's evenings are taken up in "extra duty" directing model airplane and rifle clubs in the school.

Belonging to the Chambersburg (Pa.) Modelaires Club, airplane modeling is Ron's first-love hobby, with his primary interest being in Radio Control. He also enjoys electronics and traveling. A close friendship with AMA's secretary-treasurer, Earl Witt, has led to these two fine AMA "servants" traveling to many of AMA's meetings and functions in Earl's private airplane.

The year 1970 saw Morgan start a two-year term as AMA District III vice-president. His other services to AMA have revolved mostly around the National Contest, serving as a member of the Nats administrative staff since 1962 and as either Nats director or Nats manager since 1965. Ron has been an important member of one of AMA's most experienced, most responsible, and most knowledgeable groups, the Nationals Executive Committee, since 1966. His most valuable and dedicated service to AMA has been an "advance party" (of one!) to the last five Nats to coordinate the AMA-Navy efforts, moving aboard the Naval Air Station Nats site an average of 35 days before the meet. This unselfish service gesture on Ron's part has probably been the most important and notable improvement in the Nats in recent years. The success of this important

liaison with the Navy is due greatly to the handsome, mature boyish charm of this tall, quiet, good looking young fellow.

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*The following biography, written by the History Project staff, was published in the February 2000 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Ron was a Life Member of the AMA.*

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## **Ronald Morgan**

Ron Morgan, 63, hails from Scotland, Pennsylvania. He has been involved in aeromodeling for 54 years. From his beginnings with Comet, Megow, and Ott kits, he went on to fly competitively in Control Line Aerobatics, Racing and Combat; Free Flight gas power, towline, and hand-launch; and Radio Control Pattern and Scale. Ron has flown contests at the national, regional, and local levels.

Perhaps the most notable part of Ron's competition career has been his long involvement with AMA's National Aeromodeling Championships (Nats). Except the period 1987-1993, he has served on, or as the head of, the Nats management committee since 1966.

Early in this period, Ron served as the advance coordinator with the Navy and typically was on site for a month or more. He was involved with the development of computer tabulation, helped create the revenue-sharing concept with Special Interest Groups for the event, and has served as the Nationals Manager from 1994 to the present. Ron was also deeply involved with the early planning of the Celebration of Eagles.

Drawing on his 38 years of teaching experience, Ron has developed educational programs for elementary, middle and high school classes. These emphasize the sciences and use aeromodeling as a base.

During most World Championships Ron has served as a Facilities Director and/or Administrative Assistant. He has been presented with many awards including AMA Fellow, Meritorious Award, Distinguished Service Award, IRCHA Service Award, and Vintage Radio Control Society Service Award.

Ron worked at developing reliable activators for proportional control during the late 1950s, and operated a hobby shop from 1967 to 1985. He has flown as a featured flier on an AMA Show Team since 1971. From 1970 to 1975, he served as the AMA District III Vice President. He has also held every office within his local club.

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*The following biography, written by Jay Smith, was published in the November 2009 issue of Model Aviation magazine.*

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## **A Conversation with Nats Director Ron Morgan**

*JS: Where was the first Nats you attended?*

**RM:** 1960, Dallas, Texas.

*JS: How do the Nats held on military bases compare to having them at the IAC?*

**RM:** It's totally different; everything was on one site. Now it's so big it takes this whole site, and you can't even finish it in a week like you used to. It's a lot more complicated. Back then we only had Pylon and Pattern for RC, and we would fly one in the morning and one in the afternoon. RC or radio was more experimental at the time, with guys just trying to make things work and laying the groundwork for what we have today. That's what competition does for us.

*JS: Were you a competitor in 1960?*

**RM:** No. I just went as an observer, to see what was going on. While there, I was asked if I would help and that was the beginning of it.

*JS: So you have never competed in the Nats?*

**RM:** Never. I went with the intention to compete in the 1962 Nats, but they needed someone to handle Free Flight Scale. After that, I got pushed up real quick to this level.

*JS: When did you start modeling?*

**RM:** I started in 1942, building little 10¢ Comet kits. I spent all allowance and saved money to buy stuff. I also bought my original X-Acto set during World War II. It has a wooden handle, as metal was a premium, and I still have it and use it. That was the beginning of the experience.

After World War II, we used to build anything we could get our hands on. There were a lot of kits available, such as Joe Ott, Comet, and Monogram. Everything was rubber powered for us; we didn't have the funding to get engines, and I didn't really get serious about engines till about 1948.

I wanted a McCoy .19 so bad I could taste it. I asked for one for Christmas and my dad checked around and was told an Ohlsson & Rice .23 was the best on the market. So he told me the Ohlsson or nothing; I took the Ohlsson.

I did finally get the McCoy .19, but it took a lot of work and put it in a Control Line airplane called the New Era. I got interested in radio as a teenager and built a single-channel radio and still have that radio as well.

You read all the cool names of the guys flying airplanes and you wanted to get a chance to see them. That's what brought me to the Nats.

*JS: What was the most memorable Nats for you?*

**RM:** They all run at such a consistent level. The first one in Muncie was special, as we were really breaking new ground that was different from anything we had done in the past.

*JS: How was the turnout at the AMA vs. previous Nats held at military bases?*

**RM:** The biggest Nationals I ever attended was at Glenview [Naval Air Station in Illinois], and it would draw 2,000 competitors. Here we draw about 1,000. It is just a change in the times. This is still a good show; it is good competition.

*JS: how many years have you been a Nats manager?*

**RM:** Since 1964, when I was asked to do it.

*JS: Any funny stories from the Nats?*

**RM:** Competitors by nature are very intense, and they focus on what they are doing at that time. We had competitors that would do foolish things on-site, like we had one lady from Florida who was a very good pilot and she took a disliking to us in Dallas in 1964. And instead of accepting a decision, she started getting garbage cans and throwing them at us and chased us across the field. She had to be escorted off the field by the Navy. That is probably the strangest one that I can recall.

*JS: A lot of people don't realize all the preparation that goes into the Nats. Tell us about that.*

**RM:** It is a 12-month project. I will go home in the middle of August [when that year's Nats is finished] and then go over paperwork to determine what we did well and what we did not do so well, to prepare for a planning meeting in September.

We will call all the SIGs together and have a meeting to work out the schedule. We also have to accommodate World Championships at times as well.

*JS: For those who have never competed in the Nats or come to Muncie, what would you say to them to get them to attend?*

**RM:** First of all, if they are going to compete, then they have to have a competitive nature to themselves anyhow. Most of the people our hobby attracts are not competitors; they come into the hobby to enjoy it as recreation and just go fly, and that is okay.

A visit to Muncie should be on the list for anybody who flies model aircraft. The museum is phenomenal and the facility is phenomenal. There is a lot of history here, and they should come see it.

*JS: What do you do when you're not running the Nats?*

**RM:** I have a workshop that I love to work in that some say is second to none. I fly single-stick radios and I have about 75. I like to build them and make them work as well as when they were original.

*JS: What do you see for the future of the Nats?*

**RM:** Digital spread spectrum. We spend a lot of man-hours having events overlap with frequency boards, and we make sure that they can fly together. With DSS, that all goes away. We are working on getting the Nats up and running in the future, using DSS exclusively.

The other thing is electric. It is growing at leaps and bounds.

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