



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of ROBERT (BOB) WISCHER

October 12, 1915 – November 24, 1997

Started modeling in 1930

AMA #L20244



Written by DW (1997); Transcribed & Edited by SS (04/2003), Updated by JS (10/2008, 10/2013), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

Career:

- 1958: Flew in his first Nationals and placed second in Radio Control and fifth in Pattern Rudder-Only
- 1960s: Won many Scale contests throughout the Midwest
- Early 1960s: Designed one of the first mufflers for model airplanes
- 1974: The only U.S. contestant to win the individual Radio Control Scale World Championship
- Starting early 1970s: Volunteered at the Nationals and also volunteered at the Pattern World Championships and the Scale World Championships a few times
- 1977 - 1993: Served as the U.S. Scale representative to FAI rule making sessions; Also, writer and photographer for Model Aviation magazine
- Was on six U.S. World Championship Scale teams and was an alternate four other times
- Successfully competed at the Nationals including seven first places in Precision Scale, one first place in Giant Scale and three-time recipient of the EAA best custom built aircraft award
- Placed first at three Mint Julep contests
- Qualified for the Master's many times
- Designed the Cessna OE-2, Pober Pixie, Ariel Sport and Aeronca K

Honors:

- 1997: Model Aviation Hall of Fame

The following information on Bob Wischer was included with the Hall of Fame application that his wife, Margaret (better known as Dolly), submitted on his behalf in 1997. As a result, Bob was inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame in 1997. Dolly was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1988.

I would like to nominate Bob Wischer, AMA L20244, to the Model Aviation Hall of Fame. As with most early modelers, Lindbergh's flight started a lifelong love of airplanes for Bob. His first contact with other modelers was when the Milwaukee YMCA sponsored The Model Aircraft Engineers in 1930. Photos show wonderful rubber-powered Scale models from that era. Many of these club members went on to be business owners, engineers, MIT instructors, and one became a Lockheed test pilot. Many are still flying models.

By the mid-1930s, Bob and a friend ran a hobby shop for a few years. I met him in 1936 at a six-day bicycle race. In 1941, we purchased a 12-inch to the foot Scale 40-horsepower Aeronca K, followed by a Taylorcraft in 1942. Models were put aside for a commercial pilot's license and 800 hours in the T-craft. We sold the T-craft in 1947, as hangar rent was getting expensive. We

intended to purchase a piece of land large enough for a house and landing strip. Both the K and T-craft still fly today in quarter scale. Photos that we took of our adventures back in the 1940s proved invaluable documentation when Bob was planning both models almost half a century later.

In 1950 we bought the 10-acre strip of land, after finishing the house, which we entirely constructed ourselves (another 12-inch – 1-foot model), inflation had put real airplane prices out of sight. Still bitten by the bug, Bob resumed modeling in 1954; and in 1955, he built his first Radio Control plane and radio. Our son Bill soon followed and I started in 1960.

Bob's first Nationals (Nats) were in 1958, which resulted in a second place in Radio Control Scale and a fifth in Pattern Rudder-Only. Many Midwestern Scale contests were entered and won in the 1960s. Bob always placed well in Pattern Rudder-Only as well.

In 1963 while we were flying at the Pabst farms with the Lakeland Radio Control club, complaints from neighbors over a mile away started Bob working on mufflers to insure the use of the flying site the club had used for many years. In the early 1960s, there were not any mufflers available from the engine manufacturers (a .35 engine was large in those days) or in the after market. Bob experimented and designed a muffler that was quiet and had little power loss. He made many more mufflers for the other club members and converted many die-hards to flying with mufflers. In 1964, I made a muffler display that we took to the Toledo show to make the technology available to all interested modelers. Bob still (in 1997) uses the same design muffler in his current aircraft.

From the mid-1960s, Bob concentrated on Radio Control Scale. From 1968 to 1970, he won first places at Rhinebeck World War I contests plus an all-over award. A second time at the 1971 Nats the Douglas Mailplane qualified him for the 1972 Scale World Championships in France. He entered a Piel Emeraude, finishing seventh individually and with a first place for the team.

Bob was fourth at the 1973 Nats, which placed him as an alternate team member for the 1974 World Championships. The Emeraude was the EAA Award best custom built in 1974; and just three weeks before the World Championships in Lakehurst, New Jersey, one of the team members totaled his plane. Bob was now on the team! With an excellent final flight at the Championships, he won the individual Radio Control Scale World Championship and headed the team to a first as well. So far (as of 1997) this is the only time a U.S. contestant has won the individual Radio Control Scale World Championship. In addition, Bob worked as a volunteer all week during the Championships. 1974 finished with a first at the Nats and EAA best custom-built Scale model.

From 1975 on there were eight more wins – two seconds, one third, and one fourth place. In the World Championships Bob placed seventh in 1972, first in 1974, fourth in 1976, seventh in 1978 and sixth in 1980. He won another team first in 1980, was an alternate on four World Championship teams, and many times was a Master's qualifier.

Bob worked as a volunteer at most of the Nats from 1973 on, at the Pattern World Championships in 1971 and 1977, at the Scale World Championships in 1974 and at the AMA tent at EAA Oshkosh from 1985 to date.

Bob served as our Scale representative to the FAI rule making sessions in Paris from 1977 to 1993. All these years he was also a writer and photographer for Model Aviation magazine. Bob wrote the monthly Radio Control Scale column for Model Aviation from 1977 to 1993. He also wrote the Nat Scale reports for Model Aviation from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s and the World Championship reports from 1972 to 1986 and 1992.

Construction articles that were written for Model Aviation and the old American Aircraft Modeler magazine included the Cessna OE-2, Pober Pixie, Aeronca K, and Ariel Sport (semi Scale).

I could continue on and on. He seems to have gotten better with age – he won the Radio Control Scale World Championships at age 59 and the Nats in his 60s and 70s, and his last Mint Julep win was at 80 in 1995. Bob was always the competitor, but I guess he likes to build even more.

List of Accomplishments

Competitor

First Radio Control Scale contest entered was the 1958 Nats where he placed second in Scale and fifth in Rudder-Only. In the World Championships, Bob was on six U.S. Scale teams and alternate for four others with the following results:

- 1971: First place
- 1972: Seventh place
- 1976: Fourth place
- 1978: Seventh place
- 1980: Sixth place
- 1972, 1974 and 1980: Resulted in team firsts for the U.S. team
- 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1992: Was an alternate

Bob had the following results from competing in the AMA Nats:

- 1974, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1984 and 1990: First places in Precision Scale
- 1984: First in giant Scale
- 1958, 1971, 1982 and 1985: Second places in giant Scale
- 1975 and 1987: Third places in giant Scale
- 1988: Fourth place in giant Scale
- 1973, 1974 and 1975: EAA best custom built aircraft award

Other contests Bob successfully competed in include the following:

- 1960-1965: Midwest contests where he mainly placed first in Pattern Rudder-Only
- 1968-1977: Rhinebeck World War I contest where he won several first places and was twice the high point winner

- 1970-1980: Radio Control Scale wins at Dayton (Ohio), Chicago (Illinois), Minneapolis (Minnesota) and various Wisconsin contests
- 1988, 1994 and 1995: Mint Julep contest where he placed first
- 1990: Vintage Radio Control Society, placed first
- Master's qualifier many times

Designer

- 1962: Cessna OE-2, published in American Aircraft Modeler magazine
- 1970: Pober Pixie, published in American Aircraft Modeler magazine
- 1979: Ariel Sport, published in Model Aviation magazine
- 1984: Aeronca K, published in Model Aviation magazine

Experimenter

- 1963: Mufflers, published in American Aircraft Modeler magazine
- 1981: How to Make Windshields, published in Model Aviation magazine

Leader

- 1960-1970: Lakeland Radio Control secretary/treasurer (only elected club officer)
- 1977-1993: FAI Scale representative

Writer

- 1977-1989: Radio Control Scale column published in Model Aviation magazine
- 1977-1989: Nats Scale reports published in Model Aviation magazine
- 1972-1992: Scale World Championship reports published in Model Aviation magazine
- 1980s: EAA Fly In reports published in Model Aviation magazine
- 1977: TOC Scale and Pattern reports published in Model Aviation magazine

*(signed) Dolly Wischer
March 20, 1997*

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