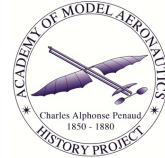




The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JOHN D. HUNSAKER

January 6, 1962 – November 19, 2020



Written and submitted by JG (08-09/2022); Reformatted by JS (08-09/2022)

The following biography was written by John D. Hunsaker's daughter, Jamie (Hunsaker) Gibbs, and submitted to the AMA History Project in August of 2022.

John D. Hunsaker 1962 – 2020

Go Fast and Fly High! These were words that were always spoken by the late, John D. Hunsaker. From an incredibly early age, John Hunsaker was always tinkering with airplanes, which grew into a sport he admired dearly. Sadly, on November 19, 2020, John passed away unexpectedly but his legacy has followed him. John was a well-known RC Model plane pilot within his local community. If you wanted to visit with John, you did not have to look far. You could always find John on the flying field or in his hobby shop working on an airplane to add to his collection.

John was born on January 6, 1962, in Hurst, Illinois to the late Glenn and Irene Hunsaker. John was the youngest of his family which consisted of himself and his brother, Glenn and three sisters: Sherry, Marsha, and Denise. Some would consider John as the “spoiled” child as there was a twenty-two-age difference between him and his oldest sister. John did not mind this as he loved all the attention of his older siblings. He was able to spend a lot of time with them. This usually involved family and sibling outings to nearby airshows.

John's hometown of Hurst, Illinois consisted of less than eight hundred residents. There was not much to do in the area so finding a hobby and/or sport to keep one busy was necessary. John started his passion at an early age when he was gifted many airplanes as a child. He loved to venture outside and act as if he were flying the plane, as most kids do! John really got involved with RC model planes in his early twenties. This nearly caused John to miss the birth of his first child, Jamie. John, of course, was on the flying field on the day of her birth. Luckily, he made it on time. He had learned his lesson when his second child, John was born. Otherwise, his wife Lisa may have ended his passion for his favorite sport.

John rarely ventured far unless it involved planes. As a member of the Sky Squires RC Club, he would travel around the Midwest to attend any type of airshow or RC model plane competition. John was a proud member of the Sky Squires RC Club (AMA Chartered Club #859) for most of his aeronautics career. While competing, other participants enjoyed watching John as he demonstrated high-level aerobatic skills. At one competition, it was noted “John demonstrated his superb aerobatic flying skills with his CAP 232. He flew a really fast Jackal that looked like a fighter jet that had nitro power driving a prop on the front!” It was no surprise as John would usually place first in the competitions. He was deeply knowledgeable about how to pilot and maneuver the planes to perform a top-notch performance. The attention he got from his performance allowed him to train other plane enthusiasts. This created more of a leadership role

for John. He really enjoyed spending the extra time with other enthusiasts and even assisted in an opportunity for local community members to attend a Sky Squire RC Club model airplane show. The event was held at a University Mall of Carbondale, IL. This provided an in-person opportunity for enthusiasts to ask questions and observe the RC models upfront. It also attracted a lot of attention and new members to the sport. John really enjoyed sharing his passion for airplanes with others.

During John's RC model career, he had designed, created, and perfected at least 100 RC model airplanes. He was able to put some creative and significant designs to his planes. There was never an airplane like his. John's most popular and favorite airplanes included the Ultimate 10-300 (Blue Hawk), Goldberg Edge 540 (Hooters), King Kobra (U.S. Navy Blue Angels), P-51 Warbird (Marie), RV-4 model (Red), RC Extra (Yellow), RC Model T-34 (Yellow Navy), RC Great Planes Waco with 6' wingspan, RC Giant Super Sportster with 100" wingspan and a 30-cc motor and smoke system, RC model T-28 with 80" wingspan, RC Extra 260 aerobatic plane, RC Extra 300 aerobatic plane, and a RC Ryan STA plane.

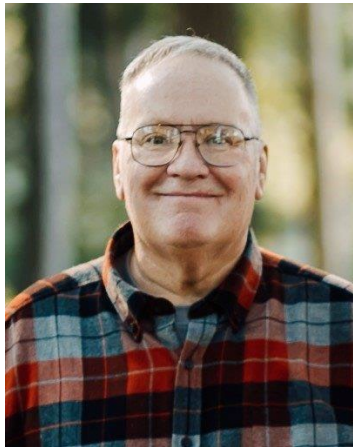
John's passion for airplanes led him to a thirty (30) year career at the local airport, Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois, formerly known as Williamson County Regional Airport. John was a very well-known maintenance supervisor at the airport. John volunteered his time to assist with airshows that were held at the airport. He was known for implementing, organizing, and assisting with all required tasks to ensure a successful event. John would also do many demonstrations at the airshows that would exhibit his pilot skills which included speed and aerobatic stunts. While working at the airport, John also volunteered his time to pilot a RC blimp for the Salukis at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He did this at all home basketball games. This always captured the attention of the crowd as John would demonstrate his skills, once again, by dropping airline tickets into the crowd. John also had an amazing opportunity to represent the RC aviation community by being asked to pilot the RC blimp inside a local Wal-Mart. This was part of their grand opening. John defeated this task without any hesitation. This was talked about for quite some time by local community members.

After a successful career of thirty (30) years at Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois, John retired. He continued piloting the RC blimp at local university basketball games and manufacturing all sorts of airplanes. Most of his planes included Sport models, Pattern airplanes, large wingspans, and larger scale models. He continued his meticulous designs to make one of a kind plane(s). John would always customize his designs and parts to ensure the airplane stood out. His airplanes would always capture the attention of others and were highly praised. John also took on additional hobbies, such as metal detecting, restoring vintage bikes, dabbling with his competition truck, camping, and of course spending time with all his grandchildren: Carson, Austin, Landon, Brayden, Aleeha, Emersyn, and Zane. He was known as "papa John" to his grandchildren.

On November 19, 2020, sadly John unexpectedly passed away surrounded by his daughter, Jamie, and son, John. The news of John's passing traveled fast throughout the RC model community. John's legacy still lives on, and he is continually mentioned during RC model events. Everyone knows him as being one of the best RC pilots around. He was beyond talented and was never afraid to push the limits on new aerobatic tricks, which some may have taught him

a lesson or two. John had such a huge personality to everyone who knew him, and he was honored to share his passion for his hobby with anyone who would listen. John's family knew how much John loved flying his airplanes and even made sure that he was honored in a way that everyone would remember. During John's memorial, two of his favorite planes were placed near him for everyone to view. His family even made sure that John had the best monument that showed his love for planes. They were able to get John and his favorite airplane placed on the back of his monument for all to see. Although John is no longer with us, his memories and legacy still live on. In honor of a great pilot, always remember ***Go Fast and Fly High!***

The following photographs were submitted to the AMA History Project by John D. Hunsaker's daughter, Jamie (Hunsaker) Gibbs, in August of 2022. Unless otherwise stated below, photos are by friends and family of John D. Hunsaker.



September 2020: John D. Hunsaker (Photo by Posie & Toesies portraits)



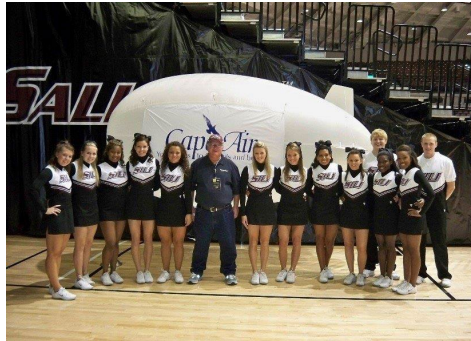
October 2015: John with his Ryan STA model airplane.



November 2009: John with his Extra 260 model airplane.



September 13, 2009: John with his Goldberg Edge 540 model airplane.



November 2011: John D. Hunsaker with his RC blimp, pictured with Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Spirit Squad cheerleaders.

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

