



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of AUGUST KERZIE

1905 – 1969



Written and submitted by DK (04/2022); Reformatted by JS (06/2022); Updated by DK (08/2022)

The following biography was written by August Kerzie's son, David (Dave) Kerzie, submitted to the AMA History Project in April 2022, and updated in August 2022.

August Kerzie AMA Biography

August Kerzie was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1905. At the age of six, August moved to the state of Washington and spent most of his life in Seattle. Early on in his youth came a keen interest in radio technology. I recalled the many times he told the story of his monitoring a ship's distress call on his homebuilt crystal radio set. He obtained his amateur radio license soon after World War II and built his own transmitters from scratch. A master with the soldering iron and other fabrication tools and with a sharp mind for electronics, August was on the forefront of signal sideband development.

He was a devoted husband and father of two sons. His interest in aviation and electronics, coupled with his sons' interest in modeling, led to many years of active participation in radio control building and flying. This was radio control in the fifties and sixties when development of RC systems was still in the early stages. We are talking soft and hard radio tubes, circuit boards with wires and components, and rubber band escapements requiring one to wind it up for power. What are transistors and printed circuits? Single channel was the method of control where one pulse on the transmitter button provided right rudder and two pulses the left rudder. Many hours were spent together in the basement building/trouble shooting the early radio systems and fabricating the models. A great amount of self-satisfaction was apparent when a two-minute controlled flight and landing was achieved during the family weekend flying sessions. His models included a Hoosier Hot Shot, a Berkley Super Buccaneer, and an Astro Hog, among others. Again, much of the radio control equipment was scratch built.

August was a lifelong friend of Bill Butler, a pioneer radio amateur and model airplane builder. August spent a considerable amount of time helping local model enthusiasts with their problems and projects. Often a builder or builders would spend several hours with him in his basement troubleshooting a particular problem. Dick Riggs and Dr. Ralph Brooks, well-known radio control builders, would often join August at the work bench or flying field working out problems.

The time and adventures while working together with his sons on modeling projects will never be forgotten. The activity really cemented a father/son lasting relationship. August passed away in 1969, well before his time.

The family photographs on the next page were provided by David (Dave) Kerzie for this biography.



August Kerzie with model airplane and radio equipment. Photo courtesy Dave Kerzie.



August Kerzie holding model airplane. Photo courtesy Dave Kerzie.

(Photo at right) August Kerzie flying a radio controlled model airplane. Photo courtesy Dave Kerzie.



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