



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of CARL HATRAK

May 14, 1921 - May 14, 2003 Started modeling in 1929
AMA #1301



Written and Submitted by CH (1999); Transcribed and Edited by SS (07/2002), Reformatted by JS (08/2009)

Career:

- Won third place at his first model contest in 1935
- Became president of his junior high school's model airplane club in 1935
- Joined the Trenton gas model club in 1936 and helped organize a contest two years later
- Served as secretary/treasurer and president of the Trenton Model Aircraft Engineers prior to World War II
- Joined the Navy in 1942 and became a charter member of the Patuxent Model Engineers Club
- A charter member and past president of the Southern California Ignition Flyers
- Joined the Inglewood Flightmasters in the 1950s and introduced an event for 48-inch jumbo rubber scale models
- Started the Flying Wing contest in 1966 and has run it for 33 years (1999)
- In the mid to late-1960s helped John Pond run the Old-Timer events at the Nationals
- Involved with the introduction of Peanut scale models and directed the first International Postal Peanut Proxy Contest
- Worked in various capacities for the Society of Antique Modelers (SAM) since its inception

Honors:

- Recipient of MECA's Robert Reuter Award
- Appointed by SAM President John Adams to be the honorary SAM Master at Arms
- 1999: SAM Hall of Fame

Carl was born on May 14, 1921 in Trenton, New Jersey and raised by his grandparents on a farm not far from Charles Lindbergh's home in Hopewell, New Jersey. He started building solid model airplanes in 1929. These were followed by the usual Rise-off-Grounds (ROGs) and hand-launched gliders. His first model contest was the New Jersey State Fair Scale Aeroplane Exhibition in 1935. He won a third place ribbon in the solid scale event.

In 1935, after he had moved into town, he became president of the model airplane club at his junior high school. In 1936, he joined the Trenton gas model club, IGMAA Unit #20. He was involved with club members and senior NAA members in staging a full-size aircraft show. This was held at Mercer Airport in New Jersey in 1938. Money from this show enabled the club to buy a 1928 school bus for \$90. He and 13 other club members then made their first trip to the 1938 Nationals (Nats) in Detroit, Michigan. A photo of the bus and club members is in the possession of the AMA National Model Aviation Museum.

Carl held the office of secretary/treasurer and was president in 1940 of the Trenton Model Aircraft Engineers, prior to World War II. He joined the Navy in 1942 as an aircraft metal smith,

third class. He was a charter member of the Patuxent Model Engineers Club started by Hal deBolt and Matt Kania. It's been said that the top Navy brass got the idea to sponsor the Nats from this club.

At the end of the war, he enrolled in the Northrop Illinois Institute in California to get his A&E tickets. He joined the Inglewood Flightmasters and became a charter member of the Southern California Ignition Flyers Old-Timer club, which became Society of Antique Modelers (SAM) chapter number three. While he was with the Flightmasters, he introduced the event for 48-inch jumbo rubber scale models. Later while in the Northrop club in 1966, he started the Flying Wing contest. Carl has run this event for 33 years (as of 1999). Around this same time, he helped John Pond run the Old-Timer events at the U.S. Nats.

He was involved with the introduction of Peanut scale models and was asked to contest direct the first International Postal Peanut Proxy Contest, sponsored by Model Builder magazine. When SAM came into being, he worked for every SAM president and has been the recipient of many plaques of appreciation. Carl was the initiator of the resolution, adopted by SAM, to honor those SAM members and other Old-Timer modelers who have passed on during the previous year at the yearly meetings of SAM. Carl was awarded the Robert Reuter award by the MECA organization. Carl was appointed by President Jim Adams to be the SAM honorary Master at Arms.

His aviation career includes work for Luscombe, Brewster, Fleetwing, Bellanca, and Northrop. He retired from TWA after approximately 38 years. He still holds NAA/AMA/SAM license number 1301.

Carl was inducted into the SAM Hall of Fame. He was also past president of the Southern California Ignition Flyers (SCIF).

(signed) Carl Hatrak

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AMA History Project
National Model Aviation Museum
5151 E. Memorial Dr.
Muncie IN 47302
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

