



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of PAUL KOHLMANN



Written by JS (08/2015); Added to HP files by JS (03/2016)

---

*The following was published in the August 2015 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the “I Am the AMA” column, written by Jay Smith.*

---

## **I Am the AMA** **Paul Kohlmann, Research and development engineer**

*Jay Smith: How did you get involved with model aviation?*

Paul Kohlmann: My three-year-old daughter, Sami, and I were at the local full-scale air show about 10 years ago. We saw a fellow flying a GWS Lady Bug, and Sami went crazy over it. Being a good dad, I bought one – for her! Well, maybe it was for me too. Sami lost her interest in RC pretty quickly, but I’m still going strong.

*JS: How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?*

PK: I’ve always been a hands-on person. I worked as a welder and mechanic while in school. The early part of my engineering career was spent using CAD to design mechanical and electrical systems.

Now I do research on thin film optical coatings – a fantastic job, but the work that we do is literally microscopic. Scratch-building gave me a way to put my hands back to work. The time at the bench and at the field helps me unwind.

RC is good socially, too. My son, Drew, flies with me, and my wife photographs our projects. Eventually, Drew and I joined the local RC club and made many good friends including John Reade, the Lady Bug pilot.

*JS: What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?*

PK: The biggest kick for me is designing and scratch-building. Seeing a new project take its first flight is always a thrill. My son and I also participate in Pylon Racing with our local club. I’m not much of a threat, but at least I’m holding my boy at bay!

*JS: What are your other hobbies?*

PK: I enjoy home brewing and tinkering with my old Fords.

*JS: Who (or what) has influenced you most?*

PK: My folks, without a doubt, have been my greatest influences. My mom became one of the top-rated science teachers in California at the peak of her career. Not bad when one realizes that female STEM teachers were mighty rare when she began teaching.

My dad was a career Air Force officer with endless B-52 hours. He later worked on the U2 and SR-71 programs. I'm so proud to report that they just celebrated 51 years of wedded bliss.

*JS: What advice would you give someone looking to build his or her first model?*

PK: Don't be afraid! A lot of people comment that they would be too afraid to fly something that they had put a lot of time into, but if you can build something once, you can rebuild it after all but the most spectacular of crashes. And if you have a spectacular crash, make sure you share it with friends!

---

**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

