



# The AMA History Program Presents: Biography of MERRICK S. (PETE) ANDREWS



Written by AMA Staff

Transcribed by JS (05/08)

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*The following was published in the August 1994 issue of Model Aviation Magazine. Andrews was inducted into the 1993 Model Aviation Hall of Fame.*

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Merrick S. “Pete” Andrews was 78 years old when he left us. During his lifetime, he accomplished much in the field of model aviation. Growing up in Philadelphia, he was vitally interested in Indoor and Outdoor Free Flight, and as his skills progressed, he focused more and more on Indoor flying and the competition scene. His skills made him successful in most contests he entered, and he became a serious record setter.

Pete served on many US international teams from 1970 to 1980. He was also renowned as a designer and had many plans and articles published in the model press. His skills as a contest director and organizer will always be recalled by his friends and fellow competitors.

When the Lakehurst, New Jersey Naval Air Station dirigible hangar became available for Indoor flying, Pete was one of the first to use the facility. The vast airspace inside this mammoth building was (and still is) ideal for Indoor flight and competition.

An East Coast Indoor Modelers group was founded around 1926, with Pete acting as a cornerstone by providing leadership and enthusiasm. Later on, starting around 1931, the huge hangar attracted hundreds of modelers to contests.

His dry wit, quiet humor, and capable techniques will never be forgotten by those lucky enough to share time with him. His “Magical 30-Minute Flight” of August 14, 1949 was one of his greatest achievements. Later, he became the first man to break the 40-minute barrier with a one-gram FAI microfilm model.

Such experiences led him in 1972 to become World Champion at the Free Flight Championships held at Cardington, England. Despite his long and comprehensive experience, he could not abide watching his last (and winning) flight in its entirety, so he walked outside the large hanger, then came back 30 minutes later to observe the final five minutes of a grand performance.

The Pete Andrews Award was established in 1975 to recognize fliers for “outstanding achievement in proficiency as an indoor modeler.” The Lakehurst Naval Air Center still hosts some of the most prestigious Indoor model flying found anywhere in the world. An annual event is now flown there to honor the Father of Indoor Free Flight: Merrick “Pete” Andrews.

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

