
Biography of ED DOLBY

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The first rubber motor I ever wound up was the long rubber band that came in the 10-cent Megow kit. I wound it by cranking the prop backward with my index finger until the rubber had a row of knots from end to end. The wound rubber motor was in a Nieuport biplane, which I launched for a very brief flight through the air. Hey, man, that was great!

The year was 1936. I was going on 12 years old and I had no idea *where* that rubber band *really* came from. Since then I've wound MRL brown, U.S. Rubber Company's T-56, some nearly white wartime synthetic, black English-made Dunlop, Italian Pirelli and Filati, Hungarian Lactron, FAI Supply's Tan and Tan 11, and probably a few others that now escape my memory. Some of them were good at the time and some of them were poor.

We used to say that winding T-56 was like playing Russian Roulette; winding Pirelli was like doing it with two chambers loaded; and Dunlop was loading a third chamber. My winding technique today is somewhat more sophisticated, with a torque meter, blast tube, and turns counter, but the object is still the same: toss the wound-up model for a hopefully somewhat-less-brief flight through the air. Hey, man, it's still great!

But all those big rubber companies, U.S. Rubber, Dunlop, Pirelli, no longer produce the specialty rubber strip I need - we need - to fly our little models. The one worldwide source that we rely on for model airplane rubber is a cottage industry called FAI Model Supply that was founded, nurtured, and then passed on from one competition rubber-model flier to another.

The founder, of course, was Ed Dolby. And we all owe him an immense debt of gratitude. Without Ed, we just wouldn't have any source of rubber today. None for P-30, Coupe d'Hiver, Wakefield, Moffett, and Mulvihill classes - the ones that turn me on today - not for Peanut Scale and FAC competition, not for 60-minute FIDs, living room sticks, and all the other Indoor classes, and not for the Delta Darts and AMA Cubs that get some kids turned on to model aviation in the first place.

It has been my privilege and pleasure to know Ed for just about half of this century. We first met on the field of competition, of course.

In the early fifties, Ed was a member - a founding member, I believe - along with Lee Renaud of the New England Wakefield Group (NEWG), while I was then a member of the Prop Spinners Club (one of many New York City model airplane groups in that era).

The two clubs were hot and heavy in the Wakefield arena and we had what was certainly one of the first inter-city series of challenge meets. Each club would put forth a six-man team of

Wakefield fliers once a year (alternating annually between Long Island and the Boston area, until other groups joined the challenge from Connecticut and Montreal). Ed was a perennial member of the NEWG Wakefield team and I frequently represented the Prop Spinners.

To give you an idea of the eagerness of our competitors, I recall one year that the Prop Spinners fielded 20 members with *Wakefields* ready to go for the Challenge; we had to start the day's flying with a team-selection trial!

Later, Ed moved west, first to Arizona, then to California. Though he left the Boston area, he never lost the New England twang in his accent. And he will never lose my gratitude - and yours - for establishing a lasting source of rubber strip to power my favorite models.

Bob Hatschek

(Ed Dolby passed away in June 1998)

(End)