

---

# Biography of ERNEST FREDERICK HUBER

Modeler since 1943      Birth Date: September 6, 1931      AMA Number: 33316

Transcribed & Edited by SS (4/03)

---

## Career:

- Flew U-Control models from 1945 to 1950 and won many East Coast contests
- Placed first in the Japan Air Defense Force and Far East Air Force Championships in U-Control while he was stationed in Japan in the early to mid-1950s
- Began working on designs for Radio Controlled (RC) models in the mid-1950s
- Flew the prototype of Andrews Aeromaster bi-plane in 1965 and demonstrated it to a crowd of over 100,000 spectators
- Won the AMA open pattern at the 1968 New England Championships flying his own design, the low wing Aeromaster
- Designed an RC helicopter in 1969 and got it to fly by 1971; took first place in RC helicopter contest from 1972 through 1976
- In 1979 was the first person to hover an RC helicopter inverted
- Invented the invert switch on radios
- Built and flew helicopters in three movies throughout the 1970s and 1980s
- Opened Ernie Huber's RC Flight Training Center in Florida in 1989; teaches five-day classes and has taught over 700 student classes from 24 countries and 46 states logging more than 28,000 flights in the last 12 years (as of 2002)
- Holds his own AMA-sanctioned fun-fly every March

## Honors:

- 1998 – AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 2001 – AMA Distinguished Service Award

---

*The following information on Ernie Huber was taken from a Hall of Fame application submitted on his behalf by Jeffrey S. Torsrud in March 2002.*

---

Ernest F. Huber was born September 6, 1931 in Middleboro, Massachusetts. His friends and associates know him as Ernie and for this nomination, all references to Mr. Huber will be made as Ernie.

From a very young age Ernie was fascinated with model aircraft. As a teenager in 1943, Ernie got his start in model aviation with a fly-by-wire or U-Control model. His first model was an Andrews Trixter developed by Lou Andrews (AMA Hall of Fame member). Ernie flew U-Control models from 1945 to 1950 winning many East Coast contests. In 1946 Ernie was able to meet Lou Andrews and Mr. Andrews became Ernie's lifelong mentor and friend until his death.

## Military Service

Ernie joined the U.S. Air Force in 1951 and trained to be a machinist. Ernie designed, built and flew four U-Control models in Everett, Washington, while stationed there and was on the base model team in Bakersfield, California, flying hand-launched gliders. While stationed in Japan, he placed first in the Japan Air Defense Force and Far East Air Force Championships in U-Control stunt.

When Ernie wasn't flying models, he was designing and building other things. He designed and built a .60 size two-cylinder opposed engine. While stationed at Paine Field in Washington he designed and built a single-cylinder 35 size engine and an inline twin 30 size engine. [See photo in Ernie's file in the National Model Aviation Museum Archives. For assistance contact the AMA librarian.] The machinist skills Ernie had learned to this point would come to bear on the hobby in years to come.

Ernie knew he could design and build an aircraft that could be controlled from the ground without wires and thus designed his first Radio Controlled (RC) plane. Unfortunately, it was too much plane and not enough radio at this time. (Babcock three-channel with one channel for an escapement and two channels for a trim-able elevator.) Ernie was honorably discharged in 1955.

## Civilian Life

After leaving the Air Force in 1955, Ernie continued his pursuit of developing RC models. Model aviation was catching on and many new developments in engines and radios were beginning to appear on the market. The Trixter Beam was the first successful RC aircraft that Ernie flew in 1956. The Trixter was powered by a K&B .15 engine and the radio was a Bramco Reid eight-channel. [See photo in Ernie's file in the National Model Aviation Museum Archives. For assistance contact the AMA librarian.] In 1965, Ernie flew the prototype of Andrews Aero Master bi-plane to second place in class two pattern aerobatics and was selected to put on a flight demonstration to an estimated crowd of over 100,000 spectators. [See photo in Ernie's file in the National Model Aviation Museum Archives. For assistance contact the AMA librarian.] The 1968 New England Championships saw Ernie fly his own design of a low wing Aeromaster to first place in AMA open pattern competition.

## Radio Controlled Helicopters

It is well known throughout the RC helicopter community that the name Ernie Huber and RC helicopters are synonymous. In 1969 Ernie spotted a story in a model magazine about a German industrialist offering \$2,800 in prizes for the first pilot who could successfully fly a helicopter with radio controls – a feat never performed before.

Ernie set out to design and build a model helicopter and make the trip to Germany for the competition. Ernie freely admits, "I didn't know anything about helicopters." Many trips to the library set him on the path to building a Mechanical Monster. It wasn't until 1971 that he got the machine to fly, but the contest had gone on without him. Dieter Schluter captured the prize with a winning flight of just 5.5 seconds in 1969.

In the years that followed, Ernie's love for RC helicopters continued and took him into many competitions. Ernie took first place honors in 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976.

In 1979 Ernie was the first person to hover an RC helicopter inverted. Note: I did say "hover inverted." Many people were able to fly around inverted, but Ernie was the first to hover

inverted. Ernie was also responsible for inventing the invert switch on radios making it possible to fly inverted without having to use reverse thought process in controlling the helicopter. Ernie, along with Horace Hagan and others pushed to have RC helicopters recognized by the AMA to establish national and international rules for competition. AMA created the first set of rules for helicopter competition in 1974.

In 1986, Ernie designed and built six three-horsepower, three-bladed, 20-pound life helicopters for industrial use in Texas. In 1988, Ernie designed and built a six-horsepower, five-bladed helicopter to carry a 30-milimeter gun camera to produce television commercials. In 1996, Ernie designed and built two nine-horsepower twin-engine helicopters for the U.S. Army to aid in carrying missile components; these helicopters had a gross weight of 86 pounds.

## RC Helicopters in the Movies

We have all seen many movies where helicopters have made spectacular crashes. We also know that crashing real helicopters are impractical. So, the movies turn to RC helicopter pilots like Ernie Huber.

- In 1973, Ernie was contacted by Bill Creeber, special effects director for Irwin Allen movies. Ernie was to build and fly nine Bell 212 helicopters and one Jet Ranger in “The Towering Inferno,” for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. This was the first major motion picture to use RC helicopters.
- In 1976, Ernie was contacted by Peter Hyams, director of the movie “Capricorn One.” Ernie built and flew five Hughes 500 helicopters for this movie.
- In 1980, Ernie built and flew three 1/8-scale Hughes 500D and two 1/10-scale helicopters for the movie “Blue Thunder.”

## RC Helicopter Flight School

In 1989, after Ernie’s second heart attack on New Year’s Day, Ernie’s wife Mary convinced him to retire from his high stress job as manufacturing manager of a 350 man C.N.C. machine shop. Ernie and Mary sold all their belongings, bought a 67-acre airstrip in Crescent City, Florida, and opened Ernie Huber’s RC Flight Training Center.

They offer five-day classes for anyone who wants to learn and fly RC helicopters. Ernie provides all the equipment and training. Ernie, along with his partner, Ralph Delusio, instruct in basic through advanced RC helicopter flying techniques. The five-day class consists of many hours of hands-on flying time with Ernie or Ralph. At night there is classroom instruction on theory and set-up procedures.

In the last 12 years, Ernie has trained over 700 student classes from 24 countries and 46 states, logging more than 28,000 flights. Ernie also sponsors and hosts his own fun-fly each March. This year (2002) will make his 10<sup>th</sup> annual AMA-sanctioned event.

Over the many years that Ernie has been involved in model aviation he has contributed a great deal to both airplane and RC helicopter aviation. Ernie has performed countless demonstrations at various events around the country and when asked how much he wanted for the demonstration (in terms of compensation), Ernie would simply tell them to send a donation to the AMA.

The AMA was established in 1936 and since 1943 Ernie Huber has been building, designing and flying model aircraft. His enthusiasm for the hobby and support for the AMA are above reproach.

I have known Ernie for only five short years and I've been to his school twice. Ernie is a very good friend and he is certainly my mentor. Learning and flying RC helicopters is no easy task and without Ernie's help, his passion for the hobby and his expert teaching abilities, I would have given up on model aviation a long time ago.

Ernie Huber is a two-time AMA Distinguished Service Award recipient. Ernie has earned the right – and deserves to be placed in the AMA Hall of Fame!

*(signed) Jeffrey S. Torsrud*  
*March 5, 2002*

---

*For additional material on Ernie Huber, please see his file in the National Model Aviation Museum Archives. Included are articles from various publications, copies of letters and additional photographs. See the AMA librarian for assistance.*

---

- End -

---

## Photographs of ERNEST FREDERICK HUBER

Modeler since 1943    Birth Date: September 6, 1931    AMA Number: 33316

---



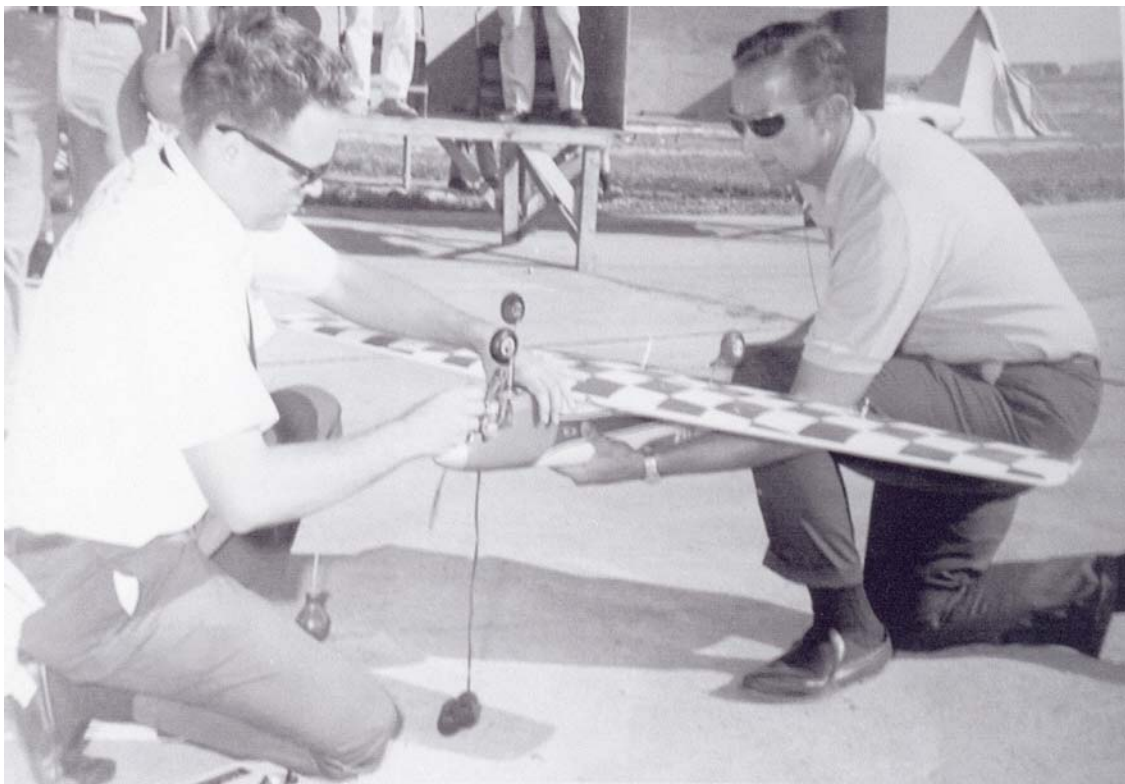
Ernie at Amarillo Air Force Base in 1951 with his original U-Control .49-powered Ernie.



Ernie's first Radio Controlled (RC) airplane in 1955 with a Babcock three-channel. He said it was "too much airplane, not enough radio."



ABOVE and BELOW: Ernie and Dennis Sawyer at the 1967 Nationals in Kansas.





LEFT: Ernie with the helicopter he flew to win first place in expert class at the 1977 East Coast Heli Championships held in Lincroft, New Jersey.



This is an actual photograph of the first inverted hover of an RC helicopter. Notice the reverse coning of the blades.

---

*Additional photographs relating to the modeling career of Ernest F. Huber are in the National Model Aviation Museum Archives. See the AMA librarian for assistance.*

---