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# Autobiography of GEORGE M. MYERS

Modeler since 1933

Birth Date: May 27, 1928

AMA Number: 1370

Written & Submitted by GMM (8/01)

Transcribed & Edited by SS (2/03)

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## Career:

- As a youngster did research for Air Trails magazine columnist Carroll Moon
- Started building wings for F6F airplanes for Grumman in 1943
- Worked on building the first 10 Mallards during the summer of 1946 after graduating from high school
- Received a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering degree from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and went to work as an engineer for Grumman
- Served as AMA District II contest coordinator, then associate vice president and, finally, vice president
- Wrote a column on radio technique for Model Aviation magazine from its first issue until June 1998
- Served as AMA frequency committee chairman

## Honors:

- 1985 – AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1986 – Vintage Radio Control Society (VRCS) Hall of Fame
- 1986 – Howard McEntee Award

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I was born in Riverhead, New York, and grew up in Mattituck, New York, where I built all the Megow, Scientific and Joe Ott stick and tissue models that I could find kits for. I was the only kid in the school who built flying models, so far as I know.

The Mattituck school system was very advanced, a fact that I came to appreciate much later. Somebody there presented me with a book for designing full-size aircraft. It wasn't of much use then for designing models.

World War II started and my father enrolled in a Grumman-financed program held in Sewanica High School in Mineola, New York, to learn how to build full-scale aircraft. (My father had left school in the fourth grade because his father had died, and my dad, as the oldest son, was expected to find work to support the family.)

Dad's studies led to a job at Grumman in Bethpage, New York, building J2F-1 Ducks, so he moved his family (including me) into a rented house in Wyandanch, New York. I was so far ahead of my classmates in the Wyandanch school that it was embarrassing. Again, I was the only kid in school who built and flew model airplanes. An adult, Carroll Moon, saw me flying and took me under his wing.

Carroll wrote a monthly column named "The Dope Can" for Air Trails magazine. My job at the time was to do research for him. The research consisted primarily of reading through the stacks of magazines he received and marking articles that I found interesting. I developed a fondness for World War I Phineas Pinkham yarns written by Joe Archibald for Flying Aces magazine.

While living in Wyandanch I occasionally watched the "brown shirts" (Sturmabteilung, abbreviated as "SA") goose-stepping up and down a grassy field nearby. They wore swastikas,

gave each other the stiff-armed Nazi salute and “Heil Hitler”d all over the place. My father, who had served in the Allied front-line trenches in World War I called them sissies and traitors. Hitler called them his Fifth Column. (Editor’s Note: The SA was an organization first formed in Germany in 1920, which ended up under the control of Hitler. By World War II, the SA was considered a military training organization. More information about this time period and related organizations can be found in the archives and is available upon request. See the AMA Librarian for assistance.)

My father had worked himself up into a position as lead man on the new TBF-1 Avenger. Grumman held an open house for workers and their families. That was my first encounter with chocolate eclairs. Dad took us to the open house, then back out to Mattituck to visit friends. We had a very modern 1936 Ford four-door sedan, but there was no radio in it. I remember arriving home to hear President Roosevelt on the radio proclaiming that the day would “Live in infamy forever.”

Next, my father bought a house in Oceanside, New York, moved the family there and started commuting each day to Port Washington, New York, where he worked building wings for F7F-1 airplanes. I joined AMA in 1943 while living at 99 Oceanside Parkway. My number, that year, was AMA 1930R, because you had to state whether you flew rubber-powered or gasoline-powered models at that time.

The next summer, in 1943, I started building wings for F6F airplanes at Port Washington. Grumman was desperate for mechanics then (World War II was going on). I suspect that I got the job because my father was doing the same kind of work in the same place and was driving there everyday.

World War II ended and my father died in 1945 while working in the Grumman plant in Bethpage, New York, on the anti-Kamikaze F8F Bearcat. The U.S. Navy, mindful of its losses at Okinawa, really wanted that plane.

The next year (1946) Tom Kelly (Mr. Lunar Module) and I were in the first group selected to receive Grumman scholarships. I graduated from Oceanside High School in June of 1946 and worked on building the first 10 Mallard’s that summer.

Houses were being built at a furious rate on what had been “our” Free Flight flying fields. U-Control models became popular, because they needed less space. I flew an original design U-Control speed model in the Daily Mirror meet, which was held on the Grumman airport in Bethpage, New York, that summer then left to enlist in the paratroops.

I served in Japan. When my enlistment ended, I came home to attend Hofstra College in Hempstead, New York, where I studied pre-engineering courses like electric fields and circuits, German (the Germans were way ahead of the United States in supersonic aerodynamics), advanced mechanical drawing (the language we had to use to communicate with the shop), public speaking and report writing.

Then I moved on to the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn in Brooklyn, New York, for a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering degree. Upon graduation, I moved into the Change Group of the Grumman engineering department, so I could become thoroughly familiar with the Grumman way with drawings.

While living in Oceanside, New York, I made the acquaintance of a boy from Rockville Center, (the next town over) named Joe Archibold! Through him, I got to know **the** Joe Archibold and learned a bit about free-lance writing (the slow way to make a buck).

After I graduated from college, I took my degree to Grumman and started working as an engineer. I soon met Bob Aberle, who took me to his club, the Long Island Radio Control Society (LIRCS). With them, I learned to fly Radio Control (RC). While there I met a member, John Byrne, who was the AMA District II vice president. John soon had me working as District II contest coordinator then as a District II associate vice president. Some time later John talked me into running for District II vice president.

At that time, Carl Wheeley handled all contest matters at AMA headquarters and wrote the contest schedule for the whole United States, which was carried in the back of American Aircraft Modeler magazine as a courtesy. John Worth decided that AMA should have its own magazine and started looking around for authors. Bob Aberle suggested me to write on "radio technique." So, my column by that name appeared in volume one, number one of Model Aviation magazine and continued until I had a stroke in June of 1998. Bob was serving as AMA frequency committee chairman in 1995 and we spent many hours together testing RC systems for interference properties. We both reported what we learned, and thus was the narrow-band system we have today promoted. We must remember all the hard work done by Bill Hirschfield and Fred Marks in securing permission for narrow-band RC systems from the FCC. Later, I replaced Bob as frequency committee chairman.

*(signed) George M. Myers  
August 18, 2001*

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