



The AMA History Program Presents: Autobiography of RICHARD C. ALLEN

Modeler since 1938

Birth Date: September 2, 1928

AMA Number: 9174



Written & Submitted by RCA (10/02)

Transcribed & Edited by SS (10/02)

Career:

- Started in Radio Control in 1951
 - Tied with Walt Good for third place in Radio Control at his first Nationals meet in 1953
 - First president and founding father of the Aeroguidance Society (AGS)
 - Designed model airplanes including the Lancer (with Ralph Jackson), the Stark Shark, Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey, the Mini MAX 1200Z and the Miles Sparrowhawk
 - Also designed the Mouseler, a quieter and more powerful model airplane muffler
 - Placed first and second in Radio Control events at many Nationals
 - Published various construction articles in modeling magazines
 - Organized and directed the first ASG annual AMA contest and the first World War I RC Aircraft Jamboree
-

1951: Got into Radio Control while stationed at Wright Field. Jack Port was my mentor.

1952: First major contest, Air Force Worldwide Model Airplane Championships, second place RC

1953: First U.S. Nationals (Nats); tied with Walt Good for third place in RC

1954: First president and “founding father” of the Aeroguidance Society (AGS)

1956: Co-designer with Ralph Jackson of Lancer for class I or II. Principle organizer and first contest director of the AGS annual AMA contest; this meet has become the longest running club-sponsored pattern meet in the country (47 years).

1957: First place in Nats’ class I (rudder only) Radio Control with Lancer. Also a 1996 replica for the Vintage RC Society.

1958: Second place in Nats’ class I Radio Control with Lancer.

1961: Second place in Nats’ Radio Control open (do not remember which event).

1963: Designed the Stark Shark for class II or III. Posted highest single flight score in class III at the 1963 Nats. Ralph Jackson won class II at the 1963 Nats with his Stark Shark.

1964: Construction article for class II and II Stark Shark published in American Modeler magazine.

1967: Principle organizer and first contest director of the World War I RC Aircraft Jamboree at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. This AMA contest ran for 30 years at which time (in 1996) it

was the longest-running club-sponsored scale contest in the country. It continues today as a scale fly-in.

1969 and 1970: Second place in the AMA Nats' Radio Control Pylon II racing.

1977 and 1979: First place in maneuvers event at Rhinebeck RC Jamboree.

1980: Construction article for 60-inch Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey published in Model Builder magazine.

1992 and 1993: Design and development of better mufflers. Published the Mousseler, which reduced the sound while increasing the power of most .40 to .60 glow engines.

1996: Construction article for 80-inch Mini MAX 1200Z published in Model Airplane News magazine.

2000: Construction article for 87-inch Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey published in Model Airplane News magazine.

Present (2002): Construction article pending for 88-inch Miles Sparrowhawk.

*(signed) Dick Allen
October 5, 2002*

The following information about Dick Allen ran in the Model Airplane News 1962 Annual as part of an article titled "Who's Who in Radio Control" by Edward Lorenz. A photograph accompanied the article.

Dick is well known in the east and in Nats competition and New York Mirror Meet flying. He lived in Appalachian, New York, has two children, spends eight hours a week on Radio Control and finds flying to be the most interesting phase of the hobby. His regular line of work is that of quality control engineer for IBM. He has been building models for 17 years and Radio Control models for nine years. He predicts a new definition of intermediate in the coming year with rudder, elevator, and engine only; proportional control, retracting gears and combat flying will be the thing within five years. Favorite models: multi, scale, intermediate and pylon, and he has many trophies to prove it.

The following information about Dick Allen was written to run with his Miles Sparrowhawk article, which was pending publication in 2002.

Born in Elmira, New York, Dick Allen cannot remember a time when he did not love airplanes. He built gliders and rubber-powered models in grade school and high school and his first U-Control models in high school. He was a teenager during World War II and went to Lehigh

University right after World War II. There, while earning a degree in engineering physics, he discovered the Fox .35 and began entering U-Control stunt competitions. He served in the Air Force from 1950 to 1954. It was while working in the physics lab at Wright Field that he met Jack Port, who was to become his mentor in RC. He tied Walt Good for third place at the 1953 Nats and won Class I (rudder-only) at the 1957 Nats. He helped organized Radio Control clubs in Elmira and Endicott, New York. He helped organize and was the first contest director for the Aeroguidance Society pattern meets as well as the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree. These meets went on to become the longest-running club-sponsored pattern and scale meets, respectively, in the U.S.

Dick worked for over 30 years as an IBM engineer. Now retired, he spends summers in Endicott, New York and winters in Naples, Florida.

Dick is married, has four sons, a daughter and five grandchildren. His favorite Radio Control activities are flying and designing. Recent construction articles include the miniMAX 1200Z (November 1996, Model Airplane News magazine) and the Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey (January 2000, Model Airplane News magazine). He thinks the best part of the hobby is the people one meets.

Dick Allen wrote the following article, which appeared in one of the Radio Control magazines in late 1996 or early 1997.

How the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree Began

By Dick Allen

Written September 17, 1996

This year, 1996, was the 30th anniversary of what has become one of the largest and longest-running Radio Control Scale contests in the world, consistently drawing about 100 entrants. Since I was the contest director for the first one (September 23, 1967) and have flown in 28 of them since then, I have frequently been asked how it all began. This is that history.

In the fall of 1966, I was living in Poughkeepsie, New York, having moved there recently from Endicott, New York. Three of my friends from Endicott's Aeroguidance Society (AGS), Byron Lichtenwalner, Bob Noll and Bob Underkofler, stopped by to see me after having just attended a World War I air-show at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. They were excited about the show and thought it would be a really neat idea to have a Radio Control contest there for scale models of World War I aircraft. We brainstormed the idea at length.

At the next meeting of my club – the IBM Radio Control Model Club of Poughkeepsie (now the Mid-Hudson RC Society) – I proposed that the club should sponsor a Radio Control meet at the Aerodrome. While there were some negative comments regarding the fact that the club had never sponsored nay sort of contest, etc., before, the general reaction was positive, providing we could get the Aerodrome's support.

By the time we could set up a meeting with Cole Palen (the Aerodrome's owner and founder) winter was fast approaching. Cole not only accepted the idea, he was enthusiastic about it. He offered to help out and to donate some World War I aircraft instruments for trophies. Cole's friend and fellow Aerodrome pilot Dick King (both of them model builders) was equally supportive of the idea.

So, we went back to the Poughkeepsie club with the good news. By this time, the club's enthusiasm was starting to build and they agreed to take on the project. We formed a rule committee consisting of myself (chair), Bruce Blake, Ed Lorenz, Bud Standley, and Jim Taylor. I told my AGS friends that the meet was a go and asked them to send us their thoughts on rules. In response I received a letter from Bill Underkofler (probably the most talent all-around RC'er that I will ever meet) summarizing the AGS thoughts. They proposed in some detail an aerobatic event with a small bonus for scale appearance. I discussed this with Cole Palen who showed me a book with many authentic World War I maneuvers described and drawn. Some of these maneuvers were added, the scale bonus was defined, and this became the Rhinebeck World War I Maneuvers event.

The rules committee, meeting in my home in Poughkeepsie, decided that we wanted more than just one event. To be successful, we felt we had to appeal to anyone who liked to fly World War I airplanes – from museum scale to just-recognizable scale. We also decided that non-scale airplanes – such as Das Ugly Sticks – would not be allowed. To that end, we established three more events:

1. AMA Scale – Using AMA rules, but limited to pre-1919 aircraft and using any five maneuvers from the World War I Maneuvers event. Some in the club wanted this to be the only event, but I believe, had we done so, the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree would have long since disappeared.
2. Team Combat – Simulated combat between two military aircraft. This event was later replaced with a Freestyle event.
3. Balloon Burst, Bomb Drop and Spot Landing – Later re-named the Mission event.

All planed entered were required to have proof of scale, but only AMA scale and World War I Maneuvers planes were judged for scale appearance.

We knew we would have to have strong support from the AGS, but realized that to be successful we would also have to draw in participants from other clubs. To encourage that, I wrote an information sheet describing philosophy, the events, and the Aerodrome. This was sent to magazines, clubs, and individuals in February 1967. The rules were finalized and distributed in March of 1967.

The day of that first meet (September 23, 1967) dawned bright and sunny. George Buso (he of the golden throat) had initiated his now-famous Anti-Rain Dance, which has for 30 years kept the Jamboree from being rained out. We were gratified by a total of 17 entrants, five of whom were from my old club, the AGS. I had been told that we would need only one balloon for the Balloon Burst. Imagine everyone's surprise when Jim Hoover nailed the balloon on the first pass

of his first flight! He was flying a Halberstadt, which some “experts” had predicted would not fly because the horizontal tail’s area was only 10% of the wing’s area. Dire predictions of carnage inflicted by the Aerodrome’s plane-eating trees also turned out to be unfounded; only one of the 17 planes crashed.

As I look back upon the 30-year history of the Rhinebeck Jamboree, I cannot help but reflect upon why this scale contest has been so successful, while the ordinary club-sponsored weekend scale contests – once so common – have all but died out. I have to conclude that it is because all of today’s AMA scale events (except Fun Scale) require a really museum piece replica of a specific full-scale aircraft to be competitive. While this has brought such extravaganzas as Top Gun, Scale Masters and the Nationals to new highs in terms of aircraft authenticity and magazine coverage, it has left the vast majority of Radio Control scale flyers out in the cold with no place to turn but to the non-competitive IMAA. Most scale flyers are just not interested in spending more time on rivets, seam lines, full-cockpit details, exact color schemes, and endless documentation searched than they do on flying. The Rhinebeck RC Jamboree has provided a Big Tent with something for every scale flyer interested in early “aeroplanes.”

This PDF is property of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Permission must be granted by the AMA History Program for any reprint or duplication for public use.

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

