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# The AMA History Program Presents: Biography of LOUIS J. ANDREWS

Modeler since the late 1930s    AMA Number: L16



Transcribed & Edited by SS (9/02), Updated by JS (10/07)

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## Career:

- Worked on developments and prototypes for Chance Vought/Sikorsky Aircraft Company in Stratford, Connecticut, during World War II
- After World War II worked for Guillow's Company as a design and manufacturing engineer; designed the *Trixter* series of Control Line stunt planes
- 1947: Won third place at the New York Mirror Meet in Stunt event
- Late 1940s/early 1950s: Assisted in testing and developing Ray Arden's new glow plug
- Won the stunt event at the 1948 Plymouth International Contest in Detroit, Michigan; received the Air Trails Perpetual Stunt Trophy flying his own *Trixter Invert, Junior*
- Fall of 1948: first person to use a Fox .35 engine in competition
- 1949: Placed second at the National Championships
- 1950: Won Open Stunt and the Walker Cup at the Nationals
- 1950: Guillow's Company kitted his Barnstormer design
- 1951: Won Open Stunt at the Nationals; his protégé, Don Ferguson, won the Walker Cup
- Designed a Radio Controlled model, the *Trixter Beam*, which he produced from his own company, Andrews Aircraft Model Company, Inc.; also designed and produced *H-Ray*, *X-Ray*, *Aeromaster Bipe* and a whole line of *Sportsmasters*
- Served as president of various model airplane clubs

## Honors:

- 1959: AMA Fellow
- 1981: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
- 1994: Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association Hall of Fame

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*Wynn Paul, historian of the Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association (PAMPA) submitted this biography that PAMPA had on file about Lou Andrews.*

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Lou Andrews began modeling in the late 1930s designing, building and flying Free Flight airplanes including Wakefield. He lived in the Connecticut and Massachusetts areas. Before and during World War II, Lou worked on development and prototypes for Chance Vought/Sikorsky Aircraft Company in Stratford, Connecticut. He worked with Igor Sikorsky and Charles Lindbergh. His first Control Line model in the early 1940s was a converted Free Flight model (called a "goat" at the time) that used butcher's twine for control wires.

After World War II, Lou worked for the Guillow's Company as a designer and manufacturing engineer. During this time, he competed in Free Flight and Control Line events. He placed third in the 1947 New York Mirror Meet in the stunt event. While with Guillow's, he designed the *Trixter* series of Control Line stunt planes.

Lou was one of the New England-area flyers who assisted in the testing and developing of Ray Arden's new glow plug. Arden was from Connecticut and gave out many of the new glow plugs

at the 1947 Nationals (Nats). Lou flew his *Trixter Invert* with the Ohlsson .29 engine converted to glow plug operation.

Lou won the stunt event at the 1948 Plymouth International Contest in Detroit, Michigan, winning the Air Trails Perpetual Stunt Trophy. He was flying his own design of the *Trixter Invert, Junior*.

When Duke Fox first produced the first run of his Fox .35 engines in the fall of 1948, he sent some to Lou Andrews who became the first person to use the new engine in competition. This was the original four head bolt, two-bolt back plate-version engine.

At the 1949 Nats, Lou chose to fly a large 660-square-inch airplane that required a larger engine, thus he used the Fox .59 engine. He finished in second place, close behind Robert Dailey who also was using a .59-size engine.

Lou Andrews flew his new design, the *Barnstormer*, at the 1950 Nats in Dallas, Texas, using a Fox .29 engine. He won the Open Stunt division and by virtue of having the highest score of the three age divisions, he won the Walker Cup. Lou's protégé, Don Ferguson, won the senior division, also flying a *Barnstormer*. In November of 1950, the Guillow's Company came out with the *Barnstormer* kit as designed by Lou. This would prove to be a very popular and competitive Control Line stunt airplane.

At the 1951 Nats, Lou won the open division of Stunt again. He was flying a *Barnstormer* that was dressed up with cheek cowls, wheel pants, and cockpit detail in an effort to gain more appearance points. His protégé, Don Ferguson, again won the senior division and out-pointed Lou for the Walker Cup.

Lou traveled to California for the 1952 Nats. He was flying a plane that George Aldrich characterized as a semi-scale Shoestring painted in the chartreuse and red paint scheme similar to the full-scale racer. Lou finished in eighth place.

Andrews had become interested in Radio Controlled models and designed the *Trixter Beam*, which he produced from his own company, AAMCA, as he had left Guillow's. He also designed and produced *H Ray*, *X Ray*, *Aeromaster Bipe* and a whole line of *Sportsmasters*. Lou competed in Radio Control events on local and national levels.

Lou excelled in all aspects of modeling – designing, building, and flying. He valued practice and often would fly eight hours a day. He was a gentleman in all respects, often helping his competitors at contests.

Lou Andrews' contribution to the Control Line precision aerobatics event was as a competitor winning the Walker Cup in 1950 and the Nationals twice. He also won the Plymouth Internationals Meet. He designed several outstanding Control Line airplanes, most notably the *Barnstormer*. Along with Harold deBolt and Harold "Red" Reinhardt, Lou was considered one of the most outstanding stunt flyers in the New England area in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He

promoted modeling in the New England area in Control Line, Free Flight, and Radio Control. He was known as a gentleman and friend to all competitors.

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*The following information about Lou Andrews comes from the Model Aviation Hall of Fame application submitted for him by the Cape Ann Radio Control Model Club in 1981. A similar application was submitted by the Sport Pilots Radio Control Club. Lou was inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame as a result.*

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## Competitor

Entered the following contests:

- 1946: Connecticut, Champ, Class D Speed
- 1947: Massachusetts, Champ, Class D Speed
- 1948: Massachusetts, Champ, Class D Speed
- 1948: Massachusetts, Champ, Control Line Precision and Novelty stunt
- 1948: North East, Champ, Control Line Precision and Novelty Stunt
- 1949: Plymouth International
- 1950: Plymouth International
- 1951: Plymouth International
- 1952: Plymouth International
- 1953: Plymouth International
- 1954: AMA National Championships
- 1955: AMA National Championships

National events winner of the following:

- 1949: Plymouth International, National Champ, Control Line Precision and Novelty Stunt
- 1950: Plymouth International, National Champ, Control Line Precision and Novelty Stunt
- 1951: Plymouth International, National Champ, Control Line Precision and Novelty Stunt
- 1952: Plymouth International, National Champ, Control Line Precision and Novelty Stunt
- 1953: Plymouth International, Radio Control first (Beam)
- 1954: AMA National Championships, Radio Control first
- 1955: AMA National Championships, Radio Control first

## Designer/Experimenter

Designs kitted by Paul Guillow:

- 1948 to 1963: over 50 rubber scale models kitted
- 1950: *Beam*
- 1954: *Explorer*
- 1955: *Vanguard*

Designs kitted by Andrews Aircraft Model Company, Inc.:

- 1964: *S-Ray*
- 1965: *H-Ray*
- 1966: *Aeromaster*
- 1966: *Sportmaster*

- 1968: *Trainermaster*
- 1970: *A-Ray*
- 1972: *Minimaster*
- 1978: *Big H-Ray*
- 1979: *Quick-Ray 500*
- 1980: *X-Ray*

#### Experiments:

- 1946: Single vent tank
- 1949: First to throttle an Radio Control glow-plug engine
- 1949: Entered first competitive flight of two Control Line planes at one time
- 1950: Ornithopter model; wings moved to propel aircraft model similar to a bird's wings in flight
- 1953: Five operational functions from one signal control through mechanical modifications (escapement) including the following:
  - Rudder – left
  - Rudder – right
  - Elevator – up
  - Elevator – down
  - Two speeds from one engine
- 1953: First steerable nose wheel; first brake on nose wheel
- 1955: First model with strop ailerons

#### Leader

Officer positions held include the following:

- 1942: Bridgeport Aeronuts, President
- 1946: New England Radio Control Modelers, President
- 1948: Norwood Society Aeromodel Eng., President
- 1962: Cape Ann Radio Control Model Club, President

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*AMA Executive Director John Worth wrote the following letter about Lou Andrews after his election to the Model Aviation Hall of Fame.*

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*February 10, 1982*

*John Worth  
Academy of Model Aeronautics  
National Headquarters  
815 15<sup>th</sup> Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005*

*Mr. Jerry Davis  
693 Beacon Street*

Newton, MA 02159

Dear Jerry:

*Lou Andrews is one of the most highly respected leaders in the Academy of Model Aeronautics. He is a life member, a Fellow and a member of the Model Aviation Hall of Fame.*

*When he flew actively in AMA-sanctioned contests, he was one of the top competitors. His model designs are famous and highly regarded as excellent performers and his kits are acknowledged to be among the best in terms of craftsmanship and quality.*

*Lou is also respected as a model industry leader for his vision and ability to set trends and establish standards. His model products were always top notch. The only problem was that he could not produce enough to meet the demand. I am sure that many purchases may have been lost as a result. In the model business, ability to deliver is the key to a successful business.*

*The Radio Control market is a constantly growing thing. AMA's membership has quadrupled since 1966 and is still growing steadily – we ended last year with 82,600 members and this year we are 5,000 ahead of last year's rate. Practically all of this growth is from people getting into Radio Control.*

*A tremendous boost to even further growth would be a Radio Control model, which is crash resistant. Many people get discouraged after a crash, if the damage is extensive. Anything that can be done in this area should result in greater sales.*

Sincerely,

John Worth  
Executive Director

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