
Biography of HAROLD de BOLT

Modeler, Designer, Manufacturer, Author, Competitor, Contest Director

Modeler since 1927 Birth Date: December 22, 1918 AMA Number: 1520

Written & Submitted by MMK (1976)

Transcribed by NR (2/97)

Edited by SS (2002)

Career:

- Competitor in rubber (indoor & outdoor); Free Flight; U-control speed; stunt; Radio Controlled (RC) pattern; Pylon racing; 1960-1973 FAI R/C Team
- Writer; articles on modeling since 1944 to present in model magazines such as Craftsman, Air Trails, American Modeler, Radio Control Modeler and Model Airplane News
- Manufacturer of U-control kits, RC kits, Fuel Tanks (Clunk), Dural Landing Gears and Multi-Servo
- Designer/ Experimenter:
 - Free Flight "Spoilers"
 - Developed, Retractable landing gear for Control Line
 - Developed, Pressure fuel systems for U-control speed
 - Developed, Speed Pan for Control Line speed
 - Developed, The dural landing gear for RC and Control Line
 - Developed, Inverted flying fuel tanks(Clunk)
 - Developed, First electric power servo for RC
 - Developed, Strip Ailerons for RC
 - Developed, First retractable landing gear for RC
- Club Organizer of Geneva Aeronuts, Buffalo Aeronuts, Patuxent Navy Base (1st Navy Model Club) and United Pylon Racing Circuit (8 club organization)

Honors:

- 1954 – AMA Eight Ball Member
- 1959 – AMA Fellows (25 years of Service)
- 1961 – Japanese Government Award
- 1970 – National Miniature Pylon Racing Association Award
- 1974 – United Pylon Racing Association Award
- 1975 – Radio Amateurs of America Award
- 1976 – AMA Hall of Fame
- 1980 – Vintage Radio Control Society Hall of Fame
- 1980 – Howard McEntee Award
- 1997 – Society of Antique Modelers Hall of Fame
- 2000 – Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association Hall of Fame

The biography that follows was taken from the Hall of Fame application submitted by Marvin M. Kowalewski, Ph.D. It is a complete and detailed history of Hal (Pappy) de Bolt up to 1976 when it was written.

Preface

This work represents a brief portion of Harold deBolt's many accomplishments in over 40 years of modeling. His career in this field is interrelated with his psychological and sociological interpretations of life and one finds numerous extensions and almost "religious" beliefs heavily intertwined and obscuring the reality of a tremendous amount of accomplishments.

This researcher humbly begs the Academy Hall of Fame Committee and Harold deBolt for the simplistic and cursory review of a man's life and hopes that the magnitude and presence of the man overshadows the script.

Sincere thanks for help in preparation of this work is extended to Arlene deBolt, Bob Brown, John Grig and John Williams. A special thanks is extended to Vice President John Byrne' for encouragement and help in "spreading the message to interested modelers on behalf of Hal deBolt."

*Respectfully submitted,
Marvin M. Kowalewski, Ph.D.*

Competitor

Harold deBolt has competed in hundreds of contests. Beginning in 1930, as a young boy, Harold successfully organized the sponsorship of model contests in Geneva, N.Y. in conjunction with local civic groups. He worked with the American Legion program in this town and developed a system to enable sharing of model supplies and later engines which not only enabled Harold to compete, but many other youngsters in that area were able to compete as well.

(It is not difficult to determine if Hal's early psychological bent was to compete to win or to compete to enable better and more modeling. A clue to his unselfish approach lies in the number of personally organized contests, clubs, events and circuits throughout the years.)

Entered Contests

Harold has entered virtually hundreds of contests to date. Pictures of contest winnings are enclosed and if it were not for the fire in Harold's plant in Williamsville, N.Y., where many other important and valuable trophies were lost, there could be a more complete accounting.

1930-33: Inter club contests; rubber power models

1932: Rochester Wing Regional Jr. Birdman meets; indoor and outdoor rubber glider

1933: All New York State championships - Free Flight; rubber, power and glider; First and Second place winnings

1933: Rochester Wing Jr. Birdman Sikorsky Exhibition Scale Regional Meet; placed fifth

1934: National Sikorsky Competition; fifth place

1935: Entered First Gas Model Meet held at Lakehurst, N.J.

1936: Attended Jr.-Birdman Nationals as one of 17 Contestants in San Antonio, Texas
1936: Rochester Wing Jr. Birdman Indoor Regional Championships
1938: Won first gas model Free Flight meet held at Rome, N.Y.
1938-45: Entered and placed in all gas model Free Flight meets throughout Western New York
1945: Won Philadelphia Record Control Line Flying Circus at Philadelphia while in the Navy
1946: Entered and won all Philadelphia Flying Circus Control Line Meets
1947: Won all Philadelphia Flying Circus Control Line meets
1946-47-48: Entered and won New York Mirror Meets
1947-50: Won and placed in all Canadian Nationals Control Line Events
1952: Won first in Tangerine International/RC events
1952-58: Entered and placed in all Northeast and Midwest Area Contests in RC, Pattern and Racing
1958-70: Entered, competed and developed pylon racing, events in Northeast and Midwest Regional Areas
1970: Las Vegas International Pylon Races; Ninth place
1947-73: Entered all consecutive nationals in Control Line speed, Control Line stunt, RC pattern and radio control racing

United States (FAI) Team

1960: World RC Championship Zurich, Switzerland; Seventh place
1973: Air Olympics FAI Pylon Races for Sopwith Trophy Long Island, N.Y.; Fifth place

Nationals Event Winner

1940-50: Won or placed in all Control Line Speed and Stunt events
1944: First National Control Line Speed Record
1949: National Record Holder All Classes of Control Line Speed
1957: National RC Pattern; Second place
1959: National RC Pattern; fourth place
1964: National RC Pattern; fourth place
1967: National RC Pattern; Second place
1969: National Formula I and Formula II Racing Championship; Formula I, Third place; Formula II, First place
1969: National Formula II Racing Championship NMPRA
1970: National Formula II Racing Championship NMPRA
1971: National Formula II Racing Championship NMPRA
1972: National Formula II Racing Championship NMPRA
1973: National Formula II Racing Championship NMPRA

World Records

1952: deBolt, Wilson Team Control Line Speed Records - (Hydro)
1952: deBolt, Wilson Team Control Line Speed Records - (Hydro)
1952: deBolt, Wilson Team Control Line Speed Records - (Hydro)

1952: deBolt, Wilson Team Control Line Speed Records
1960: FAI Closed Course RC Distance Record

National Promotion of Modeling

1967: ABC Wide World of Sports Pattern Feature.
1968: ABC Wide World of Sports Formula 1 Racing Feature

Designer/Experimenter

Harold deBolt is an outstanding designer of planes. His research and careful analysis along with scores of pages of records and experiments with different designs have enabled many modelers to become instantly successful with the famous deBolt designs.

Harold deBolt has never “designed for a market” even though he is an outstanding manufacturer. His basic intention when producing a design is to first successfully accomplish a modeling task, i.e., set a record or build a better, simple design to enable a certain personal performance in modeling. Evidence of this philosophy is seen in the many championship planes which ultimately are kitted, notwithstanding the many designs which could have been kitted but never quite measured up to the deBolt standard.

Published Designs

Harold has readily shared his modeling designs as found in the many publications. A brief review of his published designs are as follows:

1944 - Model Craftsman, Speed-Wagon, Control Line Speed
1945 - Model Craftsman, “Butch,” Control Line Speed
1945 - Model Craftsman, Thunderbolt, Free Flight
1946 – Model Craftsman, Air Foiler, Free Flight
1955 - Air Trails Magazine, Equalizer Design, RC Model Design
1959 - American Modeler, Crusader, RC Model Design
1964 - Interceptor, RC Model Design
1964 - Model Airplane News, Twin Viscount Model Airplane Design
1966 - American Modeler Magazine, Interceptor V, RC Model Design
1967 - Model Airplane News, Chief, RC Model Design
1967 - RC Modeler, Encore Model Design
1973 - American Modeler, Donight Special, RC Racer Design

Designs Kitted

Below is a list of models which have been kitted by deBolt Model Engineering. Many of these designs would still be available; however, a tragic fire wiped out all drawings, records and machinery along with inflicting critical injuries to deBolt Senior. Despite the tragic setback and

loss of his dad, Harold rebuilt and then moved to the present location. It should be noted that many deBolt's friends and modelers helped in the reconstruction and moving process – a credit to Harold.

The following is a list of kits produced, the date and the amount distributed.

Date	Kits	Amount
1946	Bipe	20,000
	Air Foiler	2,000
	DMECO Special	2,500
1947	DMECO Special, Jr.	2,000
	Wildcat	1,500
	Speed Wagon	1,000
1948	Super Bipe	5,000
	Speed Wagon 20	5,000
	Speed Wagon 30	7,000
	Stunt Wagon	8,000
1949	Stunt Wagon 30	6,000
	Infant Wagon	20,000
	Sport Wing	6,000
1950	Speedster	3,000
	Speed Wagon 50	5,000
	All American Trainer	8,000
1951	All American Junior	8,000
	All American Stunt	8,000
	All American Senior	91,000
	A/2 Twin	3,000
1952	Live Wire Trainer	15,000
	Live Wire Senior	1,500
	Live Wire Kitten	5,000
1953	Live Wire Ckipper	3,000
1954	Live Wire Cruiser	5,000
	Continental	5,000
1955	Live Wire Champion	25,000
1958	Live Wire Super Club	8,000
	Live Wire Custom	5,000
	Live Wire Rebel	8,000
1959	Live Wire Cosmic Wind	5,000
	All American Combateer	5,000
1960	Live Wre Purcuit	3,000
1961	Live Wire Encoupe	3,000
	Live Wire Sonic Cruiser	3,000
	Live Wire Yonkers	5,000

	Live Wire Viscount	5,000
1962	Brett Perigee	5000
1963	Live Wire Jerry	15,000
	Live Wire P-Shooter	10,000
1966	Live Wire Acrobat	2,500
1968	Live Wire Cobra	5,000
1971	Live Wire P-51	2,000
1974	Live Wire Junior Champs	3,000
1976	LiveWire Coudron	

Accessories produced are as follows:

- 1947 Positive flow tanks
- 1948 Dural landing gears
- 1952 Clanktanks clunk tanks
- 1953 Multi-Servo for RC; 30,000 produced
- 1960 Polypropalene Hinges (use of medical material to repair hearts)

Designs used by others to win contests:

DeBolt designs used in contest wins are so numerous that a list would be difficult to acquire. Of special merit are the designs used by Dick Wilson in 1952 to set four World Speed Records and Harrison Morgan to win many National RC places (deBolt Champ) and countless numbers of Control Line and RC pilots who found the winner's circle.

Experimenter in Aerodynamics, RC and Related

As an engineer and experimenter, Harold has explored unknown areas and often resulted in contributing many firsts to the modeling public.

The following represents a brief review of experiments shared through publication in the national press:

- 1938-39: Developed first use, of dethermalizer in Free Flight using wing spoiler system
- 1943: Developed retractable landing gear for Control Line speed models
- 1945: Developed and experimented with spring steel hinge to neutralize Control Line surfaces
- 1947: Developed pressure fuel system for Control Line speed models
- 1947: Developed speed pan through use in the speed wagon Control Line speed model
- 1948: Developed circle flight and weather vane stability for Control Line speed models
- 1948: Developed assymetrical stability for Control Line stunt models
- 1948: Developed dural landing gears for Control Line and RC models
- 1951: Designed first model aircraft especially for RC use in, i.e., all sheet balsa model aircraft
- 1952: Developed clunk type RC fuel tanks

- 1953: Developed use of symmetrical air foils for RC
- 1953: Developed first electro power motor driven servos for RC use
- 1954: Developed commercial two-channel RC system, transmitter, receiver and servos marketed through Citizenship Radio Corporation
- 1955: Experimented with electric power Control Line models
- 1960: Developed and originated strip ailerons for RC models
- 1960: Developed and originated plastic strip hinges for RC models
- 1964: Developed and perfected first retractable landing gear for RC models

Leader

Harold deBolt's leadership in modeling and in the promotion of the hobby can be described as tireless. He has been described as “visionary” and his modeling career, which spans several decades, enables him to continue to view the future. Many of the present organizations, clubs and committees he once helped organize still exist today.

The following is just a brief list of leadership activities that have benefited thousands of modelers – past, present and future.

Organized Clubs

Date	Club Name	Location
1936	Geneva Aeronuts	Geneva, New York
1939	Buffalo Aeronuts	Buffalo, New York
1943	Patuxent Naval Base (First Navy Model Club)	Patuxent, Maryland
1946	Flying Bisons	Buffalo, New York
1969	United Pylon-Racing Circuit (Eight Club Organization to promote racing events)	Western, New York

Club Offices

Harold deBolt served as club president and organizer of the above organizations for many years. In addition he promoted and organized club programs such as the famous Flying Bison indoor Control Line flying meets at the Buffalo Armory.

Officer of the Academy of Model Aeronautics

Harold deBolt is well-recognized for his efforts on behalf of the Academy. His initiation of rules, commentaries and leadership spans more than 25 years of AMA Service. In 1959 Dr. Walt Good successfully nominated Harold deBolt as an AMA Fellow and lifetime member.

DeBolt's formal service to the AMA includes Control Line Contest Board (1949, 1950); RC Contest Board (1952, 1953, 1954) and AMA Vice President (1956, 1957, 1958 and 1959).

Harold deBolt was instrumental in writing Control Line rules, RC Pattern rules for Class I, II and III and Pylon Racing Rules.

International Rules

Harold deBolt and Ed Shipe set down the original and still utilized FAI RC Pylon Racing Event and Rules.

Contest Director (“Every contest should have a junior division,” says deBolt.)

Since 1933 Harold deBolt has been involved in organizing local meets and contests. His formal AMA efforts include serving as a contest director for at least three major contests per year in western New York State from 1950 to 1975 – a total of 75 contests in addition to directing the 1953 National RC Event.

DeBolt organized and directed the first RC Conferences ever held, that is the “Buffalo Mid-Winter RC Conference,” which was very successfully held for over 14 years.

Harold organized the Plymouth Aero League Contests and many of these contests were of giant proportion and were held in a Buffalo Stadium.

On the international level, Harold deBolt and John Brodbeck, Sr. organized the Air Force Nationals in Japan in 1971 and put on a giant show for over 15,000 Japanese people.

Writer and Contributor

Recognizing that writing involves hours of time consuming effort, Harold always seemed to enjoy sharing these extra hours with the modeling public. The following is a list of some of deBolt's published articles and contributions to advancement of every modeler's knowledge.

- 1948 - Air Trails - Experiments in Speed Design
- 1950 - Air Trails - 150 Miles Per Hour Plus, Control Line Speed
- 1951 - Model Airplane News - Speed Can Be Fun
- 1953 - Model Airplane News - Some RC Experiments
- 1954 - Air Trails - Over and Under RC Modeler
- 1955 - Air Trails - Equalizer - RC Model
- 1956 - Air Trails - Automatic Multi-Control RC Flying
- 1961 - Model Airplane News - RC Design in Ed Lorenz's Column
- 1961 - Model Airplane News - RC Design in Ed Lorenz's Column
- 1974 - Model Airplane News - Forum on United Pylon Racing Circuit

In addition, Harold deBolt was invited to publish in the Zaic Model Aviation Year Book in 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1961. His articles included RC Notes and RC for the periods of 1959

through 1960.

Club Newsletters

Harold wrote several newsletters for the clubs he organized.

The most remembered are the Flying Bison “Beep Box” and the United Pylon Racing Circuit “Pylon Cuttings.”

Industry

Manufacturer

DeBolt Model Engineering Company and Orbit Northwest.
3833 Harlem Road
Buffalo, New York

1945 to present (*This was written in 1975*)

Supporting Remarks

DeBolt promotes hobby throughout the world.

1968 - Canadian Demonstrations throughout Canada

1969 - Canadian Demonstration at Nationals

1971 - Tokyo, Japan - flew demonstrations before 20,000 Japanese

1972 - Mexico City, Mexico flew demonstrations before 5,000

National Promotion of Modeling

1967 - ABC Wide World of Sports Pattern Feature

1968 - ABC Wide World of Sports Formula I Racing Feature

Regional and Local Promotion of Modeling

Harold deBolt has rendered valuable service to the development and cause of modeling through public appearances. Beginning in 1930's, Harold's promotional efforts with the American Legion, Kiwanis Club, Optimist Club, New York Schools and various societies has been endless.

It is not unusual for Harold to spend winter weekends away from home lecturing to Amateur Radio Clubs and Modeling groups of all categories. Often these travels are gratis and done with a smile. A brief story is told of Harold and a group of young boys putting on a Control Line flying demonstration in a church! Of course, the little K+B .020 was used on 20 foot lines but the

boys enjoyed it and so did the audience. For Harold's sake, I hope the "Big Modeler" Himself was watching too!

Footnote:

It should be noted that as extensive as this biography is, it was written at a time when "Pappy" was living in Williamsville, New York and still producing kits back in 1975.

When this biography was uncovered from the old AMA records in 1997 (22 years later) "Hal" deBolt was living in Florida and writing a monthly column in Model Airplane News called, "The Golden Age of RC." He has been writing this column now since 1985 (12 years in 1997).

He is still active in modeling and writing and is now flying electric powered models. He has from time to time published these designs.

- End -

Photographs of HAROLD de BOLT

Modeler, Designer, Manufacturer, Author, Competitor, Contest Director

Modeler since 1927 Birth Date: December 22, 1918 AMA Number: 1520

