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# Biography of Lee Renaud

Began modeling in 1942

Edited by JS (08/06)

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“Lee Renaud, in a lifetime that was far too short, built for himself and the companies he worked with an enviable record of excellence in so many areas of this hobby. Starting in 1942, with a dull razor blade and a Joe Ott kit, Lee was to become a leader in the model aviation field. As a competitor from 1947 on, he set himself a pace and a high standard that lasted until his untimely passing in January of 1983.

“As a designer, Lee left many fine airplanes for so many people to enjoy. The “Olympic,” “Aquila,” “Grand Esprit,” “Sagitta,” and many others, either published as plans and construction articles in national magazines, or manufactured as kits, will be flying for the foreseeable future. His “Aquila” was the airplane that Skip Miller used to win the World Soaring Championship in 1977 – we are fortunate to have the model on display in the AMA Museum.

“A prolific writer, designer, builder and supporter of the sport, Lee held many offices in several organizations that benefited modelers. Particularly interested in Soaring, he raised more money for the U.S. International Soaring teams than any other person. On the contest scene, Lee directed many local and regional meets from 1951 to 1959, while in the same period of time he conducted local elimination events for the selection of FAI teams.

“The founder of Airtronics, Inc., in 1971, Lee Renaud continued his search for excellence in all areas of his chosen field. The “Olympic 99” was the first large sailplane to be manufactured in this country and was the airplane responsible for teaching many people to thermal fly. Lee was the producer of the first “winch-in-a-can,” the surgical tubing Hi-start. His “Grand Esprit” was the first multi-task sailplane to be kitted, introducing spoilers and a V-tail to the Soaring scene. The “Aquila,” “Aquila Grande” and the “Aquila XL” are among his other fine products that have earned a name for Airtronics and Renaud from coast-to-coast as well as beyond our borders.

“In 1980, Lee introduced the XL series Airtronics radio and had another “overnight” success. Servo reversing, exponential controls and other useful features soon made this radio a standard piece of equipment for the Radio Control modeler.

“The world of model aviation lost a fine member when Lee died in 1983, but his name will live on through his designs and his friends. It is most fitting that the Hall of Fame honor has been bestowed on behalf of Lee so soon after he left us.”