



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of ROY MAYES



Born in 1915 or 1916  
Started modeling in the 1920s

Written & Submitted by DK (01/1996); Transcribed by NR (12/1999); Edited by SS (2002); Updated by JS (10/2008, 11/2017),  
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***Video link: One of the National Model Aviation Museum's special Fly By report, Inverted, is on YouTube [here](#).***



***"In this episode of Fly By, Claire discusses the first control line model to fly inverted."  
– Published by the National Model Aviation Museum on November 28, 2016.***

***See also the April 20, 2017 National Model Aviation Museum blog post on the 1939 Inverted Flight [here](#).***

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## **Career:**

- 1939: Designed a gas tank that would keep a model gas engine running upright or inverted and proceeded to make the first inverted flight of a U-Control model
- 1945-1948: Wrote a monthly newsletter for all W.A.M. clubs
- 1947: Was appointed chairman of the AMA U-Control Rules Committee for stunt and scale events by Dr. Walt Good
- 1949: Was Control Stunt and Scale director at the AMA Nationals at Olathe, Kansas
- Organized the Avian Aero Club at University High School in Oakland, California and was president for two years

## **Honors:**

- 1997: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
  - 2002: Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association Hall of Fame
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*The following biography was taken from a Hall of Fame application. The application was submitted by Dale Kirn on January 29, 1996.*

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## Competition

- 1930-1932:** Won many rubber-powered contests, both scale and endurance put on by the Oakland Tribune Newspaper.
- 1930-1931:** Was a member of the Oakland team sent to the Sacramento State Fair Model Contests.
- 1931:** Won the rubber-powered scale event.
- 1932:** Won second in the same event.
- 1946:** Took first in stunt and first in scale at Lockheed First Annual Contest in Los Angeles. Took first in stunt and first in scale at First Annual San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce U-Control Contest.
- 1947:** Took first in scale and stunt in same event.
- 1948:** Took second in stunt at First All Western Open in Los Angeles. Placed 2nd in scale at Olathe Nationals.
- 1945-1949:** Took dozens of first places at various stunt and scale Control Line contests throughout Northern California. The Western Associated Model Organization sanctioned all these contests.
- 1982:** Took first in gas Free Flight scale and first in rubber Free Flight scale. At the USA Free Flight Championship Contest's 12th annual contest in Taft, California
- 1983:** Took second in Free Flight gas scale at the 13th annual, at Taft.
- 1984:** Took second in Free Flight gas scale at Taft, in Annual.

## Designer

Co-authored with Dick Schumacher, who was then chair of the AMA Radio Controlled Rules Committee, one of the first small wingspan (42-inch) Radio Control models. Plans were published in *Model Airplane News* magazine in either 1950 or 1951. Plane was named the *42'er*. In the years from 1929 through 1932, designed many rubber powered model kits for the M & L Model Company, 3211 Filbert Street, Oakland, California. In 1930 or 1931, the name was changed to Sky Devil Model Company - same address. Proprietor was Ted Morrison. One of the salesmen was Earl Vivell who covered Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. Most successful of my designs was called the Mono Line consisting of five different models of 15-inch wingspan and using the same fuselage design in each kit. There was the Mono-coupe, Mono-prep, Mono-coach, Mono-hi wing, and Mono-low wing. Designed many other kits – approximately 15 or so. Also designed a rubber powered autogyro kit. At a large exhibition flight in 1939, covered by the *Oakland Tribune*, the model flew out of sight and was recovered two days later in Lake Merritt.

He designed a gas tank that would keep a model gas engine running upright or inverted and proceeded to make the first inverted flight of a U-Control model.

## **Leader**

In 1929, he organized the Avian Aero Club at University High School in Oakland, California. He was president for two years.

In 1945, he started organizing all the U-control clubs in the San Francisco Bay area. Originally called the East Bay Model Association of U-Control Clubs consisting of approximately 12 clubs.

In 1946, the name was changed to Western Associated Modelers and by 1949, there were over 36 clubs joined and the total membership was over 2,000. This organization is still going strong today. Since its inception, it was affiliated with AMA. Affiliated clubs of this organization reached as far north as Portland, Oregon and as far south as Bakersfield, California. He declined the office of president at the first meeting because he felt the job of communicating with all the clubs was more important. He took the job of secretary for the first year. Mayes was elected president for the next three years, but declined any further office after that.

In 1947, he was appointed chair of the AMA U-Control Rules Committee for stunt and scale events by Dr. Walt Good. He got Walt's attention by telling him that he was on the right track, but headed in the wrong direction concerning Control Line. Mayes appointed a committee of four more people from different areas around the United States and they proceeded to adopt the W.A.M. stunt and scale rules with a few modifications. He was very surprised when all the members voted in favor of the appearance points as used in the stunt rules, as Southern California flyers were very opposed to it (appearance points). He believes he held the AMA office until 1950, (at least until 1949) when he resigned the office and gave up modeling until he retired from working in 1977. In 1949, Mayes was control stunt and scale director at the AMA Nationals at Olathe, Kansas. Earl Witt was his assistant. In the period from 1946 through 1949, he gave assistance to many clubs, San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1946 and 1947 in their annual U-control contests, Oakland Boys Club contest in 1948 on how to set up and manage their contests, trained many judges for the stunt events, etc.

## **Writer, etc.**

In the period of 1945 until 1948, he took the job of writing the monthly newsletter sent to all W.A.M. clubs. Consisted of meeting minutes of the last W.A.M meeting and proposed new rules or rule changes, contest dates of future contests, etc.

In 1949 through 1950, Mayes wrote a column for *West Coast Model News* published by Howard Puckett in Santa Rosa, California. This was a column about Radio Control and was titled "Over to You." It contained information about radio sets and kits and also the models available at that early stage of Radio Control.

In 1945, he went to work for Al Hosepian who had manufactured the Micro "19" engine I used in

my first U-control ship. Name of his company was Model Airplane Motors Company in Berkeley, California. He was no longer making the motor, but it was a tool and die shop. We made parts for many manufacturers of model motors including Atwood, Bunch, Madewell and New Anderson. We punched parts in cylinders for Atwood, Bunch and many others. Made many motor mounts, gas tanks, timer parts, etc. – anything that could be done on a punch press.

Note: Forgot to mention Mayes' win at the 1934 California state fair and that he was the organizer for the West Coast Team that won the East-West Meet held in St Louis, Missouri in 1947.

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*The following is from the January 1998 issue of Model Aviation magazine in an article on Model Aviation Hall of Fame inductees.*

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Roy's modeling career more than spans the history of the AMA. The Californian's competition career began in 1930 rubber-powered contests run by the *Oakland Tribune* newspaper. Scale and Endurance models brought numerous wins throughout the California area. Roy was also interested in gasoline-powered Free Flight models.

As late as 1982, during the US Free Flight Championships in Taft, California, he placed first in Gas and Rubber Free Flight Scale. In 1984, he finished second in Free Flight Gas Scale. At a large exhibition flight, a rubber-powered autogiro model that he designed flew out of sight and was recovered days later in a lake some distance away!

As a designer, Roy was responsible for many kits sold by the M&L Model Company, later known as the Sky Devil Model Company. One of the most successful designs was a line incorporating five different models using the name Mono-Line. In 1939, he designed a fuel tank that kept the engine running while inverted and upright, which led to the first inverted Control Line flying. In the early days, kits and models that he designed and assembled were delivered by bicycle throughout the Oakland area.

In 1945, Roy went to work for Al Hosepian's Model Airplane Motors Company and was involved in the manufacture of the Micro .19 engine. While it faded from the scene, the company continued to make parts for other manufacturers such as Atwood, Bunch, Madewell, and Anderson.

Radio Control did not escape Roy's interest. In the 1950s, he co-authored with Dick Schumacher a design called the *42er*. For several years, he authored a Radio Control column in the *West Coast Model News* (published by Howard Puckett) called "*Over to You.*" It contained information about radio sets and kits during the early stages of Radio Control.

Roy's leadership qualities were important to the Academy. After he organized Avian Air Club at University High School in Oakland, he established other groups, consolidating them in 1946 to Western Associated Modelers (WAM), which still exists today. By 1949, more than 36 clubs

participated in WAM with a membership of more than 2000. For a long time, Roy's and the group's influence was felt within the AMA's competition community – especially in Control Line events.

Throughout the years, he has been Event Director and Control Line Contest Board chair, and has organized a wide variety of events. The Academy is proud to add Roy Mayes to its Model Aviation Hall of Fame!

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