



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of EUGENE PAUL RIZZARDI, JR.



Professional Modeler

Born November 24, 1952 Started modeling in 1968

AMA #318487

Submitted by EPR (3/6/2006); Written by KMM (8/25/2006), Reformatted by JS (01/2010)

Eugene Rizzardi Jr. is a modeler who took control of his craft and managed to turn his hobby into his profession. When his Father bought him a balsa wood model as his first model aircraft, Eugene started building it but left it unfinished, saving until he could buy a radio-controlled kit. That first Radio Control kit was a Dumas *Mod Pod* he built on a Navy ship in 1973. Overcoming the inherent challenges of building a model on a ship, including the lack of storage space and a worktable, Eugene could not wait to get the airplane in the sky. Unfortunately, after all this hard work, the model broke during shipping and never flew. When Eugene finally got a model up in the air, he endured the traditional modelers' process, "fly, crash, fix, fly."

He entered his first contest at the Harbor Soaring Society's monthly glider competition in Costa Mesa, California. There he flew a Southwest Sailplanes *Top Cat*. At the competition, he managed to earn a spot best described by him as "somewhere near last place." Eugene's desire to have control over his airplanes led him to design his own, utilizing the airfoil design from the first man-powered flight. That model was also ineffective, but Eugene kept working.

Today, Eugene's perseverance and commitment to his hobby has paid off. He is a professional model maker working in the motion picture industry. The skills and experience he gained from working with Radio Control model airplanes now helps him design and handle Radio Control aircraft, cars, and boats. He is a member of the Visual Effect Society, the Academy of Arts and Sciences' Visual Effects branch, and the Association of Professional Model Makers. He won an Emmy in the Outstanding Visual Effects category in 1985 for his work on the television special, *The Hugga Bunch*.

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