



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JIM SAFTIG



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## Career:

- Won the first Plymouth International Meet in Detroit, Michigan, in August 1947 with his own designed Super Zilch airplane
- Won open stunt at the 1948 nationals using his own Lil' Zilch
- Berkeley kitted his Super Zilch in 1948 and his Super Duper Zilch in 1949

## Honors:

- 1958: AMA Fellow
- 2002: 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 PAMPA had on file about Jim Saftig.*

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Jim was a competitor and designer from the San Diego, California area in the late 1940s. In August 1947, he won the open stunt event at the first Plymouth International Meet in Detroit, Michigan. At that meet, he introduced the combination of his own designed Super Zilch airplane with the powerful Super Cyclone .60 engine (this was ignition).

Jim won open stunt at the 1948 Nationals (Nats). He placed fourth in the 1947 Nats. These are the only two placing on record for Jim at the Nats. His Super Zilch was used for second place in open and second place in junior at the 1948 Nats, while he used Lil' Zilch to win open and a Lil' Zilch was used for third place in open.

In 1948, Saftig Super Zilch was kitted by Berkeley. By late 1949, it is estimated that over 20,000 Zilch kits had been sold!

In 1949, Saftig redesigned the Super Zilch, increasing the wing area and simplifying construction, created the Super Duper Zilch, which Berkeley also kitted.

Jim was killed in a full-size airplane accident in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

While this biography is quite short, it is not because Wynn Paul didn't try to find information from many sources. Suffice to say from the persons I have talked to, in the late 1940s, Jim Saftig

was a real force in stunt. He was a great competitor. Former Black Sheep squadron member, Hank Bourgeois, told Wynn in a telephone interview, “Our toughest competitor was Jim Saftig.” This was in the late 1940s when .60s were screaming all over the sky and there was Yates, Mayes, Palmer, Slagle, Jamison, and Gulotta to contend with out in California.

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