



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of ROBIN W. (BOB) HUNT

Born October 27, 1947 AMA #1114



Written by RWH (2013); AMA Staff (01/2001, 09/2013), JS (03/2016); Edited by JS (12/2005), Reformatted by JS (09/2009, 09/2013, 03/2016)

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*The following biography, written by the History Project staff, was published in the February 2001 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Robin received the Model Aviation Hall of Fame award in 2000.*

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## **Robin W. Hunt – 2000**

Robin (Bob) Hunt, 52, has been involved with aeromodeling for 48 years. His primary area of interest during that period has been Control Line Precision Aerobatics. Since the 1950s, he has participated in more than 100 contests at the local, national, and international level.

After winning the Eastern States Championships four years in a row, he went on to represent the United States in four FAI World Championships.

His awards include a first in 1978 at Woodvale, England; second in Czestochowa, Poland in 1980; fifth in 1992 in Hradac Kravole, Czechoslovakia; and eighth in Shanghai, China, 1994. He also won Precision Aerobatics at the AMA Nats in 1976.

Hunt has several designs to his credit. These include the *F-105 Thunderchief*, *Genesis*, *Saturn*, and *RD-1*. All of these appeared in *Flying Models* magazine. Additionally, the *Genesis* design and an advanced Profile Aerobatics trainer, the *Prowler*, were kitted.

In the late 1960s, Hunt formed a company called Control Line Specialties, which produced foam wings commercially. His services were used not only by Control Line Aerobatic pilots but also RC Pattern fliers.

The company also provided wind tunnel test model wings for McDonnell-Douglas, Lockheed, and several universities. There were even foam propellers for man-powered airplanes designed by students at Rensselaer Institute.

Hunt's research led to the development of a system referred to as "Lost Foam" for wing building. Besides the company named above, he started Robin's Wings and most currently, Robin's View Productions, a production company devoted to producing model airplane and hobby related videos.

In 1979, Hunt became the associate editor of *Flying Models*. One year later, he was promoted to the position of editor. He served in that position for 16 years before leaving to start the video production company.

Recently, he became the Aeromodeling Editor of *Model Aviation*.

He has served in a variety of administrative positions, including Assistant Manager of the 1984 and 1996 World Championship Control Line teams, Assistant Director of Control Line Precision

Aerobatics at the 1982 Nats, and Assistant Director of the 1979 and 1981 Team Selection Programs.

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*The following was published on the Model Aviation magazine website, describing columnists for the magazine, and added to the History Project files in September 2013.*

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## **Bob Hunt**

Bob Hunt's "CL Aerobatics" column appears bi-monthly in the January, March, May, July, September, and November issues of Model Aviation. His email address is robinhunt@rcn.com. Hi! I'm Robin "Bob" Hunt. I live in Stockertown, Pennsylvania. I was born into the perfect environment to become a modeler. My father, James A. Hunt, started flying model airplanes when Admiral Byrd flew over the North Pole in 1926. He even named my brother and me after his favorite airplane, the Curtiss Robin. My brother's name is James Curtiss Hunt and I'm Robin Wayne Hunt. Dad snuck that one right past my mother ...

All of dad's friends and most of the employees at his machine shop were modelers, so virtually everyone in my small universe was a modeler. Most of Dad's friends were CL Stunt fliers, and I naturally gravitated to that event.

I've been flying competitive Stunt since the 1960s and have won several major championships, including a Gold Medal at the 1978 World Championships. I've also won the US Nats once in the Open division, and three times in the Classic Stunt division. I've been a member of eight US World CL teams and have served as the assistant manager at two World Championships. I've won Classic Stunt at the prestigious Vintage Stunt Championships on seven occasions and had a string of five wins in a row at that contest!

I started a modeling company in 1969 called Control Specialties and produced foam-core wings for CL Stunt, RC Pattern, CL and RC Scale, Pylon Racers, CL Combat models, and Sailplanes. I even cut wind-tunnel test wings for McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed, and Mississippi State University.

In 1979 I accepted the post of Associate Editor at Flying Models magazine, and a year later I became the editor of that magazine. I served in that position for 17 years. I decided to try video editing and video program production in 1996 and did that for several years, producing several model airplane how-to and event videos.

In 2001, I was contacted by Rob Kurek at AMA and accepted the post of Aeromodeling Editor of Model Aviation magazine. I stayed there for nearly seven years and then retired.

I also have a passion for high-performance motorcycles and raced bikes in my younger years. I now serve the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program as a Site Coordinator and Rider Coach. I teach approximately 56 motorcycle safety classes a year, and as a Pennsylvania State License Examiner, I also license my students when they pass the course.

I still produce many model airplane products through my Robin's View Productions company,

and I still compete on a national level in CL Stunt. My passion in modeling is designing, building, and flying my own creations. I am constantly trying to develop new and innovative methods for building model airplanes.

In 2001 I was honored to be elected to the Model Aviation Hall of Fame (also known as the AMA Hall of Fame). I am also a member of the PAMPA (Precision Aerobatics Model Pilots Association) Hall of Fame.

I serve PAMPA as the editor of Stunt News, a 100-page bi-monthly publication. I also serve the AMA as a member of the CL Contest Board and as a contest director.

I am 65 years young and expect to do great things in the hobby when I grow up!



*Bob Hunt's "CL Aerobatics" column appears bi-monthly in the January, March, May, July, September, and November issues of Model Aviation. His email address is [robinhunt@rcn.com](mailto:robinhunt@rcn.com).*

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*The following was published on the Model Aviation magazine website, an extended interview from the March 2016 issue of Model Aviation, written by Jay Smith about Bob Hunt, CL World Champion, author, and designer.*

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## **Bob Hunt**

**JS:** *How did you get involved with model aviation?*

**BH:** My father, James A. Hunt was a modeler since the mid-1920s, so for me it was a case of osmosis. Nearly everyone my father knew was a model enthusiast, and modelers were a constant presence around the Hunt household. The likes of Leon Shulman, Fran McElway, Larry Scarinzi, and the legendary Harold "Red" Reinhardt were regulars in my dad's shop. In fact, I was around six years old before I fully realized that not everyone in the whole world flew model airplanes!

My first real modeling experience is one that I don't even remember. Dad was a member of the Exchange Club in New Jersey in the later 1940s, and he ran many of the club's sponsored meets. One of the events at those contests was "Youngest Contestant." Dad entered me in that event at one of those meets in 1949, and, as the story goes, held in my father's arms I flew a 1/2A CL training plane the requisite number of laps without any assistance and won the contest.

Who did I “beat?” In second place was Don Shulman, son of modeling icon, Leon Shulman. Don was two years old at that time, so I beat him by two months of age! Our families still laugh about that story.

With such amazing CL fliers as Larry Scarinzi and Red Reinhardt a constant source of inspiration, it is little wonder that I eventually gravitated toward CL Combat and Aerobatics (Stunt) flying.

**JS:** *How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?*

**BH:** Model aviation has been my life. Sure, I have other interests, but model airplanes, model airplane flying, and especially associations with other modelers has been the focus of my existence since I was a youngster.

There have been landmark points in my modeling life that have helped set career paths. The first of these was when I read the article in the June 1964 issue of Model Airplane News by Ed Izzo and Ray Olsen that was entitled “STYROFOAM Giant Step Forward.”

In that piece Ed and Ray shared pertinent information about how to make the equipment required to hot-wire cut expanded polystyrene foam (EPF), and detailed the procedure used to blank, spur, cut, and core foam model airplane wings. I must have read that article a hundred times!

In approximately 1967, my father and I were discussing the possibility of cutting our own foam wing cores. Dad, who was a talented automation machine designer and was well versed in electrical componentry, built the power supply. It featured a two-stage transformer controlled by an industrial grade variac. It is still my primary foam-cutting power supply 50-plus years later!

I built the bows that were required, found a source for high-quality virgin bead foam, and our experiments started. I blew a bunch of foam panels before perfecting the technique. Soon I was producing light and accurate foam wings, and all of my friends wanted me to cut their wings. It was a case of either going into business cutting wings for profit, or going broke giving out wings. I opted to start Controlline Specialties Company (CSC).

CSC was an immediate success and the word spread to the RC community about my products. At that point I incorporated and changed the name of the company to Control Specialties Corporation to reflect the fact that I would make wings and products for all aspects of the hobby/sport.

I spent much of the 1970s cutting thousands of foam wings for modelers worldwide, but also for several kit manufacturers, as well as a few that were used as wind-tunnel test wings by Lockheed and McDonald Douglas.

I also tackled some really unusual projects for Mississippi State University and Rensselaer Institute. The students at Rensselaer were attempting to win the Kremer Prize by being the first to fly a man-powered airplane across the English Channel. They needed an accurately cut,

lightweight propeller made from foam. It was certainly a challenge to cut a propeller with the correct helix with a hot wire, but I was able to satisfy them.

In 1978, I was fortunate to go to England with the US F2B World Championship Team and I won the gold medal. Bill Hunter at Satellite City heard that I built a significant portion of my Genesis model using his Hot Stuff CA adhesive. He asked me if I would consider appearing in his ads in the major modeling magazines. I agreed and he told me to send a photo of myself and my winning model along with a brief testimonial about the Hot Stuff adhesive.

He arranged for me to go to the Flying Models (FM) magazine offices and have editor, Bob Hoeckele take the photo. Bob told me that FM was looking for an associate editor and I got the job.

A year after I started working for FM, Bob left Carstens Publications and I was promoted to the editor's position. I stayed there for 17 years.

Around 1995, I started my own video production company under the name Robin's View Productions. I produced a number of modeling how-to video programs, all of which are still available today.

I also restarted the foam wing business as a part of Robin's View Productions. In fact, I'd pretty much kept the foam wing business going off and on part time while I was engaged full time as an editor.

In 2001, I was contacted by Rob Kurek, AMA's Director of Publications, who asked if I might be interested in interviewing for the position of Aeromodeling Editor of Model Aviation magazine. I got the job and served in that post for the better part of seven years before retiring. I acted as an advisor/consultant for several more years. Nowadays I write the CL Aerobatics column for Model Aviation, and also serve as the editor of Stunt News, the 100-page official newsletter of the Precision Aerobatics Model Pilots Association, the AMA officially recognized CL Stunt Special Interest Group.

Through Robin's View Productions, I'm now dedicated full-time to producing foam components, fully sheeted wings, built-up wings in my Lost-Foam Wing Building System, and other custom work.

**JS:** *What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?*

**BH:** Nowadays I still fly competition CL Aerobatics, but at the 2015 Nats I announced my retirement from Nats Open competition. I'm dealing with a number of back-related health problems and will not be able to maintain the practice regimen required to be competitive in that arena in the future. I fully intend to fly locally for as long as I'm able, and I may dabble at the Nats in Classic Stunt and Old-Time Stunt. I'm also anxious to get back to doing some RC flying. In the 1980s, I competed a lot in the Advanced class in RC Pattern.

**JS:** *What are your other hobbies?*

**BH:** I started riding motorcycles in the late 1960s, just after I served in the Army. I even went to the Woodstock Music Festival on a motorcycle! I raced bikes in sanctioned competition for a few years and then stopped riding for several years. I returned to the sport a while back and bought a Suzuki Hayabusa, which was the world's fastest stock bike at that time. I also purchased a BMW K1200 LT Custom and with that bike my wife, Marianne, and I did some long-distance touring with some close friends. Great times!

In 2001 I became a RiderCoach for the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Safety Program, and went on to become a Site Coordinator for the program and a PA State License Examiner for motorcycles. I've always had a love of music and started playing guitar around 1969. I also dabbled with playing organ, trombone, drums and even violin, but the guitar was it for me. That's not to suggest that I'm any good at it! Actually I've play mostly for my own enjoyment over the years, but have played out at gigs from time to time. Lately I've learned to Travis Pick (think Chet Atkins-style playing, although I'll never approach anywhere near the level he played at), and it has changed my life. I'm learning at an accelerated rate from a great teacher, and I'm having a ball doing it.

A hobby related to both music and model airplane building that I've begun recently is building acoustic guitars. My friend, Jeff Traxler, is an accomplished luthier, and a fast-rising CL Stunt flier, and he's been helping me to learn the trade of guitar building while I've been helping him learn the lessons of Stunt.

Currently I'm building two guitars; one is a replica of a Martin D-28 and one is a replica of a Gibson J-200 Jumbo. I've found that the requisite skills required to build stringed instruments are similar to those required to build model airplanes. Fortunately, most of the tools are also transferrable.

**JS:** *Who (or what) has influenced you most?*

**BH:** That would be a long list of people! I'd list my father first, of course. Beyond him the biggest influences when I was young, as mentioned earlier, would have to be Larry Scarinzi and Red Reinhardt. After I actually learned to build and fly at a higher level my influences came mainly from Bill Simons and Gene Schaffer. Once I became an established Stunt flier, I learned from the master himself, Bill Werwage.

To be fair, however, I learn from almost everyone I meet. All modelers have something to offer and all have good ideas that are worthy of my attention. I could list all of my influences, but the list would take up many pages in this magazine!

Above all who have influenced me is my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without him I am nothing.

**JS:** *Of all of your aeromodeling accomplishments, what are you most proud of?*

**BH:** That's an easy one—the development of what I call the Lost-Foam Wing Building System. In the late 1980s, I started thinking about a way of constructing a built-up wing that had the

accuracy of a properly cut foam wing. Foam wings are great and have many attributes, including easy and quick assembly, durability, ease of finishing, and the aforementioned accuracy. But, they are somewhat heavier than a built-up wing of the same size. Hey, foam, glue, and balsa weigh more than air!

I knew there was a way to incorporate foam into a fixture in which a built-up wing could be made. It dawned on me that the shucks, or cradles, that are left after cutting a foam core are just as accurate a negative representation of the wing shape as the core is a positive.

In 1990, it hit me. If I were to cut a foam wing blank and loft the desired rib positions for a built-up wing on the blank both front and back, and then cut the wing panel, I could transfer the rib positions onto the core's surface, label them, and then cut the core into sections at the rib stations, yielding templates with which to generate perfectly accurate balsa ribs.

In turn, I could then draw the planform of the wing into the lower cradle half and build the wing in a perfect form-fitting fixture. The result was a method of building wings that ensures that the outside shape would be perfect, and one in which no internal stresses would be built into the structure. Many fliers use this method to build their competition CL Stunt wings, and two of them have won World Championship titles and multiple National Championships using Lost-Foam built-up wings.

The only regret I have about that system is the name I gave it. Lost-Foam is really a misnomer; none of the foam components of the system are destroyed, and the fixtures can be used to build multiple wings of a given design. I'm strongly considering changing the name to Foam-Form Building.

If anyone reading this would care to see more about this building system, I have a four-PDF set that serves as a detailed building manual. It is free of charge and all I require is to have an email sent to me so that I can respond with the files. My email address is [robinhunt@rcn.com](mailto:robinhunt@rcn.com).

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**AMA History Project**  
National Model Aviation Museum  
5151 E. Memorial Dr.  
Muncie IN 47302  
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511  
[historyproject@modelaircraft.org](mailto:historyproject@modelaircraft.org)

