



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of WARREN (GENE) HUNTER



Born March 20, 1927 Started modeling around age 10

Written by GH (c. 2003); Transcribed and edited by JS (11/2007); Reformatted by JS (09/2009)

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The first model airplane kits that I built were rubber band-powered. If my memory serves me correctly, this was around the year 1937. My first Free Flight model was a Cleveland *Cloudster*. The next was a Brooklyn *Dodger*. The airplanes required a pneumatic engine cut-off timer. My first gasoline spark ignition engine was the K&B Phantom P-30. The cost was less than ten dollars. A white gasoline and 70-weight oil mix was the fuel. I must confess that I never had success reliably, starting with these engines. Consequently, this resulted in my hiatus of many years from modeling.

The sabbatical included interest changes such as the boy scouts, high school, Uncle Sam's Navy, college attendance with a degree received, marriage and children, years on the job in an aerospace field, and an attempt to play golf. A neighbor named Dr. Milton Whitley was instrumental in getting me back into airplane modeling in 1960. Milton's brother, Jim Whitley, was a Pattern airplane champion.

The first Radio Control airplane I had was a deBolt Live Wire *Cub*. A K&B .15 glow engine powered it. The radio was an Orbit single-channel gas tube regenerative receiver, operating on the 27 MHz frequency. A Babcock rubber band escapement powered the rudder-only system. Later, Babcock marketed the compound escapement. This gave both rudder and elevator control. We flew at Chase Nursery, located northeast of Huntsville. If a person got one flight in all day, he was lucky. A lot of fly-aways and crashes occurred.

I updated and bought the Orbit 10-channel reed system. It came with Bonner servos. They were very large and heavy. The manipulation of the transmitter switches was like rubbing your head and patting your stomach at the same time. The heterodyne receiver was a vast improvement over the regenerative system. In addition, NiCad batteries powered the radio. I do not believe I would have ever learned to fly a model airplane on the reed system. Three-dimensional space was too much. I did attempt to operate a boat in one flat plane, left and right with the reed radio. This, too, was a failure. A boat submerged under water is bad on the electronics.

The Kraft Gold Medal proportional radio system on 72 MHz frequencies was the first step in helping me fly successfully. I learned on the singlestick version and still fly with this system today, although some of the present day flyers laugh at the use of my Kraft radio regardless of what I say. It is still an excellent radio. I am now trying in vain to fly the current computer system

Futaba radios with two-stick control. Only time will tell if I am able to master this technique.
Wish me luck and keep 'em flying.

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