



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of RALPH N. JACKSON

AMA #7262 Started modeling in 1935
April 1923 - February 2011



Compiled and edited by JF (10/2003), Reformatted by JS (9/2009), Updated by JS (3/2011)

Career:

- 1950-1984: Mechanical engineer for IBM Corporation
- A founding member of Aeroguidance Society, Inc.
- Served as judge of Aeroguidance Society's Pattern Contest for 40 years
- Editor of Aeroguidance Society club newsletter, *The Connector*, from February 1972 to September 1978 and November 1994 to August 1995
- President and Secretary of Aeroguidance Society several times

Honors:

- 1963: First place in Class 2 Pattern and fourth place in Scale at Nationals
 - 1974: Third place in Scale at World Championships in Lakehurst, New Jersey
 - 1981: First place in Giant Scale at World War One Jamboree at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, New York
 - 1988: First place in FAI Large Scale and third in FAI Scale at Nationals
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My modeling career began at age 12 building balsa solid models. Then I began to build rubber powered flying models. In the late 1930s, I advanced to gasoline powered control line and free flight models. My first engine was a Mighty Midget assembled from a kit.

In January 1944, I graduated from New York University with a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering degree. While in college, I designed a control line model named the Mighty Molecule and prepared a construction article, which was published in the June 1944 issue of *Aircraft Age* magazine. Shortly after that, I served twenty-six months in the U.S. Army Air Force during and after World War II.

My first RC model was a Berkeley Buccaneer, which had its first successful controlled flight in 1948 at a golf course near my home on Staten Island, New York. The rudder on the model was connected to an escapement. The receiver and transmitter were made by hand. The receiver used an RK61 tube.

In 1950, I moved to Endicott, New York where I worked as a mechanical engineer for the IBM Corporation for thirty-four years and then retired. Among my interesting assignments during this time were participation in the design of the computers, which controlled the Saturn-5 rockets that started the Apollo space modules on their way to land our astronauts on the moon and the design of other units used in the B-70 aircraft and the still-flying B-52 aircraft.

I was one of the founding members of the Aeroguidance Society, Inc., which is an outstanding club, known for conducting a well-organized Pattern Contest every year from about 1953 to the present. I participated in the contest effort, primarily as a judge, for forty years. I was president of the club several times and secretary several times. I was editor of the monthly club newsletter, *The Connector*, from February 1972 to September 1978 and from November 1994 to August 1995.

I designed a model of the Windecker Eagle and wrote a construction article, which was published in the February 1973 issue of *Flying Models*.

I was active in competition flying with pattern and scale models from the 1950s to the 1980s. Some of the events that I participated in were as follows:

First place in Class 2 Pattern with a Stark Shark and fourth place in Scale with a 4-engine B-24 at the 1963 Nationals in Los Alamitos, California.

Third place in Scale with a 1/6 scale Piper Comanche at the 1974 World Championships in Lakehurst, New Jersey.

Flew in Scale with a 1/6 scale Windecker Eagle at the 1980 World Championships in Ottawa, Canada.

First place in Giant Scale at the 1981 World War One Jamboree at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, New York.

First place in FAI Large Scale with a 1/4 scale Piper Comanche and Third place in FAI Scale with a 1/6 scale Piper Comanche at the 1988 Nationals in Tidewater, Virginia.

During the 1960s, I was a member of Airborne Control Laboratories in New York State and participated in the design and manufacture of several RC systems including the Digilog VI, a transitional system between analog and digital technologies.

Now, at age 80 in 2003, I no longer compete, but go to fly-ins occasionally. I still design, build and fly scale models. My most recent project is a one-sixth scale Curtiss Fledgling, a 1920s navy trainer, which was completed about a month ago and is a good flyer. The design was done completely with a computer CAD program. I searched the Internet quite a while looking for a suitable three-view drawing of this subject and finally found one in the AMA archives.

(Signed) Ralph N. Jackson

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