



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of CLAUDE McCULLOUGH

May 16, 1922 – January 30, 2008 Modeler since the early 1930s  
AMA #10



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Written & Submitted by CM (01/2001), also written by SA (05/2008) and AR (04/2008); Transcribed & Edited by SS (01/2003), Updated by JS (01/2008),  
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## Career:

- Began competing regularly with all types of models in 1935; entered his first AMA Nationals in 1941
- Won many awards at AMA Nationals and QSAA contests (as well as others) including
- best civilian Scale, best scratch-built model, best bi-plane, first in Radio Control Precision Scale and best Scale model
- Has had numerous planes, articles and photographs published in modeling magazines such as *Model Airplane News*, *Air Trails*, *Radio Control Modeler*, and *American Aircraft Modeler*.
- 1970-1975: Wrote a monthly column on Radio Control Scale for *American Aircraft Modeler*
- 1978-1982: Served as associate editor and wrote a monthly column for *RC Modeler*
- 1946: Started designing and building model airplane parts such as transmitters, receivers, escapements, etc
- Had numerous designs kitted by SIG
- Has continuously served on many committees and various positions in the AMA starting in June 1948
- 1957: Elected AMA president; served one term then withdrew in favor of Walt Good

## Honors:

- 1979: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
- 1991: Society of Antique Modelers Hall of Fame

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## Competition

Beginning in 1935 competed regularly in all types of competitions including indoor, hand-launched glider, Free Flight Rubber, Free Flight Scale, all sizes of Free Flight Power, Rise-off-Water (ROW), Control Line Stunt, Control Line Scale, Radio Control Pattern, and Radio Control Scale.

First entered the AMA Nationals in 1941 and have competed in about three-fourths of them since that time.

Some major awards include the following:

- 1965 AMA Nationals: First in Radio Control Precision Scale
- 1972 AMA Nationals: Sterling Award for best Scale model
- 1986 QSAA Las Vegas: Best civilian Scale
- 1987 QSAA Las Vegas: Best scratch-built model
- 1989 AMA Nationals: First in FAI large Scale
- 1989 QSAA Las Vegas: Best Scale model

- 1990 AMA Nationals: First in Radio Control Precision Scale
- 1990 Dallas: George Meyer Memorial Craftsmanship Trophy
- 1990 QSAA Las Vegas: Best of bi-plane
- 1991 Scalemasters Las Vegas: Best scratch built
- 1991 Dallas: George Meyer Memorial Craftsmanship Trophy and first place civilian Scale
- 1992 QSAA Las Vegas: Best of Scale
- 1992 QSAA Las Vegas: Best of bi-plane
- 1993 QSAA Las Vegas: Best of bi-plane
- 1993 AMA Nationals: First place in Radio Control Precision Scale
- 1994 Top Gun Palm Beach: Best of bi-plane
- 1995 QSAA Las Vegas: Best of bi-plane
- 1997 QSAA Las Vegas: Best civilian aircraft

## **Plans Published in Magazines**

### *Partial List*

- Douglas *DC-4* (Display Model), *Flying Aces*, September 1938
- *Kayo* Gas Model, *Flying Aces*, January 1939
- Build Our Cub Coupe (rubber-powered Scale), *Flying Aces*, October 1939
- Try This Porterfield-Turner (rubber-powered Scale), *Flying Aces*, August 1940
- *P-40F Warhawk* (Control Line Scale), *Air Trails*, March 1943
- *Sparrow* (1/2-A Free Flight or rubber), *Flying Aces*, April 1943
- *Meteorite* (Control Line), *Air Trails*, July 1943
- *Anzac* (Free Flight gas), *Model Craftsman*, October 1946
- *Charger* (Free Flight gas), *Air World*, November 1946
- *Republic Seabee* (Control Line of Free Flight Scale), Bill Winter's *Planbook*, 1947
- *Brigand* (Free Flight gas), *Model Craftsman*, April 1947
- *Twinstar* (rubber), *Air Trails*, June 1947
- *Buzzer* (Free Flight gas), *Air World*, July 1947
- *Gnat* (Free Flight gas), *Model Airplane News*, October 1947
- *Screamer* (Control Line speed), *Model Airplane News*, February 1948
- *Pixie* (CO2), *Air Trails*, August 1948
- *Toreador* (Free Flight gas), *Flying Models*, June 1948
- *Flamingo* (rubber), *Air Trails*, July 1948
- *Rascal* (rubber), *Air Trails*, November 1948
- *Vixen* (Free Flight gas), *Model Airplane News*, August 1949
- *Fledgling* (1/2-A), *Flying Models*, October 1950
- Mac's *Chariot* (Radio Control), *American Aircraft Modeler*, April 1957
- Martin *AM-1 Mauler* (Radio Control Scale), *RC Modeler Book* "Challenge of RC Scale," 1967
- Douglas *Skypirate* (Radio Control Scale), *RC Modeler*, November 1968
- Fletcher *FU-24* (Radio Control Scale), *American Aircraft Modeler*, September 1971

## Writer

### *Partial List of Articles*

- “Exit Balsa, Enter Basswood,” *Air Trails*, November 1942
- “Towliners Are In,” *Air Trails*, Model Annual for 1943
- “Adjust That Model,” *Flying Aces*, July 1943
- “What’s Wrong with Pylons?” *Air Trails*, October 1946
- “Comment From the Flying Line,” Parts 1 and 2, *Aeromodeller*, April and May 1946
- “Those AMA Rules,” *American Modeler*, July 1957
- “Radio Control World Championships – Bremen,” *American Aircraft Modeler*, January 1970
- “Scale World Championships for Control Line and Radio Control,” *American Aircraft Modeler*, January 1971
- “Radio Control Scale” (1973 Nats photos and report), *American Aircraft Modeler*, November 1973
- *Scale Data Source List*, Booklet for the National Association of Scale Aeromodelers.
- Starting in 1970, wrote a monthly column on Radio Control Scale for *American Aircraft Modeler* until the publication ceased in March 1975. The column moved to *RC Sportsman*, a new publication replacing *American Aircraft Modeler*, appearing monthly until May 1978. Became an associate editor of *RC Modeler* in July 1978 and wrote a monthly column called “Scale Views” until 1982
- “Differential Makes a Difference,” *Aeromodeller Annual*, 1978-1979
- “The Cuban Waco,” *Skyways*, April 1992
- “Cuban Waco,” *The Waco*, 1992
- “Gwinn Aircar,” *Skyways*, January 1995
- “Detailing the A-17,” *RC Modeler*, March, April and May 2001

## Model Photographer

### *Partial List of Magazine Covers*

- *Flying Models*, March 1964
- *Flying Models*, December and January 1964
- *Model Airplane News*, September 1966
- *Flying Models*, November 1966
- *RC Modeler*, April 1967
- *Model Airplane News*, July 1968
- *Modelar* (Czech), Listopad, 1969
- *Model Airplane News*, April 1969
- *Model Airplane News*, January 1970
- *American Aircraft Modeler*, September 1971
- *Model Airplane News*, September 1971
- *Model Airplane News*, June 1972
- *Model Dealer*, July 1972
- *Model Airplane News*, October 1972
- *Model Dealer*, January 1974
- *Sport Modeler*, July and August 1974
- *Model Airplane News*, December 1975

- *Model Airplane News*, November 1976
- *Scale RC Modeler*, August 1977
- *Model Retailer*, April 1980
- *Skyways*, January 1995
- *Model Aviation*, June 1998
- *RC Modeler*, March 2001

## **Experimenter**

From 1946, designed and built transmitters, receiver, escapements, motor controls, stunt tanks, etc. Some of these appeared in Howard McEntee's Radio Control column in the 1950s.

Published Radio Control theory or construction articles include the following:

- "U.H.F.," *Air Trails*, June 1945
- "Radio Control Notes," *Model Airplane News*, March 1947
- "Pushbutton Pilots," *Popular Science*, August 1947
- "Radio Control Triplex – Three Controls in One Channel," *Popular Electronics*, November 1956

## **Designs Kitted by SIG**

- *Yak 18P* (Radio Control Scale), 1969
- *Kadet* (basic trainer), 1973
- *Komander* (Radio Control aileron trainer), 1974
- *Skybolt* (Radio Control bi-plane), 1975
- *Kougar* (advanced Radio Control trainer), 1975
- *Klipper* (Radio Control sport), 1976
- *Kavalier* (aileron trainer), 1978
- *Kadet, Junior* (Radio Control sport), 1980
- *Kobra* (Radio Control sport), 1982
- *King Kobra* (Radio Control pattern), 1983
- *Morrissey Bravo* (1/4-Scale Radio Control), 1985
- *Kadet Senior* (Radio Control trainer), 1986
- *Kadet Seniorita* (trainer), 1987

## **AMA**

- June 30, 1948: Appointed to Clubs and Chapters Committee
- 1950: Named to the contest board
- 1955-1956: Designated chair
- 1957: Elected as AMA president
- 1958: Served one term and withdrew in favor of Walt Good. Returned to the position of contest board chairman until 1960
- Chaired the by-laws committee that drew up the two-year rule cycle system with multiple contest boards
- 1960: Appointed to the new Scale Advisory Committee (SAC) when it was formed
- 1970: Continued as chairman when the SAC was converted to the Scale contest board (SCB)

- Currently (2001) District VII SCB member
- This 53-year period of continuously holding an AMA office of appointment is believed to be the longest of any AMA member
- 1979: Inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame
- 1991: Inducted into the Society of Antique Modelers' Hall of Fame

*(signed) Claude McCullough  
January 2001*

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*The following was published in the May 2008 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the Radio Control Scale column by Stan Alexander.*

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## **Farewell to Claude McCullough**

I had intended to start this column with an update of contests you might like to attend this spring. But that will have to wait.

On January 30, 2008, Claude McCullough, AMA member 10, passed away at his home. He was born in Ottumwa, Iowa, where he grew up. He served in the US Army in World War II, as did many others of his generation.

Claude had a career in farming and began modeling competitively in 1935. He entered his first AMA National Championships in 1941.

He embraced AMA; he served on many committees from 1948 until his death. Claude was elected AMA president in 1957 and was inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame in 1979. He served as an AMA volunteer for more than 59 years, which is thought to be a service record for an AMA member on the national level.

Claude was a technical writer. He also designed kits (the *Kadet*, *Senior*, *Seniorita*, etc.) for SIG Manufacturing and his own Scale designs, which were published in several magazines through the years. A photographer as well as an experimenter, Claude kept busy with many projects.

One of the many things modelers around the world admired about Claude was his willingness to help them with documentation or finding a unique way to solve a problem. He never owned a computer, but he wrote many articles and magazine columns, and he took many cover photos.

Later in life, Claude realized that his piloting skills weren't up to snuff for competition. Team Scale became his event, with either Mike Gretz or Scott Christensen as his pilot. Some of the many memories I have of the Nationals are of Claude sitting on his milk stool working on a model and getting it ready for the next flight.

Claude's passion was Scale models and documenting unique aircraft that people had never seen before. He built several of those throughout his career, including the Gwinn *Aircar*, the Douglas *Skypirate*, the Martin *AM-1 Mauler*, and others. Claude was an AMA Nationals Champion, a US FAI Scale team member, and an award winner in the National Association of Scale Aeromodelers (NASA) and the Quarter Scale Aircraft Association.

A gentleman at any gathering, Claude could get his point across without raising his voice. He was gracious as a winner and a team member on committees; he tried to help shape AMA for the future—especially with regard to Scale competition.

Claude will be missed very much.

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*The following was published in the April 2008 issue of Model Aviation magazine, written by Ashley Rauen.*

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### **Claude McCullough: 1922-2008—By: Ashley Rauen**

Aeromodeling great Claude McCullough passed away January 30, 2008, at the age of 85. He was a leader in model aviation and a skilled competitor. In his more than 70 years of model aeronautics, Claude left his stamp on the hobby industry.

Born in Ottumwa, Iowa, May 16, 1922, Claude was raised an only boy with two sisters. At age 9 he and his sisters went to live on a farm under his grandparents' care. Approximately four years later he began participating regularly in all types of modeling competitions.

In 1943, Claude entered the US Army Signal Corps. He wanted to be in the US Air Corps, but poor eyesight made his dream unattainable. However, Claude was blessed by being attached to the Air Corps and worked at a *B-24* base in Italy during World War II.

Claude returned from the war in 1947 and resumed farming near Ottumwa. He then moved to Montezuma, Iowa, in 1971, where he began working at SIG Manufacturing Co.

SIG gave Claude the opportunity to design model airplanes and related products. It was there that he met and became good friends with Mike Gretz, who is currently a design engineer for SIG.

“Claude was very quiet but very intelligent,” said Mike. “He was an easy man to talk to and knew all about models and full-scale aircraft.”

Mike said Scale was important to Claude, who saw it as a separate entity from RC, FF, and CL. Claude created numerous Scale projects and won several awards, including the Sterling Award for the best Scale model at the 1972 Nats; the Best Scale Model at the 1989 Quarter Scale Association of America Las Vegas Fly-In; and the George Meyer Memorial Craftsmanship Trophy more than once.

Popular in design and innovation, Claude had several kits manufactured and experimented with, and he developed transmitters, receivers, escapements, motor controls, and Stunt tanks. His kits, all of which SIG produced, include the *Yak-18P*, *Kadet*, *Skybolt*, *Kobra*, and *Morrissey Bravo*. He created plans that were published in various aeromodeling magazines.

In addition to building and designing, Claude had experience in writing and photography. He had articles published in *Air Trails*, *Flying Aces*, *American Modeler*, and *R/C Modeler* magazines. His photography had been printed in such publications as *Model Airplane News*, *Sport Modeler*, and *MA*.

Claude competed in his first AMA Nats in 1941. Mike said that the high point every year for Claude was these events; he lived for and took part in many Nats. Mike said that Claude once told him his goal was to be the first individual to compete in 50 Nats. Claude's friend, Sal Taibi, had been to 47 consecutive Nats, and Claude hoped to surpass that. Once he did, he hoped for 50.

In the summer of 2007, Claude took part in the 48th Nats of his career. Mike said that he thinks that is the most AMA Nats in which any person has participated.

Claude's AMA career began when he was appointed to the Clubs and Chapters Committee in 1948. He was named to the Contest Board in 1950 and was designated chairman from 1955 to 1956.

In 1957, Claude was elected AMA president. After a year of his term he stepped down in favor of Walt Good. He then resumed the position of Contest Board chairman, which he held until 1960.

At that time, Claude was appointed to the new Scale Advisory Committee (SAC). He remained on the SAC board when it was converted to the Scale Contest Board in 1970, and he served on it through 2008. This 60-year period of continuously holding an AMA office of appointment might be the longest term of any AMA member.

Claude was inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame in 1979. In 1991, he was elected to the Society of Antique Modelers Hall of Fame.

"He totally devoted his whole life to model airplanes," said Mike.

Mike mentioned that Claude had other hobbies. He had been a news buff since his teenage years and consistently made an effort to know what was happening around the world. He also had a great love of movies and acquired an extensive collection.

Claude McCullough was a determined man who knew what he loved early in life and never let it go. He will be remembered and missed for all he did for every facet of model aviation.

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