



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of DON MCGILLIVRAY

Born May 3, 1932

Modeler since 1941



Written by DM (c. 2003); Transcribed and edited by JS (11/2007), Reformatted by JS (10/2009)

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I started in 1941 with a Comet kit of the Rearwin *Speedster* at a cost of 10 cents. It flew about ten feet. Many rubber-powered kits followed. Some of the manufacturers were Comet, Megow, Scientific, Bird, Consolidated, Joe Ott, and Berkeley, to name a few.

Then there were my own designs; a twin pusher, a rubber-powered Northrop flying wing, a Piper *Cub* on floats, a 56-inch wingspan stick-types with a single blade-folding propeller, a Korda *Wakefield* with my design of a folding landing gear, and a *Cloud Hopper*.

Now for the ignition gas engines. I almost wore out my finger on a Rogers .35, and then came a Brown Jr., an Ohlsson .23, an Atom, and a Phantom P30. U-Control was getting popular, so I had to learn this, too. My Dyna Jet was a real attention getter. My Stunt proficiency was not very good, so I built and flew U-Control Scale and Speed in several contests.

With high school behind me, the route was the University of Minnesota, Cal Aero Aviation Technical Institute, and finally a job with Minneapolis Honeywell as a tool grinder in their tool room. During my tool and die maker apprenticeship, my nickname was "Jetex 50." This was because of my lunchtime experiments with the Jetex Rocket Motors. I still have my Journeyman's Qualification Card issued by the state of Minnesota. I worked 35 years with Honeywell, mostly working with automation assembly machines, and retired from my last position as supervisor of an engineering department.

During the last fifteen years living in Florida, I have concentrated on Scale Radio Control. Multi-

motored models have always fascinated me. The recent popularity of electric modeling has provided me with an opportunity to be a contest director and a local club officer. I have constructed twin, triple, and quadruple engine-powered models successfully.

Now, after these past fifteen years in Southwest Florida building and flying most types of model aircraft, I could easily write a book about my modeling adventures. However, as the good Lord says, “the best is yet to come.”

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