



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JOHN MOHR



Written by JS (04/2012); Added to HP files by JS (03/2016)

The following was published in the April 2012 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the "I Am the AMA" column, written by Jay Smith.

I Am the AMA **John Mohr, Airplane pilot and air show performer**

JS: How did you get involved with model aviation?

JM: As far back as I can possibly remember I had model aircraft around me. Both my grandfather and father were avid modelers.

I remember playing with a stick-and-tissue Stearman model that my dad built. He bought me some Control Line models, including the Cox PT-19 and a Cessna 172 or 182 that had a center post for the control lines and you sat outside of the circle with a stick that controlled the elevators.

My grandfather dreamed of a helicopter and he built models of autogyros and helicopters that he designed.

I have a picture of him and I on the snow-covered ice of northern Minnesota starting the .049 on the front of a Free Flight autogyro. I still have that model along with a Free Flight helicopter that he built.

I built my first radio as a Heathkit with Kraft servos. I later built two Cannon four-channel sets with Kraft servos.

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

JM: I learned so much about aerodynamics and construction from building and flying models, both proven and my own designs. Getting my A&P license and IA was much easier because of my background in model aviation.

Learning to fly with my dad and grandfather and teaching flying in later years was advanced greatly because of the knowledge I gained from model aircraft. I wouldn't have advanced to the

point I am in the air show industry if it wasn't for model aviation. I would go to Oshkosh [Wisconsin to the EAA AirVenture] to watch my mentors fly their shows and I would return home and try to duplicate the maneuvers with my RC models.

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

JM: I still fly some gas engine models, but I have switched mainly to electrics, some fixed wing, but mostly helicopters. I have a soft spot for helis because of my grandfather and the wonderful experiences of childhood.

I have built four full-scale helicopters and owned an Enstrom for 15 years. I built my first Scorpion at age 17 in my dad's shop and taught myself to fly it.

My grandfather was still alive to witness that and I feel that I fulfilled his dream by doing that. My son is also heavy into the RC 'copters. I have two grandsons, ages 2 and 3, who I fly RC stuff for all the time, so that's fifth-generation modelers on the way up!

JS: What are your other hobbies?

JM: My other hobbies and passions include kite boarding, both on water and snow, skiing and snowboarding, sailing, scuba diving and spear fishing, fishing trips in my Piaggio Royal Gull seaplane, music including guitar, fiddle, mandolin, and harmonica. Aerobatics in my Stearman, Ultralight and LSA [Light Sport Aircraft] flying, soaring, and just about any other method of getting airborne!

JS: Who or what has influenced you most?

JM: My dad and grandfather had the greatest influence on me. I saw in them the wisdom, knowledge, and skill obtained from studying and building many things and I knew if I did the same, I would follow in their footsteps.

Secondly, my mentors in the air show world who I wanted to emulate. And last, but not least, is anyone in the model aviation world today who has excelled in whatever endeavor they have chosen because I know what it takes with the passion and dedication to achieve success.

JS: How did you get started as an airshow performer?

JM: I got started in the airshow industry right after I bought the Stearman and restored it. I initially hopped rides on weekends at fairs and other gatherings in northern Minnesota and little by little I began doing impromptu shows as a way of getting the customers for the rides. I gave so many acro rides that I got pretty good at it just from repetition. Soon I was hired to perform at bona fide air shows and the rest is history, as they say.

You can follow John on his website at www.mohrbarnstorming.com.

-Jay Smith
MA Editor

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