



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of GEORGE P. PATSON

Born April 1922 Started modeling in 1937



Information submitted by GP (2005); Written, Edited, and Formatted by JS (10/2010)

The following was written from information obtained from George P. Patson in 2005. Portions were first printed in the Fall 2010 issue of Cloud9, the official newsletter of the National Model Aviation Museum.

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<http://www.modelaircraft.org/museum.aspx>.

George Patson

Born 1922

George Patson has been a modeler for over 70 years. His interest in modeling started when he received an unfinished *Gee Bee Sportster* kit around age 15. It was a 12" wingspan rubber-powered kit. Though someone had started putting it together (the wing, fuselage, and empennage), he assembled the rest himself. He wasn't sure how to cover it, and so it was still in the bones when he left it on a chair and his mother sat on it. George wrote, it "broke my heart."

His next project was a solid model, a *Gee Bee Racer*. His bedroom ceiling had many models hanging from it, and, in his own words, he "used lightening bug tails on all the appropriate locations. One *DC-3* had all the windows illuminated. I liked WWI models and when finished flying them, I flew them out of a second story window with a 1" firecracker in the fuselage and watched the explosion."

He graduated from high school in 1940 and went into the US Army Air Corps (USAAC.) With his interest in model and full-scale aviation, in November of 1940, he became an airplane mechanic, working on Northrop *A-17As*, Douglas *A-20s*, *B-17s*, *P-47s*, *B-29s*, and, as a crew chief, two *B-25s*. He went to India with the 20th Air Force and to Tinian (a principal island of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands) later on.

He graduated from the Northrop Aeronautical Institute with training in Aeronautical Engineering. With his degree, George writes, "I redesigned the auxiliary landing gear door on the Martin *B-57*, as the American tire was one-inch in diameter bigger than the British metric tire. I designed castings for an emergency handling gear on L.R.A. blimps, *ZPG-2Ws* and *3Ws*. These were attached to the passenger car [in case] the bump bashed its gear on a hard landing. The work was done or tested at Lakehurst, Nevada." He also "supervised the construction of 2 airship envelopes, the *ZPG-2W* type, for the Navy in 1960-1961."

Holding a civilian job at the private company ILC Dover, in Frederica, Delaware, George writes, "I supervised the construction on many type of tethered aerostats and small advertising blimps. One of the *ZPG-2W* envelopes that I built for the Navy was used by Frank Piasecki on a Helistat with four helicopters. Unfortunately, it crashed, but not due to the blimp envelope."

Over the years, George continued to dabble in modeling while working in full-scale aviation. He writes, "One of the best models that I have built was a [Free Flight] Grumman *F9-F* ducted fan... from plans in *Model Airplane News*, somewhere around 1956. It had a Cox .049 engine with a six-blade fan that I cut out of .030 aluminum. I flew it on a runway at a naval auxiliary field in Georgetown, Delaware. It would run about 40 feet, rotate the nose wheel, take off in about ten more feet, and climb out to the left. [It was] a short flight, as the fuel tank was very small.

"I intend to build another model but will add a miniature Radio Control system to it, with a larger fuel tank.

"I also like ½A Free Flight Scale and contest models. I am a member of SAM and have built and flown Henry Struck's *New Ruler* with a Brown Jr. engine and Kraft radio. It flies great.

"I still build peanut scale WWI planes and my favorite models are by Earl Stahl. I have built his Grumman *Wildcat*, Stinson *049*, and his *Interstate Cadet*."

George joined the Lewes R/C Club of Lewes, Delaware in 1995, and continues to fly today.

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