



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of ROBERT WALLACE

Born September 28, 1934 Started modeling in 1941
AMA #478



Information submitted by RW (05/2003); Written & Edited by SS (05/2003), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

Career:

- 1950: Compete in his first Nationals at age 15 and did well
- 1970s-1980s: Directed numerous local contests
- 1977-: Has drafted construction plan sheets for many manufactures and for RC Modeler magazine
- 1976- present (2003): Has had numerous designs published in RC Modeler magazine
- 1977-: Has been a contributing editor for RC Modeler magazine
- Late 1970s: Has produced numerous pylon racing kits and Radio Control scale combat kits
- 1985: Won the FAI F3D event at the Nats
- 1985: Began competing internationally
- 1987: Manager of the U.S. team that placed first, second and third at the World Championships in Melbourne, Australia
- Throughout the years his best placing in FAI contest in Europe was a third place
- Served as acting team manager for the Czech team at the 1985 World Championships and as a mechanic for the Russian team at the 1995 World Championships
- Has served as president of several modeling clubs
- 2002-: Member of the AMA Radio Control Combat Contest Board since its creation
- Currently (2003): An Associate Vice President for AMA District I
- Has served on the FAI (F3D) Pylon Team Selection Committee and on numerous FAI (F3D) international competition juries
- Has been a guest speaker at numerous model airplane club meeting and civic group meetings

Honors:

- 2002: AMA Fellow

The Beginning

Bob's modeling career began at age 7 when his father, a modeler, helped him build a kit airplane made of six balsa parts. Bob was so excited to fly the plane that he rushed through construction. He had the influence of his father along with a strong interest in all airplanes to spur him on.

Bob was hooked after that first model and joined his first club around 1945. It was the Greater Hartford (Connecticut) Model Airplane Club and he stayed a member for eight and a half years. His modeling progressed from simple hand-launched gliders to rubber-powered and finally to U-Control models. Bob's first engine was a Bullet .29 ignition engine.

Competition

It wasn't long until Bob developed an interest in model aviation competition. He entered his first contest in 1948 at the age of 14. It was a regional U-Control meet held in Boston, Massachusetts. Bob competed in U-Control speed and placed third.

Within two years, Bob was competing at the Nationals. His first was in 1950 at Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Pennsylvania around age 15 and he competed in classes A, B, and C U-Control speed events. He didn't place in the top three, but did well for his first Nationals.

As the years went by, Bob's competing got more serious. By the mid-1980s he was competing in FAI events. In 1985, at age 51, Bob competed in his first FAI event, F3D pylon racing. He was successful in this event at the Nationals, even placing first. His FAI competition also took him to Europe where he participated in several FAI F3D European Championships in Germany, Belgium, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. His best placing in Europe was a third place.

In 1987 Bob took on another role in FAI competition as manager of the 1987 U.S. team that finished first, second and third in Melbourne, Australia. He was also acting team manager for the Czech team at the 1985 World Championships held at Westover Air Force Base in Massachusetts. The Czech's won that year. Bob has helped out other countries as well. At the 1995 World Championships held in Muncie, Indiana, he was a mechanic on the Russian team.

Aside from World Championships abroad, Bob also competed in other international contests, such as the Velka Ceny Modely from 1986 to 2000. The Velka Ceny Modely is an annual contest and one of the largest in Europe. He also competed in the Tropho Milano in Italy using his own designed pylon racers. Bob's best finish there was third place, but overall he was never out of the top 10. Both competitions regularly attracted 40 to 50 competitors from 10 to 12 different countries.

Bob also competed internationally with Radio Control scale combat from 1999 to 2001 in the European circuit receiving several second place finishes. He competed in the World Championships in Germany one year though it was not a FAI-sanctioned event. In each competition Bob used planes of his own design that he had also kitted.

Bob's Radio Control activities also took him to Russia several times for Radio Control activities and also as an invited guest.

Experimenting

For Bob experimenting with design of models began about the same time his modeling career began. He was designing his own airplanes by age 11 or 12. His designs reflect his modeling career by including both Radio Control and U-Control models.

From 1976 to the present Bob has had numerous designs published in RC Modeler magazine and has served as one of the magazine's contributing editors since 1977. He has also produced a

number of pylon racing kits, Radio Control scale combat kits and a Radio Control submarine kit that was a scale Japanese two-man submarine kit that was fully functional with ballast tanks, etc.

Leadership

Bob's modeling activities have led to leadership roles in his clubs. He served as president of the old Greater Hartford Model Airplane Club, but doesn't recall the exact date. He was president of the Central Connecticut Radio Control Club in the 1970s and has also been a club officer in other clubs.

Within the AMA, Bob is currently (2003) serving as an associate vice president in District I and has been a member of the AMA Radio Control Combat Contest Board since its creation in 2002. For two years, Bob also served as a committee member on the Quickie 500 Rule Formation Committee.

During the 1970s and 1980s Bob directed numerous local contests. He has also been a member of the FAI (F3D) Pylon Team Selection Committee since around the time of its creation until the present (2003). Also in FAI competitions, Bob has served on numerous FAI (F3D) international competition juries and has officiated at a variety of contests.

Publications

Having been a contributing editor for RC Modeler magazine since 1977 Bob has had too many articles published to count. He has produced many aircraft construction articles, done numerous product test reviews, written miscellaneous Radio Control aviation-related articles and drafted most of the magazine's construction plan sheets since 1977. Aside from his involvement with RC Modeler magazine, Bob has also had a few articles published in Model Aviation magazine and in European magazines including RC Modely (a Czech magazine).

On the club level, Bob was club newsletter editor for a Radio Control auto racing regional group in the early 1970s. The newsletter was named the "East Coast Radio Control Auto Racing News and Report."

Industry Involvement

Bob has been involved with kit manufacturing since the late 1970s. He has drafted construction plan sheets for several manufacturers as well as produced his own line of pylon racing and Radio Control 1/2-scale combat kits. He has produced numerous foam wing cores and, as previously mentioned, also produced a Radio Control scale submarine kit.

Some of the kits he has produced between the late 1970s and the present (2003) include the following: Mustang, P-51 (FAI type), MIG-7, Kawasaki K1-64, Focke Wolf Ta-152 1/2-scale combat kits, Kairyu 1/16-scale Japanese submarine kit, miscellaneous molded fiber glass parts for other kits, foam wing cores, sticky stuff (which is the most popular streamer grabbing substance used in Radio Control combat) and coil cord (coiled cord for electric starters).

Education and Model Aviation Promotion

Bob has been a guest speaker at numerous model club meetings and civic group meetings over the years on a variety of subjects. Frequently these talks included the experiences Bob had while competing internationally, especially in Iron Curtain countries (the Soviet Union) in the 1980s.

Miscellaneous

Bob is an AMA life member having been awarded the AMA Fellowship Award.

Since 1967 Bob has had a private pilot's license so he also flies full-scale airplanes. He has owned several full-sized planes. During his travels to Europe he had the opportunity to fly different types of full-scale aircraft in Germany, Russia (including Russian Air Force type planes), and the Czech Republic.

For Bob, model aviation has had a positive impact on his life. "So many of the wonderful things that I've experienced have resulted from my involvement in model aviation and would never have happened otherwise," he said. "The international experiences have been especially meaningful, exciting, rewarding, and unforgettable!"

(signed) Bob Wallace
April 27, 2003

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