



## The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of LEE F. WEBSTER

Born February 2, 1924 Began modeling in 1934  
AMA #168



Transcribed & Edited by SS (03/2003), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

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### Career:

- c. 1935: Involved with the development of gas-powered models
- Started his first model airplane club while in high school and continued to start clubs everywhere he went including in the military during World War II; was an organizer for the Plymouth Aero League Movement (PAL clubs)
- Successfully competed in local, regional and national contests
- Worked at the Jet Propulsion Lab where he helped develop ideas for proportional control systems
- Became a contest director in 1960 and has directed contests every year since (as of 1997) including the Airfoiler Free Flight contest in Tullahoma, Tennessee
- Served as an AMA district vice president from 1986 to 1990
- Served as a member of the safety board

### Honors:

- 1977: AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1989: AMA Meritorious Service Award
- 1995: AMA Fellow
- 2000: Society of Antique Modelers Hall of Fame

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*The following was part of an application for the Model Aviation Hall of Fame that James H. Perdue and the Coffee Air-Foilers Model Airplane Club submitted on behalf of Lee F. Webster in March 1997.*

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Lee F. Webster started modeling at age 10 with construction and flying of Jimmy Allen models. He expanded to include other forms of modeling, i.e., hand-launched gliders, towline gliders and scale models.

He was involved with the development of gas-powered models sometime around 1935.

Lee started his first club while in high school. The club was involved in early model competition in the Wisconsin/Minnesota area.

He worked for Boeing Aircraft Company in Seattle during early World War II then entered the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1943. Lee trained on B26s, B17s and other aircraft. He organized model clubs at two different bases and at Boeing.

After the war, Lee flew competitively in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, area. Later he went to the University of Wisconsin and the University of Minnesota. While at the University of Minnesota, he was an organizer for the Plymouth Aero League Movement (PAL clubs). Lee successfully

competed locally and at Detroit. Again, he was involved in organizing model clubs in the local area besides PAL club activity.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota, Lee went to work at the Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL). He again competed in the Los Angeles area with success. He became interested in early Radio Control activities and worked with personnel from JPL on development of ideas for proportional control systems.

Lee changed jobs in 1956 moving to the Arnold Engineering Development Center to work as project engineer in the wind tunnels and engine test facilities. He was instrumental in organizing the Coffee Airfoilers. This club has been in existence for over 40 years. It has been a hotbed of competitive activity in Free Flight, Control Line and all types of Radio Control. It has had a strong group competing in Society of Antique Modeler (SAM) events. Lee has flown in competition in all of the above areas with considerable success.

Lee became a contest director in about 1960 and has directed events every year since. The most successful event is the Airfoil Free Flight contest at Tullahoma, Tennessee. This event has been held successfully for about 37 years and has always drawn competitors from all over the south. In addition to this contest, Lee has directed Radio Control, aerobatic, scale, soaring, SAM and a few Control Line events.

Lee was an AMA district vice president from 1986 to 1990. He is still active on the national level on various committees. He is currently (1997) a safety board member. He has been active in the investigation of accidents involving models and currently is investigating safety aspects of pylon racing.

He is still active, flying mostly SAM events and Radio Control soaring events.

Lee is an AMA Fellow and has received an AMA Distinguished Service Award.

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