



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of WARREN WILLIAMS



Born 1914

Started modeling in the 1920s AMA #5550

Written by AMA Staff (01/2007); Transcribed and Formatted by JS (07/2007), Reformatted by JS (02/2009)

The following is from the January 2007 issue of Model Aviation magazine.

Warren was born in 1914 in Redding, California. He once walked six miles to meet Charles Lindbergh and built a Spirit of St. Louis model. He built a number of twin pushers and once beat Mr. Ohlsson (of Ohlsson engine fame) with an 11-minute flight at the Sacramento Fairgrounds.

Warren soloed in a Jenny and flew full-scale aircraft while employed at Consolidated Aircraft. He was working for Lockheed in England when World War II broke out. He spent six years in Europe and Africa working on P-38 fighters. Upon his return, he became line chef at Burbank airport where he helped Howard Hughes run up the engines on his personal *Constellation*.

For more than 81 years, Warren has been building and flying models. He has flown in 12 Nats in five states and has set five national records- one is still current. He traveled (as an observer) to the Indoor World Championships in Japan and Romania and is an original member of the Thermal Thumbers. He once built a Microfilm model with a wingspan of more than 5 feet, a 24-inch propeller, and a wing area of more than 600 square inches. This aircraft flew for more than 20 minutes.

Warren has built and sent more than 70 models to people all over the world. "Warren is a modeler's modeler," wrote Keith Varnau, "a classic role model for aspiring modelers and one who has advanced technical achievements in the field of aeromodeling."

Known to give of his time and energy to many, Warren refers to his hobby room as the "Inner Sanctum," full of models, awards, and projects in progress. "On our first meeting," wrote Keith, "he built all the parts for a Baby-ROG and covered it with microfilm, in one afternoon. Wow! Then he gave it to me!"

One of his students is Steve Brown, who went on to become a four-time World Champion in the F1D event. "Warren believes in people and has a positive attitude in all relationships," Keith wrote. "He goes out of his way to make life better for others."

Warren helped Keith establish the Boeing Employees' Aerodynamic Modeling Society (BEAMS) in Everett, Washington, a club devoted to inspiring youth and adults to design, build, and fly model airplanes together. "He mailed models to me," wrote Keith, "ready to fly, packed in boxes he made for shipping."

In the past 14 years, more than 115,000 youth and adults have seen Warren's models fly in BEAMS programs inside the Boeing hangar. The models include F1Ds, 18-inch helicopters, Baby-ROGs, Easy Bs, Manhattans, and Penny planes, but the crowd favorites are the ornithopters. He has built and flown more than 250 indoor and outdoor ornithopters of all sizes from 10 inches to 28 inches, inspiring members to build and fly their own models.

More recently, Warren has collaborated with Dr. Paul B. MacCready, building five prototype models for a government project. Dr MacCready wrote, "About four years ago, I conducted a seminar course which lured dozens of teenagers to creating radio-controlled flying models with tiny video cameras onboard, reading out on small TV sets.

"To acquaint the students with other models, I invited Warren to fly a number of indoor flying machines in a gymnasium. It was a remarkable, awe-inspiring experience. Warren had helped us out with other modeling ideas by constructing a number of rubber-powered models, stressing different techniques for stability and control."

Warren has not flown competitively for several years, but he retains his enthusiasm for aeromodeling. His contributions and mentoring have inspired others to continue promoting modeling to the next generation.

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