



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of **FRANK LAWRENCE LASHEK** 1916 – 2003



Written by RS (2015); Reformatted by JS (04/2019)

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*The following was submitted by Richard Sarpolus for Frank Lashek's nomination for the AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame. Frank Lashek was inducted into the AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame in 2017.*

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## **FRANK LAWRENCE LASHEK** **1916 - 2003**

### Career:

- Lifetime model airplane flier – Free Flight in the 1930s and 1940s, Control Line in the 1950s and 1960s, Radio Control in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.
- AMA member since the 1940s.
- In the 1950s, Frank held several AMA-certified National Control Line Jet Speed records.
- He won trophies at several AMA National Meets and New York Mirror Meets.
- He was one of the founders of the Jersey Coast Radio Control Club in 1962.
- In the 1950s, with a partner, their company Radio Control Headquarters produced single-channel radio gear. Frank would test their equipment in a Custom Cavalier at a local airport.
- Many times teamed with well-known model designer/editor/artist Cal Smith. Frank and Cal would do magazine construction articles on scale flying aircraft and boats. As a master with the DynaJet engine, Frank produced models of the F-86 Sabre, F9F Panther, and Convair XF-92A, powered by the enclosed pulse jet engine.
- Frank was a skilled RC model boat designer and builder, a member for many years of the Garden State Model Boaters Club.

An old friend of Frank's recounts how they started their model airplane flying in 1936, belonging to an organization earlier than the AMA, with dues of \$.50 a year. Frank's member number was 214. He also remembers Frank holding an AMA speed record of 145 mph for CL Jet Speed in the 1950s.

During World War II, he was in the Army Air Corps, serving as staff sergeant in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 392<sup>nd</sup> Bomber Squadron in England. Frank worked as an electric system mechanic on B-24 bombers, spending many long nights servicing the planes for their early morning missions over Germany. While waiting for the return of the bombers, always a modeler, he fashioned a model B-24 from pieces of Plexiglas, a beautiful polished model. While in a nearby town in England, he saw a German buzz bomb fly over his head, down the street, and into a church. He received the European Theatre Ribbon with Bronze Stars and the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal.

Frank was a full scale rated pilot, and over the years owned three aircraft. One was a Taylorcraft and one an Aeronca. He would take a young modeler with him in his light aircraft, with their models, to attend and fly at different model contests around the area. The young modeler told me they would navigate using Frank's railroad maps, "iron compass" navigation, common in those days.

Master craftsman Frank Lashek was a true lifelong did-it-all-himself modeler builder. He would design his own aircraft and boat projects, build them into beautiful models, fly them in competition events, and frequently be a high placing winner. And he would always provide a helping hand to other modelers to assist them with his skilled abilities.

When quarter scale/giant scale/gas engine models became popular, Frank built an excellent PT-19. It looked and flew so well that other modelers frequently wanted to buy it. Frank would sell it, not to make money, but he said, "I can always build another one." And he did.

Frank loved best the old time free flight modeling, so he joined the Society of Antique Modelers. This group reproduced the old time models, but with modern RC equipment installed. Frank built a Buzzard Bombshell and went to the competitions with it, not to win but for the camaraderie with other old modeling friends.

Frank was for many years a skilled carpenter, specializing in building construction and restoration work on classic Victorian homes.

This is only a partial list of Frank's published modeling articles. These were all done by Frank, teamed with Cal Smith, well-known model designer/author/artist:

- Convair XF-92A, *Air Trails Annual*, 1954
- Consolidated B-24, *Air Trails*, August 1954
- Martin P4M-1 Mercator, *Air Trails*, March 1954
- Stits Playboy, *American Modeler*, January 1957
- Grumman F9F Panther, unknown publication and date
- Nautilus, *Air Trails Hobbies*, September 1955
- Sea Going Bunker Boat, *Young Men*, February 1956

- Missile Ship, *American Modeler*, December 1955
- Forrestal, *American Modeler*, August 1958
- Savannah, *Popular Science*, December 1960?

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