



# The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of TIMOTHY (TIM) D. BAILIFF



Written by TDB (08/2018). Reformatted by JS (09/2018)

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*The following was written by Timothy D. Bailiff on August 27, 2018, and added to the AMA History Project in September 2018.*

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I flew into this world 64 years ago on May 13, 1954 at Queen of Angels Hospital, located in Los Angeles, CA. I consider myself blessed to not only have been born into a very loving family, but also one that was passionate about flying. My father, Daniel O. Bailiff, served in the United States Air Force, and as a civilian was a private pilot. He was also president of the local phone company flying club. My brother, Daniel E. Bailiff, served in the United States Air Force Reserves, was also a private pilot, and after finishing college become a commercial pilot, flying for United Airlines. He also introduced me to Laura, my beautiful flight attendant wife, now of 35 years. She, at that time, worked for United Airlines as well. My mother, Angelina Ann Bailiff, was a kind, spiritual woman that did her best to keep us all safe and protected. My Dad always said, "If I make it to heaven, it's because Angie got me there."

For as long as I can remember, there was an airplane in our family. Through the years we had a Cessna 120, Cessna 140, Porterfield, Cessna 172, and a Piper J-3 Cub. I learned to fly at a very young age, sitting on my Dad's lap, just the way many kids learned to drive a car. For me, flying somewhere was as common as driving. Needless to say, there was never any doubt in my mind that I too would become a private pilot the moment I could. On my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, I soloed in both my flight school's Cessna 150 and our family Cessna 172. After completing the mandatory flight training and then independently studying the recommended ground school material, I passed both the FAA written and flying exams. That coveted Private Pilot Certificate was finally mine! On the day I received my Single Engine Land rating, I was also checked out in my brother's J-3 Cub. Those were magical days for me and what fun we all had!

Growing up in an airplane family meant I naturally gravitated toward anything that flew. As a kid, that especially included model airplanes. I credit my brother, who was 10 years my senior, for sparking my interest in aeromodeling. He seemed to always be building and flying some type of model airplane. One of my first memories of Dan was of him test gliding a stick and tissue plane in our front yard. I later came to recognize that plane as a Guillow's P-38 Lightning. Dan particularly liked control line planes. I remember numerous occasions when he'd fired off one of his .049 engines in our garage. The noise of that screaming engine was deafening ...and I loved it. When the engine would finally sputter and stop, my ears rang for an hour. It was such fun! Plus, the smell of that burning fuel, with its distinctive castor oil aroma, lingered for the longest time. In my mind, I can still smell it to this day...

In retrospect, I suppose I was that typical "tag-along" little brother that might have bothered some older brothers, but not mine. Instead, he encouraged me to join in and be a part of whatever he and his buddies were doing, especially if it involved model planes. It was, in fact, Dan that first introduced me to the wonders of our local hobby shop.

In the early '60s I began building my own model planes. They were plastic planes at first, but as with all kids, my interests wandered and varied greatly. At one point I found myself assembling balsa planes. Even as a little kid, I soon realized that after the building was finished, balsa planes had the added bonus of being able to fly! From simple 5-cent, slide-together gliders to more complex stick and tissue models, I grew to love them all.

When I was 10, Dan gave me my first control line plane for Christmas. It was the classic Cox PT-19. By then, he had moved away to attend college elsewhere, so flying it was left up to me and my best friend Jon. How we struggled to have a successful first flight. That poor little plane crashed over and over and over again. Each time it hit the ground, parts and pieces flew in all directions. Fortunately, due to the "rubber band together" engineering, we were able to collect up all the parts, reassemble and try again.

My epiphany control line moment finally came the following summer. It occurred when Jon's older brother suggested we take off down wind. Although I knew that was the opposite from flying a full-size plane, it made all the difference. For the remainder of that summer we flew every day, from morning until night. We finally wore out that great little plane, but that was only the beginning!

In those days, the PT-19 came with a Cox .049, which had a metal fuel tank and mount attached. That .049, which still ran great, was used to power many different planes. My budget at that time was limited to my weekly allowance, so 1/2A planes were my primary focus. Carl Goldberg, Sig, Sterling, Testers and Cox were all names I became very familiar with. After building and flying numerous control line kit planes, I decided to try my hand at an original design. I followed a few basic aerodynamic principles and employed the control line set up techniques I had learned from building the kits. To my delight I was successful! It was a very simple plane, with a profile fuselage and a solid 1/4" thick balsa wing. With that Cox .049 screwed to its plywood firewall, it not only flew, but it flew well!! It was then that my love for designing and building model planes really took flight.

In the years that followed, I designed many 1/2A control line planes, including several designs powered by Cox .020s and even the mighty TD .010. I also experimented with control line rocket planes. Believe it or not, I even had one that staged! I had some real fun with several twin .049 powered designs. One twin engine plane included a third line throttle control. Another design I was particularly excited about was a control line glider. I had never seen one and thought it really unique. It was set up like any other control line plane except it was towed aloft and remained tethered to a powered plane, which had throttle control. This meant two people could fly at the same time and nobody had to watch from outside the flying circle or wait for their turn to fly.

As I grew older, my planes grew larger and my engines more powerful. My control lines became cables and my fun factor soared. My brother and I flew planes like the Cosmic Wind, Super Ring Master, Fokker D VII, Mustang, P-38 Lightning, and the Voodoo. I might add that my love for designing and flying the smaller 1/2A models continued as well.

While attending Junior High, I became the vice president of our school's model airplane club. While there, R/C planes suddenly caught my eye. I was so taken with them that when I turned

13, I asked my Dad to buy me a 3-channel Controilaire Galloping Ghost R/C system for my birthday. I was also given a Tri-Squire, which I proceed to build. Soon after, I joined a local R/C club called the March Hares. With guidance from the club members, I learned to fly my Tri-Squire as well as a Junior Falcon, School Boy, an Ugly Stick, plus a few original designs. What I also discovered was while many of the club members had a “go big or go home” attitude, I tended to lean the other way. Small planes were of particular interest to me. In fact, the smaller, the better.

Throughout high school and college, my love for modeling never ceased and I continued designing and flying R/C power planes. Eventually I started flying sailplanes as well. Gliders like the Pussy Cat, Gentle Lady, Oly II, Pioneer, Ridge Rat, Thermic 50, Thermic C and several more original designs all joined my squadron.

Fast forward now to 2008. My children were grown and I had retired after a 30 year career with AT&T. I had not been affiliated with any formal R/C flying clubs for many years, but friends and I met regularly to fly our creations at local schools and parks. Electric powered planes had become popular and I found great delight in their simplicity and reliability. R/C equipment had also become so reliable that crashes due to radio failures were very infrequent. The introduction of 2.4 GHz equipment also meant that mishaps caused by same frequency conflicts were virtually eliminated. Also to my delight, micro R/C technology was prevalent, so that would allow for even smaller airplane designs.

That year I had also experimented and been successful with converting a 3D Macaw X-Kite into an R/C bird. I had added a pusher motor and utilized a rather unique system of wing warping for control. Every time I flew my Macaw, it drew a crowd. The most exciting part of the project came when I presented my idea to the CEO of Brain Storm Products, X-Kite’s mother company. When we met, he naturally asked for a flying demonstration. We stepped outside and once airborne, I encouraged him and several other staff members to fly the bird. The Macaw was easy to fly, so even without any R/C flying experience they all seemed to enjoy themselves. My only concern was landing. That day our flying site was little more than a small open area in an industrial park. When it came time for me to land, the only grass available was a narrow strip of parkway. Although I had practiced landing many times, I knew this time I had only one chance to nail it. I carefully circled the bird down, slowly turned onto final and with all eyes watching, gently set it down on the grass, right in front of the CEO. The expression on his face said it all. Back inside things went well and after some negotiating, they bought my idea. With much anticipation I helped them launch their new line of “R/C Wildwings” which featured not only the Macaw, but also a Hawk. I was asked to fly the birds for several of their commercials and also join their sales reps in working a booth at the 2010 AMA Expo in Ontario, CA.

Also in 2008, I was invited to fly at a friend’s R/C club named the Valley Wide R/C Electric Club in Winchester, CA. There I was fortunate to meet many amazing people who shared my enthusiasm for R/C aircraft. One man in particular, Mr. Charles Mackey, took an interest in my airplane designs. Little did I know that he was very involved in the AMA, was a prolific designer and builder himself, plus the author of 32 [as of 2002] model airplane published works, including a book titled *Pioneers of Control Line Flying*. It was he who suggested I write and submit my first model airplane construction article. With a few writing tips, and a whole bunch of

encouragement, Charles helped me launch into the world of model airplane publications. I have now authored 20 articles. Who knew our friendship and my writing would span 10 years?

Currently, in 2018, I am the safety officer for our Valley Wide R/C Electric Club. Along with common sense safety, my motto is, "Have Fun!" If we aren't having a good time flying, then why fly? I love assisting the guys in our club and always enjoy helping when I can. I'm still very interested in small electrics. I like planes that are unique and interesting. I have designed a number of flying wings, rogalloos, and canards. First person view (FPV) is also another interest of mine. Having a pilot's eye view from inside an airborne model plane is truly amazing to me. Due to new rules and regulations I have recently acquired my amateur (ham) radio license, as well as registered with the FAA as a small UAS pilot.

As I've gotten older, I find myself becoming more nostalgic. Some of my more recent designs reflect this sentiment as they involve converting simple gliders and rubber powered planes, which I've loved since childhood, into electric R/C planes. Aeromodeling is a great hobby and I continue to enjoy the ride. With advances in R/C technology, I truly feel fortunate to be able to enjoy all that it has to offer. Who knows what new, exciting advances will be made in the near future? More fun stuff to come...

**My current list of publications is as follows:**

- 1) R/C Macaw Kite, *Back Yard Flyer*, March 2008
- 2) Pond E-Racer, *Electric Flight*, May 2011
- 3) 4-Mation, *Park Pilot*, Summer 2011
- 4) Front Yard Canard, *Model Aviation*, September 2011
- 5) Snow Bird, *Fly R/C*, May 2013
- 6) BOB, *Fly R/C*, June 2013
- 7) Blue Moon, *Fly R/C*, September 2013
- 8) Firecracker, *Fly R/C*, December 2013
- 9) Hudson Racer, *Fly R/C*, February 2104
- 10) Bye-Plane, *Fly R/C*, March 2014
- 11) Big Bird, *Fly R/C*, September 2014
- 12) Drone Racer, *Fly R/C*, November 2014
- 13) Simple Simon, *Fly R/C*, January 2015
- 14) Repurpose On Purpose, *Fly R/C*, May 2015
- 15) Baby Moon, *Fly R/C*, July 2015
- 16) Disc-Go, *Fly R/C*, December 2015
- 17) Cub-Cake, *Model Aviation*, March 2016
- 18) FYI, *Fly R/C*, April 2016
- 19) 2-Fan Toucan, *Park Pilot*, Spring 2017
- 20) Tiny Tim, *Park Pilot*, Summer 2018

**Photos of some of my modeling projects:**



*2008: R/C Macaws*



*2011: 4-Mation*



*2011: Front Yard Canard*



***2011: B.O.B.***



***2013: Firecracker***



*2014: Big Bird*



*2014: Bye-Plane*



*2015 Simple Simon*



*2015 Cub-Cake*



*2017: 2-Fan Toucan*



*2018 Tiny Tim*



*2018: Tim Bailiff with the Wild Bill Netzeband Annual Memorial Award*

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