



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of ROBERT (BOB) FIORENZE



Written by AMA staff (10/2008); Formatted by JS (01/2009)

The following was published in the January 2009 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Bob was a 2008 Model Aviation Hall of Fame inductee.

Bob Fiorenze of Maitland, Florida, has been involved in aeromodeling since 1958. He is perhaps best known as the first to fly a turbine-powered model aircraft (JPX Turbine) in the United States. Bob was appointed to AMA's original Turbine Safety Committee along with former AMA president Don Lowe.

Bob has held his FAA A&P Mechanics Rating since 1969, and earned his pilot's license for both helicopters and airplanes in 1974. At one time he worked for a major airline and much later Bob built his own helicopter, a 1997 Rotorway Exec 90, that won the Sun 'n Fun Grand Champion prize. He described the project on his Web site:

“On September 12, 1997, the first flights were completed with the Rotorway Exec 90. After many final adjustments and checks, the Exec 90 was taken up to altitude and flown around the airport area. This project has taken a little over a year. There are many enhancements not called for by the factory to make this an exceptional bird. The Rotorway puts a practical, low-cost helicopter within the reach of someone who is willing to do the assembly from kit form. It is a two-place helicopter that runs on standard automotive fuel and has about the same climb rate and cruising speed of a Cessna 152. The Rotorway of course will fly much slower and land almost anywhere.”

Bob has been an active competitor in the model aircraft field, winning the 1983 and 1985 Scale Nats with his A-4 Skyhawk ducted-fan jet and his Black Bunny F-4 Phantom twin-ducted-fan jet respectively. Flying an F-18 Hornet twin-ducted-fan jet, Bob placed first in the 1988 US Scale Masters, the 1989 Top Gun Invitational, and the 1989 Scale Nats.

Nominated for the Model Aviation Hall of Fame by Wallace Zober and Vinny Caratozzolo, Bob is considered a model jet legend, well known for his high-speed, low-altitude passes. Considered a master builder and flier, he is in great demand as a demo pilot, performing during half times and breaks at air shows across the US.

His modeling interests are varied and in addition to Scale and jets, he enjoys helicopters, warbirds, and electrics. His building and flying skills have received recognition at contests, fly-ins, jet rallies, and national events.

Bob currently owns Bob Fiorenze Model Products, specializing in jets, electrics, helicopters, and giant electric models. Products sold include the T-38 Talon, his Air Speed Indicator, and Proportional Hydraulic Brakes. Bob also does test flying and consulting work for Bob Violett Models.

As an accomplished author and photographer, Bob has been a contributing writer for a number of publications, including *MA*, *RCM*, *Flying Models*, and *Scale R/C Modeler*.

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