



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of RICHARD C. (DICK) ALLEN

Born September 2, 1928

Modeler since 1938

AMA #9174



Written & Submitted by RCA (10/2002), AMA staff (12/2011); Transcribed & Edited by SS (10/2002), Reformatted by JS (08/2009); Updated by JS (12/2011)

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## Career:

- 1951: Started flying Radio Control
  - 1953: Tied with Walt Good for third place in Radio Control at his first Nationals meet
  - First president and founding father of the Aeroguidance Society (AGS)
  - Designed model airplanes including the Lancer (with Ralph Jackson), the Stark Shark, Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey, the Mini MAX 1200Z and the Miles Sparrowhawk
  - Also designed the Mousseler, a quieter and more powerful model airplane muffler
  - Placed first and second in Radio Control events at many Nationals
  - Published various construction articles in modeling magazines
  - Organized and directed the first AGS annual AMA contest and the first World War I RC Aircraft Jamboree
  - 2011: Received AMA Hall of Fame award
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**1951:** Got into Radio Control while stationed at Wright Field. Jack Port was my mentor.

**1952:** First major contest, Air Force Worldwide Model Airplane Championships, second place RC

**1953:** First U.S. Nationals (Nats); tied with Walt Good for third place in RC

**1954:** First president and “founding father” of the Aeroguidance Society (AGS)

**1956:** Co-designer with Ralph Jackson of Lancer for class I or II. Principle organizer and first contest director of the AGS annual AMA contest; this meet has become the longest running club-sponsored pattern meet in the country (47 years).

**1957:** First place in Nats’ class I (rudder only) Radio Control with Lancer. Also a 1996 replica for the Vintage RC Society.

**1958:** Second place in Nats’ class I Radio Control with Lancer.

**1961:** Second place in Nats’ Radio Control open (do not remember which event).

**1963:** Designed the Stark Shark for class II or III. Posted highest single flight score in class III at the 1963 Nats. Ralph Jackson won class II at the 1963 Nats with his Stark Shark.

**1964:** Construction article for class II and II Stark Shark published in American Modeler magazine.

**1967:** Principle organizer and first contest director of the World War I RC Aircraft Jamboree at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. This AMA contest ran for 30 years at which time (in 1996) it was the longest-running club-sponsored scale contest in the country. It continues today as a scale fly-in.

**1969 and 1970:** Second place in the AMA Nats' Radio Control Pylon II racing.

**1977 and 1979:** First place in maneuvers event at Rhinebeck RC Jamboree.

**1980:** Construction article for 60-inch Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey published in Model Builder magazine.

**1992 and 1993:** Design and development of better mufflers. Published the Mousseler, which reduced the sound while increasing the power of most .40 to .60 glow engines.

**1996:** Construction article for 80-inch Mini MAX 1200Z published in Model Airplane News magazine.

**2000:** Construction article for 87-inch Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey published in Model Airplane News magazine.

**Present (2002):** Construction article pending for 88-inch Miles Sparrowhawk.

*(signed) Dick Allen  
October 5, 2002*

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*The following information about Dick Allen ran in the Model Airplane News 1962 Annual as part of an article titled "Who's Who in Radio Control" by Edward Lorenz. A photograph accompanied the article.*

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Dick is well known in the east and in Nats competition and New York Mirror Meet flying. He lived in Appalachian, New York, has two children, spends eight hours a week on Radio Control and finds flying to be the most interesting phase of the hobby. His regular line of work is that of quality control engineer for IBM. He has been building models for 17 years and Radio Control models for nine years. He predicts a new definition of intermediate in the coming year with rudder, elevator, and engine only; proportional control, retracting gears and combat flying will be the thing within five years. Favorite models: multi, scale, intermediate and pylon, and he has many trophies to prove it.

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*The following information about Dick Allen was written to run with his Miles Sparrowhawk article, which was pending publication in 2002.*

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Born in Elmira, New York, Dick Allen cannot remember a time when he did not love airplanes. He built gliders and rubber-powered models in grade school and high school and his first U-

Control models in high school. He was a teenager during World War II and went to Lehigh University right after World War II. There, while earning a degree in engineering physics, he discovered the Fox .35 and began entering U-Control stunt competitions. He served in the Air Force from 1950 to 1954. It was while working in the physics lab at Wright Field that he met Jack Port, who was to become his mentor in RC. He tied Walt Good for third place at the 1953 Nats and won Class I (rudder-only) at the 1957 Nats. He helped organized Radio Control clubs in Elmira and Endicott, New York. He helped organize and was the first contest director for the Aeroguidance Society pattern meets as well as the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree. These meets went on to become the longest-running club-sponsored pattern and scale meets, respectively, in the U.S.

Dick worked for over 30 years as an IBM engineer. Now retired, he spends summers in Endicott, New York and winters in Naples, Florida.

Dick is married, has four sons, a daughter and five grandchildren. His favorite Radio Control activities are flying and designing. Recent construction articles include the miniMAX 1200Z (November 1996, Model Airplane News magazine) and the Junkers J-10 Tin Donkey (January 2000, Model Airplane News magazine). He thinks the best part of the hobby is the people one meets.

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*Dick Allen wrote the following article, which appeared in one of the Radio Control magazines in late 1996 or early 1997.*

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## **How the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree Began**

By Dick Allen

*Written September 17, 1996*

This year, 1996, was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what has become one of the largest and longest-running Radio Control Scale contests in the world, consistently drawing about 100 entrants. Since I was the contest director for the first one (September 23, 1967) and have flown in 28 of them since then, I have frequently been asked how it all began. This is that history.

In the fall of 1966, I was living in Poughkeepsie, New York, having moved there recently from Endicott, New York. Three of my friends from Endicott's Aeroguidance Society (AGS), Byron Lichtenwalner, Bob Noll and Bob Underkofler, stopped by to see me after having just attended a World War I air-show at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. They were excited about the show and thought it would be a really neat idea to have a Radio Control contest there for scale models of World War I aircraft. We brainstormed the idea at length.

At the next meeting of my club – the IBM Radio Control Model Club of Poughkeepsie (now the Mid-Hudson RC Society) – I proposed that the club should sponsor a Radio Control meet at the Aerodrome. While there were some negative comments regarding the fact that the club had never sponsored any sort of contest, etc., before, the general reaction was positive, providing we could get the Aerodrome's support.

By the time we could set up a meeting with Cole Palen (the Aerodrome's owner and founder) winter was fast approaching. Cole not only accepted the idea, he was enthusiastic about it. He

offered to help out and to donate some World War I aircraft instruments for trophies. Cole's friend and fellow Aerodrome pilot Dick King (both of them model builders) was equally supportive of the idea.

So, we went back to the Poughkeepsie club with the good news. By this time, the club's enthusiasm was starting to build and they agreed to take on the project. We formed a rule committee consisting of myself (chair), Bruce Blake, Ed Lorenz, Bud Standley, and Jim Taylor. I told my AGS friends that the meet was a go and asked them to send us their thoughts on rules. In response I received a letter from Bill Underkofler (probably the most talent all-around RC'er that I will ever meet) summarizing the AGS thoughts. They proposed in some detail an aerobatic event with a small bonus for scale appearance. I discussed this with Cole Palen who showed me a book with many authentic World War I maneuvers described and drawn. Some of these maneuvers were added, the scale bonus was defined, and this became the Rhinebeck World War I Maneuvers event.

The rules committee, meeting in my home in Poughkeepsie, decided that we wanted more than just one event. To be successful, we felt we had to appeal to anyone who liked to fly World War I airplanes – from museum scale to just-recognizable scale. We also decided that non-scale airplanes – such as Das Ugly Sticks – would not be allowed. To that end, we established three more events:

1. AMA Scale – Using AMA rules, but limited to pre-1919 aircraft and using any five maneuvers from the World War I Maneuvers event. Some in the club wanted this to be the only event, but I believe, had we done so, the Rhinebeck RC Jamboree would have long since disappeared.
2. Team Combat – Simulated combat between two military aircraft. This event was later replaced with a Freestyle event.
3. Balloon Burst, Bomb Drop and Spot Landing – Later re-named the Mission event.

All planed entered were required to have proof of scale, but only AMA scale and World War I Maneuvers planes were judged for scale appearance.

We knew we would have to have strong support from the AGS, but realized that to be successful we would also have to draw in participants from other clubs. To encourage that, I wrote an information sheet describing philosophy, the events, and the Aerodrome. This was sent to magazines, clubs, and individuals in February 1967. The rules were finalized and distributed in March of 1967.

The day of that first meet (September 23, 1967) dawned bright and sunny. George Buso (he of the golden throat) had initiated his now-famous Anti-Rain Dance, which has for 30 years kept the Jamboree from being rained out. We were gratified by a total of 17 entrants, five of whom were from my old club, the AGS. I had been told that we would need only one balloon for the Balloon Burst. Imagine everyone's surprise when Jim Hoover nailed the balloon on the first pass of his first flight! He was flying a Halberstadt, which some "experts" had predicted would not fly because the horizontal tail's area was only 10% of the wing's area. Dire predictions of carnage inflicted by the Aerodrome's plane-eating trees also turned out to be unfounded; only one of the 17 planes crashed.

As I look back upon the 30-year history of the Rhinebeck Jamboree, I cannot help but reflect upon why this scale contest has been so successful, while the ordinary club-sponsored weekend scale contests – once so common – have all but died out. I have to conclude that it is because all of today's AMA scale events (except Fun Scale) require a really museum piece replica of a specific full-scale aircraft to be competitive. While this has brought such extravaganzas as Top Gun, Scale Masters and the Nationals to new highs in terms of aircraft authenticity and magazine coverage, it has left the vast majority of Radio Control scale flyers out in the cold with no place to turn but to the non-competitive IMAA. Most scale flyers are just not interested in spending more time on rivets, seam lines, full-cockpit details, exact color schemes, and endless documentation searched than they do on flying. The Rhinebeck RC Jamboree has provided a Big Tent with something for every scale flyer interested in early "aeroplanes."

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*The following was printed in the January 2012 issue of Model Aviation magazine, in the AMA News section, under Model Aviation Hall of Fame Class of 2011. He is a 2011 AMA Hall of Fame inductee.*

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### **Richard C. "Dick" Allen**

"I wonder if my parents knew what they were doing when they gave me the name that resulted in those initials."

*-Richard C. Allen*

Richard began his modeling career in grammar school. His first attempts were in gliders and CL. He continued with his CL activities while in college flying *Ringmasters* powered by Fox .35 Stunt engines.

Richard graduated in 1950 with a degree in engineering physics and went on to a career with the US Air Force. During this time he began competing in CL events.

While in his tour with the Air Force at Wright Field, Richard met Jack Port, a pioneer in RC flying. The year was 1952 and Jack quickly became a mentor to Richard, encouraging him to enter RC competition.

In 1952, Richard entered the Air Force World Championships and took second place in RC Stunt. Then in 1953 the Air Force sent him to the National Aeromodeling Championships where he tied for third place with Walt Good in RC. Richard continued to fly CL, but RC was quickly moving to the forefront.

Richard took first place in RC Rudder Only during the 1957 AMA Nationals. He attended again in 1958 and 1961, taking second place both years. Richard has entered and won awards in numerous other contests since his foray into competition. Some of his victories include the World War I Jamboree, Aero Radio Club of Syracuse (ARCS) 11<sup>th</sup> Pattern Meet, Vintage Radio Control Society (VR/CS), and the Southwest Florida International Miniature Aircraft Club.

After his Air Force retirement in 1954, Richard became the primary founder of the Elmira Flyoneers of Elmira, New York. Later that year he also created the Aero Guidance Society (AGS) Inc., of Vestal, New York, and served as its first president.

Richard also served on the club's board of directors a number of times and often acted as the club's flight instructor. This club continues to operate today and in 2005 was the recipient of the AMA President's Award for service to the AMA.

While part of AGS, Richard organized the first Pattern contest under its sponsorship. He served as CD for the event its first 10 years running. Today this contest is still active and is the longest, continuously running, club-sponsored Pattern contest in America.

In September of 1967, Richard worked with Cole Palen, owner and founder of the old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in Rhinebeck, New York, to establish the first World War I RC Aircraft Jamboree and served as its CD. Pilots were encouraged to dress as WWI fliers, and the event was featured in magazines and newspapers. Forty-four years later this event is still being held. Richard even published an article "How the Rheinbeck Jamboree Began" in the April 1997 issue of *Model Airplane News*.

Throughout his model aviation career, Richard did some experimentation and developed some of his own designs. He invented the *Mousseler*, a muffler design based around an empty can from mousse hair dressing. The *Mousseler* increased rpm and decreased noise output for .40 and .60-size glow engines.

Richard designed the *Stark Shark* – a success for him and the number of modelers who built it and entered it into competitions – and published it in the March/April 1964 *American Modeler*. Richard also designed and published the *Junkers J-10 Monoplane*, the *miniMax*, the *Sparrowhawk*, and several other RC models.

Richard is the recipient of many awards. In 1976, he received the trailblazer award for designing and contracting an access road to the AGS club flying field. Richard received the Dr. Walt Good Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003 and the Vintage R/C Society Hall of Fame award in 2005.

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