



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DR. RALPH C. BROOKE, DDS



Transcribed by JS (09/2006)

The following was printed in the April 1996 issue of Model Aviation magazine.

Dr. Ralph C. Brooke, DDS, formally of Seattle, Washington, passed away on June 6, 1989. Dr. Brooke practiced dentistry from 1959 until failing health forced him to retire in 1976. Interestingly, he firmly believed that his success in dentistry and as a dental educator was directly related to the experience he gained through modeling.

Ralph began his modeling experience at the age of six near Kansas City where he was born. From the very beginning, he honed his intensely competitive nature by entering free flight contests in and around the Kansas City area. In 1944 in Missouri, he was given an award for the “longest flight by a Boy Scout.”

He was introduced to Radio Control flying while a student at the University Of Washington School Of Dentistry. From that point in 1959, Ralph competed in literally hundreds of RC Aerobatics events ranging from local to highly prestigious international ones. His performance on a national level in 1962 and 1964 resulted in his being a member of the 1963 and 1965 United States World Championship Pattern teams. He responded to the challenge by winning first place in Genk, Belgium in 1963 and repeating that performance in Ljunjbyhed, Sweden in 1965, thus becoming the first person to win consecutive world championships in FAI Pattern competition.

Ralph helped to organize the Radio Aero Modelers of Seattle (RAMS) and subsequently served in a wide variety of capacities, including helping to find, purchase, and develop a club flying field. In 1964, he founded the RAMS RC Symposium. This winter technical and model show has now evolved into the hobby trade show called Northwest Expo. This event is held annually on the first weekend of February in Puyallup, Washington.

Ralph founded, organized, and managed the Northwest Kidney Benefit Model Airshow, which raised thousands of dollars for the Northwest Kidney Center. He received the Pan American Award for modeling achievements in 1976. In 1982, he was awarded the AMA Distinguished Service Award for 20 years of service, including representing District XI on the Radio Control Contest Board throughout that time.

As his health deteriorated due to long-term diabetes, Ralph was no longer able to practice dentistry, or build or fly models. He did stay a part of the modeling community by starting a business in 1979, producing model products. This business continued until 1985 when he could no longer manage it due to failing health.

Ralph participated in one classic event when he was called upon to fly a Scale F4U Corsair from the deck of a "scale" aircraft carrier underway on Lake Washington. This "ship" consisted of a 15 x 40-foot deck with superstructure built on a buoy-tender hull. Over a two-day period, Ralph made several take-offs and arrested landings. The achievement simply underscored his abilities and competitive nature.

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