



# The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of GEORGE BUSO

**Modeler, Designer, Competitor, Writer,  
Administrator, FAI Team manager**

January 28, 1924 – 2013

Modeler starting in 1934

AMA #927



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Written & Submitted by GB (03/1997); Transcribed by NR (01/1998); Edited by SS (2002), updated by JS (10/2007, 11/2013), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

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## Career:

- 1948: Started and organized model club in Delhi, N.Y.
- 1993/ 1995: Chief Judge at Muncie Scale Nationals
- Assisted in the planning of the “Celebration of Eagles”
- Produced and managed the annual Rhinebeck Jamboree for 25 years
- Represented the (AMA) United States for five years as a voting delegate to the Federation Aeronautic International Aeromodeling Commission (CIAM) in Paris, France
- Scale competitions won: 1st place at Toledo, Ohio and 1st place FAI Scale (F4C) at Westover, Massachusetts

## Honors:

- 1977: Voted Life Member of the Mid-Hudson Radio Controlled (RC) Society
  - 1991: AMA Superior Service Award
  - 1996: AMA Fellow
  - 1997: AMA (2nd) Superior Service Award for 15 years service to District II and for over five years representing the United States as voting delegate to the CIAM in Paris, France
  - 1998: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
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## Early Efforts in Modeling

**1934:** First model airplane in memory was Curtis *Robin*-type, built with 1/16-in. square balsa wood, tissue, banana oil and rubber powered.

**1939:** First really successful rubber-powered Free Flight was Scientific, *The Flea*. I remember most vividly the small dummy engines. It was lathe turned from wood, painted silver and employed a ratchet on propeller hub and a flat clock spring to duplicate the sound of a gas motor. *The Flea* flew consistently and I chased it consistently.

During this period, I concentrated on *Korda*-type models and balsa hand launched gliders.

**1939:** Saved pennies and bought first gas engine: Syncro Bee. Also first gas model was a Megow design by Maxwell Bassett, which was later named *The Cardinal*. Have saved the original plans for fuselage and tail construction. However, have lost plans for wing construction many years ago.

**1939 - 1941:** Concentrated on Free Flight models and meets in the Syracuse, New York area. Flew *Cleveland Viking*, *Interceptor*, *Brooklyn Dodger*, powered with Ohlsson 23's and Cannon 29.

Competed against Harold deBolt and his original *Blitzkrieg*. He won; I lost.

**1941 - 1946:** During Navy duty, I married my high school sweetheart. She actually had helped in “chasing” after the *Brooklyn Dodger* and seemed to enjoy Free Flight airplanes. I figured that we would get along very well. We celebrated 50 years of a model airplane-type marriage in 1996.

In addition to re-entering college, designed a few models, I became interested in Control Line, which was becoming popular.

### **Designing, Building and Flying**

**1947:** First Control Line model was detailed, scale reproduction of Grumman *Hellcat* (still had the Navy influence). It was constructed on a kitchen table while I attended college again.

Had not flown Control Line before and no experienced modeler to help. But, I had been a Navy pilot and said I could fly anything, especially a model airplane – certainly some misplaced confidence.

After the engine started, the *F6F* took off, flew uncontrolled for about one-half circle and demolished itself on the college football field.

Purchased three “almost new” engines from a college friend with G.I. Bill money, which my wife had earmarked for food. Shortly thereafter, became a paperhanger to earn enough money to finish college with wife and one child.

The engines were a DeLong 30 Glo, a McCoy .60 Red Head and an Ohlsson 23 still in the original box. Used each in the next few years, and learned to fly Control Line reasonably well.

**1948:** Started model club in Delhi, New York, with about 10 modelers, each learning how to cope with Control Line flying without instruction. Became a very motivated self-taught group.

Designed some simple model airplanes but did not compete during this period.

Finally, constructed some Smoothies, deBolt's Stunt Wagons. “Madman” Yates became idol.

**1952:** In Hyde Park, New York, Edward J. Lorenz introduced himself when he spotted my powder blue *Smoothie* on front lawn; he lived around corner and authored Radio Controlled (RC) column for Model Air Plane News, at that time. We learned that we were both employed by IBM Corporation and became lasting friends.

My interest in radio controlled model airplanes soared at that moment. Subsequently, Ed Lorenz gave me an experimental two-tube (RK-61's) receiver kit to install in my hastily built Live Wire Trainer.

Each member of our club was noted for bringing to the flying field a new model on weekends – crashing, repairing during the week, and crashing again on the following weekend. I noted later in life that most of the early enthusiasts followed the same pattern of “build-crash-repair-crash.”

**1956:** Finally, I found remarkable success with a Veco *Smog Hog* and Dr. Walt Good's *T.T.P.W.* using de Bolt servos. Demonstrated first throttle control ever used at our field. Made slow, throttled-back “fly-byes” and actually landed consistently without crashing. A few spectators cheered and I never turned back.

Throughout this period, our club members assisted Ed Lorenz in experimenting with the first available Ni-Cads manufactured by Sonotone Corporation. Actually melted the plastic housing on two servos, when the brass contacts shorted. We made first battery chargers from various parts found in scrap bins at I.B.M. Corporation.

Built and flew Live-Wire models – *Cruiser*, *Champion*, *Bipe* and a *Pursuit*, as well as several *Smog Hogs*. Did not engage in competition during this period, but attended the famous Mirror Meet at Floyd Bennett Field as a spectator. This was the highlight of yearly activities.

**1963:** Began pattern competition in earnest with kit models such as Orion, Taurus, Acrobat, Intruder (scratch built), and Phil Kraft's *Kwick Flies*. Placed top five several times in East Coast events. Won third place at the Glenview Nationals (Nats) in the early 1970s.

**1973:** Designed pattern model named *Configurator III* with .60-power and 62-in. wingspan. Also noted that to be a consistent winner one must practice constantly because winning required 90% pilot skill and 10% airplane design.

**1976:** With the help of some three-view drawings from Piper Aircraft, I scratch-built a twin engine Piper *Navajo 300* with 84-in. wingspan. Placed first in Sport Scale event at the Nats in Dayton, Ohio.

**1977:** *Navajo* places first at WRAMS show in White Plains, N.Y.

**1979:** At the Nats in Lincoln, Nebraska, the *Navajo* model placed first in Sport Scale and qualified for the U.S. team for the world championships scheduled for Ottawa, Canada in 1980. However, while practicing for the Ottawa event, the *Navajo* crashed and could not be repaired in time (five days before), and sadly, I personally called Bob Karlsson in Delaware to have him prepare for his trip to the world championships. The U.S. team placed second.

**1980:** Designed and experimented with a large pattern airplane with 84-in. wingspan. Model was eventually named the *Big One*. It flew the pattern low and slow, while everyone else flew large maneuvers with great speed. Thus, *Big One* never became popular. Looking back, maybe the

design was 10 years too soon.

Made last attempt at pattern competition at the 1991 Nats. Placed 20th out of 20 in the master's class. Became instantly nostalgic about pattern models and was determined to concentrate on Scale.

**1990:** My *Nieuport 28* (highly modified Proctor kit) won first place in Precision Scale at the Toledo, Ohio, Weak Signals exposition. In addition, it received the special director's award for Technical Achievement with its finely detailed Gnome engine.

**1992:** *Nieuport 28* model placed seventh at the annual Top Gun event. It received the second highest static score in a field of 60 participants.

*Nieuport* won first place in FAI (F4C) Scale at the Westover, Mass. Nats.

**1995:** Became involved in Vintage RC movement with an original (but recovered) deBolt *Acrobat*, a *Taurus* reproduction and a *Smog Hog*, using original 1969 Super Tiger 51 engines.

Participated in IMAA Giant Scale events between 1990 and 1996 with *Nieuport* and *Navajo*.

### **Published Articles and Reports**

**1974:** *American Aircraft Modeler*: December issue, pages 40 through 45. Construction instructions and plans for *Configurator III*. Model was a state-of-the art pattern model with .60 power, foam wings, Pro-Line retracts, epoxy finish.

**1982:** *Flying Models*: November issue, pages 20 through 26. Construction article for large pattern model named *Big One*. Daughter-in-law, Teresa Buso, was featured on the cover, with the original *Big One*.

**1989:** *Model Aviation*: February, pages 85 through 94 and pages 190 and 191. Authored report on FAI Scale World Championships held in Gorizia, Italy. Served as Judge.

**1991:** *Model Aviation*: February, pages 86 through 93. Co-authored report with Mike Scott that detailed the FAI Scale World Championships conducted in Warsaw, Poland. Served as team manager.

Same issue featured a cover photograph, which was submitted with above report. Photo was of Raymond Torres with his third place Beechcraft *T-44A*.

### **Administrative Contributions**

**1956** - Helped organize the IBM Radio Control Model Club in Poughkeepsie, New York. Later, this group became The Mid-Hudson Radio Control Society, Inc. This club is noted for

sponsoring the annual Rhinebeck Jamboree.

**1967:** Helped to plan and organize the first Rhinebeck Jamboree. Served as Contest Director for 14 years beginning in 1969.

**1972 - 1975:** Member of Radio Control Contest Board. Concentration was on pattern events.

**1974:** Served as Contest Director for the Scale World Championships at Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey.

**1978:** Team manager for the United States Scale Teams (both F4B and F4C) at the FAI World Championships in Woodvale, England. Most vivid memory of events includes the complete rebuilding of Steve Sauger's Fairchild between rounds 1 and 2. Roland Baltes and Steve used.

**1981 - 1986:** I served as the voting U.S. delegate to the CIAM. Attended annual meetings in Paris, France with AMA delegation.

**1982:** Static and flight judge for Scale World Championships in Reno, Nevada.

**1986:** Chief Judge at the Scale World Championships in Oslo, Norway.

**1988:** Judge for Scale World Championships in Gorizia, Italy.

**1989:** Appointed Associate Vice President for District II, which includes New Jersey and New York State.

Chief Judge (F4C) in Dayton, Ohio, for Scale team selection program.

**1990:** Team manager for U.S. Scale Team competing in Warsaw, Poland.

**1992:** Served on jury (F4C) for Scale World Championships in Muncie, Indiana.

**1993:** Chief judge (F4C) Muncie, Indiana for Scale team selection program. Team competed in the Netherlands in 1994.

**1995:** Chief Judge (F4C) Muncie, Indiana, for Scale team selection program. Team competed in Perigueux, France in 1996.

**1996:** Assisted in planning the "Celebration of Eagles" at Muncie, Indiana. Son, Steve Buso, designed place mats, which were used as souvenirs of the Modeler's Banquet held on July 6.

## **Personal Recognition**

**1977:** Voted Life Member of the Mid-Hudson Radio Control Society.

**1991:** Received AMA Superior Service Award. “In recognition of efforts for having collectively produced and managed the annual Rhinebeck Jamboree throughout the past 25 years.”

**1996:** Received AMA membership award in the grade of Fellow. Presented in Toledo, Ohio at the Weak Signals exposition, by AMA President David Brown and Vice President John Grigg.

**1997:** Received second AMA Superior Service Award. “In recognition of over 15 years of varied service to District III and for over five years representing the United States as voting delegate to the CIAM in Paris, France.

## Personal Background

- AMA # 927
- Born January 28, 1924
- Served in Navy - World War II - Pilot, PBY Catalina - PBM Mariner - PB4Y2 Privateer
- Master’s Degree; University of Maryland in 1951
- Retired from IBM Corp. in 1984, after 33 years
- Married, 3 children, youngest son, Steve Buso, became very active in Control Line Stunt, designing building and finishing techniques.

*(Signed) George Buso 3/1997*

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