



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of ROBERT O. (BOB) DAILEY

Born August 9, 1929 Started modeling in 1947
AMA #720387



Written & Submitted by FC (09/1999); Transcribed by NR (09/1999); Edited by SS (2002); Reformatted by JS (2011, 2012)

Career:

- A pioneer of precision aerobatics
- Skilled Control Line and Free Flight flyer and competitor
- Developed the I-Beam wing with the flapped NACA-0018 airfoil, and the all flying tail.
- 1949-1951: He had a genius for designing U-Control stunt models that won many contests during.
- Hundreds of beautiful classic I-Beam stunters are still being built and flown

Honors:

- 1998: Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association Hall of Fame

The following biography was submitted by Mr. Fred Carnes who was acting as Mr. Dailey's biographer, with note: "Subject: Bob Dailey, Inventor of the I-Beam Wing I am pleased to forward the following history and biographical data on Robert Owen (Bob) Dailey--stunt pioneer and father of the I-beam wing. Fred Carnes"

History

Bob Dailey was a competitor in Control Line stunt and Free Flight during the late 1940s and early 1950s. He won many first places at contests in the Midwest around Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Bob won two Michigan state championships and open stunt at the 1949 Plymouth Internationals and 1949 AMA Nationals (Nats) using a revolutionary flapped, I beam stunter with an all-flying tail. He invented the I-beam wing, the spar-mounted torsion bar landing gear, all-flying tail and goose necked vented stunt fuel tank. He pioneered the use of the flapped NACA 0018 airfoil for stunt, inverted and cowled engines, wheel pants on landing gears and twin-engined stunters. Truly ahead of his time, Bob perfected an engine muffler and used engine pressure to inject oil to produce smoke. Bob flew exhibitions with one stunter in each hand, flying the complete stunt pattern with each plane!

Bob Dailey's legacy as a fierce competitor and innovative designer was passed on to other modelers in the Detroit Michigan area, the Toledo and Cleveland, Ohio areas and the Indianapolis, Indiana area. Sam Dehelean's Bugs (Canadian National winner), Rolland MacDonald's Detrouiter (2nd Open, 1954 Nats), James Ebejer's Neptune (First Senior, 1953 Ply. Internats), Art Pawloski's Atom (First Senior 1957 and 1958 Nats), Bill Werwage's Ares (First Senior, 1959 Nats), Steve Wooley's Argus (1960 World Championships most beautiful plane), Charlie Lickliter's Ballerina (2nd Open, 1962 Nats) and a host of other I-beam stunters have their origins in the genius of Bob Dailey. These airplanes and many other I-beam stunters through the years have won or placed high in world, national and international stunt competitions.

After a highly successful career as a crop duster, Bob Dailey is now retired in Amarillo, Texas. The designs he inspired are true classics and still being built and flown. His novel I-beam method of wing construction is still being used today.

Biographical Data

Bob Dailey was born March 17, 1927 in El Paso, Texas and lived for a while in Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Detroit. He graduated from high school in 1945 and was drafted into the Navy where he served one year, one month and one day. In 1947, Bob was a member of the Royal Oak Cloud Busters model club and worked in a hobby shop in Ferndale, Michigan. Bob became an avid modeler competing in both Free Flight and stunt events. During 1948, he started reading articles and doing research to develop more competitive models. He designed his own models from scratch rather than building or modifying kits. His models were just built, without first drawing plans.

He went to every contest within driving range of Detroit and competed to win. Through trial and error, he developed his ideas into successful models. By 1949, Bob had developed the I-beam wing with a flapped NACA 0018 airfoil, all flying tail and honed his flying skills to a fine edge. For the next three years, he set the standard for stunt design and flying in the Detroit area. He could fly any way the judges wanted with precision. Bob became so good at stunt flying other flyers simply would not fly at some of the contests he would enter. By 1952, Bob had stopped entering as a contestant and started flying exhibitions before and after contests.



About the end of 1952, Bob Dailey abruptly stopped his modeling to get a technical education and go into full-scale aviation. Bob saw an article on crop dusting in Air Trails magazine and decided that was what he wanted to do for a career. He got his private pilot's license, bought two Fairchild trainers (PT-19 and PT-23), then went to the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma where he earned his Airplane and Powerplant licenses. Soon Bob earned his commercial pilot's license and became a crop duster, which he did for over 30 years.

Bob accumulated over 18,000 flying hours, almost all of it as a crop duster, and he never crashed an airplane. Bob's flying career was ended by a stroke in 1986.

Bob Dailey's genius as a designer and his skills as a stunt flyer were picked up by members of the Detroit

Strathmoor model club who turned them into a series of fabulously beautiful and successful I-beam stunters of the mid to late 1950s. Those models inspired many other I-beam models that won Nats and World Championships during the 1960s. Bob Dailey's many contributions to stunt

flying make *him* one of the true pioneers of what is now precision aerobatics. His legacy continues to this day in the hundreds of beautiful classic I-beam stunters still being built and flown.

(Submitted by Fred Carnes)

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