



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of BERT C. DUGAN

Started modeling in 1931  
AMA # 26271



Edited by JF (03/2004), Updated by JS (08/2007)

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## Career:

- Began building models at age 6, built models for display at Kress' Department Store, Blytheville, Arkansas
  - Flew gas models as a teenager, often from a plane in flight
  - Entered the U.S. Air Force at age 17, serving for over 30 years
  - 1967-1971: Flew with the U.S. Air Force Modeling Team World Champions
  - Organized model clubs in U.S., as well as in Japan and the Philippines
  - 1981-1999: AMA Scale judge
  - 1981-1998: Served as Secretary/Treasurer of National Association of Scale Aeromodelers (NASA)
  - Taught aircraft mechanics at Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan
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Bert Dugan's earliest aviation memory was at age 3, when his uncle took him to the Flint, Michigan airport. Here, he watched a bi-plane take off and wondered why the wheels were turning after the plane was in the air, not knowing of the concepts of inertia and momentum.

By the age of 6, Bert started going to Kress' Department Store in Blytheville, AR. Here, they sold 10-cent models, which he eagerly purchased. He built until the store had Bert building models through high school for their display.

The first gas model that Bert built was a G-Line Tiger Shark with a 1942 Brown Engine. His first scratch model was a design of his own. Bert remembers buying boxes of balsa for a dime, by this time he had figured out this was cheaper than buying kits. He began flying these models at the airport, sometimes launching from a plane already in flight. Bert also built rubber-powered models until 1942, the year he left for the Air Force.

Bert's first competition was in 1948 at Flint, MI. This was his first AMA-sanctioned event, a Scale event. He won 2<sup>nd</sup> place. From 1963 to 1971, Bert flew with the U.S. Air Force Modeling Team World Champions, flying in National competition. Those contests saw Bert competing in 1/2A Proto Speed, A, B and C Speed, B Proto, FAI Speed, HL Glider, A-1 Nordic, 1/2A Free Flight, A, B and C Free Flight and Control Line Scale. Bert often took first place in Scale events and placed variously in other competitions.

Bert entered the 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force Invitational Meet in the Philippines in 1956 and 1957, as well as the Far East Air Force Championships in Japan during the same period. He also participated in local Japanese contests, held monthly. In 1970 and 1971, Bert competed in Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) meets. Bert's period of Air Force meet competition spanned the period 1954-1972.

As a leader, Bert organized model clubs in Japan and the Philippines and in the United States too. He served a total of over 30 years in the Air Force. Bert instructed in Base Hobby Shops while all the time competing with the Air Force Team. All spare moments were spent building competition models, as Bert was single during most of his Air Force career.

With AMA, Bert has held positions in Scale judging from 1981 to 1999. He has been an event director, Scale director and once as a Scale-category manager. He also served as Secretary/Treasurer for the National Association of Scale Aeromodelers (NASA) from 1981 to 1998.

Bert directed a meet in Pontiac, Michigan in the 1980s. He directed a US FAI Team Selection Program at Louisville, Kentucky and a Scale meet in Muncie, Indiana once. He also directed many local meets at places where he was stationed with the Air Force.

A few years ago, Bert was asked to present a lecture and demonstration to a classroom in a Flint, MI elementary school. Here he presented many of his own models. Students seemed attentive and Bert hoped "out of the classroom perhaps one or two young people took interest and became modelers." As an educator, Bert also taught classes in Aircraft Mechanics at Lansing Community College, Lansing, MI.

To date, Bert has not participated in the last few Nats Scale competitions. He considers himself retired as far as Judging and directing. He still has a couple of projects on his worktable, though. They are Radio Control and Control Line Scale models, all of his design. He is a licensed pilot and aircraft mechanic. He is also a Draftsman and Technical Illustrator with a rating of Master Instructor.

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