



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of WALTER (WALT) E. MOONEY

June 6, 1925 - March 1, 1990 AMA# 77700



Written & Submitted by BH (03/1990); Transcribed & Edited by SS (08/2002), Updated by JS (02/2008, 11/2019, 03/2020, 06/2020),
Reformatted by JS (10/2009)

Honors:

- 1987: National Free Flight Society Hall of Fame inductee
- 2000: Kits and Plans Antiquitous Hall of Fame inductee
- 2004: Flying Aces Club Hall of Fame inductee
- 2019: AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame inductee

The following was written by Bill Hannan after the death of Walter E. Mooney.

Farewell, Walt

By Bill Hannan

On March 1, 1990, Walter E. Mooney, age 64, passed away.

How can one let go of such a friend?

By reflecting upon his accomplishments?

By remembering the joys shared with him?

Walt was an artist, author, engineer, historian, test pilot, lecturer, TV performer and possibly the most productive designer of model airplanes in the United States, if not the world.

Truly a “total aviation person,” he was equally at home in the spheres of model aircraft, sailplanes, light planes and aerospace vehicles, although one suspects that the smallest ones were his favorites.

Walt’s enthusiasm for life was contagious – he delighted in sharing his pleasures with others – and gave freely of his encyclopedic knowledge. His energy seemed boundless and he packed more living into a day than anyone else I have ever met. His curiosity was unlimited, extending far beyond aviation, encompassing animals, especially birds, all types of machinery, languages, and philosophy.

He had friends throughout the world and large portion of his spare (?) time was devoted to answering mail. He also had strong feelings for political injustice and used his powerful pen to make his opinions known. Counterbalancing this was his remarkable ability to deliver jokes and puns in apparently endless variety.

To Walt, each day was a new adventure and he made the most of it – finding “silver linings” even in situations which would have discouraged most people. For example, when confined to a hospital bed some years ago with a serious heart condition, Walt did not feel sorry for himself at all. Rather, he seized the opportunity to design and draw half a dozen new Peanut Scale models! And, his positive outlook made such an impact on the nurses that they told him he was one of the very few patients they did not want to leave.

Walt leaves us with a rich legacy – his family, all of whom are endowed with sizeable portions of his philosophy, his legion of friends, who will help keep his memory alive, and, of course, his designs which are now such an integral part of both full-size and miniature aviation.

In thinking back over the many years, it was my good fortune to know Walt Mooney, I remember most his cheerful disposition, optimism, patience and willingness to share.

One special experience stands out. During a glorious summer day near Lake Ellsinore, California, one of Walt’s models caught a thermal and headed to the horizon – with the two of us running, eyes skyward, to keep it within view. When the model finally landed, we were far from the contest site and weary from the long chase. It was only as we gazed around us that we noticed thousands of brilliant wildflowers in variegated colors extending in all directions. As we sat down among them to rest, Walt turned to me and said, “You know, Hannan, this is probably as close to Heaven as we’ll ever be here on earth.” How right he was...

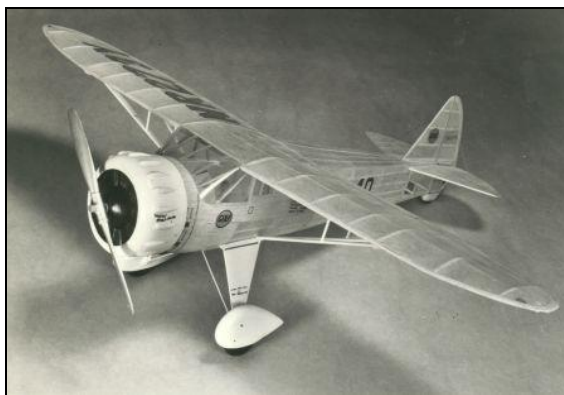
(signed) Bill Hannan



Walter Mooney with ducted fan model



Walter with CO2-powered wing



Walter's Mister Mulligan

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