



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of STUART L. (STU) RICHMOND



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AMA #4529

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Career:

- His *PT-40* radio-controlled (RC) design won the 1989 Powered Model Airplane Kit of the Year award at the Nuremburg Toy/Hobby Fair in Germany
- American Aircraft Modeler said his *Simple Fly* design was their best-ever selling plan
- His *Ramblin' Through Europe* and *Ramblin' Through Australia* travelogues in *Model Builder* ran for more than years.
- His plans and “Engines of the World” columns were well-received by the readers of *Model Builder* magazine
- By mid-2000 he sent *RC Modeler* about 125-150 columns
- Since 1984, he wrote a bimonthly RC column published in England's leading RC magazines
- Currently writing the “RC Fun USA” column that appears in *Radio Control Models and Electronics* (English publication) and “Just Plane Fun” column that appears monthly in *RC Report* magazine

Honors:

- 1998: AMA Pioneers Award
 - 2001: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
 - 2006: Howard McEntee Medal
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When I was a really little kid, I'd lie on the lawn – look up and watch birds in flight. How come they could fly – and I couldn't? I was fascinated with flight.

Later, in the first grade, I sometimes had a penny (others often had more) to spend on candy at the store we passed as we walked home from school. One day I spent my penny NOT on candy, but I bought what was called a “penny glider” – it was pieces of thin wood and a weight that all went together to be a model airplane and when thrown just right, it flew! I flew it and flew it all the way home. That night Dad helped me cut up the glider with a single edged razor and together we made two smaller gliders. (Dad was a Navy seaman at the end of World War I and was part of the ground crew for the *NC-4*. Today the famous *NC-4* is the centerpiece in the Pensacola Naval Aviation Museum).

The two smaller gliders wouldn't fly, but that was the beginning of my Dad's great support of my

interest in designing, building, and flying model airplanes.

My first “ten-cent kit” was a Peerless *Monocoupe* that I couldn't build. Paul Dubsy built the fuselage for me and said, “Take these other parts to your Mom's ironing board and pin and glue them together on the ironing board. Then stick the paper on the parts and come back. I'll help you put it all together.” I was 7-years-old. With Paul's help, I became a stick and tissue model “airplaner.”

When President Roosevelt, on radio, gave his famous “Day in Infamy” speech on December 7, 1941, I was 12-years-old and was building a model, but I stopped to listen. By June of 1942 (I was 13) I'd entered the war effort by carefully carving three scale identification models for aircrew training purposes and I was issued three U.S. Navy Bureau of Aeronautics certificates in exchange for the models. I was told that one of the models (a Grumman *F4F Wildcat*) was going to a museum. Now, 58 years later, model #19 in the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum's World War II Aviation Hall is, I am quite sure, that *F4F Wildcat*.

My love of things that fly got me to Georgia Tech as an aero engineering student in 1947. My U-Control Georgia Tech *Yellow Jacket* became the football team's mascot and was flown at half-times from 1948 through 1951 before thousands of football fans. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Management in 1951, just as model airplaners were trying to turn from U-Control to Radio Control (RC).

I was an armament systems officer in the USAF from 1952 through 1954 and figured if I could understand the electronics that would take a *B-47* to Moscow and drop a nuclear weapon; I could probably put together a working Berkeley Aerotrol RC system and make a Bantam .19 powered *Brigadier* fly for RC fun. It worked and I have been an active RC modeler since the early 1950s. The Aerotrol was followed by an Otation receiver driven from a Citizenship transmitter. My



original designs for RC started about this time. One (or maybe two) is in the Frank Zaic yearbooks. Then came a 6-channel Controlaire reed system (with Bonner Duramites and Transmite3) that flew and flew. I used to attend the Flying Bisons' RC trade shows in the Buffalo, New York area in the early 1970s. There I was awed by RC-ers like Hal deBolt, Bill Winter, Howard McEntee, Frank Garcher, John Elliot, Jack Port and others who made the hobby happen. My later RC systems were an EK Logictrol and the Kraft sets – and all this time Lynn and I

were raising three sons while I worked 25 hours a day, 8 days a week over 15 years, building up a color photo film developing business in Worcester, Mass.

I taught my three sons to build and fly RC models and we used to attend the New York City WRAM show each year to meet more people and see what was new. Eventually, the 25 hours, 8 days a week for 15 years paid off when my business was sold to a Fortune 500 company and I retired early to Florida at 43-years-old to build and fly RC model airplanes and to write (and teach) about them. Yes, I am one of the lucky ones.

Various model plans of mine were published in different magazines. Ed Sweeney edited *American Aircraft Modeler* and told me once my *Simple Fly* design was their best-ever selling plan. For seven or eight years, Bill Northrop published my “stuff” in *Model Builder*. My “Ramblin’ Through Europe” and “Ramblin’ Through Australia” travelogues in *Model Builder* ran for over three years. Plans and “Engines of the World” columns were also well received by the readers of *Model Builder*. I sometimes used the penname of “George P. Burdell” (who was a fictional graduate of Georgia Tech) in the *Model Builder* articles.

Oddly, the first plan I had published in *RC Modeler* magazine was for a simple hand-launched balsa glider not much different from the penny glider with which I started. It was the design with which I started my three sons into model airplaning! My writing has always been aimed at encouraging the reader to enjoy the fun of the world’s greatest hobby. During this time Charlie Grant of Vermont (was editor of *Model Airplane News* for years) used to telephone me and talk at length how my obligation was to teach. He would say, “Stu, you got ‘em as your audience, now TEACH ‘em!” To this day, I believe I am the only person in the world to whom he ever told the story of the origin of the Grant X airfoils and the Clark Y airfoil!

About the time Bill Northrop sold *Model Builder* magazine, I too left *Model Builder*. Shortly later, Ken Willard (who was one of *RC Modeler*’s most-read columnists) took ill and I was offered Ken’s column in 1991. I changed the column’s title from “Sunday Flyer” (in deference to Ken) to “Sunday Fun” and by mid-2000 I sent *RC Modeler* about 125-150 columns, reviews, construction articles and such that are aimed at having RC fun – and teaching the reader. Since 1984, I have also been a bimonthly RC columnist published in England’s leading RC magazines. I am currently writing the “RC Fun USA” column that appears in *Radio Control Models and Electronics* and it is a show-and-tell column about the very best and most-attended RC functions in the USA. It also shows the best of what is new originating in the USA and the column teaches too. Due to multiple magazine issue readerships between the USA’s *RC Modeler* and England’s *RCM&E*, it has been suggested I may be reaching as many as 500,000 RC readers/modelers around the world. Maybe so.

I guess an autobiography is maybe the place to also tell of your happiest moments – to share those moments with others who maybe have enjoyed moments parallel to yours. In no particular order, my happy moments are:

- The first time the Berkeley Aerotrol RC system flew
- The first RC solo flights of my three sons. Two are still active RC airplaners – AMA 79548 and AMA 79546 – Bruce and Brian Richmond, and the third son is Perry whose skills are now used

for RC model railroading.

- When my *PT-40* design won, at the Nuremburg Toy/Hobby Fair (in Germany), the “1989 Powered Model Airplane Kit of the Year” award for Great Planes Model Manufacturing Company.
- When I received an AMA Pioneer Award in Muncie, Indiana in 1998.
- When I first saw a grandson throw a hand-launched glider.
- When I watched as sons Bruce and Brian, had first place F3D FAI Gold Medals hung around their necks in Australia as the great USA team won the World RC Pylon Champs in 1987 while the Star Spangled Banner recording played and the American flag went up behind them.

I owe a lot to model airplanes!

Stu L. Richmond 09/2000

The following comes from the Model Aviation Hall of Fame application submitted for Stuart Richmond by Rodney Gier on March 23, 1998.

Supporting Remarks

1960s: Wrote club newsletter articles.

1971-1972: Wrote Chapters 2, 3 and 20 of *RC Modeler's* “Flight Training Course.”

1975: Co-founded the Fulton Flying Circus Club in Roswell, Georgia.

1977: Won second place in the Southeastern Miniature Pylon Racing Association’s year-ending points award.

1978: Winner of the year ending points, of Southeast Quarter Midget racing championship.

1981: Served as chairperson of contest board of RC Association of Central Florida, also known as Tangerine International.

1982-present: Served as secretary for the RC Association of Central Florida; Contest directed the world famous Nite Fly contest for many years.

1983: Wrote “How To” and “Close Look” articles in *RC Modeler*.

1984: Started the monthly column in *Model Builder* magazine; first, “Engines of the World,” then, “Inside Engines.” These articles lead to a study that developed what is now known as

Richmond Ratios to measure the high/low speed ratio performance of engines.

- Developed procedure to measure performance of RC equipment, known today as Uplink Performance
- Appointed contributing editor of England's *RC Model World*; wrote column called, "RC USA," to show and tell about the best of the American RC action. Bi-monthly and monthly to this day.

1985: Accepted Model Builder assignment to write a series of 36 monthly articles called "Ramblin' Around Europe," then "Ramblin' Around Australia"; the subject was a worldwide view of modeling.

1987: Traveled to Australia as a FAI supporter for America's F3D entrants. Two of his sons were team members. They won the gold, and the USA team was the winner.

1988: Construction article of the Ford Trimotor for England's *RC Model World* in Germany for the USA.

1989: Designed an RC version of Paul Plecan's *Simplex Old-Timer*; published in *Model Builder* magazine.

- Designed *PT-40* for *RC Modeler*; (PT=Primary Trainer) a .40 trainer for beginners

1990: Great Planes Model Manufacturing Company produces the *PT-40* as a kit.

- Wins the highly prestigious RC Model of the Year Award for Great Planes at the Nuremberg Toy / Hobby Fair in Germany. The *PT-40* Kit sold in greater volume in more countries than any other RC design/kit to date.
- The *PT-40* gets published in Czechoslovakia's *Modelar* magazine as the winner of the 1990 Nuremberg competition.
- Great Planes follows up the *PT-40* with a *PT-20* Kit version.

1991: Offered an associate editorship by *RC Modeler* magazine to fill the void left by Mr. Ken Willard. Richmond's column is entitled, "Sunday Fun."

- Nominated and accepted a voluntary (non-paid) position as one of the two American jurist on the 12 nation (24 jurists) panel of judges for Model of the Year awards

1993: Survey reports that Stu Richmond column, "Sunday Fun," is the most widely read column in of all magazines. Read by 500,000 readers each month.

- Mr. Richmond is one of a team that holds the record for heavy weight lifting with an RC model. Event was sponsored by Progressive Miniature Aviation and *RC Modeler* magazine.

1994: Elected to chair the Remote Control Association of Central Florida's Constitution Committee. This club presents and manages the prestigious Tangerine International RC Contest.

- Writes "White Paper," a five-page document with concerns about transmitter up-link,

receiver sensitivity, switch assembly, and servo centering, which was sent to all radio manufacturers. Some of these concerns have been updated in the latest RC equipment.

1995: Mr. Richmond is requested to write a monthly column named “RC USA” in *Radio Control Models and Electronics*, England's counterpart for our *RCM*.

1996: Competes in the Society of Antique Modelers’ (SAM) Championship at Pensacola, Florida. Wins first place with a 56-minute flight using a Brown Jr.

1997: Mr. Richmond becomes a member of the International Model Aircraft Association; he has produced no less than 35 kits and /or radio reviews in model magazines.

1999: Mr. Richmond continues to write for several RC magazines.

- Was elected a life membership in the RCACF club (R C Association of Central Florida, a 200-member club.)

The following information is from a previous Model Aviation Hall of Fame application.

Biography of Model Aviation Hall of Fame Candidate Stuart L. Richmond, AMA 18199

Today, Stu Richmond is the most published (and possibly the most-read) model aviation writer in the world.

He writes the popular “Sunday Fun” column in America’s *RC Modeler (RCM)* magazine, which is the world's number one model magazine.

He writes the “RC Fun USA” column in England's *Radio Control Models and Electronics (RCM&E)*, which is the world's number-two model magazine. It is estimated he has as many as 500,000 readers (due to multiple issue readership) in about 80 countries. The *RCM* column covers all facets of RC activity in the USA; the *RCM&E* column concentrates on showing the fun-side of USA activities to modelers of the world. Prior to joining *RCM*, he wrote for *Model Builder* in the USA and for *Model World* in England for about seven or eight years. His “Ramblin’ in Europe” and “Ramblin’ in Australia” columns that ran in *MB* are well remembered today by many.

Lynn and Stu have raised three sons. Bruce (AMA 79548) is an owning partner in Andersen Consulting and is an RC pylon racer. Brian (AMA 79546) is a captain with Alaska Airlines and a RC Pylon racer. Perry is a medical software engineer for the US Government and is a superbly creative model railroader. The two RC sons have brought great credit to AMA and the USA by winning Gold FAI medals in international F3D Pylon Races.

Stu started model building/flying about 1935 with 10-cent kits. He was teaching modeling at the Worcester (MA) Natural History Museum in the 1940s when he established three AMA records. He graduated from Georgia Tech in 1951 and spent US Air Force time on *B-47s* as an Armament/Electronics Officer. He retired early to Florida from the family-owned photo-processing business in 1973 and has devoted much time to flying, competing, designing, and enjoying model aviation. Among his best-published designs are a scale Ford *Trimotor*, *Corkscrew*, and *PT-40* (kitted by Great Planes and winner of the 1990 prestigious Model Airplane Design of the Year at Nuremburg in Germany). His most recent original design is *Cheap Fun*, published in England's *RCM&E* and in USA's November 1998 *RCM*.

Stu was honored in Muncie, Indiana in September 1998 to receive an AMA Pioneer Award. He belongs in the [Model Aviation] Hall of Fame.

The following is an update from Stuart Richmond from October 2006.

I retired as a magazine columnist, with the publication of my final "Just Plane Fun" column published in the January 2006 issue of *R/C Report* magazine. I wrote for Radio Control model airplane publications in the United States and England for 33 years.

In February 2006, I was honored with Radio Control modeling's highest, most-coveted award. I received the 2006 Howard McEntee Medal at the annual WRAM Trade Show at the Westchester County Center in White Plains, New York.



Stuart Richmond with his Kerswap.



February 2006 WRAM Show: Stuart Richmond (left), with Bob Krull, President of WRAM club, receiving the Howard McEntee Memorial Medal.

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