



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of BILL WARNER

Born January 8, 1933 Started modeling in the 1930s  
AMA #28070



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Written & Submitted by BH (10/1998); Transcribed & Edited by SS (09/2002), Reformatted by JS (02/2010); Updated by JS (08/2014)

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## Career:

- 1949: Won an exhibit contest with a Cleveland Gee Bee Z
- Worked as a machinist for North American Aviation and the Northrop Corporation in California
- 1960: Began teaching junior high school; started a model club at his school and organized various other modeling seminars, summer programs and extracurricular activities
- 1963-: Co-founded the Flightmasters News and Views club newsletter; has served as its editor and major contributor since then
- Quite a few of his students went on to have careers in or related to aviation
- Conducted indoor flying meets for youth and for the Flightmasters model airplane club for approximately 30 years
- Created a special “Aeroplane and Flying Machines” summer workshop program for the California Museum of Science and Industry; it ran for 17 years
- 1967-1968: Attended school in France and competed in model contests there as well as translated for French modelers who wanted to write for American model magazines
- Wrote articles for the French magazine, Le Modele Réduit D’Avion
- Concentrated on flying Free Flight sport and scale throughout his flying career
- Donated many of his trophies to local contests for youth
- Four of his models are in the National Model Aviation Museum’s collection
- Started writing his column, “Free Flight Sport and Scale,” in Model Aviation magazine in 1978; continued to run in 1998 when the biography was written
- Had numerous model designs published
- He and his late wife, Phyllis, have worked as reporters/photographers covering modeling meets for model magazines
- A columnist for Model Aviation magazine for 20 years

## Honors:

- 2001: National Free Flight Society Hall of Fame
- Flying Aces Club Hall of Fame

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*In 1998, Bill Hannan submitted the following biography about Bill Warner to the AMA History Project (at the time called the AMA History Program.)*

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Bill Warner began his interest in model airplanes during the 1930s, starting with penny gliders and Wallace Rigby paper models, then graduating to various stick and tissue kits. A high point during his high school years came with his construction of a Cleveland Gee Bee Z, which won an exhibit contest in 1949. A bonus “prize” was having the model autographed by Thompson Trophy winner Cook Cleland.

Following service in the Marine Corps, Bill worked as a machinist for North American Aviation and the Northrop Corporation in California.

In 1960, Warner began a junior high school teaching career and founded the Sepulveda Balsa Butchers Club, the first of numerous extra-curricular activities aimed at the promotion of model building among youngsters. He also introduced and taught a model aeronautics class at Paul Revere for several years in the science and shop education programs. Bill organized the Revere Model Aircraft Society, which was continued until Warner's 1989 retirement.

A measure of Bill's success may be noted by the number of his students who became successful model builders and those who became involved in full-size aviation. Among them are Bill Watson and Dave Saks, key figures in human-powered aircraft projects, Joel Rieman, aircraft marketer, George Heaven, currently noted for his Rubber Bandit man-carrying, rubber-powered aircraft effort, Matt Keenan, engineer/designer on super tiny electric Radio Control models for AeroVironment Incorporated (Paul MacCready) plus a student who is a bush pilot in Alaska, one who is flying police helicopters in Sacramento and one who flies a sailplane tug.

Warner conducted indoor flying meets once a month for youngsters and also for members of the Flightmasters model airplane club for about 30 years, feeling that mixing the kids and experienced modelers was beneficial to both – inspiration and guidance for the beginners and school flying-site availability for the adults.

Bill created a special "Aeroplane and Flying Machines" summer workshop program for the California Museum of Science and Industry, which was conducted over a 17-year period, concluding in 1985. Those sessions included teaching of model aerodynamics, aeronautics and aerostatics through model building and both indoor and outdoor flying activities. The class was featured in *The Journal of Aerospace Education* as well as on the television program, "Kids are People, Too." Another series of his aviation classes, conducted at the Beverly Hills Elementary School, was called "Exploring Science on Saturdays."

While attending school in France during 1967 to 1968, Warner participated in model contests, gaining friendships with such noted French modelers as Emmanuel Fillon (1937 Wakefield Cup contest winner), J.F. Frugoli (former magazine publisher and noted contest flyer) and the late Jacques Pouliquen, who introduced peanut scale to France. Bill served as a translator and editor for these gentlemen, as well as for Lubomir Koutny of the Czech Republic, to enable them to publish articles in the U.S. model magazines. Bill also authored a series of articles for the French magazine *Le Modele Reduit D'Avion*.

All through the years, Warner took part in many contests in such diverse categories as hand-launched glider, Nordic A-1 and A-2, but concentrated upon Free Flight sport and scale, including participation in foreign proxy meets. He won around 300 trophies, medals and certificates over the years. He won the sweepstakes award at the first AAA LACMA Free Flight meet at the Sepulveda Basin in Los Angeles as well as firsts in the International Lympe Trails in England and two firsts at the Internationals at Woodville, England. Many of the trophies he won were generously recycled into junior prizes for local contests.

Four of Bill's models, Miss Los Angeles Racer, Sikorsky S-42, DH 82 Tiger Moth and his Nationals-winning Waco YKS6, are presently in the AMA Museum collection. His long-running, "Free Flight Sport and Scale" column, which began in 1978, is a continuing popular feature in AMA's Model Aviation magazine.

He has twin pusher replicas of a 1922 record model in museums in San Diego and in Porterville, California. He also won the Free Flight scale events at the Nationals in indoor in 1967 and twice in outdoor in 1972 and 1985 as well as several firsts at the U.S. Free Flight Championships in Taft, California.

Among his published model aircraft designs were the following:

<b>Model</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Super Sleek Streak</i>	<i>American Aircraft Modeler</i>	June 1971
<i>Eastbourne Monoplane</i>	<i>1964-1965 Model Aeronautic Yearbook (Zaic)</i>	1964 & 1965
<i>Pollywog</i>	<i>Sig Air-Modeler</i>	July 8, 1967
<i>Leopard Moth</i>	<i>Model Airplane News</i>	November 1967
<i>Insect</i>	<i>American Aircraft Modeler</i>	April 1970
<i>Poulin JP30</i>	<i>American Aircraft Modeler</i>	June 1971
<i>Waco YKS6</i>	<i>Model Builder</i>	June 1973
<i>Hot Gnat</i>	<i>Model Builder</i>	March 1974
<i>1920s Powered Glider</i>	<i>Model Builder</i>	May 1974
<i>Lacey M-10</i>	<i>American Aircraft Modeler</i>	February 1975
<i>F.R.E.D.</i>	<i>Model Builder</i>	September 1976
<i>Ms. Peach</i>	<i>Model Aviation</i>	August 1978
<i>Lee-Richards Annular #3</i>	<i>Model Aviation</i>	October 1983
<i>Sky Bunny</i>	<i>Model Builder</i>	April 1988
<i>Zippy Sport</i>	<i>Model Aviation</i>	January 1990

Bill and his lovely and supportive late wife, Phyllis, have served as magazine reporters/photographers for many years. They have covered model meets in venues including Los Angeles, San Diego and Taft, California, Las Vegas, Nevada, Arizona and Geneseo, New York, for various modeling magazines.

Having co-founded in 1963 the Flightmasters News and Views club newsletter, Warner has served as its editor and major contributor frequently all through the years. He also wrote the Free Flight scale bi-monthly column in Model Aviation magazine for 20 years from 1976 to 1996. He wrote a 14-part series for Model Builder magazine on getting started in modeling called, "Hey, Kid! Ya' Wanna Build a Model Airplane?" Later it was published by TAB Books in a three-book set.

Although Bill has tirelessly promoted our hobby, especially to beginners, he modestly feels that his efforts have been more than amply repaid, saying: "The more one 'gives' to modeling, the more one gets out of it."

Certainly, Bill Warner deserves recognition in the [Model Aviation] Hall of Fame!

*(signed) William C. Hannan  
AMA 19349  
October 30, 1998*



*Bill with his Astro .02-powered Lee Richards number three annular monoplane built from drawings in the October 1976 issue of Aeroplane Monthly magazine. This model won Free Flight Scale events at the U.S. Free Flight Championships in Taft, California and at the Nats in Dayton, Ohio. The photo was taken by Phyllis Warner.*



*1995: Bill with his twin electric Miles (M-18?) Free Flight Scale model of his own design*

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