



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of DR. LARRY FREDERICK KRUSE



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Written by LK and FF; Compiled and Formatted by JS (03/2016); updated by JS (08/2021)

Honors

- 2014: AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame
 - 2010: Flying Aces Club Hall of Fame
 - 2005: National Free Flight Hall of Fame (NFFS)
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The following autobiography was written by Dr. Larry F. Kruse.

Free Flight and Me

For over five decades I have been inspired by flight - an inspiration which began, to a large degree, from being raised on the Great High Plains where hawks, Golden Eagles, and buzzards drifted effortlessly through the warm rising air as fixtures of my early boyhood. I remember the thrill of watching a nickel glider catch a thermal for the first time, and my brother and I chasing it on our bikes for miles on a dusty, dirt road before it capriciously came down and landed in a fresh cow pie.

As I grew up, that fascination with flight turned into the usual spate of building many Comet kits ordered by mail, always accompanied by the agony of going to the post office every day in the hope that the box from America's Hobby Center had arrived. Two slightly older neighbors urged me along. Although both of them mainly flew control line, they occasionally dabbled in free flight. I can still close my eyes and see Fred McKee's *Ramrod 600*, woefully underpowered by a Cameron .19, yet capable of awe-inspiring flights, hanging just above the setting sun and motionless in the still evening air.

During high school, I turned away from modeling aircraft and toward designing and building futuristic 1/12 scale cars for the General Motors-sponsored Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild. That experience was invaluable to my return to aircraft modeling because it taught me that I could start with a blank piece of paper and an idea, and come up with an object of beauty and wonder (at least to my eyes!). Later, when I returned to modeling, only those airplanes I designed myself had any special meaning to me and satisfied the aesthetic needs within.

I began competitive flying in the early 1970s after college by attending my first contest and winning my first trophy in Hand Launch Glider. Before the contest I was inspired by a seminal article on HLGs written by Dick Mathis, Kit Bays, and Tom Peardon that appeared in *Flying Models* in July of 1970. In fact, my first published modeling article in 1973 was entitled, "From Theory to Trophy" and detailed my preparation for entering duration free flight competition and flying the HLG event.

From that point on I began publishing designs, both my own and those of others whom I felt should have some exposure to the modeling world, now totaling some 80 different aircraft models. Over the past 40-plus years, I've written for all of the major commercial modeling publications (some now defunct), and estimate that the total volume of work stands at over 800 articles. That total includes construction articles, kit and product reviews, Nats and other special meet coverages, building hints and tips, and my monthly column in *Flying Models* magazine.

The monthly column came about through a request by the then-editor of *Flying Models*, Bob Hunt. Bob wanted to begin a monthly column that aimed itself at the average free flight modeler - one who perhaps was just getting into the hobby or just returning - and one who was in need of some down-to-earth common sense advice and information. "FF Sport" seemed like a natural name for the column at the time, and still speaks to its purpose, I think. And, having now completed over 30 years of cranking out "FF Sport" on a monthly basis, it only seems right to continue as long as readers exhibit interest and the editorial staff at *Flying Models* will put up with me.

My modeling interests within free flight have changed over the years, starting with duration events and the moving to free flight scale in a serious way during the 80s to chase a goal of winning every free flight scale event at the Nationals, both indoor and outdoor. That quest ended in eleven first-place Nats trophies in Rubber Scale (indoor and outdoor); Peanut Scale (indoor and outdoor); and outdoor Power Scale. Along the way, I also collected three National Association of Scale Aeromodelers Achievement Awards, and a proxied first place in Indoor Bostonian for Don DeLoach thrown in for good measure.

In 1992 through 1996, I took a hiatus from modeling to concentrate on completing a doctoral program at Oklahoma State University. Much to my surprise, when I came back to modeling my focus had changed. While I still hold the highest rank possible in the Flying Aces Club, lately my modeling interests have come full circle. I'm now back into duration events, particularly the Nostalgia planes of the 50s that eluded me as a boy (chiefly because of the cost of the engines at that time); today's version of the HLG for those past their prime, the catapult glider; and small rubber jobs like the P-30, which remains amazingly intriguing despite (or perhaps because of) its inherent limitations.

Since my work in the real world was as an administrator, prior to my retirement and since that time, I've tried to make it a point to become involved in modeling in an administrative fashion as well. I've been one of the founders of a modeling club; gotten over 200 Cub Scouts in a gym to fly Delta Darts each fall; served as a CD for contests; judged scale events at regional meets and the Nats; written AMA rules proposals for improving the hobby; chaired the NFFS Ten Models of the Year committee; helped establish the NFFS Scholarship program as a sitting committee member; and currently serve as a mentor for a state-wide model competition at our local technical school.

Beyond all of the above, I've enjoyed and treasured the many friends and acquaintances that modeling interaction permits. Those of us involved in free flight are a small and select group, but one populated by the best people in the world. Because of our association with each other and

with our segment of the hobby, we are uniquely blessed as human beings. I am grateful to be one of the chosen few who find magic in models that fly free.

Not too long ago, a little blue-haired lady approached me after I'd made a presentation to her club on getting young people involved in modeling. She peered up at me through the glasses perched on her nose and said, "You know, Dr. Kruse, I don't think you've ever grown up!" I replied, "Thank you, ma'am. Nor do I intend to."

The following information was gathered from biographical material submitted to the AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame by Frank Fanelli in 2014. Larry Kruse was inducted into the Hall of Fame in that same year.

Published Designs by Larry Kruse *(Not a comprehensive list)*

Design	Designer	Type	Publication	Date Published
1911 Caudron Type N	Kruse	Peanut Scale	Flying Models	1988/10
1919 LWF Butterfly	Kruse	CO2 Scale	Flying Models	1979/07
20/20	Kruse	HLG	Flying Models	1973/04
Backlash	Kruse	Catapult glider	Flying Models	1976/03
Bandido	Kruse	Rubber Sport	Flying Models	1976/05
Barnwell Monoplane	Kruse	CO2 Scale	Flying Models	1982/04
Bebe-Jodel	Kruse	CL Semi-Scale	Model Aviation	1979/06
Beech Starship	Kruse	Rubber Profile	Flying Models	1985/08
Bellanca Scout	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1981/11
Bostonian T-Craft	Kruse	Bostonian	Flying Models	1982/09
Carousel	Kruse	RC glider	Flying Models	1984/09
Cassutt II	Kruse	CL Profile Stunt	Model Aviation	1982/07
Cessna Agwagon	Kruse	CL Profile Stunt	Flying Models	1979/10
Cessna C-34	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1986/07
CGS Hawk Ultralight	Kruse	CO2 Scale	Model Aviation	1985/07
Clones from the Past	Kruse	Rubber Sport	Flying Models	2007/01
CO-2 Cub	Kruse	CO2 Sheet Balsa	Model Aviation	1987/01
Columbia Space Shuttle	Kruse	Catapult glider	Flying Models	1987/11
Compact field box	Kruse	Support equipment	Flying Models	1985/01
Cubby	Kruse	CL Trainer	Model Airplane News	1981/05
Dalotel DM-165	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1985/11
Druine Turbulent	Kruse	CL Sport	Flying Models	1978/07

Face Saver	Kruse	HLG	Flying Models	1974/08
Fairey Barracuda	Kruse	No-Cal Scale	Flying Models	2008/08
Fantasy	Kruse	CO2 Sport	Flying Models	1977/12
Farman Moto Aviette	Kruse	CO2 Scale	Flying Models	1986/08
Flying Aces Stick	Kruse	CO2 OT	Flying Models	1990/08
Fokker D-VII	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1988/08
Found Centennial (20")	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1989/11
Found Centennial (39")	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1993/09
Geezer Pleezer	Kruse	P-30 Rubber Power	Flying Models	2003/11
Goldwing Ultralight	Kruse	CO2 Scale	Flying Models	1988/07
Heat Stroke	Kruse	Rapier/Jetex	Flying Models	2007/03
Heinkel HE-100D	Kruse	No-Cal Scale	Flying Models	1986/11
Hyperbipe	Kruse	CL Profile Sport	Model Airplane News	1980/03
Lear Fan	Kruse	No-Cal Scale	Flying Models	1983/11
Lippisch	Kruse	Catapult glider	Flying Models	1987/07
Mauboussin- Hemiptere	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1988/05
Mig-3	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1981/02
Miles Sparrowhawk	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1984/07
Monoprep	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1979/02
Morane Saulnier	Kruse	CO2 Scale	Flying Models	1978/10
Pond Scum ROW	Kruse	Rubber Sport/Competition	Flying Models	2008/03
Prairie Duster Bipe	Kruse	CO2 Sport	Flying Models	1984/05
Roger Dodger	Kruse	P-30 Rubber Power	Flying Models	1979/11
Santos-Dumont 14 bis	Kruse	Peanut Scale	Model Aviation	1987/07
Sky Bird	Kruse	FF Power	Flying Models	1979/03
Smoothie Profile	Kruse	CL Profile Stunt	Model Aviation	1984/09
Star Cavalier	Kruse	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1980/04
Switcher II	Kruse	Jetex/Catapult	Flying Models	1989/05
Temco TT-1/Cessna T-37A	Kruse	Catapult glider	Model Aviation	1982/12
Throwback	Kruse	.020 Sport	Flying Models	1974/11
Tomahawk II	Kruse	CL Profile Stunt	Model Aviation	1988/09
Tx-Air TX-1	Kruse	Peanut Scale	Flying Models	1987/09
Underdog	Kruse	HLG	Flying Models	1973/08

Designs published by Larry for other designers
(*Not a comprehensive list*)

Design	Designer	Type	Publication	Date Published
1/2A Marval	Berry	FF Power	Model Aviation	2008/06
2+2 Unlimited	O'Reilly	Rubber Power	Flying Models	1975/01
Aeronca Chief	B. Schmidt	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1999/12
Bad Medicine	Ransom	FF Power	Flying Models	1975/03
Beta Blue Chip Racer	Derber	FF Rubber Scale	Model Aviation	2002/05
Brewster Buffalo	Midkiff	Rubber Scale	Model Airplane News	1981/10
Bubba Clem	Clem	FF Power	Model Airplane News	1981/05
Cessna 140	B. Schmidt	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1997/08
Checkers .60	J. Schmidt	RC Pattern	Flying Models	1977/04
Country Boy	Clem	FF Power	Flying Models	1977/10
Country Boy	Clem	FF Power	Model Aviation	1977/03
Dennyplane	Mathews	RC Sport	Model Aviation	1977/01
Draft Dodger	Dunham	Rubber Power	Flying Models	1975/04
Electric Country Boy	Clem	FF Electric	Model Aviation	1982/02
Embraer Ipanema	de Souza	Peanut Scale	Model Aviation	2007/11
Evil Ways	Turner/Hallum	FF Power	Flying Models	1978/04
Fun Flying Foamies	Goldbach	FF Sport Gliders	Model Aviation	1991/05
Geodetic Tubesteak	O'Reilly	Rubber Power	Flying Models	1979/05
Kansas Wakefield	Linn	OT Rubber	Model Aviation	1988/10
Medicine Man	Clem	FF Power	Flying Models	1974/02
Orr's Pacemaker	Linn	OT Rubber	Model Builder	1996/05
ParFAI	Marcos	FAI Power	Flying Models	1975/09
Piper PA-16	B. Schmidt	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1998/04
Porterfield Zephyr	Mathews	Rubber Scale	Flying Models	1979/10
PZL P11C	Nogy	RC Sport Scale	Flying Models	1982/12
Scorcher	Chilton	Jetex	Flying Models	1976/03
Scorpion .60	Hamilton	RC Sport	Model Aviation	1988/01
Semi-Pro	Chilton	H LG	Model Aviation	1976/01
Sir Rodney	O'Reilly	A-1 glider	Model Aviation	1981/05
Spacewalker	de Souza	Peanut Scale	Flying Models	2008/04
Spider	Woolard-Tallman	CL Combat	Flying Models	1973/11
Spinner II	Blackard	RC Sport	Flying Models	1983/08

Star Seeker	Hallum	FF Power	Flying Models	1974/03
Sudden SAM	O'Reilly	FF Power	Flying Models	1979/08
Together IV	Johnston	CL Stunt	Model Aviation	1978/01
Tubesteak	O'Reilly	Rubber Power	Flying Models	1975/12
Tubesteak OMT	O'Reilly	Rubber Power	Model Aviation	1987/03
Twin Comanche	Perez	CL Scale	Model Aviation	1983/05
Two for the Show	Woolard-Tallman	CL Stunt	Model Airplane News	1976/02
Winterhawk	O'Reilly	Rubber Power	Flying Models	1977/03
Witch Hawk 500	Clem	FF Power	Model Aviation	1982/09

The following two photos were provided to the History Project by Larry Kruse.



Larry Kruse



Larry with his Hustler model.

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