



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of SAL CALVAGNA



Written by SC (2013); Reformatted by JS (09/2013)

The following was published on the Model Aviation magazine website, describing columnists for the magazine, and added to the AMA History Project (at the time called AMA History Program) files in September 2013.

Sal Calvagna

I was born and raised in Long island, New York, the eldest of five brothers. I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1975 upon high school graduation and attended the School of Applied Cryptologic Sciences at Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo, Texas. My first assignment was to Elmendorf AFB, Anchorage, Alaska.

It was during my time in Alaska that I became interested in building model aircraft. During the long cold winters, I would occupy some of my free time building Guillow's stick-and-tissue models.

When my four-year enlistment was up in 1979, I returned home to attend a local community college. In 1981, I began a career with the U.S. State Department Diplomatic Communications Service, where I was trained to operate and maintain a variety of communications equipment at U.S. embassies and consulates.

It was during my training in Northern Virginia that I began to build and fly RC aircraft. My first models were the small three-channel Sig Colt and Scamp. The great folks at the NVRC (Northern Virginia Radio Control) club in Chantilly, Virginia, taught me how to fly these models.

Just about the time I became comfortable with flying, I received my first posting overseas to a small West African country, Senegal. I purchased a few kits and whatever I thought that I may need to continue modeling. While on tour in Dakar, Senegal, I built a Sig Cougar and Andrews Aeromaster. I was one of five modelers (three French expatriates and one Senegalese) who flew together just outside the city limits.

It was on my next tour in the Philippines in 1984 that I became interested in Giant Scale. My first large model was Balsa USA's Fly Baby Bipe, which I powered with a Zenoah G-38. From this point on, my main RC interest has been Giant Scale.

My last posting with the state department was to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Manhattan. I have built and flown many different types throughout the years. In 2001, I started writing the "RC Giants" column for Model Aviation magazine and have authored more than 120 columns to date.



Sal's column appears bi-monthly, in the February, April, June, August, October, and December issues. His email address is rcgiants@optonline.net.

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