



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of DOUGLAS V. MAC BRIEN

Born January 7, 1929 Started modeling in 1976
AMA #68432



Written & Submitted by DVM (02/2006); Edited by JS (02/2006), Reformatted by JS (10/2009)

Douglas V. Mac Brien submitted the following autobiography in 2006.

Model Biography of Douglas C. Mac Brien

The Beginning

I was raised out in the country, 120 miles north of Toronto in Ontario, Canada, on the shore of a beautiful lake. My brother, Bob (two years older than I), came home from Toronto where he was attending Central Technical High School with a small rubber-powered model that you could fly around indoors! I was hooked!

I built a lot of scale models all through high school – they cost about a quarter then. In my twenties, after joining the U.S. Air Force, I started to fly U-Control. I flew a .29 – powered trainer a lot and had it rigged with a second pair of lines for throttle so I could shoot landings. It was a lot of fun.

I built a six-foot-span Radio Control *Cub*, an escapement set-up. I went to a big meet in California where I was stationed, but only one model could fly at a time. I had to wait in line (not much action) so I did not stick with that. I did not do any more model airplane flying until I retired from the Air Force. Around 1976, I built a Radio Control trainer with a .25 OS engine. Eddie Kopec gave me my first training flight. It was a short lesson; the wing folded in-flight and the model wrecked!

Next, I built a *Pietenpol* from plans, put a .40 engine on it and floats, and took it up to my cottage in Ontario. I soloed off the water but crashed. It was a very nervous flight. After a few more trainers, I could fly okay and got into bigger models. I built a giant scale *Stearman* from Don Godfrey's plans, then started designing and building my own: a 1/3 scale *Druine Turbulent* (7' span), a 1/5 scale *Dalotel* (7' span), a 1/5 scale *OS2U Kingfisher* (7' span), a 1/6 scale *OS27 Kingfisher* (6' span) and a Curtiss *SOC Seagull* (7' span). I sold plans all over the world, though not in great numbers except for the *Seagull*, and another modeler beat me to it. I was not happy with the flight characteristics of the *Seagull* anyway. It tended to porpoise, whereas the *Kingfisher* never had that problem. My training as a civil engineer helped in the design work. I also took classes in drafting and taught it at Easthampton High School for one semester before I went back to school to get my engineering degree. Lately, I have had health problems and stopped flying, but I am still very active in photography.

Competition

I only flew in one competition, at the 1984 AMA National Aeromodeling Championships (Nats) at Westover Air Force Base, where I flew the 1/5 scale Kingfisher on wheels. I did not place, but I did not crash either. It was very hot and I did not really enjoy it, so I did not do any more competition.

Leadership

I served as Treasurer of the Hampshire County Radio Controllers for a couple of terms years ago.

Publishing Experience

In 1985, Norm Goyer, who used to publish *Radio Control Scale Modeler*, asked me to write an article and let him publish my plans for the 1/5-scale *Kingfisher*. This appeared in the February 1986 issue of *Radio Control Scale Modeler* with nice color photos to accompany my article on construction and flying. (Previously Norm published color photos of the big OS2U in the December 1985 issue of *Radio Control Scale Modeler*. The *Kingfisher* showed up again briefly in the October 1994 issue of *Radio Control Scale Modeler*.)

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