



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of EDWARD (ED) MANULKIN

Born 1920      AMA # L-7



Written by AMA Staff (09/1974); Reformatted by JS (03/2010); Updated by JS (01/2017)

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## **Ed Manulkin Profile of a Life Member**

Once upon a time, a 9-year-old kid walked into a posh Philadelphia department store, went straight to the toy counter, and demanded to see the best model airplane kit they had. The year was 1929. The store was Gimbel's. The kit was a toy Wanner Baby Rise off Ground (R.O.G.) priced reasonably at 50 cents. And, by the way, the kid didn't have neat the necessary funds so he had to go back home and skimp and save three more weeks.

The little boy was Edward Manulkin, destined to become soon after a superb free flyer, a contest winner all over the East and Midwest, one of the original members of the AMA, eventually a patron and pillar of our fine Academy, and the founder and president of one of America's most respected model airplane kit manufacturing companies.

Ed took the toy R.O.G. home, spent three months coaxing a 30-second flight out of it, and earned his Gimbel's Wipacs Club "Grease Monkey" pin. He soon joined the Philadelphia MAA, a then quite prestigious club holding maybe 90% of all national records. Schooled by good modeler, slowly learning his model aerodynamics, Ed gradually became a skillful designer, builder, and flyer of indoor rubber, outdoor rubber tractors and pushers, and Brown Junior-powered gassies.

Attending contests from the Detroit Nats to Eastern Seaboard meets, he was a contestant to be reckoned with and feared. He flew against all the greats of his day – Frank Ehling, Maxwell Bassett, Matty Sullivan, etc., and earned his share of medals, merchandise, and glory.

His twin pusher was printed in Frank Zaic's 1937 Year Book, page 91, featuring two original advancements to aid endurance. Staggered booms served for larger propellers, and enclosed rubber motors in rolled fuselages cut drag.

After serving honorably in World War II, Ed worked briefly as Sales Manager for B. Paul Distributors. Discontent working for someone else and anxious to get back to the models he understood and loved so well, he quit his job cold one afternoon, went down in his basement and slaving long hours, started the Sterling Model Company. Today, he is still at it, still putting in 14-hour days.

Ed's company has prospered and he has shared his success with AMA. The much sought-after Sterling Award, given each year at the Nats for the best scale model to make an official flight, is his baby and he has given the Academy a hundred dollar check each year to go with it. He also gave AMA a thousand dollars when they needed money, and became a life member before special numbers were ever heard of.

Look in the pages of any model magazine today for the colorful Sterling ads. See the little scale airplane kits for sale. Kits fashioned by a premier Free Flight pioneer who got on your wave length a long, long time ago and never got off, and who wants *your* kid to see something more elegant than a toy R.O.G. the first time he walks into a department store or a hobby shop and demands to see the best they got!!!



*Nats, unknown year, c. 1960s: (left to right) Matty Sullivan, Ed Manulkin (in bus), Sid Axelrod, Frank Garcher, Art Laneau. (Photo Credit: Official Photograph U. S. Navy)*

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