



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of

## DR. JOHN B. "DOC" MARTIN, JR.

October 25, 1927 - January 12, 2002

AMA #712



---

Written & Submitted by SL (01/2002); Transcribed & Edited by SS (08/2002), Reformatted by JS (10/2009)

---

### Career:

- Earned his DDS at Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine and practiced in Miami, Florida from 1953 to 2001
- Founded the Miami Indoor Aircraft Model Association (MIAMA) in 1973; found many local flying sites
- Served as the only scale judge for MIAMA contests
- Published 216 issues of The Hangar Pilot, the MIAMA club newsletter; a building plan was included in every issue
- Instituted Pistachio Scale as a U.S. Indoor Championship (USIC) event
- Held postal meets known as the MIAMA Internats
- Flew at numerous Nationals, USICs and record trials
- Flew at various meets in the United Kingdom
- Served as MIAMA president and an indoor contest board member

### Honors:

- 1987: National Free Flight Society Hall of Fame
- 1999: AMA Fellow
- Received the AMA Distinguished Service Award from Vice President Jim McNeill
- Received the Blue Max medal from the Flying Aces club

---

*David Linstrum wrote the following after the death of John B. "Doc" Martin in January 2002.*

---

## Remembering MIAMA Founder, Doc Martin

By Dave VTO Linstrum

On January 12, Doc Martin (after a battle with cancer) left his beloved earthly flying sites to spiral up and fly with the angels near the ceiling. He is survived by a son Matthew and daughter Lilah, plus three lovely granddaughters.

Doc was born in 1927 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, living as a youth near the Fred Megow kit factory.

He built Dime Scale models when they only cost a dime – starting a lifetime love affair with Free Flight. He earned a DDS at Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine and established a dental practice in Coconut Grove (Miami, Florida) in 1953 continuing through 2001.

He founded the Miami Indoor Aircraft Model Association (MIAMA) in 1973 as a means to organize local flyers in competition. He found local flying sites such as the Opa Locka Blimp

Hangar (a World War II structure) and various college gyms. Later his sites' search expanded to locations in Tampa Bay like MacDill Air Force Base, Delta Air Hangar Tampa Airport, U.S. Coast Guard (Saint Petersburg) and the huge Tropicana Dome (with a 231-foot ceiling) in downtown Saint Petersburg. He had hoped to fly at the third annual MIAMA meet there. Monthly MIAMA contests were held at all those sites from September to May with a wide variety of AMA and Flying Aces events. Doc was the sole scale judge.

Thirty-one years ago, he began publication of the monthly newsletter, The Hangar Pilot, to advise club members of upcoming meets, give results and educate them about indoor flying. He prided himself on having a building plan in every issue. His final effort, number 216, had a Tom Swift Red Cloud Airship on the cover and a Peanut Scale Polish PWS-11 by maestro Pres Bruning. There was also scale data for the Swiss Comte AC4 Gentleman – an excellent scale subject. The newsletter was a clear expression of his feelings, often with pungent remarks and educational items.

Doc's first love was Pistachio Scale, which he instituted as a U.S. Indoor Championships (USIC) event and an annual postal meet that MIAMA Internats. At first he invited flyers to mail their models to him – he recruited clubsters to proxy fly them. Lately he had tried a postal meet format with modelers flying at home and simply sending in their time. He built his own Pistachios, winning often. His favorite Goldwing canard homebuilt will be proposed as a donation to the AMA Museum in Muncie, Indiana. It is a USIC winner.

I first met Doc at the 1972 AMA Indoor Nationals (Nats) at the Madison Street Amory in Chicago. He had a group of Martin MO-1s in bright silver and chrome yellow U.S. Navy livery. They flew like homesick angels. He then attended all the Nats and was at the 1980 Indoor World Champs in West Baden, Indiana. He also flew at that site at various record trials.

I had the pleasure of being Doc's travel companion often, first to the 1978 F1D World Champs at Cardington Airship Shed, United Kingdom. Bud Romak took home the trophy then. We shared many motel and ETSU dorm rooms, most recently at the 2001 USIC.

Doc was always a great dinner companion, with an opinion on everything – especially politics. He had a dry sense of humor – perhaps due to his being an anglophile. He often flew at Old Warden and Middle Wallop FAC/SAM (Society of Antique Modelers) meets in the United Kingdom, then continued to the Edinburgh Jazz Festival. Dixieland jazz was a passion. He often built models while listening. He built quickly, but well as a desk in his second story den in the Live Oaks.

His service to AMA was as MIAMA president and indoor contest board member.

He earned the AMA Distinguished Service Award from Vice President Jim McNeill and the Blue Max medal of the Flying Aces club. His shop was filled with models and trophies.

For the story of Doc's Hangar Pilot publication, see the article in the January 1996 National Free Flight Society Digest. There is a good photo of him with his beloved Goldwing in FAC and Pistachio sizes. He is wearing surgery scrubs – his favorite comfortable flying costume.

All who knew Doc saw him as a free spirit. His contributions to Free Flight were myriad and the MIAMA club will never be the same. He was our guiding light.

*(signed) Dave Linstrum  
January 18, 2002*

---

**This PDF is property of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Permission must be granted by the AMA History Project for any reprint or duplication for public use.**

**AMA History Project**  
National Model Aviation Museum  
5151 E. Memorial Dr.  
Muncie IN 47302  
(765) 287-1256, ext. 511  
historyproject@modelaircraft.org

