



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of WILLIAM HEWITT PHILLIPS 1918 - June 27, 2009



Written by AMA Staff (12/1987); Transcribed by JS (06/2008), Reformatted by JS (01/2010)

The following was published in the December 1987 issue of Model Aviation magazine. William was a 1986 Model Aviation Hall of Fame Inductee.

William Hewitt Phillips has been a model aviator for more than sixty years. At the age of nine, Hewitt flew model Gliders in the playground across from his home in Belmont, Massachusetts. He built models that were illustrated in library books, and he became a keen competitor. This led him to join the Jordon-Traveler Aviation League of Boston, and eventually took him to Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study aeronautical engineering. Graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1939, he went on to complete his master's degree in 1940.

Moving to Hampton, Virginia, he became employed by NACA, forerunner of NASA, and was assigned to the Flight Research Division. When the space age dawned, he became Chief of the Space Mechanics Division. In subsequent years, he did extensive work on the Space Shuttle projects as head of the Guidance and Control Division.

The St. Louis Nats in 1935 was Hewitt's first national event. He competed again in 1936 and 1937 and stood several trophies, including a first place in the Stout Indoor event in 1937.

Hewitt has received several prestigious awards, including the NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement (1967), the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service (1979), and the NASA Distinguished Service Medal (1979.) He was made a Fellow of the American Astronautical Society in 1985. He has also been honored by many model groups, and serves as technical editor for *Free Flight* magazine. His interest in model aircraft is not limited to any one type or group, and he enjoys exploring new developments in design and flying techniques.

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