



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of H. WARREN PLOHR

March 17, 1922 – March 29, 2016

Modeler since 1930s



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The following was published in the January 2011 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Warren was inducted into the 2010 Model Aviation Hall of Fame.

Warren Plohr grew up in Bronx, New York. When he was five, his father made his first model: a cardboard *Spirit of St. Louis* from plans in the newspaper. The magic of airplanes caught Warren's attention, but his early attempts to build models were not too successful until an issue of *Model Airplane News* steered him on a correct course.

In the late 1930s, Warren became an AMA member - #1717 – and is currently an AMA Fellow.

Warren's family moved to Pittsburgh, interrupting his engineering studies at NYU. He became an Army officer, receiving his pilot's silver wings. Warren flew combat missions to France and Germany and received the Air Medal for combat.

Following World War II, Warren enrolled at the Carnegie Institute of Technology to complete his degree in aeronautical engineering. He also taught himself radio electronics from the *Radio Amateur's Handbook*.

After graduation, Warren landed a research position with NACA, the precursor to NASA, in the Aircraft Engine Research Laboratory in Cleveland, Ohio. While there, he met and became lifelong friends with modelers including Chet Lanzo, Joe Elgin, and George Reich.

Warren was assigned to temporary duty at Langley Research Center with the Space Task Group on Project Mercury. He was later part of the group assigned to validate technology used in the space capsule design and the re-entry test flight program. Warren designed an attitude control system for the test capsule.

Employed with NASA through 1979, Warren was promoted to Program Manager and was a member of the Lewis Senior Research staff. He received the NASA Exceptional Service Award. He led a NASA-sponsored Explorer Scout Post that introduced students to the engineering profession.

Warren's modeling was put on hold during the time that led to the first lunar landing. He and his good friend, George Landreth, joined the League of Silent Flight (LSF) and attended many sailplane contests. Warren was LSF vice president from 1979 through 1981, and served as president of the organization through 1985. In 1982, he completed the final Level V task – an 8-hour slope flight – becoming the 26th member to do so.

Warren was asked to join AMA's Frequency Committee, chaired by Fred Marks. His first task was to edit Fred's *Guidelines for Acceptable Introduction of a Full Set of R/C Frequencies*. He

also worked with George Steiner and Bill Hershberger developing guidelines to evaluate the performance of RC transmitters that became the basis of AMA's Gold Sticker program.

In the late 1990s, the FCC proposed to add non-RC users to the 72 MHz band set aside for radio-controlled models. Warren, Bill, and George ran tests at the AMA flying site in Muncie, Indiana, and drafted a report that convinced the FCC to withdraw its proposal.

Warren has been a mainstay on the Technical Committee, renamed the Electronic Technology Committee in 2008. The mission of the ETC is "to support the Academy by monitoring, maintaining, and developing electronic areas of modeling through liaison with government, industry, and membership groups."

As an active member of the ETC, Warren certainly contributes much to that mission.

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