



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DAVIS (DAVE/DAVY) MAXTON SLAGLE



Born April 28, 1933 Started modeling in 1944
AMA #22501

Written & Submitted by WP (08/2002); Transcribed & Edited by SS (09/2002); Reformatted by JS (02/2010); Updated by JS (03/2018)

Career:

- Won the first Walker Cup presented at the AMA Control Line Nationals in 1947 at the age of 13; won the next two years also; all three times flew in the junior division
- Designed his own planes, including the first one he flew inverted
- Came up with the idea of using symmetrical airfoils as a youth

Honors:

- 2002: Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association Hall of Fame

Wynn Paul, historian of the Precision Aerobatics Model Pilot Association (PAMPA) submitted this biography that PAMPA had on file about Davis Slagle. Wynn Paul originally wrote it to nominate Davis Slagle for the PAMPA Hall of Fame.

There are only two persons who have won the Walker Cup in precision aerobatics three times in a row – Davis Slagle and Paul Walker. While Paul has the distinction of winning it five times in a row (1990 to 1994), it is Davis Slagle who won the first Walker Cup presented at the first AMA Nationals (Nats) with Control Line stunt in 1946 and subsequently won it in 1947 and 1948.

When he first won the Walker Cup in 1946, he was the tender age of 13! Yes, he won the Walker Cup as a junior division flyer!

Once again calling upon the work of Charles Mackey in his book, “Pioneers of Control Line Flying,” he points out that Davy Slagle was a natural when it came to Control Line flying.

Davy started flying in Burbank, California at the age of 11 (1944) with a Sky Baby purchased by his father from Bob Palmer. On his 12th birthday, he received an Ercoupe kit and then, according to Mackey, traded off his electric train for a Super Cyclone engine.

The first plane that Davy flew inverted was his own plane named the Chickery-Chick, a design patterned after the Ercoupe. His next plane was called the Chala, Chala. Then came his famous Checkala Roma, which was featured in Air Trails and Science Frontiers in April 1947. All of these planes had symmetrical airfoils. According to Mackey, “It appears that Davy was the first in southern California and maybe anywhere to use the symmetrical airfoil.”

Bob Palmer wrote to Wynn Paul some time in 1980, “Davy was a bright kid. He came up with the idea of symmetrical airfoils himself. He thought that this would allow the plane to be maneuvered equally whether it was right side up or upside down.”

At the 1947 Nats, Davy crashed while practicing with two airplanes at once. He thought he was out of the competition, but suddenly people began picking up all the pieces and then took them to the hangar where they commenced gluing everything back together. Sound familiar? Then, the next day, he again won junior stunt and again won the Walker Cup.

There was some confusion over whether having won the Walker Cup three times in a row if Davy could then retire it, but the AMA insisted that he return the trophy for the next year. Jim Walker had stipulated that the trophy was to be a perpetual trophy.

Later, Davy joined the U.S. Air Force. He began to fly Radio Control and restored Corvettes while living in Escondido, California in the 1980s. He worked for an electronics firm at this time, according to Mackey who interviewed him in 1982.

As one of the pioneers of stunt in the first series of National Championships, Davis Slagle has the distinction of winning the prestigious Walker Cup three consecutive years (1946 to 1948), an accomplishment of note since at the time he was a junior division flyer.

Another biography about Mr. Slagle can be found in an article in PAMPA's newsletter, Stunt News, Issue 4, 2017. The article is titled "Dave Slagle" and is by Ara Dedekian.

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