

James Ribar

1961 National Champion-Open Combat

Jim grew up in and around the Dunellen, New Jersey area. He developed a keen interest in aviation and started building model airplanes (rubber powered) when he was eleven years old. Around age seventeen he learned to fly control line and soon after he was trying his hand at combat (circa 1950-1951). His first control line models were built in 1950 and were OK Cub powered. In 1952 Jim built his first stunt ship, a Super Duper Zilch powered by a Fox 35. His first combat competition was in Far Hills, NJ in 1953. His combat career spanned 20 years. Jim's last combat competition was with the Middlesex Modelers in 1973 flying a Torpedo 35 powered Flite Streak.

Jim is a long time member of the Middlesex Modelers (Middlesex, NJ). Prior to becoming a member of the Middlesex club Jim was a member of Dunellen Model Airplane Club. For two years Jim served as president of that organization. He is an all-around modeler and through the years competed in several other events besides combat principally Stunt, Rat Racing and Balloon Breaking. In 1959 he placed second in a club rat racing contest. He won a Ruffy stunt ship kit and when he completed it he used it to compete in stunt at the 1961 Nationals . Jim still has the Ruffy and it still flies some fifty five years later. At the same Nationals, which was held at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station in Pennsylvania, Jim finished first in Open Combat. This was quite an accomplishment as combat, at that time, was at or near its' peak of popularity.

At the 1961 Nats Jim flew a combat ship of his own design, called Explorer, (the name came from the USA Explorer satellite). He says that it was inspired by the Quicker but he used a thinner airfoil. Jim liked it because it turned quicker than the 'Quicker'! A Johnson .35 on suction provided power through a TF 9x7 prop. When Jim was asked how many matches it took to reach the final he said the only one he remembered was the final. Fair enough. It was fifty five years ago after all! He ended up winning all the marbles after his opponent crashed. His other vivid memory was flying over concrete! Jim, prior to and after the Nats used his Explorer design to win or place in many New Jersey area contests. If you study the photos of his design you can see how it was influenced by the Quicker, however you also quickly notice that it was very unique and innovative.

Today, Jim is doing well and now lives in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida where he enjoys fishing, kite flying and building his HO model railroad layout and yes, he's still flying.



One of several OK Cub powered ships built in 1950 which were the first u-control airplanes Jim built and flew



Jim's first stunter built in 1952-a Super-Duper Zilch



In 1957 Jim, like so many, was using a Quickerö as his weapon of choice



By the spring of 1958 the First Explorerö was ready for action
Influenced by the Quicker design but very unique and innovative in its own right



Jim with his Explorer
September 27, 1959
First Place Combat
Parsippany, NJ



July 1961-First Place Open Combat-1961 Nationals



Jim Ruffy built in 1961
Flown at the 61 Nats
Still flying today



In 1961, in addition to the Nats, Jim and his Explorer captured trophy spots all over New Jersey. In early July he won in Bridgeton, NJ. In August he placed third in Pamona, NJ. In September he earned a second in Perth Amboy, NJ and was first at the Far Hills, NJ contest.



The last time Jim flew combat was in Middlesex, NJ in 1973 using this Flite Streak which was powered by a Torpedo 35.