

Scale model, or, time machine

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SCALE MODEL, OR TIME MACHINE?

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So, its lunch break and at almost every scale fly-in, contest, or fun-fly, the models are lined up on the runway in a neat line for spectators to get a close look and talk to the pilot/builder standing near his/her pride and joy. Do they have a question or comment? The answer is, often.

Or, it could be at a mall show or club display, or anywhere you show your scale model. The model doesn't need to be museum quality, just a recognizable model of a particular type and manufacturer. It can be a model dating from pre-WWI to any modern jet. Golden Age, WWI, and WWII seem to be special favorites.

The spectator will usually verify the description of the aircraft and then offer a comment or memory he or she has regarding that aircraft. At almost every event someone will tell me about his first plane ride in that aircraft, or that he had owned one at one time. His father owned and flew one is common. "I crewed on the full scale military model" is something you hear a lot.

Mike Barbee told me of a spectator asking about the flutter qualities of his Beech T-34T turbo-prop trainer. Mike told him he had lost an earlier model of the T-34 to tail flutter at high speed and explained the changes he had made to correct his flutter problem. The spectator then told Mike he had been involved in the design of the full scale T-34T and that when the company made an attempt to verify the design VNE (Never exceed speed) and the aircraft developed flutter, tore off the tail, and killed the pilot. The company then developed reinforcements to stop the flutter that were remarkably similar to those made by Mike.

Bob Bush flew his beautiful North American "Super Saber" F-100 turbine powered model at the Scalemasters Championships in Rosewood, IN, and he told of having a spectator arrive looking like he had been living under a highway overpass. His clothes were dirty, his face unshaven, and really bad teeth. He began what became a well-versed 45 minute conversation about the aerodynamics, performance, and capabilities of the F-100. Bob told me he has had many conversations with various crewmen or Super Saber admirers, but no pilots have shown up yet. There were, of course, many more crewmen than pilots in any case.

Now the experiences and memories of these folks may not be 100% factually correct, but they certainly believe them to be. The memories have been awakened once more.

These comments come from people who are old enough to have been involved with, or had relatives involved with, aircraft between 1930 and yesterday. You know, many of the antique aircraft have been restored and are still being flown today. New memories are being made on any day around any aircraft.

There are so many benefits when you build, or fly, a nice scale model of some historic, or just a familiar, aircraft. We get to enjoy learning about the full-scale aircraft and who flew them and where. We get to enjoy the thrill of watching a model come to life under our hands, even if it is only assembling an ARF.

We get the challenging delight of the first flight and any after that first flight. Hopefully, many more after that first will follow. And finally we get to share our models with spectators who, in turn, get to renew and share personal memories brought back by seeing the model you have on display.

It just doesn't get much better than when you are building scale model aircraft.

9/27/2010 View from Ramona/Scale Model or Time Machine