

Control Line Combat - 1st 20 Years

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While I don't claim to be a national combat hero, I have been involved with uc combat off and on since my high school days in 1958. I built my first model, a 10 cent Comet Piper Cub, in December 1950 assisted by my brother who was 7 years older than me. Many Comet models and five years later my brother enlisted in the Marines and I inherited his model stuff which included a Cub .049 and a ready to fly free flight. After learning to start that finger whacker it was time to fly it. We had a six square block field across the street from my house in Des Moines so that was a natural place for a 13 year old to fly a free flight. Of course you just put a little fuel in the tank so it won't go far. After cranking what seems like forever and not getting it to stay running I figure it must be out of gas and add some more. Repeat this procedure a couple more times and it finally fires off. Quick, launch it before it runs out of gas again. Wow, look at that go up. It is getting real small and drifting down wind and the engine is still singing away. Now I can see it any more but I can still hear it running for another minute or so. Of course it is going in a direction where no roads are running that way. Looked for weeks and never saw it again. After saving lawn mowing and paper route money another OK Cub was purchased and the previous experience with free flight was almost repeated. That made this kid sit down and say there has got to be a better way of playing with airplanes. There was a Firebaby left from my brother's stuff and the light bulb came on in this kid's head. Hey-if I fly it on strings at least it can be found when the fuel runs out. Well the Firebaby was fuel soaked so I ended up with a Scientific hollow log Super Cub. After a number of times attempting to fly that thing the firewall got fuel soaked and wouldn't stay on anymore but the wing was still good. In one of my treasured model magazines there was a plan for a 1/2A airplane called a Simple Simon. I learned some drawing by scaling up the plans for the fuselage and mating that scientific wing to it. This taught me to fly and my peers in the neighborhood starting flying also. In 1957, when in my sophomore year in high school, we moved to Waterloo, Iowa and I found some other classmates that flew control line. About this time my brother sent me a couple of engines that he bought real cheap at his base px in Japan – an Enya 36 and an OS Max I 35. I started flying

combat in the spring of 1958 and entered the first contest later that summer. Starting in the early summer of 1959 the Quicker and that Max 35 became my weapon of choice. It got so I could build them with no plans, just a wing rib template. Go down to the Ben Franklin store and buy the ugliest silk or nylon scarf to cover it with and just give it a couple of coats of airport clear dope. Along the way I won a couple of K&B Green Heads and started to fly my Quickers just because that is what Riley was flying. The next summer I scaled up John Sullivan's Lil' Ram from a magazine article and won a couple of kits with it. A Renegade, a Combat Streak, and another K&B 35. This was after graduating high school and before getting full time employment. The summer of 1961 saw a couple of more contests but the Voo Doo's and Equallizers were getting popular and my ships were not as competitive as they used to be. About this time the cold war started to heat up with the building of the Berlin Wall and I figured it was just a matter of time before I got a draft notice so the Air Force adopted my body for a 4 year term. During that time a wife, a set of twins and a year on an Aleutian island put an end to my serious modeling activities. After discharge modeling was on the back burner for a few years while life got in the way. After a number of years rc pylon racing was discovered and that brought back the adrenaline rush that combat used to give. When speed limit combat started up in the early 90's combat started to look possible again. My old equipment would have no problem going 75 mph so I entered at the Sig control line meet and became hooked again. Still at it at age 74. Have been judging combat at the Nats for the last 3 years and flying speed limit also. That's my story and I'm stickin' to it.

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