

ONE OF THE GREATS HAS PASSED ON: AL GRELL

by Bruce Augustus, with assistance from Bob Stalick and the Grell family



Al in 1948 at age 21 with Thermal Magnet. Designed by Ray Heit in 1938, it was built by Al after his return from WW II.

This isn't a story about SAM or even aeromodeling it is more about love and magic: The late, great Al Grell, March 22, 1927 - October 26, 2009.

Albert L. Grell, although perhaps not very well known east of The Divide, was a Giant in Northwest aeronautics and aeromodeling. He was a lifelong pilot and aeromodeler, and to be more exact, builder of both full scale and model aircraft of museum-quality. Al restored full scale antique air planes, especially obscure antiques, and then flew them. He was responsible for the creation of aircraft museums, and had a well-maintained grass strip on the premises of his Oregon farm, upon which I and other pilots have landed many times.

Al was a Life Member of SAM, holds several AMA records and was the founding member of the

Willamette Modelers Club of Oregon (WMC). He made superb contest trophies for the WMC and stored at the farm all kinds of club equipment used for contests and otherwise. Al was the Contest Coordinator for AMA Dist. XI for over 10 years in the 1960s and early 1970s, and his son Glenn Grell currently is the AMA Free Flight Contest Board member for Dist. XI.



Al at a local contest of the Willamette Modelers Club in Oregon with his Penetrator.

His sons, Paul, Glenn and Bruce, are superb aeromodelers in their own right and have contributed mightily to the sport in many ways, including serving as contest directors, printing the club newsletters and serving on AMA committees. They hauled the trailer full of contest equipment out the field, opened their houses for contest-week (free) feasts, and actually competed (very well), but only after the other stuff got done.

The flying fields commonly used were just a few miles from the farm, and Al and his late wife Dee, and their sons Glenn and Bruce and wives, Sue and Linda, prepared outdoor country banquets

on contest weekends. They put in untold hours and graciously fed us all free meals. All the contestants had to do was set up the folding chairs and tables in the back yard. During WMC contests, the Grell's opened their house to unlimited numbers of contestants to sleep in the house in beds or bags, or outside in tents. They even hauled a huge industrial-strength outdoor grill to the contest sites and provided us with sandwiches and hamburgers for lunch.

Al Grell was a gentleman's gentleman and an aviator's aviator, both large and small. His name is legend in the sphere of Oregon aviation. We are not exaggerating ? I



Al launches his Gordon Murray Answer.

doubt if there is an Oregon aviation or
aeromodeling enthusiast alive who does not recognise, and perhaps revere the name of
Albert L. Grell. And although
perhaps not a legend outside of Oregon, he was well known and beloved in Washington,
Idaho, Montana and British Columbia.
If ever there was a Free Flight Mecca, it was Grell's Farm, Tangent Oregon. Custodians:?
Al, Dee, Bruce, Sue, Glenn and Linda. Al, R.I.P.

Top - Al in 1948 at age 21 with Thermal Magnet.
Designed by Ray Heit in 1938, it was built by Al
after his return from WW II.

Center - Al at a local contest of the Willamette
Modelers Club in Oregon with his Penetrator.

Bottom - Al launches his Gordon Murray Answer.