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## The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of EDWARD A. VARGO

June 8, 1926 – January 24, 2006

Started modeling in 1939

AMA #518870



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Written & Submitted by EAV (01/2006), LV (02/2006); Edited by JS (01/2006, 02/2006), Reformatted by JS (02/2010)

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*The following was written and submitted by Edward A. Vargo in January of 2006.*

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### **Edward A. Vargo**

AMA# 518870

The highlights of my competitive career were the three (3) world records I set from 1939 to 1941. These records were Outdoor Junior Stick Rubber, Indoor Autogyro, and Indoor Ornithopter. I also won the 1941 National Junior Outdoor Gas and the Illinois State Junior Championships and placed in the top three (3) in all four (4) of the events I entered at the 1941 Canadian Nationals.

My modeling career in some ways followed that of my brother, Louis G. Vargo, who tended more toward rubber where I specialized in gas, but I flew in all indoor/outdoor phases of the sport. My gas model career began with a Megow Cadet, which reminds me of the V-2 rocket. I worked almost one year to save \$16.95 to purchase the engine, which proved to be a very valuable asset during my career. I flew many other aircraft, typically the 50-cent kits, but my real passion was for the Zipper. I flew Ohlsson 23, Serial Number 4302, to win the 1941 Junior Outdoor Nationals, with a better total time than the winners of the Senior and Open classes.

After a stint in the USN from 1943 - 1946, I did not fly again until my retirement in 1992. I began this phase of my career with small electric and small rubber and ventured into Cox engines and limited (rudder & engine only) Radio Control to reduce chasing. Today I have a stable of about ten (10) glow plug models, all dating back to the 1930's and early 1940's. I no longer fly in competition, but I really enjoy the thrill of seeing the old-timers circling overhead.

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*The following was written and submitted by Prof. Louis G. Vargo.*

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### **Career**

- Won first place and set AMA record in Outdoor Stick, rubber- powered, Class C, Junior in April 1941 at Davenport, IA contest
- Won first place in Class B Gas , Junior in July 1941 at AMA National contest in Chicago
- Won several places in gas and rubber-powered events in July 1941 at Illinois State Championship contest at Springfield and became Illinois State Junior Champion
- Won first place in Class B Gas, Junior in August 1941 at Canadian National contest at Toronto; also won first place in indoor scale Junior event
- In winter of 1941-42 set two more AMA records: indoor ornithopter Junior and indoor autogyro Junior; the latter time was within 5% of the Open record and almost twice that of

Senior!

- Qualified as member of the Chicago Aeronuts in 1942

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During Ed's brief but spectacular competitive modeling career of about eighteen months he worked part-time at Midwest Model Supply (producer of the Jabberwock and Gollywock) in Chicago. He was attending high school at this time also. After the first of 1943, he worked long and hard for the war effort in a defense plant while completing his third year of high school in June.

The next month he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. One year later on D-Day June 6, 1944, Ed was at Omaha Beach, Normandy, France, manning an LCI. He was one of the very few American servicemen who were on that beach before their eighteenth birthday. He lived through World War II and began a long and distinguished career as an engineer and contractor in the food industry. He and his wife Elaine had three children, none of whom was badly bitten by the modeling bug.

In 1994, Ed retired from his occupation and moved to the Palm Springs, CA area. His brother Lou lived just about the same distance in the opposite direction from the well-known Southern California flying site at Perris, so that the two brothers were able to meet and fly again after a fifty-year hiatus. They would meet about every two weeks -- Ed usually with four or five models. He was a fast builder and loved to put many planes in the air on a given day. Most of his planes were old-timer designs during this ten-year period of fun-flying he and his brother had.

Unfortunately, Ed was stricken with cancer early in 2004, but he continued building and flying through that year. Ed died two days ago. This is his brother Lou writing this, and I and many others will miss his helpful manner and the enthusiasm he brought to the sport.

Submitted by Louis G. Vargo, January 26, 2006

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