

John Wright

Neil, I saw your history request in Charlie Johnson's newsletter. I'm John Wright, C/L flyer since 1956. That's when Dick Wolsey moved to town, Lynnfield, Mass. I had been flying rubber powered A.J. Hornet's. Dick was given his Uncle's Enya 29. We were so afraid of it we went out and bought 049's. It took us both about 2 years to achieve a full flight without crashing. By then I had moved to Winchester, Mass but kept up with Dick, only about 11 miles away.

I've read that combat was first introduced by a team from Sterling models who toured the country with the Sterling Yak-9 and Mustang. Must have been 1950 -1951 or thereabouts. If I find that article I'll try to send that to you. Don't know if the Mears brothers have a Yak-9 or Mustang in their combat museum yet.

Dick got his AMA license about 1962 and me 1963. Most of our early contest flying was stunt, but since we knew how to start an engine, we figured we should fly combat too. Voodoos were cheap and easy to build. My first win was in Littleton, New Hampshire, 1964. I won a Johnson Combat Special and a silver plated platter by Onedia. It was a fluke, I beat my combat mentor, Roger Ramsey, he was 3rd in Jr combat 1956, he said. He ran a hobby shop in Medford at that time, Hobbies Unlimited. I flew stunt, combat and scale in the New Bedford contests of that era. I'm sure we met your brother Glenn. In 1966 or 67 I had to fly Dawn Cosmillo, the girl stunt champ. She beat me in a midair collision. The terrors of the combat circle at that time were John Benway and Dan Emmons, but I got to beat Benway once because he modified his Johnson so much it wouldn't run.

I moved to California in 1968. Got to fly Charlie Johnson several times and won some of them. Other local notables were Phil Granderson, Terry Prather and Linn Bowman. Terry Prather (1st in Sr combat at 67 Los Alamitos Nats) introduced me to the ST G21-35. That was king for a while in Southern California. I went to the Willow Grove Nats in 1969 with Terry. 72 entries in open combat that year. It was single elimination and I only won 1 match. My plane was like a Winder with a ST G21-35. Terry lasted a few rounds but didn't place. I flew combat occasionally thru the mid 1980's. Russ Graves and Barry Baxter were in my club then, the Flying Tigers. Barry and I got pictured in Model Aviation in that period.

I've been flying stunt, scale and sport since then. I'm president of the Knight's of the Round Circle 2015 and 2016. The name you should know now is Mike Alurac. He was pres 2013 and 2014. He now flies only combat. He and I just got back from the SW Regionals in Tucson AZ. He got second in two combat events. Pretty good against the Mears brothers and Chuck Rudner plus others. Too bad Rich Lopez passed away. He was a great flyer and a great guy. I'm going to try to get to Brodak's this year. Hope to see you there.

Happy Landings,
John Wright



Hello again Neil,

Attached is a photo of my vintage combat planes. The red and blue ones in the front row are unknown types with Voodoo stabilators. The light blue one is also unknown to me. The black and white one is the ubiquitous Voodoo. The iridescent red one is a Netzeband Equalizer. I just flew it for the first time last Sunday with Chuck Rudner. It really moves with a 1958 Fox CS Blackhead/APC 9-7. Finally the high aspect blue one is a Super Whipsaw.

The real story here is the oval silver plate. It reads 2nd Littleton (NH) air meet, 1964 winner open combat. I probably used a Voodoo and Torp 35 GH. That win put me in as 1964 Grand Champion of the Lawrence Aristocrats. The trophy is on my left. That club met at Modelers Haven in Lawrence. They kept a tally every year; 10 points for a first, 5 for second, 4 for third, 3 for fourth etc. 1964 was my glory year.

I didn't have many wins in combat but plenty of 2nd and 3rd. I also flew stunt, scale and even tried carrier.

I still fly most every week but I haven't flown competition combat for 25 years. These days I fly these combat planes for sport and fly stunt and scale competition.

Happy Landings,
John Wright