

Pilot Profile: Bob Kabella

by Russell Knetzger

We all have to work for a living. Only a few of us are so pleased with our chosen field that we can match Bob Kabella's great satisfaction with the job he held at Harley Davidson Motor Company here in Milwaukee, the last 30 years of his mechanical engineering career, until he retired in 2001. He is now 68. Bob particularly enjoyed the work following the buy-back of the company from AMF - American Machine & Foundry, by company managers such as Vaughn Beal, himself an engineer. That occurred in 1981, 10 years after Bob had started at Harley. AMF managed Harley well, doing a lot of needed updating of manufacturing equipment, and under Beal's style, working there became sheer joy.

Beal favored TQC - Total Quality Control, as propounded by W. Edwards Deming, the U.S. quality guru who America discovered after the Japanese had made him famous. Under TQC, the opinion of everybody counts. Bob would willingly be at work at 6AM to talk with third shift workers going off duty, and first shift just coming on. In the afternoon he consulted the 2nd shift. The object is that manufacturing engineers, which Bob became after leaving the Chief Tool Engineer job, involve line workers, sales people, field repair shops, - all get heard by each other. Solutions are likely to pop up anywhere in that chain. Companies become more efficient with less waste, the work becomes more profitable, and consumers get better products.



Bob was successfully following his career in greater Chicago for 10 years before moving to Milwaukee, so his wife Carolyn could be closer to her parents in Kenosha, her hometown. Bob had grown up in Hinsdale township, and Westchester, both on Chicago's west side. He studied mechanical engineering at La Grange Jr. College, and Western Illinois University in McComb, IL near the Mississippi River. He and 4 friends gained home-town fame for enlisting as a 5-some in the U.S. Marine Corps, 1961-64, before Viet Nam escalated. Most successors in their Marine unit were later killed in Viet Nam.

While in Chicago Bob worked designing machines and dies for Castle Engineering, RC Can Co., Com-



Bob in his block-long back yard at S.35th & Layton, behind his 1997 Harley, holding a Sig kit-built 4-Star .60, wingspan 71 inches, Supertigre .60 engine.

mercial Can Co., and at Kraft Foods, worked on a "Philly Cream Cheese" packaging machine. In Milwaukee before joining Harley he worked at Aladdin Design, being farmed out to places like Amron Corp. in Waukesha, where he retrofitted Swedish machines to make large and small caliber ammunition. In Manufacturing Engineering his work has been to follow a product through its manufacture process, developing designs for or purchasing jigs, dies, fixtures, machines, and gauges to make the product accurately, durable, and cost effective.

Model airplanes for Bob really came nearing retirement. He did some control-line back in Chicago, but modeling was set aside during his career, while he and Carolyn were rearing their three daughters, Debra, Michelle and Stephanie. Among them the Kabellas have 3 grand children, 2 boys and a girl.

What attracted Bob to R/C modeling was a motorcycle ride ten years ago on Oakwood Rd. past the field. Leo Pachucki and Art Schmidt encouraged Bob to get involved, and he did with a PT-40 trainer, and a Saito.56. cu.in. four cycle engine Bob is now serving the RAMS Club as its Vice President.

RAMS Horn, June, 2007, Bill Stilley, Editor
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