



July, 2018

Fellow Twirlybirds,

Greetings from California, land of a twelve month fire season.

Unlike the majority of Twirly Birds, some of our senior members stay in touch and share memories and thoughts.

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Twirly Bird and Les Morris recipient, Nancy Miller Livingston Stratford recently sent me an e-mail from her San Diego home:

“ It's Thursday morning here, just after 9:30 am, and I'm having a cup of coffee...And I think of my travels, which weren't many, but primarily to England during WW2, and later on.....Somehow though, I just didn't expand on my travels, which I wish I had!!!! ..... And now it's a bit late!!!!....

Yep, will be 99 in about a week, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June!!...I've been so lucky with my health over the years; still up and walking, albeit with a cane outside the unit.....Have Chester, a white bichon doggie to keep me company—he's such a joy.....I admit I'm not doing much outside, gave up driving several years ago, and have a friend buying whatever I need now.....Of course, this place is good, with meals, so I don't have to cook!! Always hated cooking, primarily because I was never good at it!!! :- )...Outlasted two husbands, bless them!!.....I try to walk outside every day (San Diego has nice weather most of the time!), and stop by the gym and "work out" on the Nu-Step machine (arms and legs moving).....So far, so good!!!! :-)"

Thanks so much for writing, keeping in touch!!!!!!

Nancy modestly fails to mention that she wrote about her war time service as a pilot. The book is available on line: [Contact! Britain!](#) “An American woman ferry pilot's life during WWII. British Air Transport Auxiliary 1942-1945”

This award-winning book can be found on Amazon, ABE, and other online book sales.

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Twirly Bird Jim Meade sent a nice note along with a generous contribution to the Twirly Bird treasury. I had sent Jim the HAI Helicopter History book after realizing that he was in the picture on the cover. Jim responded "that the picture brought back fond memories of 67 years ago when he had soloed in the pictured helicopter followed by a career where he accumulated 17,000 hours." Jim noted that he was "28 at the time and is only 98 now".

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And this note from Twirly Bird, Rob Chambers: "I'm fire fighting at 10,000' in the crane. We're working near Alamosa, CO on the Spring Creek Fire. Great fun really beautiful place to be. The thin air makes for reduced performance, but at the same time we are getting great fuel burns! We end up carrying a bit less fuel to haul more water but, we end up flying about a normal two hour cycle because the P & W engines sip the fuel at this altitude. We have a good size helibase shaping up with all the usual AC. Fun to see guys I haven't seen in years! Fun to work with them. Anyhow, we flew 8.0 hrs today and timed out. Gotta have a quick shower and meet the guys for a beer. More later! Cheers" □

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The 2019 HeliExpo will be in Atlanta, Georgia. We have been assured that the Twirly Birds will have a convenient room available for our annual reception at one of the headquarters hotels.

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With deep regret we include the obituaries of three Twirlybirds: Dr. Carrol Voss was Les Morris recipient. Fran Bera was a well-known aviatrix, WhirlyGirl, and helicopter test pilot. Lt. Col J Logan Fagner was an early helicopter rescue pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corp.

#### Dr. Carrol Voss

Dr. Carrol Voss, the founder of AGROTORS, Inc., and a pioneer in the use of helicopters in aerial application, died on June 10 at his home in Maine.

Voss was born in February 1920, the son of German immigrants. During his early years, he helped with his father's farm in Nebraska where they raised sugar beets, corn, and alfalfa. In an interview with HAI's ROTOR magazine in 2006, he recalled seeing the skies turn dark during the Dust Bowl in the 1930s.

Voss became interested in aviation while attending Alfalfa Center High School, carving model airplanes and reading about flying. He took his first flight in a Curtiss Jenny biplane from a pasture and recalled seeing Amelia Earhart fly over his farm in a Pitcairn autogyro during her 1931 coast-to-coast tour.

Out of high school, Voss received a Sears Roebuck and Company scholarship to attend Agriculture College at the University of Nebraska in 1941, majoring in entomology. He then attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin, focusing on pest control.

World War II interrupted his studies and Voss joined the Navy Air Corps, serving as a flight instructor for PBV and PBM "flying boats." He met his wife, Wilma "Jo," who was also in the Navy at the time, and they married in 1945.

Voss continued his education and interests in entomology and aviation following the war, earning a doctorate at the University of Wisconsin. After reading an interview with Lawrence Bell and hearing of a demonstration of crop-dusting by Joe Mashman using flour and a Bell Model 30, he became intrigued by the use of helicopters for agricultural work.

In the late 1940s, Voss received his helicopter pilot's license and started working in the industry. After nearly a decade of working with helicopters and agriculture, he started his own company, AGROTORS, Inc., in 1958. The company became a leader in aerial application operations, later opening a flight school in the mid-1960s.

Voss served as a consultant with the World Health Organization, helping to establish aerial application programs for insect infestations in Africa. He was also a consultant for agricultural spraying in India, the USSR, and South America.

Voss began working with HAI in 1953 when it was still Helicopter Association of America (HAA). He was active in the Agriculture Committee and helped to produce a safety video about flying the wire and obstruction environment. His son, Tim, who was also active in HAI, took over AGROTORS when the elder Voss retired in 1985.

**Voss is the recipient of the Twirly Birds Les Morris Award (1995)** and HAI's Lawrence Bell Lifetime Achievement Award (2001). AGROTORS also received HAI's Sikorsky Humanitarian Service Award (2000) for assisting with mosquito eradication in New York.

Voss and his wife were married for more than 70 years, raising four children.

Earlier this year, he was presented with the Boston Post Cane, honoring him as the oldest resident of Bristol, Maine.

Those interested in reading more about Dr. Voss can find the "HAI Heritage Series" story in ROTOR magazine from Summer 2006

## Frances S. Bera

December 7, 1924 - February 10, 2018



SAN DIEGO —  
Fran Bera,  
Aviation  
Legend

Born Frances Sebastian on December 7, 1924 in Mulliken, Michigan, she was the youngest of 8 children born to Hungarian immigrant farmers. Learning to fly at age 15 at the airport in Ionia, Michigan, Fran soloed an aircraft at age 16 and obtained her private pilot certificate that same year, 1940. She graduated from Lake Odessa High School, Lake Odessa, Michigan.

Fran went on to earn her commercial, flight instructor, helicopter, hot air balloon, single/multi-engine aircraft, and seaplane ratings. In addition, she became a free-fall parachutist and ferried surplus military aircraft after World War II. At age 24, Fran became the youngest person, and the only female at the time, to become an FAA Designated Examiner, eventually administering over 3,000 check rides to those applying to become pilots and those pilots who wanted to obtain advanced ratings (commercial, instrument, and multi-engine).

Fran moved to Long Beach, California in the 1950s, and continued working in the aviation business as a flight instructor and a FAA Designated Examiner. In



the 1960s, she was an experimental test pilot of Lift Systems, Inc., the developer of a new design in rotor craft – a helicopter with no tail rotor. She was the first woman in history to fly a helicopter with no tail rotor. From 1960 to 1985, she was one of few women in the world to sell new aircraft for Beechcraft and Piper manufacturers. She applied to the First Lady Astronaut Trainees program, one of only 25 women to undergo the rigorous testing for the space program that was unfortunately scrapped in 1962.

In June 1966, Fran broke the world altitude record at 40,154 feet, in a normally aspirated twin engine Piper Aztec, and this record still holds today. A recognized expert in aviation, she was appointed to serve on the Women's Advisory Committee on Aviation (WACOA) organized by the F.A.A. and served on "The Aviation Task

Force for California" under former California Governor Ronald Reagan (1969).

Her greatest avocation, however, was flying in air races. Fran set an unequaled record as a seven-time 1st place winner, and five-time 2nd place winner of the All Woman Transcontinental Air Race, also known as the "Powder Puff Derby." She placed in the International Women's Air Race, the Reno National Air Races, and many other races including the Great Race from London, England to Victoria, B.C., Canada.

From the 1990s to 2008, Fran set another record by achieving seven 1st place wins, four 2nd place finishes, and one 3rd place finish in the Palms to Pines All Women's Air Races.

Active in aviation throughout her life, she continued to push limits by earning her Airline Transport Pilot certificate and a type rating in a Cessna Citation Jet (CE-500) at age 70, continued to train pilots into her 80s, and flew aircraft into her 90s. She accumulated well over 25,000 hours of flying in her lifetime.

The recipient of multiple aviation honors, Fran was awarded the "Who's Who in Aviation" (1973), a Wall of Honor listing at the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum (2004), the Livingston

Award by the Whirly Girls for contributions to the helicopter industry (2005), the "Elder Statesman of Aviation" by the National Aeronautic Association (presented by former Senator Bob Dole in 2006), and the FAA Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award (2007).

She was inducted into the Women in Aviation Pioneers Hall of Fame in recognition of contributions to the advancement of aviation (2006), and the International Aerospace Hall of Fame at the San Diego Air and Space Museum (2007).

Fran died in San Diego, California, on February 10, 2018, where she lived the past 50 years. She is survived by her sister, Edna Baldwin of Carlsbad, California. In lieu of flowers, it is requested that donations be made to the "San Diego Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, Inc.," 8690 Aero Drive, Suite 115-26, San Diego, CA 92123, or online at [youcaring.com/franberascholarship](http://youcaring.com/franberascholarship).

A "Celebration of Life" will be held for Fran Bera on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. at Gillespie Field, Allen Airways, 2020 N. Marshall Avenue, El Cajon, CA 92020. R.S.V.P. at <https://franbera.rsvpify.com>.

*Please sign the Guest Book online  
[obituaries.sandiegouniontribune.com](http://obituaries.sandiegouniontribune.com)*

## J Logan Fagner

Lt. Col. J Logan Fagner enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force in 1943 during WWII. J was a helicopter rescue pilot in the USAAF and the USAF. He served in WWII, Korea and Viet Nam. During his service, J was highly decorated, receiving the Bronze Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Before taking a command in Viet Nam, Lt. Col Fagner served as the attaché' for the Secretary of the Air Force at the Pentagon. In 1975, Lt. Col. Fagner retired after serving our country for over 30 Years.

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Twirly Bird, Jim Wisecup has assumed the duties of Chairman of Helicopter Association International. Jim is the Assistant Chief Pilot at Air Methods. Jim is married to Jessica; they have five children. Previous newsletters contained a short story about Jim's experiences as a helicopter pilot in Viet Nam, supporting Special Forces "MACV-SOG" missions.

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Twirly Bird, Randy Rowles also serves as an HAI Board member. Randy is an FAA Designated Examiner, the Lead Instructor with Bell407training.com and Director of Training at Epic Helicopters, Fort Worth, Texas. Randy's Rotorcraft Training Musings column appears in Rotorcraft Pro magazine.

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Twirly Bird, Randy Mains column, My 2 Cents Worth, is another thought provoking and insightful bit of writing found in Rotorcraft Pro magazine.

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We do not send out dues notices because all Twirly Birds are honorable people, but if you have forgotten to send Dennis MacBain your check, this would be a good time to do so. We will reluctantly begin to purge the membership list in a few months.

Please take a few minutes and send me a story, news item, or just a suggestion for the newsletter. I would really appreciate hearing comments regarding the newsletter. My e-mail is [srs@jma.com](mailto:srs@jma.com). Or if it is easier, just call me at 408 348 5780

KEEP YOUR ROTOR IN THE GREEN!

Steve Sullivan

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