



May 2019

Fellow Twirlybirds

Twirly Birds and their guests experienced another memorable gathering in Atlanta on March 5th during Heli-Expo 2019. Although a bit chilly, Atlanta offered an interesting and different venue for our reception. Thanks to the efforts of HAI and Yes Communications staff, The Twirly Birds were provided a convenient room in the headquarters hotel.

VIP Guests included HAI Chairman and Twirly Bird, Jim Wisecup; HAI President and Twirly Bird, Matt Zuccaro; Whirly Girl President, Joni Schultz; and former HAI Chairmen, Twirly Birds Gian Franco Blower, and Mark Gibson.

Bill Yarber's family generously donated five pieces of Bill's aviation art collection to the Twirly Birds. Twirly Birds and their guests were generous with their bids for the Artwork, contributing significantly to the Twirly Bird treasury. A portion of the sale proceeds will be added to the endowment of the Twirly Bird archives at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Twirly Bird Gary Young received the Les Morris award. Gary's remarkable career was summarized by Randy Rowles, with further comments by HAI President Matt Zuccaro. Matt recalled his training at the Bell Academy by Gary. Gary was presented the Les Morris plaque by Twirly Bird, Sergei Sikorsky.

Sergei Sikorsky was honored by the Twirly Birds for him and Elena's unyielding support to the Twirly Birds. A Lifetime membership pin was presented to Sergei by his long-time friend and former HAI Chairman, Gian Franco Blower.

Terry Palmer was honored by the Twirly Birds for her contributions to the helicopter industry. Sergei Sikorsky presented Terry with a Twirly Bird pin and welcomed her to the Twirly Birds.

Lifetime Twirly Bird membership pins were presented by Sergei Sikorsky to Jim Roberts, Ken Roberts, and Kevin Shields. The Twirly Birds are grateful for the generous support by Roberts Aircraft and subsidiary Trans Aero Ltd. of Ft. Collins, Colorado.

Twirly Bird Nancy Stratford will celebrate her 100th birthday on June 12. Nancy was the first woman on the West Coast to receive a commercial helicopter rating, the second in the United States and the fourth in the world. Nancy commented in a recent e-mail "During WWII!...More time in planes (7000+) than choppers (1500+).....Had 3 yrs. in England (1942-45), ferrying 50 different types of military aircraft, of which 41 were solo first time up!...Had wonderful progressive type of training to work up to the twins (35 SEL + 15 MEL I was lucky in being able to fly all these different aircraft, wonderful experience...Then I had the pre- and postwar civilian planes, to go with my ATA ferrying, and so—in all, I had an absolutely wonderful aviation career! Nancy recounts her time in England in her book, "CONTACT BRITAIN".

During the Atlanta reception, Twirly Bird Randy Rowles graciously agreed to become the "Gallant Leader" of the Twirly Birds. Randy's lengthy and impressive resume includes experience as an agricultural pilot, EMS pilot, Designated Pilot Examiner, HAI Board member, HAI Flight Instructor of the Year, monthly column author for Rotorcraft Pro Magazine, 14,000 plus hours as PIC in helicopters... you get the idea. Randy is eminently qualified to guide the Twirly Birds.

It is important to recognize the folks who really do the work on behalf of the Twirly Birds; Jim Kettles handles the press releases, membership, and a variety of other duties. Jim is also part owner of Yes Communications; an aviation trade show specialty company presided over by Twirly Bird Kelley Parlier. Kelley and her staff have provided seriously needed adult supervision to the Twirly Birds.

Two other individuals have quietly contributed lots of time and effort to the Twirly Birds: Secretary Treasurer, Dennis MacBain and Web Master Roger Gould. Both of the senior helicopter pilots have quietly and effectively contributed immeasurably to the Twirly Birds.

Twirly Birds Bob Petite and Jeff Evans have taken the reception photos that are on the Twirly Bird web site. Bob and Jeff also authored "The Bell 47 Helicopter Story", the history of the Bell 47.

There is no shortage of talent with the Twirly Birds. Randy Mains, author and public speaker, writes a thought-provoking column for Rotorcraft Pro, "My cents worth". Bob Petite's "Vertical Rewind" column in Vertical Magazine is always a captivating bit of little-known helicopter history. Twirly Bird, Mike Broderick writes for Rotor & Wing International. And our new Twirly Bird, Gallant Leader, offers his training musings in Rotorcraft Pro.

Twirly Bird, Marty Pociask, recently retired from the Helicopter Association/Helicopter Foundation; he has performed an invaluable service to an industry not known for preserving its history. Marty has countless interviews with helicopter pioneers, most of whom have been Twirly Birds. Marty also took the time to ascertain the actual founding date of the Twirly Birds. Thanks Marty.

Past Twirly Bird leaders and mentors Jim Hamilton and Bill Yarber devoted considerable time, money, and effort, to preserve some of the Slattery collection of papers and models. They also established and endowed the Twirly Bird Archives at the University of Texas at Dallas.

It has been an honor, privilege and humbling experience to serve as the Twirly Bird President.

KEEP YOUR ROTOR IN THE GREEN.

Steve Sullivan

GARY YOUNG

Gary Young is a very common name. Understandably, it took Gary B. Young twenty years to realize that his two names had recognition from the Law Enforcement Community and to the Union of Mistreated Ladies. So, between the refused checks and threatening calls in the middle of the night, he decided to do something to differentiate himself from all the other Gary Youngs named after Gary Cooper of the 1940's. He became Gary B. Young, the Pilot!

But long before that education, Gary B. Young was already "bit" by the flying bug. He became aware of aviation at a young age by his parents who attended many airshows in the Texas/New Mexico plains. His Mom even had a picture of him standing proudly beneath the prop of a Bell Ara-Cobra at Clovis, New Mexico Army Airfield at four years old. Gary's discovery of his Dad's Wing Cigarettes airplane photos helped fuel the fire. Gary's Mom became enthused about Aviation when her brother-in-law flew both her and Gary home in 1945. That short flight in a J-3 Cub sparked a flame in Gary's heart that was kept alight both and Uncle and next-door neighbor who shared a passion for Aviation. More about the neighbor later.

In 1961, when Gary was attending West Texas State University, he discovered a means to get in the air again. The ROTC program was the best of both worlds: Military Service and a Private Pilot License. What else could a college student wish for? The same year, he was in Dallas for a Cotton Bowl football game and found a new opportunity for an all new type of flight. He got his first taste for "Helicopters"; the bug bit hard and gave him new purpose.

Following his marriage to Cary Jane Fowler, of Memphis, Texas in June of 1964; Gary returned to work for his father at a filling station owned by Byron Young in Turkey, Texas. A friend that owned a 1942 Taylorcraft BC-12D exchanged flight time for taking the friend Coyote hunting.

Gary's taildragger lessons were done by a B-17 pilot. Their first taxi lesson turned into a first flight when the lightweight aircraft went airborne before either was ready! So, lesson one was taxi, flight, and checkout! For two months he flew from Memphis to Turkey while waiting to enter the Army. August 5th, 1964, Jane and Gary arrived at Ft Benning, Ga for his Infantry Training. Gary and Jane both entered training; Gary, arriving home each evening exhausted and immediately falling asleep on the couch, and Jane, polishing his boots each night.

October ended the Infantry training and sent them off on the adventure of a lifetime. Fort Wolters, Texas was their first stop, as it was the primary location for helicopter flight training in the Army. After graduation from flight school, Gary and Jane headed back home where Jane would spend her time in college while Gary was in Vietnam.

Following military leave, Gary arrived in Amarillo, Texas for his flight to Ft. Travis AFB, CA. Now picture this 290-hour pilot (38 hours of Cessna 150, 2 hours Cessna 172, 30 hours of Taylorcraft BC-12D and 220 hours in helicopters) onboard his **first Commercial Airline Flight**. When the landing gear of the old Convair slammed to the up and locked position, someone yelled "oh my god the wing fell off". Gary fell for that and jumped to his feet! First, and last, Convair flight.

Arrival at Travis Air Base was an equally stunning experience for the country boy. But he was soon shuttled off to a real airliner and on his way to Vietnam. September found Gary assigned to the 121st Aviation Unit of the 13th Battalion in the Mekong delta river basin, based at a Village called Soc Trang. This when the real flight training began. Thanks to "on the job training" with experienced pilots in the Soc Trang Tigers and Viking company, Gary accumulated enough experience and skill to finish his tour unscathed with one thousand hours of turbine helicopter time. He was assigned to the Artillery Aviation Command Headquarters in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

In addition to normal duties, Gary was able to continue flying each month. A disagreement within the Office of Duty Assignments resulted in Gary resigning his commission and seeking civilian employment. Through a friend's recommendation, and meeting the flight hour

requirements, Gary was able to hire on at Bell Helicopter in Fort Worth, Texas. He was employed as a production test pilot; meaning that he would fly new UH-1 helicopters for their maiden flights and continue flying each helicopter until it met delivery specifications for the Army acceptance team at Bell.

He continued this dream job for several years until the commercial side of Bell's helicopter production began to demand attention. Customer flight training became an additional duty for the production pilots. Gary had a unique philosophy on this new element of the production pilot's responsibility: "...if you want to fly, get your own aircraft! The one I am piloting, and this one is mine!" His boss would not accept Gary's reluctance to train customers to fly; he gave Gary the opportunity to either train or find himself on the outside of Bell's property. No, it was not an ultimatum; just a suggestion to continue employment.

A strange thing happened to him. Because of his reluctance, he found it challenging. Customers asked all kinds of strange questions and displayed some unusual flying habits. All these elements dared Gary to understand more, and blindly trust less. Working as both a test pilot and an instructor gave him the opportunity to explore the whys and how's of the helicopter.

1974 gave him the opportunity to spend more time training than test flying. He found that Loren Doughty was extremely skilled and knowledgeable about training customer pilots. Teaching causes questions, and questions cause exploration and study. This became Gary's new focus in the 1980's. The growth of Bell's customer training enlarged the training program in its entirety. This growth brought about the need for structured training, FAA oversight in courses, and the new name for the facility by some customers: Bell Flight Training Academy. Under Loren's tutelage, Gary became the Assistant Chief Flight Instructor and had the opportunity help create new FAA Approved training courses. A very special honor was given Gary in 1987 at the Helicopter Association of America (HAA to later become HAI) annual convention when he received the Dub Blessing Flight Instructor of the Year award. Blessing was one of the extraordinary pilots that Gary had become acquainted with along his learning opportunities.

Gary became Bell's Chief Flight Instructor and inherited a tremendous pool of talent to offer the customers in the way of Flight Instructors. From 1996 until his retirement in 2004, Gary was truly blessed to work with this excellent team at the Bell Training Academy. One of Gary's favorite training opportunities was to work with Police Aviation Units throughout the U.S., and several foreign countries. Gary's goal (and their goal) was to achieve an accident and violation free flight career.

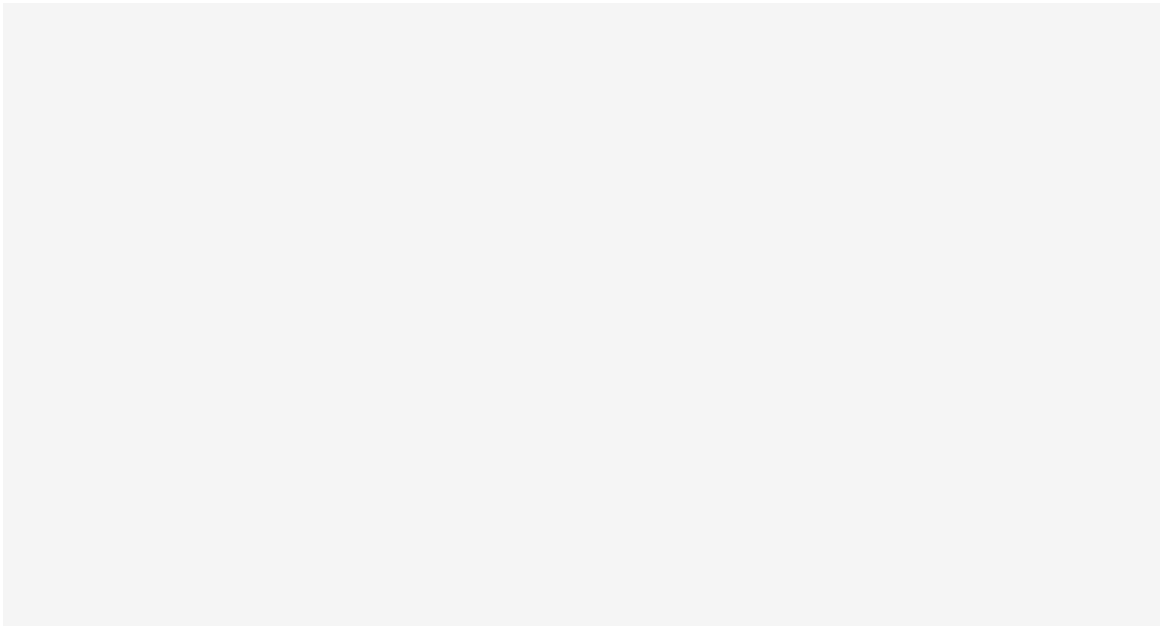
Along this educational journey, Gary had the great fortune to work with pilots like Joe Mashman, Dick Buyers, Clem Bailey, Ned Gilliland, Wayne Weisman, Gene Colvin and Don Bloom. Each of these pilots had something in their skillset that Gary dreamed to achieve. The customer training side allowed Gary to work with legendary pilots/instructors like Dub Blessing, Don Harvey, Francis Gary Powers, Art Schoal, Bob Greeno, and Jack Schwieboldt. Gary had the privilege of flying with many, many other skilled pilots with special talents that Gary hoped to learn from.

The time spent with these pilots was special, as was the time of Gary's career at Bell Helicopter. This was a dream job and a historical time of the "Helicopter". Gary saw the advent of the cockpit trainer with real sound and features, Flight Training Devices that produced realism and full motion simulation and watched the commercial application of night vision goggle training and pilot certification as it evolved from the military to the civilian market. "Memory says that some twenty thousand Bell helicopters were built during

my years spent there. I did not fly them all of course; but many of their serial numbers are in my logs."

TERRY PALMER

Terry Palmer has more than 30 years of experience in aviation safety and training and is the recipient of numerous awards, including HAI's 2010 Agusta Westland Safety Award and AAMS Airbus 2015 Jim Charleson Safety Award . She currently serves on the HAI Training and Safety Committees. In the last ten years, Terry worked closely with the NTSB, FAA and insurance companies in the effort to raise the standard of training for helicopter operations. As the previous chair for the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST) Training Work Group, she co-authored the IHST Training Toolkit. Terry is a Board member and aviation advisor for the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Services (CAMTS) and a contributing author for "Safety and Quality in Medical Transport". After more than a decade at FlightSafety International, Terry led a 6 year project for the Helicopter Flight Training Center, a simulator center dedicated to air medical operations. Terry was instrumental in advancing helicopter simulator training for FlightSafety, Coptersafety, and Helisim. She writes articles on training and simulation for many industry magazines including a feature article in the current issue of Rotor.



GONE WEST

JOE KETTLES



Joseph Cameron Kettles of Bruce Mines, Ontario, Canada age 84 passed away peacefully surrounded by his family in Thessalon, Ontario on March 26, 2019. Born in Lansing, Michigan on October 10, 1934 to parents Cora (nee Stobie), and Grant Kettles. Joe received his high school diploma in 1952 at Bruce Mines Continuation School. While attending General Motors Institute of Technology, he was drafted into the United States Army. Following his father's flying career as a pilot in WWI for the Royal Air Force in Britain and later in WWII as a United States Army Air Corp pilot, Joe realized his love of flying and graduated from Army Flight School in 1959. After his active duty service, his civilian flying career began in 1962 as a helicopter pilot on the U.S. Gulf of Mexico flying offshore for oil and gas exploration and production efforts. This started a worldwide flying career that spanned over 30 years flying airplanes and helicopters from the north slope of Alaska to the jungles of South America and from China to the east coast of Africa and many points in between. Joe's military career included over 30 years as an Army Reserve and National Guard fixed and rotary wing flight instructor. During his long career with Petroleum Helicopters (PHI), Joe was instrumental in pioneering the first offshore IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) program to allow helicopter operations offshore in poor weather—one of his proudest achievements. His accident-free flying career spanned well over

20,000 flight hours and almost 40 years. Joe retired as a professional pilot in 1994 and was active in the community of Bruce Mines and surrounding area.

DICK KIRKLAND

We received the following note from Twirly Bird **Dick Kirkland's** wife, Maria.

Dear Friends: I am sorry to inform you that my dear husband Richard has passed away after a month-long struggle in a hospital and rehab center. He passed just short of his 96th birthday, God bless him. He will be greatly missed, and it does my heart good to hear he had such a wonderful impact on so many people. I was both blessed to have a large family around to support me and blessed to have found Richard who led me to places and adventures most people could never dream of. I would appreciate it if you could inform any of his colleagues that might be interested in knowing about his passing. Thank you for being such good friends all these years. Fondly, Maria.

Korean War helicopter pilot, World War II fighter pilot, author, artist, and great-grandfather. Many people would relish in accomplishing just one of these goals. For Richard C. Kirkland, that's just where his story begins. Among his honors are the Distinguished Flying Cross, six Air Medals, the U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal with several aircraft models, and WWII, Korea, and Vietnam War memorabilia from his 50-plus years in the aviation industry.

His new book, "*MASH Angels*"—published by Burford Books in late 2009—provides a detailed account of his life in a helicopter emergency medical services (HEMS) unit in the Korean War. Kirkland's unit—the 8055 MASH with the 3rd Air Rescue Group—helped pave the way for modern military HEMS operators. He flew the Sikorsky R-5 (H-5 after 1948, S-51 in commercial designation) and H-19 Chickasaw during the Korean War. He picked up downed pilots and injured soldiers from the battlefield and transported them to Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) units.

Helicopters from the 3rd Air Rescue Group "were given credit for picking up 846 pilots and aircrew from behind enemy lines," Kirkland explains, adding that the group rescued 8,373 soldiers from the front lines and transported them to the mobile hospitals. "Quite a feat for a handful of taxi drivers," he says. Many of the medevac ops would take place in Korean-controlled territory, and the helicopter played a new and integral role in the war. Kirkland served with Capt. Sam Gilfand, who was the basis for the fictional character "Hawkeye" in the popular 1970s television series, *M*A*S*H*, that was based off a Richard Hooker novel.

An author of four published books—"MASH Angels," "*War Pilot*," "*Tales of a War Pilot*" and "*Tales of a Helicopter Pilot*"—Kirkland spent most of his time writing and painting, chronicling his experiences. Each one of the books contains anywhere from 15–20 short stories, except "*MASH Angels*," which is one cohesive story from cover-to-cover.

He'd been aiming to write "*MASH Angels*" for some time because "it was a story that just needed to be told. It's another part of that great story that hasn't been told. It lays the

groundwork for the current air medical helicopter program that's all around the world



now, and it began in Korea."

From left to right, Kirkland, Capt. Michael Johnson (Trapper) and Capt. Sam Gilfand (Hawkeye) in front of the officer's quarters tents at 8055 MASH during the Korean War in spring 1953. Historical photos courtesy of Richard C. Kirkland

Inside the MASH

The MASH helicopters were given missions by Army headquarters to fly into one of a number of pre-determined base camp locations.

"They would call us on a landline—we had a phone right in our tent—and say there's a wounded soldier at spot number 23 [or K-23]. We would go and pick him up and bring him back to the MASH, and then they'd call again when the next one was coming. Sometimes, when they had a big battle, we'd just be going back and forth as fast as we could, but otherwise they'd just call us when they had one."

Kirkland says that the Army units flew the H-13 (military version of the Bell 47), which has a pod but didn't have room for a doctor. "We had a medic, using the Sikorsky H-5, which is a little larger and has a little more horsepower. The medic came in handy because the wounded might be in pretty bad shape and need attention while we were getting him back to the hospital, particularly when we'd go behind the line."

Vietnam Vs. Korea

Kirkland explains that the way helicopters were used in the Korean War differed from Vietnam (he didn't serve in Vietnam, but did train pilots for that conflict).

"We did lose some pilots and some helicopters, but nothing compared to Vietnam. In Korea, we primarily flew up the bottom of the canyons, or we would fly offshore," he says, adding that if a fighter pilot got into trouble, he could bail out in the Yellow Sea and be picked up by a helicopter-mounted rescue hoist.

Stepping back for a moment, Kirkland explains that before Korea, when helicopters came out in the 1940s, "everybody thought they were kind of novelties. They were in great demand during the holidays to come and show people how they could fly, do circles, bring in Santa, etc. But then they would go home and everybody would get back to business."

The Korean War "changed all that," he continues. "All of a sudden, helicopters were doing all kinds of neat stuff." The Army picked up on this, having lost a significant amount of air power when the Air Force split off from the Army Air Corps in 1947. "They were

looking for something to [establish another] air unit, and latched on to helicopters, saying they were ground-related. Pretty soon they had thousands of helicopters.”

In Vietnam, Kirkland says, “they made a big mistake, they thought the helicopter could fly like a fighter or bomber,” he says. This resulted in thousands of pilots and around 4,000 helicopters being shot down, a stark contrast to Korea. “You could count on two hands the number of pilots killed in the Korean War,” he notes.

Post-Korea

Kirkland's love for helicopters didn't stop after he left Korea, flying “a little bit of everything.” In 1963, he took a job working for Hughes Aircraft Company, starting out in sales. He went through a number of promotions—sales, then a demonstration pilot, a sales pilot and national salesman—before McDonnell Douglas took over the company in 1984.