



August – October 2021



A Message From the President



Randy Rowles

Fellow Twirly Birds,

It's good to have the time to sit at the keyboard and write this note to you. To say that 2020, and now 2021 have proven challenging to our industry would be a tremendous understatement. However, our industry is resilient and again growing. Within the ebb and flow of life, a rebound is simply the downhill portion of our last challenge awaiting our next.

While in the fight against COVID, we have learned of Twirlybirds that have [Gone West] since our last meeting. As you are aware, Heliexpo 2021 was cancelled, thus our Twirlybird annual meeting was cancelled as well. Although necessary, missing out on the memories that would have been created during our 76th annual Twirlybird meeting was heartbreaking

Since our 2021 Twirlybirds annual meeting didn't happen, I've included more pictures from Heliexpo 2020 in Anaheim, CA. All the photos were provided by HAI's photographer for this newsletter. Many of the photos were not recorded with names. Please visit www.TwirlyBirds.org for all the pictures of the 2020 Twirlybirds Annual Meeting at Heliexpo..

As I write to you, the world appears in chaos. How many Twirlybird presidents have seen and thought similarly by the optics of their time? I know that question can't be answered. Our group by its nature is made up of people that have experienced the roller coaster of life and survived to a maturity to appreciate the ride. Although I'm not sure where "We The People" are headed, my faith in God and Country is unwavering and true. So...I'll continue to say a prayer at night for humanity and be thankful for tomorrow as the gift it truly is. I would ask each of you to say a prayer with me. Old Glory needs the help!

In April of 2020, I made a promise to get the next Twirlybird newsletter out to you in a timelier fashion. To be very honest, I failed miserably. The past two years have been the most challenging I've experienced in more than 30 years of business. It was the opportunity to craft these thoughts to my fellow Twirlybirds and reflect on the challenges we've overcome that made me realize just how much I appreciate all those around me. With this newsletter, I want to say thank you. Additionally, I want to thank my wife, Samantha. A guy couldn't ask for a better wife and business partner.

Until we meet in Dallas 2022...stay safe, healthy, and happy! Life is good...

Randy

Twirly Birds Annual Meeting Pictures - HeliExpo 2020 Anaheim, CA



Looking Forward to Dallas 2022!



Steve Sullivan's - 2020 Les Morris Award



W.A. "Dub" Blessing



2020 Anaheim - A Great Turnout



Jose Prieto and The TB Brass Book

Let's Make Dallas 2022 Even Better!!!!

To see all the Twirly Bird Annual Meeting Pictures, visit www.TwirlyBirds.org



Les Morris Award



Les Morris Award - Nominations Requested

NOMINATE NOW!

Twirly Birds...If you know of a TB Member deserving of recognition for contributions made to the Helicopter Industry, take the time to let us know and have them receive the industry recognition they deserve!

The Charles Lester Morris Award is provided to select TB Members as recognized by their fellow TB Members.

"Once you've experienced excellence, you will never again be content mediocrity"

Author: Thomas S. Monson

Twirly Birds Past Recipients Of The Charles Lester Morris Award

- 1980- FRED BOWEN
- 1981- JOHN SLATTERY
- 1982- BOYD KESSELRING
- 1983- STEVE TREMPER
- 1984- REGINALD A.C. BRIE
- 1985- OWEN Q. NIEHAUS
- 1986- JOHN J. SANDUSKY
- 1987- JOSHEPH S. DUNNE
- 1988- HAL SOMMER
- 1989- ROY FALCONER
- 1990- STEWART R. GRAHAM
- 1991- GEORGE TOWNSON & JOHN MILLER
- 1992- BEN WITSELL
- 1993- HAL SYMES
- 1994- DOUG DAIGLE
- 1995- CARROLL VOSS
- 1996- HARLAN HOSLER
- 1997- DICK BUYERS
- 1998- CARL BRADY
- 1999- JIM RICKLEFS & JOE SEWARD
- 2000- LEONARD J. LAVASSAR
- 2001- DENNIS FOLEY & DON SEGNER
- 2002- ANDY AASTAD & JOHN SLATTERY
- 2003- VICTOR ARMSTRONG & OSVIL YORK
- 2004- KEN EICHNER & PHIL FILLINGHAM
- 2005- ROD KVAMME & BERTIL JOHANSSON
- 2006- NED GILLIAND & DICK KIRKLAND
- 2007- JACK HORNER & DON NEW
- 2008- SERGEI SIKORSKY & ALAN BRISTOW
- 2009- WEST LEMATTA & JEAN TINSLEY
- 2010- JOE KETTLES & WILBUR O'BRIEN
- 2011- BILL YARBER & JIM HAMILTON
- 2012- ELFAN AP REES
- 2013- JAKE C. HART
- 2014- ROY M. SIMMONS
- 2015- NANCY MILLER LIVINGSTON STRATFORD
- 2016- MEL O'REILLY
- 2017- CARL N. MILKO
- 2018- ROY MORGAN
- 2019- GARY YOUNG
- 2020 – STEPHEN SULLIVAN



Industry Happenings



Sikorsky helicopter plant in Chester County and others scheduled to close

The Reporter - The Sikorsky helicopter plant located in Chester County is planning to close the facility in March of 2022, leaving the fate of hundreds of workers unsettled.

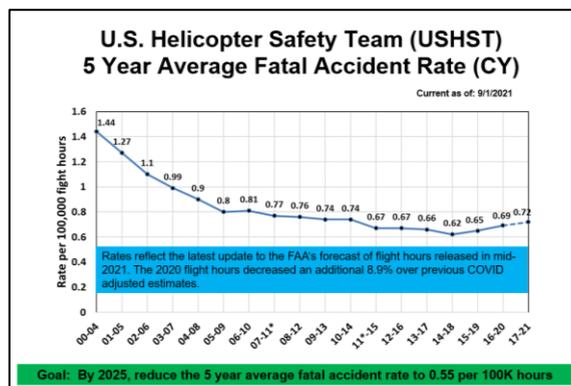
The announcement of the decision to shutter the plant in Sadsburyville was made by U.S. Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, who said she was disappointed that work she and other politicians, including former President Donald Trump, to keep it open and operating and which had appeared to have been successful two years ago, had apparently come to naught.

“After spending the last two years working with Lockheed Martin, White House officials in two administrations, and state and local partners to find ways to enable the plant to continue operating, I am frustrated and disappointed that we find ourselves here,” said Houlahan.

Earlier this year, the defense contractor announced closing two other plants in Maryland and Massachusetts. There was no public announcement by the company about its plans in Chester County.

At the time of this Newsletter, the company had 465 employees on its 24-acre campus. Some of the current workers are expected to remain with the company, but a majority are expected to lose their jobs.

Helicopter Industry Accident Rate (Rolling 5-Year Average)



 Interesting Reading**Here Today, Gone Tomorrow.**

By Bob Petite | September 27, 2021
Reprint from Vertical Magazine

Vertical

Following the introduction of helicopters in the latter part of the Second World War and the start of the commercial rotary-wing industry in 1946, the newly formed helicopter manufacturers prepared for an expected surge in both military and civilian sales.

An early drawing of the two-place Hiller X-2-235 helicopter. Jeff Evans Collection Image



An early drawing of the two-place Hiller X-2-235 helicopter.

Jeff Evans Collection Image

Having produced the R-4, R-5, and R-6 helicopters during the war, Sikorsky Aircraft was successful in its introduction of the four-place S-51 (for military and civil markets) and the two-place S-52.

Bell Aircraft succeeded in putting its two-place Model 47 into production, which had become the first commercial helicopter in the world during 1946. Its Model 42 and Model 48 helicopters had only limited success at the time.

Hiller Aircraft had perfected its one-place coaxial XH-44 helicopter, and Stan Hiller was already looking at getting into commercial production. Kaman and Piasecki were also both producing helicopters for military and limited civil use.

Even with the many notable successes of the late '40s, there were many more attempts to bring newly designed helicopters to market that failed. This is the story of three of the more noteworthy aircraft that never were.

The Hiller X-2-235

The Hiller-copter Model XH-44, created by a young Stan Hiller, is generally considered to have performed the world's first successful co-axial helicopter flight. It recorded the noteworthy achievement near San Francisco, California, in the early 1940s. The first free flight of the type took place on July 4, 1944, with an initial public showing on Aug. 30, 1944. Hiller was determined to get his new helicopter into commercial production, but also knew this would require additional financial support.

This support eventually came from wealthy shipbuilder and helicopter enthusiast Henry J. Kaiser. Kaiser had himself manufactured a two-place helicopter called the Fleetwings XR-10 Twirleybird in Bristol, Pennsylvania, in 1944. The same year, Hiller demonstrated his XH-44 to Kaiser at his shipyard, and during a second demonstration visit, Kaiser actually hovered the XH-44.



Hiller X-2-235

Stan Hiller's co-axial X-2-235 in Berkeley, California in 1944. Due to the war, it was constructed in secrecy.

*Hiller Aviation Museum
Photo*



Interesting Reading

He was ecstatic after he got out of the helicopter, and told Hiller that he wanted arrange a contract for Hiller to build a helicopter for him.

Stan Hiller's co-axial X-2-235 in Berkley, California in 1944. Due to the war, it was constructed in secrecy. Hiller Aviation Museum Photo

Kaiser wanted the new helicopter to be built at Fleetwing's facilities in Pennsylvania. Hiller agreed to the production contract, but not to the relocation. Still, Hiller Aircraft became the Hiller-copter Division of Kaiser Cargo, and Hiller benefitted from new finances and the experience of Kaiser's knowledgeable staff. Under the Kaiser contract, Hiller designed, built, and tested a new two-place co-axial helicopter with super-rigid metal rotor blades. Each of the two main rotors had two blades. Powered by a Lycoming 235-horsepower engine, the aircraft — called the X-2-235 — was created to be a successor to the XH-44, and was designed for speed.

During October 1944, construction began on three X-2-235 helicopters, but the program was veiled in wartime secrecy. Ground tests started in the summer of 1945 in Berkley, California, and although Hiller did not have any military contracts in hand, he planned to solicit the U.S. Navy to use the new helicopter as an observation and training machine. While the Navy never procured the helicopter, it did accept the third unfinished X-2-235, designated as the UH-1X, for wind tunnel testing at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) in Langley Field, Virginia.

It was Hiller's first ever Navy contract, but vibration problems with the UH-1X/X-2-235 brought a swift end to the program. Hiller was a quick learner, and redesigned the X-2-235's main rotors to include three blades, as well as a rear propeller, stub wings, and retractable landing gear.



Interesting Reading

As the new helicopters were getting close to tethered flight in early 1945, Hiller and Kaiser clashed over finances, with Hiller having requested an injection of additional cash to get the aircraft into production. Kaiser agreed to continue financing the project, but only at the existing level — there would be no additional funds. As a result, Hiller and Kaiser parted ways and the X-2-235 program came to an end.

The three existing X-2-235 helicopters remained with Kaiser, but appear to have disappeared with the passage of time. Years later, Hiller himself tried to locate them, but had no luck doing so.

In time, Hiller — whose new company was called United Helicopters Ltd. — was successful in obtaining financial backing in California. With this support, he was able to certify and manufacture his famous Hiller Model 360 three-place helicopter, which found a home in both the civil and military helicopter markets. On Oct. 14, 1948, Hiller's was the third company in the U.S. to certify a commercial helicopter for civil use, following in the footsteps of Bell and Sikorsky.

The Bell Model 54



Bell Model 54

A Bell Model 54 three-place observation helicopter sits on the grass in front of the Bell Aircraft factory in 1948. It was built with a wheeled undercarriage.

*Bell/Jeff Evans
Collection Photo*

Over at Bell Aircraft in Niagara Falls, New York, the company had obtained a contract from the U.S. Army Air Forces (the predecessor to the U.S. Air Force) to build a prototype for a competition to produce a new observation and utility helicopter. The contract, awarded in February 1946, saw the creation of the Model 54/XR-15 — a three-seat helicopter powered by a supercharged engine. Bell had, in fact, only won second place in the design competition (G&A Aircraft/Firestone was awarded first place, for its XR-14-GA), but was still asked to develop three prototype Model 54s.

A Bell Model 54 three-place observation helicopter sits on the grass in front of the Bell Aircraft factory in 1948. It was built with a wheeled undercarriage. Bell/Jeff Evans Collection Photo



Interesting Reading

In 1947, the U.S. Air Force replaced the Army Air Forces, and took over the contract, which called for the aircraft to be developed for both the Air Force and Army Ground Forces. In 1948, the Model 54/XR-15 became the XH-15, and in September of that year, Bell received a contract from the Air Force for the aircraft. On March 15, 1948, the XH-15 performed its first flight, with Bell test pilot Owen Niehaus at the controls.

A front view helps illustrate the narrow fuselage of the Bell Model 54. Bell/Jeff Evans Collection Photo



Bell Model 54

*A front view helps
illustrate the narrow
fuselage of the
Bell Model 54.*

*Bell/Jeff Evans
Collection Photo*

The three-place observation helicopter permitted a high degree of versatility for military use, with a Continental X0-470-5 or Franklin X0-425-7 300-horsepower turbocharged engine maintaining sea level performance in excess of 10,000 feet (3,050 meters). Its range was 200 miles (320 kilometers), it had a four-hour endurance, a maximum speed of 110 mph (170 km/h), and a service ceiling of 20,000 feet (6,100 meters). It had a normal gross weight of around 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms), and a length of 27 feet, 10 inches (8.49 meters).

The helicopter had a semi-monocoque construction, with a high inertia autorotation rotor system similar to the Model 47, and came with interchangeable wheels, floats, skid, and ski gear. It was equipped for instrument flying, and could easily be winterized for Arctic operations.

“While flight testing the XR-15 Sept. 1, 1948, with Charlie Barr project engineer, a fuel line break was experienced while doing saw-toothed climbs through 10,000 feet,” Niehaus recalled in a written memoir of his career in helicopters. “We autorotated successfully north of Bond Lake, N.Y. The smell of fuel in the cabin was overwhelming.”



Interesting Reading



Bell Model 54

The Bell Model 54 in flight. The helicopter was powered by either a Franklin or Continental supercharged engine.

*Bell/Jeff Evans
Collection Photo*



Sikorsky Model S-53/XHUS-1

Sikorsky's Model S-53/XHUS-1 helicopter was one of three constructed by the company for the U.S. Navy as an observation, utility and search-and-rescue helicopter.

*Sikorsky/Jeff Evans Collection
Photo*

Development of the XH-15 reached the flight test stage, but, according to an Air Force historical report, the program was terminated because of the incompatibility of the rotor system and supercharged engine. This incompatibility resulted in engine surging, which could not be eliminated. The family of engines available for conventional liaison helicopters was not suitable because of their high weight/horsepower.

The Bell Model 54 in flight. The helicopter was powered by either a Franklin or Continental supercharged engine. Bell/Jeff Evans Collection Photo

While the Model 54/XH-15 was extensively tested by the Air Force into the 1950s for high altitude research vehicles, they purchased no further helicopters from Bell. Unfortunately, no examples of the Model 54/XH-15 helicopters appear to have survived or were preserved.

The Sikorsky S-53

In 1947, Sikorsky Aircraft designed and manufactured the S-53/XHJS-1 for a U.S. Navy competition. The Navy was looking for a four- to five-seat rotary-wing aircraft to be used for observation, utility operations, and search-and-rescue duties. Sikorsky's S-53 was up against Piasecki Aircraft's tandem-rotor XHJP-1/HUP-1 helicopter for the tender. During 1947/1948, Sikorsky manufactured three prototypes for the XHJS-1 contract, which was the only experimental military contract obtained by Sikorsky at the time. The S-53 first flew on Sept. 22, 1947, piloted by Robert Decker.

Sikorsky's Model S-53/XHUS-1 helicopter was one of three constructed by the company for the U.S. Navy as an observation, utility and search-and-rescue helicopter. Sikorsky/Jeff Evans Collection Photo



Interesting Reading



Sikorsky Model S-53/XHUS-1

*The U.S. Navy evaluated the S-53
at the Naval Air Test Center (NATC)
in Patuxent River, Maryland.*

*Sikorsky/Jeff Evans Collection
Photo*

The Sikorsky S-53 was developed from the S-51, but was slightly larger and had several modifications. The two-bladed tail rotor, which spanned eight feet, eight inches (2.7 meters) in diameter, was raised above the height of the main rotor head for safety. Its three-bladed metal main rotors were 49 feet, three inches (15 meters) in diameter, and featured an eight-degree twist. They were also fitted with a folding mechanism. The three-wheeled landing gear was strengthened for shipboard operations, and there was an option for amphibious landing gear.

The S-53 had a rescue hoist, used through a trap door in the cabin floor. This also allowed the aircraft to carry sling loads or a camera.

The helicopter was powered by a Continental R-975-34 engine, which provided 525 horsepower for takeoff, and normal rated power of 500 horsepower.

It had a gross weight of 4,750 lb. (2,155 kg), a fuselage length of 40 feet, eight inches (12.5 meters), and a height of 12 feet, four inches (3.8 meters). The S-53's cruising speed was 78 knots (90 mph), and it had a range of 285 nautical miles (525 kilometers). Its service ceiling was 18,900 feet (5,760 meters).

The flight tests of the Sikorsky and Piasecki aircraft were conducted at Naval Air Test Center Patuxent River, Maryland, by Navy pilots. It was not long before they noted a major deficiency in the S-53's design: it was severely limited in the allowable center of gravity range (CG). The aircraft was not able to handle the changes in CG caused by loading or unloading rescue personnel and equipment. As a result, the U.S. Navy ended up selecting the Piasecki HUP-1 tandem rotor for its search-and-rescue helicopter.



Interesting Reading

Sikorsky recognized the problem, and eventually came up with a solution in a new transport helicopter, called the S-55/H-19, in 1949.

The U.S. Navy evaluated the S-53 at the Naval Air Test Center (NATC) in Patuxent River, Maryland. Sikorsky/Jeff Evans Collection Photo

No additional S-53 helicopters were obtained by the Navy, and all three S-53/XHJS-1 helicopters were struck off charge. None were saved for preservation or historical purposes.

Unfortunately, as with many of the early helicopters that were developed, but never made it to mass production, no one thought to keep them for future generations to see. However, their role in laying the groundwork for future successful types will never be forgotten.

**SPECIAL
THANKS**

Vertical

 *Twirly Birds Gone West*

Sunset Toast, To be presented at 2022 Twirly Bird Meeting in Dallas, TX



Jim Hamilton

1/20/2021



Joe Galloway

War Correspondent and Author *God's Own Lunatics*

See page 13 to read the full version of *God's Own Lunatics*



Dorman Cannon

Dorman was a proud TCU Horned Frog alumni, United States Marine helicopter pilot, Flight Instructor, and a Bell Helicopter Chief Test Pilot. He was admired for his accomplishments developing and flying the XV-15 and V-22 Tiltrotor aircrafts.





God's Own Lunatics

Author: Joe Galloway

I don't know if there is anybody here today who doesn't thrill at the sound of those blades.
That familiar whoop whoop whoop is the sound track of our war.
The lullaby of our younger days

To someone who spent his time in Nam with the grunts,
I've got to tell you that noise was always great comfort.

It meant that someone was going to help,
Someone was coming to get our wounded,
Someone was coming to bring us water and ammo,
Someone was coming to take our dead brothers home.
And eventually, someone was coming to give us a ride out of hell.

Even today when I hear it, I stop, catch my breath, and think back to those days.
I love you guys as only an infantryman can.

No matter how bad things were, if we called you came.
Down through the green tracers and other signs of a real bad day, off to a real bad start.
To us you seem to beyond brave and fearless.
That you would come to us in the middle of battle,
In those flimsy thin skinned crates.
And in the storm of fire, you sit up there behind the thin plexiglas
Seeming so patience, and so calm, and so vulnerable
Waiting for off loading and the on loading.
We thought you where God's own lunatics and we loved you. Still do.

We are the fortunate ones.
We survived when so many better men gave up their precious lives for us.
We owe them a sacred debt, to live each day to it's fullest.

What they are saying when you listen hard enough is this,
"We're at peace and so should you be... and so should you be."

You can view Joe Galloway's reciting God's Own Lunatics on YouTube at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqYOAqxIL_Y



Joe Galloway



Twirly Birds Gone West



Keep Your TB Family Informed

Over the years, we've lost Twirly Bird members only to find out months after their passing they've Gone West. Each Twirly Bird member is cherished among our group and as with any family, we want to share their stories and experiences.

At the Twirly Bird Annual Meeting, we celebrate the life and industry contribution of each Twirly Bird Gone West by presenting a "Sunset Toast".

We need your help to stay informed of our Twirly Bird family. To facilitate this request, we ask that members and family send us any information known on the status of a Twirly Bird member that would be appropriate to share.



Update Your Twirly Bird Membership Information

Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP:
Phone:	E-mail:	
Date Soloed:	Instructor (Optional)	
Make and Model Helicopter you soloed:		
Where did you solo?		
Additional Qualifications or Information (Optional, but feel free to attach photos, clippings, biographical info., etc.)		
<p><i>Print this page, fill out and mail</i> Please include an initiation fee of \$20 plus 1 year annual dues of \$10 <u>Make check for \$30 payable to:</u> Twirly Birds</p>		<p>Mail application to: Dennis MacBain, Secretary/Treasurer 4525 Leon Street San Diego, CA 92107</p>



Next Newsletter...

We Want Hear From You!

The Twirly Bird Newsletter is for ALL our members. If you know of a good story or historical event that your fellow Twirly Birds would enjoy...let us know! We're here for you.



Twirly Birds Annual Meeting Dallas 2022



Twirly Birds Annual Meeting

Heliexpo 2022 will prove to be a great year to visit with friends and fellow TB Members during our Twirly Bird Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

Here are the meeting room specifics:

Date: Tuesday March 8th
Time: 1730 – 2030 Hours
Location: Omni Hotel Dallas
Room: Arts District 7



Hotel Information – Heliexpo 2022

Hotel Information – Heliexpo 2022 - Dallas, Texas

In partnership with onPeak, HAI has secured discounted rates at a selection of Dallas hotels. We know plans change, so to help ease your travel planning, onPeak, the only official hotel provider for HAI HELI-EXPO 2022, offers convenient hotel options with flexible change and cancellation policies. We encourage you to book through them early for the best selection and price.

To make hotel reservations for Heliexpo 2022:

<https://compass.onpeak.com/e/63HAI2022HIR/0#hotels>

Or call:

(855) 211 4898 Toll-Free
(312) 527 7300 International