

January 2014



Fellow Twirly Birds:

We are looking forward to another Twirly Bird reception at Heli-Expo in Anaheim. The reception will take place on the first day the exhibit hall is open, February 25, 2014. The reception will begin just after the show closes at 5:00 pm. The reception will be at the nearby Anaheim Marriott Hotel in the Marquis Ballroom Northeast, located on the main floor of the hotel.

We plan to introduce new general and associate members followed by the presentation of the Les Morris award. We will also conduct a fund raising raffle, and there will be some very special items available on the silent auction table. Adult beverages will be available. Please bring your airline peanut packages to share with Wilbur O'Brien.

We look forward to another evening with friends from the helicopter industry enjoying good fellowship and sharing helicopter stories that are all true.

We will no doubt be joined by Twirly Bird Matt Zuccaro, President of the Helicopter Association International who was recently awarded the Distinguished Senior Statesman of Aviation Award.

(I added the "Senior" to the award. Matt is just a Distinguished Statesman).

But...Matt is not just another Washington guy in a suit. Matt has more than 12,000 helicopter flight hours and not one, but two, Distinguished Flying Crosses earned during his year in Viet Nam. Following is a press release; no doubt written by Matt:

"On Tuesday, Nov. 12, HAI President Matt Zuccaro received a Distinguished Statesman of Aviation Award - one of five presented by the National Aeronautic Association, (NAA). The NAA has presented the awards annually since 1954 to "honor outstanding Americans who, by their efforts over a period of years, have made contributions of significant value to aeronautics and have reflected credit upon America and themselves.

In its recognition, NAA noted that under Zuccaro's leadership, HAI has become one of the fastest-growing and influential aerospace organizations in the world."

Twirly Bid Associate, Vice President and Curator for the Helicopter Foundation, Marty Pociask, continue to preserve helicopter history with his diligent and tireless efforts to interview

January 2014

helicopter pioneers. Every Twirly Bird should be receiving ROTOR produced by the Helicopter Association International. Marty has been conducting a written interview with Captain Eric

“Winkle” Brown in England. This interview will be published in ROTOR magazine. Marty sent me the following from his interview:

“The story on Captain Eric Brown's first helicopter flight goes like this. In February 1945 Aerodynamics Flight allocated three Sikorsky R-4B Hoverfly (referred to in England as Gadfly). Brown had been sent to Farnborough. After a brief flight as a passenger, he and Squadron leader Anthony F. Martindale were sent to pick up two new R-4Bs without prior instruction. When he got there they were being assembled by USAAF mechanics. When Brown asked who was going to train them, he was handed a training manual. After a night of studying, and a day of experimenting, they were off to Farnborough. There they stayed until they got proper instruction. The date he soloed was March 4, 1945.”

Of course Captain Brown is a Twirly Bird and after flying a record 487 different makes and models of aircraft he remains steadfast in his opinion that the most memorable and enjoyable flying was in rotorcraft. (This is not a precise quote from Captain Brown, but we are certain that he feels this way).

---

Another Twirly Bird has joined the elite ranks of Twirly Bird Life Member. Gian Franco Blower, AKA the Italian Stallion, recently sent the Twirly Birds his \$500.00 check. As soon as the check clears, we will send him his life member pin.

Gian soloed in 1970 in a Hughes 269A. In addition to founding a helicopter company in Italy, Gian served on the Helicopter Association of America board of directors and was President of the association in 1982. Gian was instrumental in changing the name to Helicopter Association International, but more importantly he guided the organization to become the leading advocate for the worldwide helicopter industry.

Gian Franco recently notified us that he was nominated and elected to the rank of "Fellow" of the "Royal Aeronautical Society" at number 4, Hamilton Place London, SW 1. Congratulations Gian Franco.

Twirly Bird and HAI Chairman, Tony Burson's picture is on the cover of the December 21, 2013 Professional Pilot magazine. Tony is the Chief Pilot for UTFlight, the flight department of United Technologies. UTFlight is Professional Pilots "Flight Department of the Year for 2013. As HAI Chairman, Tony will no doubt join us at the Twirly Bird reception where we can all congratulate him.

January 2014

We received the following note from talented author and historian, Twirly Bird Bob Petite:  
"My book on the Bell 47 has been printed. The Bell 47 Helicopter Story is finally ready for sale. Retail sale is \$ 89.95 US. I am selling the first 200 copies for a special price of \$ 75.00 plus postage. My website has been updated [www.helicopterheritagecanada.com](http://www.helicopterheritagecanada.com) I will send

ordering information to any that is interested. I might have limited copies with me when at Heli-Expo HAI in February 2014. I will have a copy for you to use in a raffle or silent auction at the Twirly Bird Meeting."

---

Twirly Bird, Writer/historian Elfan ap Rees, the 2012 Les Morris award recipient, not only publishes one of the more comprehensive and in depth helicopter publications, but is also personally responsible for establishing The Helicopter Museum in Weston Super Mare England. The origins of the Helicopter Museum go back to 1958. Elfan began to build up a private collection of helicopters and helicopter documentation. The Helicopter Museum has over 80 helicopters in the collection with the ones on display to the public being housed in the main display building. The Helicopter Museum is the World's Largest Dedicated Helicopter Museum  
You can learn about the museum on their website <http://helicoptermuseum.co.uk/aircraft.htm>

---

Twirly Bird, Don Armstrong, soloed November 15, 1951 in a Hiller H-23 at San Marcos, Texas. Don served in Korea as a MASH pilot, returned home and was graduated from Stanford University with a BS in mechanical engineering. Don worked for Hiller in Flight Test, and then joined the FAA retiring as the Flight Test Branch Manager. Don died on June 21, 2013 at the age of 86 in California.

---

John Barbour's daughter wrote to tell us that her father has passed away. John soloed in July 1945 in a Sikorsky R4-B at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.

---

Twirly Bird, Jim Honaker, went west September 9, 2013. Jim was graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy receiving a commission in the U.S. Air Force. Jim's helicopter solo was in 1953 at San Marcos, Texas. As a career USAF pilot, Jim flew for the Presidential Flight Detachment and served a tour in Viet Nam flying H-3's with the 20<sup>th</sup> Helicopter Squadron. Jim completed test pilot school in 1959 and was involved in helicopter flight testing at Edwards AFB in California. In the early 60's he was forced to bail out of an H-43 while testing the effects of an engine failure. The resulting abrupt nose pitch-down caused the main rotor blades to strike the vertical tails. Fortunately Jim was wearing a parachute for this particular test flight. After retirement from the Air Force Jim worked for the FAA in Ft. Worth, Texas at what is now the Rotorcraft Directorate.

January 2014

In the September 2013 Twirly Bird newsletter we noted that the HAI Rotor magazine contained part one of a two part interview with Twirly Bird Ken Johnson written by Twirly Bird Marty Pociask. The second part of that interview was published in the fall edition of Rotor. Ken completed the interview that documented an amazing career in the helicopter world. His pioneering efforts and contributions to the Public Safety sector of the helicopter industry will be hard to match.

Ken Johnson died October 11, 2013 at the age of 95. We are grateful that Marty Pociask was able to preserve Ken's history in the HFI heritage series. And we are most grateful to Ken Johnson for his pioneering work promoting the helicopter as a public safety tool.

---

Twirly Bird Historian, Bill Yarber, has the log books of Twirly Bird, Dick Peck. Dick was a well-known test pilot for Hiller Helicopters, and later a corporate pilot in New York. We know that Dick had children who might like to have his personal logbooks. His children were living in the state of Washington. If you have any information that would help us contact them, please send that information to me or Bill Yarber.

---

Breaking news!!!! Twirly Bird, Roy Simmons has been selected as the Les Morris Award recipient for 2014. Following is a draft press release from Columbia Helicopters:

"The Twirly Birds are pleased to announce the selection of Roy Simmons to receive their prestigious "Les Morris Award" for 2014. The Twirly Birds are an organization whose members have soloed in a helicopter or other vertical flight aircraft prior to 1945, or who has soloed more than 20 years ago.

The Les Morris Award signifies the pioneering spirit of the Twirly Birds and the award is reserved for members that have made an exemplary contribution to the helicopter community over their lifetime. The award is named for Les Morris, an early helicopter pioneer that was instrumental in many developmental phases of the helicopter and experimental test pilot techniques.

Simmons has served as Chairman of the Board of the Helicopter Association International (HAI), as President of Columbia Helicopters. Roy completed naval flight training in 1958. He served on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957 to 1963 and the Marine Corps Reserve 1963-1966. He was hired by Columbia Helicopters in 1966 and soon became the company's Chief Pilot, a position he held for six years.

He also served as an FAA Pilot Examiner, issuing ratings and licenses to both company and non-company pilots. He moved to Director of Flight Operations in the mid-1970s and later became Vice President of Flight Operations. He held the title of Executive Vice President when he

January 2014

replaced Columbia Helicopters' founder Wes Lematta as President in 1992. He retired from Columbia Helicopters in 1999, after 33 years with the company. Since then, he worked his way through the Board of Directors of HAI, and served as Chairman in 2004.

Twirly Bird President, Mr. Steve Sullivan will present the Les Morris Award for lifetime achievement to Mr. Simmons during their annual meeting in Anaheim, Calif., on February 25, held in conjunction with the annual HAI "HELIXPO". Joining Mr. Sullivan in presenting the award will

be Columbia Helicopters' Chairman of the Board Nancy Lematta, and Michael Fahey, the company's Chief Executive Officer."

---

At last year's Twirly Bird reception we noted that Roy, and his wife Joanna, had contributed \$50,000 to the Helicopter Foundation scholarship fund. We learned later that this was not the only substantial contribution by JoAnna and Roy. Like many Twirly Birds, Roy has contributed to the helicopter industry in so many ways, as a military pilot, as a line pilot, as an instructor pilot, closely following Wes Lematta in the development helicopter external load operations. Roy played an important role in the growth and success of Columbia Helicopters. Roy's quiet effective management style and leadership during his tenure on the Board of Directors of Helicopter Association International has had a profound positive influence on the Association and the helicopter industry.

We will also join together in a toast to Twirly Bird Jim Ricklefs, who will be celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Jim may not be able to join us, but we will be gracious and send him the bar bill.

We look forward to seeing you all in Anaheim, February 25<sup>th</sup> at the Anaheim Marriott hotel, just after the exhibit hall closing at 17:00.

Keep Your Rotor In The Green!

Steve