



NAVAL HELICOPTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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PURPOSE:

The Naval Helicopter Historical Society was organized to "Gather, Preserve and Display the Legacy of Naval Helicopter Aviation." This is to include past and present helicopter operations in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The timeliness of this effort was made apparent with the passing of some of the pioneers in naval helicopter operations. Action was necessary before the "corporate memory" was lost!

The collection of historically significant materials from donors will be used for educational presentations, displays, research and the eventual establishment of a museum. The initial Plank Owner startup funds will be used to acquire the myriad of items necessary to properly receive items for cataloging and preservation.

Message from the Chairman:

Dear Plank Owners and Members,
This is our first Newsletter since Bob Vermilya passed away on December 4th 1999 and, although it

was some time ago, I felt it was important to recognize his contribution to our organization.

When the time came to select the founding members of our Board of Directors, Bob was on the "short list" from the beginning. Quiet and unassuming, he was the consummate team player, yet his leadership capabilities were such that when Bob spoke, it was always worthwhile to listen. Bob never worried about who got the credit, he just made certain the job was done. In the 30 plus years that I knew him, I never once saw him lose his temper or put another person down.

Bob brought a wealth of experience to our Board.

On the military side, he was Captain of Sandoval (LPA-198) and Austin (LPD-4) and commanded HS-6 where he earned a Silver Star for pulling Tommy Tucker from Haiphong Harbor while under heavy fire.

Among his civilian accomplishments were service on the Board of Directors of the North Island Federal Credit Union and NHA. He was also a Past President of NHA.

Bob drew on all these experiences, plus a host of others, in his service to our Board of Directors and left us a much richer group...both individually and collectively.

I'll close with a quote from the Eulogy delivered by Al Monahan at the Memorial Service for Bob.

"This is the football season and I am the intimate sports fan. A good fan looks beyond the team and enjoys the individuals and how they perform their job with such intelligence, skill and beauty. Today I want to speak about one of my favorite players in the "game" of life. He played in many leagues and on many teams and in each one he excelled and left his mark. I am a dedicated intense fan of Bob Vermilya."

Al, we all are.

Chuck Smiley

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PIONEERS:

MGEN Victor A. Armstrong, USMC (Ret):

General Armstrong was born August 2, 1918 in Bozeman, MT and attended high school at the Far Eastern Academy, Shanghai, China, graduating in 1936. He received his B. A. degree in Science from Walla Walla, College Place, WA in 1942.

In May 1942, he entered the Aviation Cadet Program and underwent flight training at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, TX. He was commissioned a Marine second lieutenant March 16, 1943 and designated a Naval Aviator April 3, 1943.

During World War II he was a fighter pilot with Marine Fighter Squadron 312 (VMG-312), Marine Aircraft Group 33 (MAG-33), and participated in aerial operations in the South Pacific, earning two Distinguished Flying Crosses and his first Air Medal in Ryukyu Islands area.

Following WW II he was a squadron pilot and filled a number of staff billets with VRF-2, Headquarters Squadron, First Marine Aircraft Wing, and with Air, Fleet Marine Force, Western Pacific.

In June 1948 he was assigned to Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA and MCAS Quantico, where he completed the Junior Amphibious Warfare Course in May 1949.

During the Korean conflict, General Armstrong served as Executive Officer, VMO-6, with the First Marine Aircraft Wing. As such, he was in charge of the helicopters of the squadron. This was the first employment of helicopters in combat for the Marine Corps and was in support of the 1st Brigade in the Pusan Perimeter, the Inchon Landing and in the Chosin Reservoir. There he directed and participated

in the earliest combat helicopter operations, and helped develop the tactics and techniques for Med-Evac, rescue of downed pilots in enemy territory, and command and control of helicopters. He made the first Marine Corps amphibious landing in combat at Inchon from a Japanese LST manned with a Japanese crew. Having been raised in Japan before WW II for 15 years and speaking Japanese came in handy for this operation. During the Korean conflict he earned the Silver Star Medal with one Gold Star in lieu of a second award, a third Distinguished Flying Cross and his second through seventh Air Medals.

Upon his return to the United States in December 1950, he served with Marine Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1) and the Marine Corps Equipment Board at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, and was subsequently promoted to major in June 1952. In 1953 he was transferred to MCAS Santa Ana, CA where he served as Executive Officer and later, Commanding Officer, Marine Helicopter Squadron One, until April 1961. During this period he was Senior Presidential Helicopter Pilot for both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. During Presidents Eisenhower's last two years 1960-61, he flew him on his "Good Will" tours around the world. The logistics were tremendous which included several carriers, cruisers, LPD's and considerable fixed wing aircraft in support of personnel, equipment and fuel. On many of these flights the President or Ruler of the country visited accompanied President Eisenhower on the flights. In the United States during the Eisenhower presidency he flew many dignitaries who included Khrushchev, DeGaulle and Churchill. While stationed at Quantico he was promoted to lieutenant colonel in July 1959.

In April 1962 General Armstrong completed the Indonesian Language School, Monterey, CA then reported as Naval Attaché, Djakarta, for a three-year tour. He was promoted to colonel in July 1965.

Upon his return to the United States, he completed the course of instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, RI in June 1966, after which he reported to the First Marine Aircraft Wing, Vietnam. He served as Commanding Officer, MAG-36 and later as Commanding Officer, Marine Wing Support Group 17. For his service in Vietnam, he earned the Legion of Merit with Combat "V", his fourth through seventh Distinguished Flying Crosses, and his eighth through twelfth Air Medals.

From June 1967 until September 1969, General Armstrong was assigned as Assistant Head and later

Head, Assignment and Classification Branch, Personnel Department, Headquarters Marine Corps. After his promotion to brigadier general in September 1969, he was assigned duty as Marine Corps Liaison Officer, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and earned a second award of the Legion of Merit.

A third award of the Legion of Merit was presented to him for his service as Commanding General, First Marine Brigade at MCAS Kaneohe, HI from October 1970 through August 1972.

In October 1972, General Armstrong became the Deputy Commanding General/Chief of Staff, Fleet Marine Corps, Pacific, where he received his fourth award of the Legion of Merit. In August 1973 he returned to the Headquarters Marine Corps and assumed the responsibilities as the Director of Information. He was advanced to the rank of major general on March 20, 1974 and the following month undertook the duties of Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. Upon his return to the United States in January 1975, he became Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation, Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D. C.

In July 1975 he became the Commander, Marine Corps Air Bases Eastern Area and Commanding General, MCAS Cherry Point, NC. He held this command until July 1978 when he retired from the Marine Corps with over 37 years of service. Upon retiring he settled in Morehead City, NC.

HAROLD NACHLIN
Sikorsky Western Area Supervisor (Retired)

Harold Nachlin was born in the Bronx, NY on October 25, 1918 and grew up and graduated high school in Jamaica (Queens), NY. He attended City College, New York 1936-38 and Roosevelt Aviation School 1942-43 where he received an A&E license and instructed in the U.S. Army Air Corps (USAAC) Maintenance Course.

"Harry" started working at Sikorsky Aircraft on November 6, 1943 as crew chief on R-4 and R-5 helicopters being flight-tested for delivery to USAAC. In addition, he often flew with **Igor Sikorsky** and **Jimmy Viner** (Sikorsky's chief test pilot) on sales demonstration trips to demonstrate the feasibility of using Sikorsky helicopters for a variety of military, civilian, and corporate organizations.

Among other things, he was involved in the first demonstration of “Air Mail” delivery by helicopter.

In 1946 Harry was loaned to Greyhound to supervise maintenance of two civilian S-51’s (HO3S-1). Departing Detroit in late September, the demonstration team went on an extensive tour of the East Coast to showcase the helicopter to the Greyhound family and other government and civilian agencies.

In 1947 the aircraft (N92805) was disassembled, shipped by rail to California, reassembled and a showcase tour was made of all West Coast naval activities. Again, pilots included Igor Sikorsky and Jimmy Viner.

In 1948 the aircraft was leased by the “Lyndon Johnson for Senate” campaign committee and Harry, as crew chief, ferried the aircraft to Dallas, TX and flew Congressman Johnson to 18 different cities and towns as he campaigned for the U. S. Senate.

Harry was assigned as crew chief on production of all Army, Navy and Air Force aircraft as well as assignments to other nations air force commands when Sikorsky sold aircraft to them. His foreign assignments were to train their personnel to maintain the aircraft and were often accomplished by using a translator.

In 1950 when North Korea launched its attack across the 38th parallel and started the Korean Campaign, Harry was asked to “volunteer” to accompany a contingent of Marines (VMO-6) headed for Japan and ultimately to Korea. In July 1950, Harry started a lengthy career of working mostly, but not exclusively, with Navy and Marine helicopter units.

In Korea, Harry became known as the “Copter Doctor” and was in great demand by all helicopter units throughout the combat area. With the increasing helicopter flight operations in the area, he was assigned to COMFAIR-JAPAN in order to respond more readily to requests for assistance from all Navy/Marine units. In this capacity, he was also instrumental in identifying and establishing helicopter repair facilities in Japan (HU-1 Det. ONE).

Representing Sikorsky, Harry’s responsibilities expanded to include all helicopter units in the FAR EAST including Navy, Marine and 3rd Air Rescue Squadron.

In November 1951 in response to COMNAVAIR-PAC’s request that a Sikorsky Technical Representa-

tive be assigned to provide assistance to O&R North Island, Harry settled into San Diego as his home base and served all helicopter organizations on the West Coast.

In April 1955 Harry became Sikorsky’s “Western Area Supervisor” for all military (Army, Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, Air Force) and civilian helicopter organizations on the U.S. West Coast, Japan and the entire Pacific Ocean Area. The West Coast civilian organizations included Los Angeles, San Francisco and Oakland Helicopter Airways.

At the height of the Vietnam War, Harry supervised 35 Sikorsky Representatives working with the U. S. Navy, Marines, Air Force; Vietnam Air Force; Thai Air Force, Malaysian Air Force, Chinese Air Force in Taiwan, Japanese Maritime Defense Agency, Indonesian Air Force and Shin Meiwa and Mitsubishi corporations.

After 34 years of servicing Sikorsky’s R-4 (HNS), R-5, HO3S, HRS-1, HO4S, HO5S, HSS-1, HSS-1N, HR2S-1, SH-3, H-53, HH-52A, H-6O helicopters and all their different versions and civilian and military counterparts, the “Copter Doctor” gave up the good life and retired on June 30, 1977.

FROM THE HISTORIANS:

HU-1 Det. ONE: **“Where it all began”**

by
Harold Nachlin
Sikorsky Tech. Rep./Western Area Supervisor
(Retired)

Much has been written and said about the Navy HO3S-1 Helicopter and its role in the Korean conflict. (“ROTOR REVIEW”, No. 28, Winter 1990, “The HO3S-1 and Korea”). In the early phase of the action the helicopter sort of ‘hit the ground running’ and the more it did, the more tasks were laid upon it. Fortunately, it turned out to be a very rugged helicopter for its day, and flight hours were accumulated beyond what was anticipated during early planning stages.

As August and September of 1950 turned into November and December, and optimistic predictions that, “it would be over by Thanks-giving or Christmas”, were not about to be realized. It appeared prudent to assess what would be needed in the way of

intermediate level maintenance support to reinforce the maintenance capabilities of the ship based helicopter operating detachments.

It should be noted that at the time the HO3S-1 helicopter went into action in the Korean conflict, it had a conservative maintenance schedule, pending a build-up of maintenance and overhaul experience. Thus, the main components of the rotor and transmission systems required removal for overhaul at 240 hours flight time. While this removal and installation could be accomplished while embarked, it was much more efficiently done ashore. In addition to tying up hanger space on a crowded hanger deck and working under blackout conditions at night, there were several procedures such as flight control rigging, rotor blade tracking, and post maintenance test flights that were more easily and safely controlled ashore. The operating detachment was better served if it could be provided another aircraft while the aircraft requiring heavy maintenance was transferred to a shore based maintenance facility.

At this point let it be noted that the writer had deployed to South Korea with the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade in August, 1950, and was assigned with VMO-6 as a U. S. Naval Technician in support of this squadron's HO3S-1 aircraft. On November 25, 1950, while at Hungnam, North Korea, I was requested to return to Commander, Fleet Air Japan, Tokyo, "to assist in establishing a shore based maintenance facility to support embarked helicopter detachments". At my initial meeting with maintenance personnel at COMFAIRJAPAN, I was advised that I would be based in Tokyo and made available to Marine and Navy operating units, as needed. The immediate need was to assist a detachment that had been off-loaded at Kisarazu Naval Base across Tokyo Bay from Yokosuka. Their helicopter required replacement of all high time (240 hr.) components. The O-in-C of the detachment was advising COMFAIRJAPAN that Kisarazu was not a satisfactory location for this work. I was requested to immediately visit Kisarazu and report back on the situation.

Conditions noted during my visit confirmed that it was not a satisfactory site to undertake the scheduled maintenance task. The FASRON manning this base had a high priority task of making ready for flight replacement aircraft arriving from CONUS, and making ready for shipment to CONUS damaged aircraft requiring repair or overhaul. They had insufficient working space, support equipment and personnel and thus, were unable to offer the

helicopter detachment the space and equipment needed. Upon returning to Tokyo, I was unable to convince the staff to send the aircraft elsewhere. (There really wasn't any elsewhere).

I was asked to return to Kisarazu and assist the HU-1 crew with its task. My participation in this matter went on "hold" after the first day as I was ordered back to Hungnam immediately. I never returned to Kisarazu, but the need for a dedicated helicopter support base was demonstrated when it took two months for the helicopter at Kisarazu to be returned to service.

When the 1st Marine Division departed North Korea, I returned to COMFAIRJAPAN. A chief on the COMFAIRJAPAN staff contacted me and told me about the seaplane facility at Oppama and we drove there for a first hand look. It was an ideal location. It had several serviceable hangers, a ramp out of the water where LST's could be beached, and facilities for unloading non-flying helicopters that could be barged over from the aircraft carrier pier at Yokosuka. Before I could discuss this matter with COMFAIRJAPAN maintenance staff personnel, I was advised that Sasebo had been selected as the site for HU-1 Detachment ONE to become operational. Sasebo had been selected because it was close to the operating area and 7th Fleet ships were arriving at Sasebo for R&R. Personnel were enroute from HU-1 to man this detachment.

Air Repair Division ONE, comprised of two modified LST's would support Det. ONE and was already in Sasebo. USS FABIUS was outfitted for airframe and airframe component repair; USS AVENTINUS was outfitted for aircraft engine and engine component repair.

On December 28, 1950, I was requested to proceed to Sasebo and provide assistance as necessary. Upon arrival at Sasebo I visited both ships. They had no experienced helicopter personnel on board and were concerned about being able to provide assistance. I was able to advise that HU-1 Det. ONE personnel would fill this requirement.

Before departing Tokyo for Sasebo, discussions with the assistant aircraft maintenance officer at COMFAIRJAPAN touched on the matter of positioning spare parts where HU-1 Det. ONE had access to them. He suggested that I talk to the several operating detachments in Sasebo, while on Christmas leave, about off-loading the large components that were going to be replaced ashore, when necessary.

While the ships supply officers were understanding, they were not about to release these components without official instructions. After getting the same reaction at the several ships we visited, we requested COMFAIRJAPAN to release a message on this matter.

After “freelancing” at Sasebo on my own, I finally met the HU-1 personnel, who had just arrived to set up shop. They anticipated considerable delay getting the selected building in condition to use. It was a roofless hanger filled with harbor defense gear, and in an out-of-the-way location on the Sasebo Naval Base. The O-in-C of Det. ONE suggested that I return to Tokyo, pending getting the detachment operational.

Upon returning to COMFAIRJAPAN I was “loaned” to the 3rd Air Rescue Squadron, to visit operational detachments in Korea and Japan. When I reported back to COMFAIRJAPAN at the conclusion of my Air Force visits, I was requested to depart immediately for Sasebo to assist in the investigation of an HO3S-1 accident that occurred at the Naval Station. The accident, the result of a mechanical failure in the flight control linkage, took the lives of the pilot, the O-in-C of Det. ONE and the captain of AVENTINUS. It was a sad setback to plans for getting the detachment operational.

Following this visit to Sasebo, I visited VMO-6, which was now in central South Korea. Upon return from Korea I departed Yokosuka aboard USS PHILLIPPINE SEA with an itinerary and orders that would permit a visit to each of the helicopter detachments operating with the 7th Fleet. I hop-scotched through the fleet, visiting USS ST. PAUL, MANCHESTER, LST Q007 and returned to Yokosuka aboard USS BOXER.

Upon returning to COMFAIRJAPAN on 21 April 1951, I was advised that HU-1 Det. ONE had been moved from Sasebo to Oppama and I was requested to report to Commander Aircraft Repair Division ONE, to work with HU-1 Det. ONE. The move from Sasebo to Oppama was made as a result of a decision to use the Yokohama/Yokosuka and surrounding area as R&R sites. There was dissatisfaction with the Sasebo area, as it was too small to handle the influx of Navy personnel during leave periods.

Whatever the reason for the move to Oppama, the result was outstanding as far as HU-1 Det. ONE’s ability to perform its mission was concerned. The location and layout of the facility was ideal. The

hanger provided was clean and weatherproof and immediately adjacent to beaching ramps for the LST’s. It was a short flight from the carrier pier at Yokosuka to the helicopter landing area adjacent to the hanger. Facilities were available to barge and off-load dud aircraft that might be arriving for repair. A U. S. Navy aviation supply base was located just a short drive from Oppama. As previously noted, R&R opportunities were readily available for ship based personnel.

Typically, when the carrier tied-up at Piedmont Pier at Yokosuka Naval Station, the embarked helicopter was flown to Oppama, accompanied by the helicopter maintenance crew. In some cases, the parent crew would turn their aircraft over to the Det. ONE crew and go on leave. Det. ONE would perform all of the required maintenance and have the aircraft ready to return to the ship by the end of the leave period. If necessary, all liberty was cancelled until the aircraft was “up”. Other operating maintenance crews preferred to perform the maintenance themselves and deferred their R&R until their aircraft was ready to return to sea. At the end of the in-port period, the helicopter returned to their ships looking like they came out of overhaul. Some aircraft received a complete paint job during the maintenance period.

With a steady maintenance effort ongoing at Oppama, COMFAIRJAPAN directed that I make my base in Japan at Oppama rather than Tokyo. This resulted in my getting to know all of the Det. ONE personnel. A major benefit of this was that they were not reluctant to come to me with questions and requests for assistance and everyone who needed it had access to on-the-job training.

A case-in-point concerned four (4) HO3S-1 aircraft inoperative due to damaged tail cones. The tail cone was subject to main rotor blade strikes while engaging or shutting down the main rotor blades in heavy weather, with winds gusting and the deck pitching. A sequence of messages ordering spare tail cones advised that there was none any closer than San Diego and these were being shipped via LST. Just as we were settling down for a long wait, I was told by one of the officers from USS FABIUS that he was walking through a storage area at the supply base when he saw several crates marked “tail cones”. From his description of their dimensions, they could have contained a tail cone. A quick check by HU-1 Det. ONE’s supply personnel confirmed that they were the needed tail cones.

Since detachment personnel had not previously performed the task of installing a tail cone and installing and aligning a new tail rotor drive shaft, on-the-job training was initiated. It also included fabrication of simple tooling required for the task. All four aircraft were quickly returned to service and made available to COMFAIRJAPAN as "pool" aircraft.

Just as the helicopter demonstrated that it could fill a vital need in naval warfare, the helicopter maintenance detachment filled a vital need in supporting the helicopter squadrons and detachments. And they continued to demonstrate their worth as Navy rotary wing operations expanded around the world in the last 46 years.

In closing this article, which hopefully will find its way into the Naval Helicopter Historical Society records, I would have liked to list the names of the officers and men I worked with on my assignment as a U. S. Navy Technician. I have always appreciated the fact I was treated with courtesy and respect. Though recommendations and suggestions put forward by me were of necessity "advisory", they were reviewed and implemented when they solved a problem. To widen the base of historical information on Navy helicopter operations, those who were involved are urged to send their name, organization, and periods of involvement to the Naval Helicopter Historical Society.

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FROM THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER

by
Hugh F. McLinden, Jr.

Shortly after arrival at HU-2 on October 1950, we had a three-week cruise assignment on the Palau and during this period VS-24 had their Carrier Qualifications. We, Danny Milner, O-in-C of the Det., J. R. Thompson and myself were trainees as this was to be our first as on-board Helo drivers.

The ship operated Monday through Friday each week and the first week as plane guard went very well. They flew and we flew-- nobody got wet and we took a ribbing for the soft duty we had.

The second week was different. I was comfortably sitting in plane guard position aft of the ship reviewing my own experience in a rubber raft. -- January 1943 an SB2U 30 miles off JAX inbound on a standard search with the mouth of the St. Johns

river as starting and ending point of the search, when the engine goes to idle, throttle moves but no change in power. Was at 1000 feet, sent Mayday, posit, etc. Answer--GAIN ALTITUDE--nuff said. Extremely successful landing, stepped out on wing, gunner and I pulled the raft from compartment --inflated and stepped into it at wing edge--at this point only feet wet--I said it was a good landing.

Count the planes in qualifications pattern--a habit derived from 6 years as a Landing Signal Officer--all flying in pattern. -- There were no Helos in 1943. Spent about 4 hours before pickup by a PCS doing a square search. My wingman Ben Tate circled until fuel forced him to head for JAX. All types of aircraft from JAX flew over, south, and north without spotting us. -- Count the planes--that guy on downwind next in pattern is losing altitude, best get over there. Arrived in hover as the plane stabilized in the water. As crewman lowered the noose the pilot stood on the canopy rails --had him leave his chute and my crewman hoisted him aboard the Helo.

The following day a plane went over the port side dragging a wire --the pilot got out and was floating toward the oncoming Helo. Tommie picked him up, unfortunately the pilot come onboard the Helo with his chute --a very wet chute. Tommie went by the Carrier nose down but came aboard soon thereafter having gotten rid of the chute and residual seawater.

Danny did a beautiful bit of Helo flying to retrieve the pilot who managed to get his bird attached to the ship on the starboard side aft of the Island. The fuselage was at catwalk level and the wings were vertical--pilot could look left for blue sky or right for blue water. Best not move till Dan gets there. Dan took a hover position above the wing tip--crewman lowered the noose and started swinging it in an arc toward the pilot. When the pilot was in the noose he stepped away from the plane and Dan took up the swing without an oscillation.

That weekend those soft duty pilots had round-trips to Lakehurst and package store freebies.

The third week-- again no one got wet.

Much credit for the successful Helo flights goes to the workhorse of the fleet, the HO3s, and the humor of the Plane Captain who would invariably, at the command from the bridge to 'prepare to start engines', would alert the engine room by yelling into the Helo engine exhaust stack, "**Start Engines**".

Remember the Forgotten Mechanic

Through the history of world aviation
Many names have come to the fore.
Great deeds of the past
In our memory will last
As they're joined by more and more.

When man first started his labor
In his quest to conquer the sky,
He was designer, mechanic, and pilot,

He built a machine that would fly.
But somehow that order got twisted,
And then in the public's eye
The only man that could be seen
Was the man who knew how to fly.

The pilot was everyone's hero;
He was brave, he was bold, he was grand
As he stood by his battered old biplane
With his goggles and helmet in hand.
To be sure these pilots all earned it.
To fly you have to have guts.
And they blazed their
Names in the Hall of Fame
On wings with baling wire struts.

But for each of these flying heroes,
There were thousands of little renown,
And these were the men who worked on the planes
But kept their feet on the ground.

We all know the name of Lindbergh,
And we've read of his flight to fame.
But think, if you can,
Of his maintenance man
Can you remember his name?

And think of our wartime heroes
Gabreski, Jabara, and Scott.
Can you tell me the names of their crew chiefs?
A thousand to one you cannot.

Now pilots are highly trained people,
And wings are not easily won.
But without the work of the maintenance man
Our pilots would march with a gun.

So when you see mighty aircraft
As they mark their way through the air,
The grease-stained man
With the wrench in his hand
Is the man who put them there.

Author unknown

USS MIDWAY HIGHLIGHTS

by

Walt Lester, SDACM Liaison

The Environmental Impact Report "approval" by the Port Authority is slated for 25 April, after which it passes to the Coastal Commission for a 90-day review, apparently promised in 45 days. If this occurs on "promised" schedule, the US Navy will turn the USS Midway over to the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum (SDACM) in June. This is critical because of the "towing period" (1 April to 30 October). Towing will take seventeen days and a "soft opening" is planned during Fleet Week in October 2000. The Grand Opening is scheduled for the 59th anniversary of the Battle of Midway on 4 June 2001.

While awaiting the approval of the EIR, the major ongoing function of the Planning Group is "Fund Raising." This is being accomplished in the form of Centurion Luncheons, during which individuals are invited to become Charter Members at the "Centurion Level," i.e.; a \$10,000 donation, or at a lesser level known as Charter Membership in the "Midway Magic Circle of Friends", i.e.: the Admiral's Circle (\$2,500), Captain's Circle (\$1,000), Commander's Circle (\$250), and Crew's Circle (\$100). Twenty-five of the one hundred "Centurion" slots are promised (\$3000 "down" and the remainder in two payments after the arrival of the ship) and two of the forty-one "Plank Owner" slots are still available at \$25,000 each. Another category, the "Midway Airwing" has been established, at the \$20,000 level, which entitles donors to have their name painted on the side of one of the display aircraft. Thanks to a generous donation by the North Island Federal Credit union, the name of CAPT. Bob Vermilya will be painted on the first H-3 procured. Individuals or companies who may be interested in participating at any level are urged to contact me and I will arrange for a Centurion Luncheon invitation.

The SDACM now holds title to **fourteen** aircraft with another thirteen committed. NHHS has signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' which sets forth our

responsibilities with respect to the acquisition and restoration of rotary wing aircraft.

In the few meetings and contacts that I have had with the SDACM people, I am impressed with the professionalism and perseverance of this group and with what they have accomplished in the seven years of work and money put into this project. They have a very definite plan and program to carry out their vision, however, most activities, with the exception of a continuing fund raising program, will be held in abeyance until the SDACM receives custody of the ship.

At this point in time, all progress seems to be hanging on the approval of the EIR.

REUNIONS OF NOTE

March 28-April 1, 2000

The Navy Helicopter Alumni Association (NHAA), under the outstanding leadership of CDR Don Bellemare, USN (Ret) and his staff, carried out a most memorable reunion in San Diego at Humphrey's Half Moon Inn on Shelter Island. An extensive program of tours, a bay cruise and dining complimented the re-living of the "GOOD OLD DAYS". Those of course were when THEY were making Helicopter History. Perhaps the high point of the reunion was the guest speaker at the business meeting. RADM John P. McLaughlin, Commander Naval Air Reserve Force, gave a most informative presentation of the current status of the helicopter PLAN in the navy, pointing out that retention of qualified personnel remains a critical issue along with funding. A detailed and entertaining review of his career and extensive helicopter experience was entwined with the serious messages he relayed.

April 17-20, 2000

The Naval Helicopter Association (NHA) will be conducting its Symposium 2000 at the Town and Country Hotel and Convention Center. The theme is "Hovering on the Millennium" NHA Headquarters <http://www.inetworld.net/rotorrev/index.htm>

June 22-26

Helicopter Attack (light) Squadron –Three [HA(L)-3] Seawolves at the Hanalei Hotel. Contact web-site at <http://www.seawolf.org> for details.

June 26-30

HC-7 Reunion at Las Vegas at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino. Contact Joe Skrzypek 619-460-9064
Web-Site: www.hc7seadevils.org

August 24-27

USMC/Vietnam Helicopter Association – ReUnion 2000 in San Diego at Town & Country Resort Hotel
Contact: USMC/Vietnam Helicopter Association
72 Lorraine St., Weymouth, MA 02189

September 4-8

Silver Eagles Association at San Diego Contact Charles Raczkowski Email: NapSkiRet@aol.com

October 11-14

National Chief Petty Officers Association San Diego. Contact Williams at (803) 537-4899

ENLISTED COMBAT AIRCREW ROLL OF HONOR

An Induction Ceremony was conducted 11-12 November 1999 at PATRIOTS POINT Naval & Maritime Museum [on board USS Yorktown (CV-10)] in South Carolina for some 153 individuals, two of which are known to be from the HELICOPTER community. Petty Officer's Bruce Dallas & Don West, while serving in Helicopter Combat Support Squadron Seven (HC-7), attained the requisite qualifications and once nominated, were quickly accepted for the Roll of Honor.

The Helicopter Community has many many Enlisted Aircrews that are qualified to receive this singular honor but first they must become known and then nominated. They actually are known, by the Pilots and the Commands with which they served. So now, the only thing left is the nomination.

The Roll of Honor is endowed by RADM James D. "JIG DOG" Ramage, USN (Ret). He personally requests that a concerted effort be made to significantly increase the numbers of qualified Helicopter Aircrewmembers on the Enlisted Combat Roll of Honor.

Please refer to the following web sites for information and application procedures:
<http://www.tailhook.org/RLHNR.htm>
<http://www.vpnavy.com/aircrew.html>
or contact NHHS for assistance.

ARCHIVE REQUEST

NHHS is seeking the donation of any and all manufacturer issued helicopter models of Navy, Marine or Coast Guard aircraft to add to our collection.

INCOME TAX REMINDER:

NHHS is a charitable organization pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (C) (3), and

1. You do not receive any goods or services in return for your contribution.
 2. Your donation(s) to NHHS as Plank Owner and/or Member are income tax deductible.
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REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS

NHHS is establishing a **Volunteers Database** for helpers interested in volunteering in areas of web-page development and mission area coordinators, computer accession data entry, helicopter maintenance or restoration, historical research, volunteer coordinator, newsletter editor, etc.

WEB-MASTER REQUESTS

Please submit information of historical nature, old war tales, what occurred, when, who was involved. Medals awarded from AM to MOH, how things started and evolved. Copies of current unclassified squadron histories. Authors will be acknowledged.

CORPORATE FISCAL HEALTH

The fiscal health of the Corporation has and will be dependent upon donations. Thus far, through limiting expansion and development, keeping a low overhead and utilizing an all-volunteer staff, it has maintained a sound condition.

The **Plank Owner** program has served us well with **170 members** of the crew already on board and our goal of not-less-than 200 by the time Midway arrives in San Diego (expected Oct this year) appears to be realistic. The funds produced through this effort have been start-up funds. Realistically, we must attract sustaining monies as a minimum, plus special funds for special projects. To this end the membership program was created.

Membership: Currently there are eleven levels of membership. We have at least one member in each of the lower six categories. This program has not been vigorously promoted to date. However, with the cost attendant with developing and moving a first rate exhibit aboard Midway we are seeking more active participation in the various levels of membership. We expect this range of levels, coupled with planned on-site displays, to provide appropriate recognition for any level of contribution.

Membership levels.

Council of Ministers	\$25,000 or more [Lump sum]
Chairman's Round-Table	\$15,000 or more [Lump sum or cumulative with annual contributions of \$5,000 or more]*
Centurion	\$10,000 or more [Lump sum or cumulative with annual contributions of \$5,000 or more]*
President's Council	\$5,000 or more [Lump sum or cumulative with annual contributions of \$1,000 or more]*
Life Member	\$2,000 or more [Lump sum or cumulative with not less than \$25 annually]*

Sustaining (three year) Membership:

Benefactor	\$1,000 or more
Patron	\$500 or more
Partner	\$250 or more
<u>Annual Membership:</u>	
Friend	\$100 or more
Individual	\$50 or more
Student/Military	\$25 or more

- *Level of membership remains at highest annual contribution until total for this level is attained.
 - Honorary Membership may, from time to time, be bestowed upon those whom the BOD may approve.
 - Plank Owner Certificates are still available for a one-time donation of \$100.00 or more
 - **Note:** Any level of membership including, "Plank Owner", may be purchased for or in memory of a person or loved one no longer living.
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NHHS MEMBERSHIP

NAME _____
FIRST MI LAST

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Telephone _____ FAX _____ E-mail _____

Desired Membership Level _____ Amount Enclosed _____

CREDIT CARD

MC _____ Visa _____ Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____
(Check One)

SIGNATURE

*We gladly accept MC and VISA. Please mail and make checks payable to NHHS, P.O. BOX 974, BONITA, CA 91908-0974 or FAX 619-472-0315.

_____ (Cut here to separate forms)

NHHS "PLANK OWNER" APPLICATION

In addition to memberships, original personalized Plank Owner Certificates (suitable for framing) are available for a limited time only with an additional donation of \$100 or more. If interested, please complete this application and send to: NHHS, P. O. BOX 974, BONITA, CA 91908-0974

Name _____
Please print, as you would like it to appear on the certificate

Address _____ Apt # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tel # _____ Email _____ FAX _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$100.00 (or more) payable to NHHS or bill my bankcard: MCard _ VISA _

Card # _____ Expiration date _____

Signature _____

NAVAL HELICOPTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 974
BONITA, CA 91908-0974

