



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 cataloguing and preservation.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

"Gather, Preserve and Display the Legacy of Naval Helicopter Aviation."

The last item in our mission statement speaks to "Displaying" the Legacy of Naval Helicopter Aviation. While the other two elements of "Gathering" and "Preserving" are vital, the most important part of what we are about is to make Naval Helicopter History available to as large an audience as possible. To that end, we've asked Joe Skrzypek, to take on the creation of a "Time Line of Naval Helicopter History." Many of you know Joe and you know his reputation for carrying out a project of this nature. We have every confidence that he'll give us a first class vehicle.

We'll be using our web site as the prime device to collect, preserve and display the information and our goal is to create the world's most authoritative source on Naval Helicopter History. We'll cover it from Leonardo's concept of the helical air screw to the present time and we'll ensure that it becomes the Bible for definitive and authenticated information.

This magnitude of the project is such that it will never be completed and that's as it should be. We'll provide the basic framework, however, we look to all of you to help us "put the skin on the bones". As we present various milestones, we hope you'll contribute information that will fill in the blanks. We expect, for example, to mark the establishment of every Naval Helicopter Squadron. But we'll do much more. We want video interviews with original members (there's some great film available from a recent HS-4 reunion) and still photos of major events in the history of each unit. Documents and cruise books will be invaluable to our authentication efforts. We'll provide links to squadron, staff and corporate web sites that will allow access to the most up to date information available.

All the information is out there in attics, garages, footlockers and on the walls of "I love Me" rooms. Joe will be coming out with details on our web site and in future Newsletters as to his plans for getting all this in to us. And, while we may have a section devoted to non-authenticated sea stories, we'll try to settle once and for all some of the great arguments about who did what and when. Now is the time to set the record straight.

We hope you'll join us.

Chuck Smiley

Note: This issue of the Newsletter was delayed in the hope of being able to announce the results of the

California Coastal Commission's hearing on the North Embarcadero Master Plan. The hearing was delayed once again. For details, see Walt Lester's article elsewhere in this edition.

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"SIGNAL CHARLEY"

To paraphrase the words of Dick Catone, "We are all in 'Starboard Delta' waiting to be cleared aboard 'after the turn'. The following pioneers have received a 'green deck' and will be waiting for us:"

Lloyd L. Duncan; George H. Lyter, Jr.; Walter M. "Smokey" Staight; Mike White; and Robert S. "Bob" Vermilya.

USS MIDWAY HIGHLIGHTS

by
Walt Lester, Midway Liaison

Although final approval of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the North Embarcadero Master Plan was expected by this time, the California Coastal Commission Staff has requested additional data on the "MIDWAY" project. The San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum (SDACM) is part of the overall package. It is expected that the project will now be heard in Los Angeles on 9 -12 January, 2001. As this will be the final hurdle, "donation" of the ship should take place soon thereafter, with towing in the late spring/early summer, and opening in the fall.

The SDACM Planning Committee, upon which I represent the NHHS, is realizing we may be behind for opening day exhibits and aircraft ready for display. The Exhibits Subcommittee (upon which George Cagle represents the NHHS) is moving forward rapidly. As well, George Conn and Dick Krueger have been active as our representatives on the Historical Subcommittee.

At the last SDACM Board of Directors Meeting, Chuck Smiley, was voted onto the SDACM Advisory Board.

The SDACM has now acquired a hanger on North Island (#805 near the Flying Club, and for the old timers, where the Bunker Hill was moored for many years) in which to work on restoring our aircraft. A call for expertise and volunteers is underway.

Also, we have a SH-3H identified for our use in the graveyard at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson. This is the aircraft upon which Bob Vermilya's name will be inscribed, and will be in a Combat SAR configuration, similar to when Bob made his famous Silver Star rescue in Hiaphong Harbor, while CO of HS-6. Estimates have been received for putting it into shipping condition, and transporting it to San Diego. As it stands now, this will probably be the first aircraft displayed on the MIDWAY upon opening of the museum.

Speaking of volunteers, we are really in need of people who can reinstall the transmission and rotor blades after arrival of our bird here in San Diego. Please contact me at 619-265-2321, and/or wlester@home.com or Chuck Smiley at 619-234-5557 and/or cbsmiley@home.com.

PIONEERS:

**The Naval Career of
GUISEPPE A. "JOE" RULLO**

by
Harold Nachlin



LT. JOE RULLO

Guiseppe A. "Joe" Rullo, a graduate of Manhattan College, New York and a science high school teacher in the New York City school system enlisted in the U. S. Navy's V-5 Aviation Cadet program on July 23, 1941. He started flight training at NAS New York (Floyd Bennett Field). The first flight entered in his logbook was dated November 27, 1941.

He completed his primary course in December 28, 1941 and his advanced course on January 13, 1942 and was transferred to NAS Jacksonville, FL via the NAS Atlanta, GA training pool. On February 1, 1942 his designation changed from Seaman Second Class to Aviation Cadet. Cadet Rullo's logbook indicates this phase of training featured instrument flying. He completed the Jacksonville phase in July

and was transferred to NAS Miami, FL. Operational training was featured at NAS Miami. Logbook entries include gunnery, tactics, night flying and navigation flights. At the conclusion of this phase Cadet Rullo received his Wings and was Commissioned Ensign. Next Ensign Rullo went to NAS Glenview, IL where he completed his carrier qualifications aboard USS Wolverine on October 31, 1942.

In November 1942, Ensign Rullo was assigned to Bombing Squadron TWELVE (VB-12). VB-12 flew SBD-1, 4 and 5 Douglas dive-bombers. VB-12 was embarked on the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga in the Southwestern Pacific during the campaigns that lead to the ultimate defeat of Japan.

Ensign Rullo was authorized Service Ribbons for having participated in the following campaigns:

<u>Operation</u>	<u>Ship or Unit</u>	<u>Dates</u>
New Georgia Bougainville	VB-12	9/22/43 – 10/01/43
Treasury Island	VB-12	11/12/43
Gilbert Island	USS Saratoga	05/17/44
Marshall Island	“ “	“
Asiatic Pacific		
Sabang & Soerebaja	“ “	“
Navy Occupation	Kisarazu, Japan	09/1950

Awards: Three Air Medals

Logbook entries show that Ensign Rullo compiled 165 flight hours on 16 bombing missions and 20 scouting missions during the aforementioned campaigns. He departed the squadron in June 1944. Available correspondence does not provide information regarding advancement in rank, but discussion with a contemporary advises that Ensign Rullo would have been appointed Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) on or about July 01, 1943.

On October 01, 1944 G. A. Rullo was appointed to the rank of Lieutenant in the Navy for temporary service. On October 08, 1947 his temporary appointment was changed to a permanent appointment.

Upon returning from his combat tour in July 1944, LT Rullo did duty at bases in Florida as follows:

August 1944 – May 1945 - Fighter Squadron TEN (VF-10), NAS Miami, FL – Flight Instructor (fighters) & Squadron Commander (not unusual at that time).

May 1945 – November 1945 – Bomber Squadron FIVE (VSB-5), NAS Daytona Beach, FL – Bombing Instructor & Night Flying Officer.

November 1945 – January 1946 – Bomber Squadron FIVE (VSB-5), NAS Deland, FL – Bombing Instructor & Bombing Phase Officer.

January 1946 – March 1946 – NAS Jacksonville, FL – Bombing Instructor & Bombing Phase Officer.

In early 1946 LT Rullo was accepted for helicopter pilot training. He went through helicopter pilot training between April and July 1946 at NAS New York while assigned to Navy Experimental Squadron THREE (VX-3). He was designated Navy helicopter pilot **No. 17** upon completion on August 28, 1946.

As LT Rullo completed his training at NAS New York, VX-3 was moved to NAS Lakehurst, NJ. He served as operations officer and was Officer-in-Charge of helicopter detachments aboard the USS Randolph, USS Leyte, and USS Macon.

In February 1947 the U. S. Navy and Sikorsky Aircraft co-operated in a project to demonstrate the capability of helicopters to operate at sea and perform the missions envisioned for this type of aircraft. A Sikorsky owned S-51 helicopter (similar to what the Navy designated the HO3S-1), with a Sikorsky crew, embarked aboard the aircraft carrier USS Franklin D. Roosevelt. The FDR was a unit of Task Fleet TWO, and engaged in fleet training exercises in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. LT Rullo was assigned to the project as observer, host to the Sikorsky contingent and rescue hoist operator during plane guard missions.

As detailed in a paper obtained from the Igor I. Sikorsky Historical Archives titled, “First Helicopter Naval Rescue”, the demonstration was most successful. With Mr. D. D. Viner as pilot on three occasions and Mr. J. E. Beigle pilot on one mission and LT Rullo hoist operator on all four missions, rescues were made of airmen who ditched during carrier operations. Six Navy pilots and crewmen were recovered and returned to their ship. Guard-Mail flights and ship-to-ship personnel transfers were also performed

In recognition of his participation in the rescues performed during the demonstration aboard USS Franklin D. Roosevelt, LT Rullo was presented with a “Winged S” lapel pin and certificate. This award is presented to pilots and crewmen who have performed rescues by helicopter. This award is tendered by Sikorsky Aircraft.

On 1 April 1948 the personnel and aircraft assets of VX-3 were transferred to two newly commissioned helicopter squadrons. Helicopter Utility Squadron ONE (HU-1) was formed and deployed to NAAS

Miramar in San Diego, CA. Helicopter Utility Squadron TWO (HU-2), also activated in this dual commissioning ceremony, remained at NAS Lakehurst. LT Rullo was assigned to HU-1, assuming duty as Administrative Officer. He also served as O-in-C of detachments deployed over a period of time aboard the USS Boxer, USS Rendova, USS Valley Forge and USS Salisbury Sound.

During this time frame, helicopter detachments were deployed aboard aircraft carriers to provide a range of services. HU-1 provided the aircraft and crews for West Coast based ships. A primary mission was “plane guard”. The helicopter was airborne during launches and recoveries of the embarked fixed-wing aircraft, flying behind and to the right of the carrier. Should an aircraft ditch during the operation, the helicopter was in position to quickly rescue the aircraft’s crew. This mission soon was named the “Angel” mission as rescued personnel said, ‘the helicopter came out of the sky like an angel’ to rescue them. Destroyers performed these rescues before helicopters became available but it was a more time-consuming operation, especially in heavy seas.

Helicopters also delivered mail between ships in the task force, transferred personnel between ships, transported the Chaplain to conduct Sunday services to ships not staffed with one and many more missions as they arose. As a result, the pilots and crewmen were kept very busy on their cruises.

On December 3, 1948 LT Rullo received temporary orders to proceed to NAS Whidbey Island, WA to provide assistance to an on-going search for a Navy aircraft missing in the vicinity of Vancouver Island. Although the search was not successful, in his letter of appreciation, the commander of the Navy unit at Whidbey Island thanked the HU-1 officers and men for their efforts.

On his return to San Diego, LT Rullo attempted to set a distance record for helicopters. He took off from NAS Seattle and planned to fly to Bakersfield, CA. Adverse headwinds caused them to terminate the flight at Alameda, CA. They were airborne for 10 hours and 17 minutes and covered 715 miles on a dogleg route. The flight was made on October 30, 1948.

In February 1950 the Mexican Government, through the American Legation in Mexico City, requested assistance with the evacuation of bodies from the scene of an air crash near Punto Prieta, Baja California. The request was approved and HU-1 was directed to perform the mission. LT Rullo, LTJG William Leary and CHMAC A. D. Hight were selected for the mission.

Because there were no airports or refueling facilities along the route to Punta Prieta, a Coast Guard PBY

amphibian was dispatched to escort the helicopter and provide fuel.

The flight departed on March 1, 1950 and arrived at Lago Chapala, a dry lake, that afternoon. It was to rendezvous with a ground party, but no one was there. Some difficulty was experienced locating Lago Chapala because maps provided the pilot were obsolete and inaccurate. Fortunately there was a Mexican Officer and the U. S. Council from Tijuana aboard the Coast Guard aircraft. They were able to supply information about the area that helped them locate the dry lake.

LT Rullo flew on to Punta Prieta, which was about 30 miles south of Lago Chapala. Upon arrival it was learned that a ground party had recovered the bodies. A spokesman for the village thanked the helicopter crew for its efforts and they returned to Lago Chapala.

The PBV and helicopter crews made camp over night and returned to San Diego the next day. The mission did demonstrate the feasibility of conducting rescue operations in Baja California with coordination of Navy and Coast Guard aircraft.

In addition to their operational missions HU-1 and LT Rullo found time to do some flying "for fun". Both received a letter of appreciation for their participation in Navy Day activities in 1948. They also received recognition and appreciation for delivering Santa Claus to pre-Christmas festivities in 1948 and 1949. LT Rullo is named 'Santa's Chauffeur' in a newspaper report of this event.

In March and July 1949 LT Rullo completed correspondence courses in Navy Regulations and Customs and one in Military Law all while performing a busy schedule at his parent squadron and several ship-based temporary assignments. In January 1950 he completed a course in Practical Radiological Safety at the Fleet Training Center in San Diego. In October he completed a Naval Gunfire Air Spotters course.

As of July 1, 1950 he had a total flight time of 2200 hours of which 650 hours was helicopter time.

On July 24, 1950 LT Rullo and two other HU-1 pilots received orders on short notice to depart on the USS Salisbury Sound. The ship was tasked to transport several helicopters to Japan for further transfer to the Marines in Korea. Upon arrival at a port near Tokyo, the helicopters were flown to a base in Southern Japan and across the straits of Korea. The group returned to NAAS Miramar on September 18, 1950.

As the fighting in Korea continued into the winter of 1950, and as more helicopters arrived for ship-based operations in Korean waters, it became apparent that

a shore-based helicopter facility was needed to support the sea-based helicopters.

During the first week of January 1951, Helicopter Utility Squadron ONE, Detachment ONE (HU-1, Det. 1) with LT "Joe" Rullo as Officer-in-Charge arrived at Naval Station, Sasebo and proceeded to make itself ready to accept helicopters in need of maintenance or repair. This writer, at the time a Naval Technician provided by Sikorsky Aircraft and assigned to Commander, Fleet Air Japan to assist Navy and Marine helicopter units, was also at Sasebo prepared to work with HU-1, Det. 1. During a meeting with LT Rullo, he noted that several days would be required before the detachment would be ready to work on aircraft. He suggested that I return to Tokyo and that my assistance would be requested when needed.

January 17, 1951 the maintenance detachment had a helicopter ready to return to service. It was to be transferred to an LST. At the same time, a helicopter stationed aboard USS Manchester was visiting the maintenance detachment. LT Rullo and LT Miller, the pilot of the USS Manchester helicopter, were discussing the best way to make the landing on the LST. LT Miller offered to fly LT Rullo out to the LST and demonstrate the landing procedure. This was accomplished and while they were returning to the maintenance detachment's landing area and, while still over water, the helicopter experienced a failure in the flight control system which rendered it uncontrollable. It crashed into the water and there were no survivors.

Letters and messages from his commanding officer, shipmates, colleagues and friends attest to LT Rullo's excellence as a naval officer and grieved his loss to the Navy and to his family. San Diego newspapers carried articles about his accident and his naval career.

Although it was cut short by this tragic accident, LT Rullo's career is indelibly woven into the tapestry that is Naval Aviation. His action as a dive-bomber pilot in the Southwestern Pacific when Japan's aggression was stopped and turned into ultimate defeat, and his tour of duty as a helicopter pilot during the formative years of the Navy's helicopter program are truly a part of the U. S. Navy's aviation history.

(This biography was suggested by Joe Rullo's son, David. It is dedicated to him and his sisters, Dana and Mary Ann. --- Harold Nachlin, Historian, Naval Helicopter Historical Society)

HUGH F. McLINDEN, JR.
Autobiography



1941

On 30 September I raised my hand at NRAB Anacostia and became a Seaman 2nd Class on inactive duty in the U. S. Naval Reserve V-5 program and was scheduled to begin Flight Training on January 15, 1942.

1942

Reported to NRAB Anacostia on 15 January for Flight Training. The E-Base, as it was known then, meant "Elimination Base". Fortunately, I soloed on 18 February and spent March in 'Pool' at NRAB New Orleans awaiting assignment to primary training – Pensacola, Corpus, or Jacksonville. (Flew the N3N-1's, 3's)

Arrived Pensacola 2 April and spent April in 'Ground School'. Did Primary, Formation, Instruments and Advanced (Dive-bombing) through 23 October. Received Wings this date and commission as Ensign, USNR as of 11 August. (Flew the N3N-3, NJ-1, SNJ-3, SNV-1)

1943

Went to Miami and Cecil Field (JAX) for Advanced Dive Bombing Training and completed this training on January 26th. Qualified aboard the carrier USS Charger (Norfolk) in an SB2U on February 18th and had orders to VC-24.

Reported to Floyd Bennett Field, N.Y. in March. VC-24 trained to go aboard the new CVL-24, USS Belleau Wood which had commissioning in May, shakedown June-July, refit in Philadelphia Naval Yard after shakedown and then headed for Pearl with new birds aboard. Fighters had F4F's, now new F6F's, Torpedo Bombers TBF's to TBM's, and SBD-4's to SBD-5's. A comfortable change for all.

In October the SBD aircraft were off-loaded from all CVL carriers and replaced with a second fighter squadron. Four such CVL Dive Bomber squadrons 22, 23, 24, and 25 left Pearl Harbor for land-based combat in

the Northern Solomon's. (Flew OS2U-3, SNJ-4, BT-1, SBC, SB2U-2, SB2U-3, SBD-4 and SBD-5)

1944

From November 1943 to May 1944 I managed to destroy 2 Betty's turning up for take-off, 4 Zero's in a cloverleaf revetment, at least six heavy guns (AA) and a power plant during my 26 Combat Missions. I had two trips to Australia, was awarded one DFC, six Air Medals, a Presidential Unit Citation, five 'I was there' and one 'thank God it's over' medals. Spent most of the rest of the year as an instructor at Cecil Field. (Flew SB2A)

1945

Started LSO Training at NAS Jacksonville on December 1, 1944. It included Fighters at Green Cove Springs, Bombers at Miami, Night Fighters at Vero Beach and completion of 1000 waved landings of all types on the USS Wolverine on Lake Michigan.

From October 1945 till July 1950, I had LSO/Squadron duties at sea and at CQTU, Pensacola including CVL CARQUALS. (Flew N2S, GH2, SNJ-4C, F6F, F4U, AD, TBM-3E, PBY-5A and F8F)

1950

On July 27, 1950 I began Helicopter Training at Connolly AFB, Waco, Texas and completed October 10th. Arrived Lakehurst November 3rd and completed HU-2 training on November 16th, (**Helo Pilot #312**).

December 12th, first at-sea rescue.

On December 23rd had duty when ferry pilot came in with the first HO4S-1. Accepted HO4S-1 #125508 for O&R and HU-2. Later checked out all the pilots headed for VX-1 with HO4S-1 aircraft to fly the dipping sonar ASW program for OPDEVFOR.

By May, the HRP-1 replaced the HO4S-1 on the program until it's completion in July. (Flew H5D, YH13, H5F, HO3S-1, HTL-2, HO4S-1 and HRP-1)

1952

Was HS-3 Operations Officer from September 1952 to July 1953.

1953

Practiced in HRP-1 for new forthcoming tandem HUP-2S then replaced them with HRS-3 aircraft in March 1953. First Airlant detachment of two HRS-3 aircraft aboard a carrier was May 6th-28th. (Flew HUP-25 and HRS-3)

1954 Became Bureau of Aeronautics Resident Representative at Hiller Helicopters in February. Organization changed to BAR (BuAerRep), in December. (Flew H23-B, JRB, SNB, C-47 and H23-C)

1955 Flew 'Flying Platform' on April 6th.

1956 Received orders in June to report to HS-6 as Executive Officer and 'to report before September 10th'. Reported in August and was detached at the end of June 1957. (Flew HO4S-3, HSS-1)

1957 New orders as Assistant OPS for Air-Weapons on CARDIV FIFTEEN for 18 months on the USS Princeton. (Flew HSS-1)

1958 HS-8 and HS-4 were aboard for an eight and six month cruise. Ordered to BAR at Vertol in Morton, PA as assistant with orders to relieve the BAR on his retirement. (Flew S2F-1 and H-21C)

1960 A number of changes to BAR as the Bureau of Naval Weapons absorbed BuAer and BuShips. At Vertol, they found a new Big Brother in BOEING. (Flew V-107, V-44, YHC-1A, YHC-1A-II and H-46)

1961 Sea duty called and I was fully qualified to become the Assistant Air and Weapons Officer for an Admiral (CARDIV-19) who didn't want anyone in training. Enjoyed my tour with him since I didn't actually relieve anyone for a few months, so I enjoyed the ride. Got a lot of HSS-1N time while judging the training exercises and dropping Chaplains on the destroyers. (Flew HSS-1N and TF)

1962 Old acquaintances showed up, Phil Nicholas, CO, was my assistant in HS-3. Al Monahan, CO, was my assistant in CQTU-4. He left CQ in early 1950's as did I in mid-1950's to rejoin at HU-2. Bill Gatlin, CO, flew on my wing in the Solomon's.

Spent 25 months aboard the USS Yorktown and HS-4, had two tours back-to-back, one 8 months and then 6 months because the new turbine helicopter training delayed normal squadron rotation. (Flew HSS-2)

1963 Next came shore duty as Assistant Head of the Rotary Wing Section of Bureau of Naval Weapons. Bob Raddatz was the Head of Section but shoved off without relief (didn't

want to keep France waiting). (Flew TC-45J)

1964 I was Head of Section until Rip Collins appeared after about six months. (Flew UH-2A and CH-53A)

1965 Retired on July 31st.

PEOPLE

In 1947, while a COMFAIR West Coast LSO attached on TD to Air Group 13, the CAG, CDR J. J. Lynch, told Milner Andrews and myself to go with him to the carrier tied up on the West side of the North Island.

We went up on the flight deck and met Mr. Igor Sikorsky and Jimmy Viner and a crew chief named Nachlin. We boarded an HO3S helicopter, three across the back and Jimmy Viner up front. The backward take off impressed the carrier pilots aboard. This was the first time I met Mr. Sikorsky.

In 1957, he visited Ream Field Squadrons and told of the twin-turbine and boat hull planned for the HSS-2.

Later when Acting Head of Rotary Wing Section in the Bureau I met with Mr. Sikorsky a number of times in the Bureau and at the Factory.

Frank Piasecki appeared on the scene in late 1950 at Lakehurst and I believe it had something to do with the first delivery of a HUP-1.

During 1959-60 and early 1961 I was the Rep at Vertol and Boeing Vertol. Frank's Engineering Firm at Philadelphia International was under the office for related BUAER-BUWEPS programs.

In 1952 the VX-1 Helicopter detachment went aboard the CVE Siboney for compatibility tests and corporation executives were invited aboard. It was at this time as Maintenance Officer for the HRP-1 helos that I met Charles Kaman for the first time. Also, in 1952, while on a provisioning conference of Bell for the HSL, Larry Bell showed the group a mock up of the tilt rotor vehicle.

When ordered to Hiller Helicopters as the BARR (Bureau of Aeronautics Resident Rep) in Feb 1954 I had touched base with the last of the five producers of helicopters at that time, Stanley Hiller, Jr.

BIRDS

Fifty-years on 27 July 2000 seems like yesterday that I started training in the H5D at Connally AFB, Waco, Texas.

In 1950, D.S. Billet did a feasibility study with an HRP-1 aircraft and dipping SONAR at Key West, Florida. In April 1950, the US Navy ordered 10 HRS-

1 aircraft from the Marine Production Line at Sikorsky to be modified to carry dipping sonar. On 23 Dec. 1950 the first of the ten arrived at NAS Lakehurst and I had the duty and was the only available pilot. Lucky me, the honor to be the first FLEET pilot to fly the HO4S-1, BuNo 125508. I accepted the helo for O&R and HU-2 after a half-hour of flight including autorotations.

By February 1951 HO4S-1 aircraft accepted at NAS Lakehurst were enroute to VX-1, Key West, Florida. An overnight stop at PAX River for AQS-4 sonar installation at Ed Bayers Electronics Division was part of the Ferry trip.

A number of firsts has interested me. Yes! I know it has a lot to do with being there at the right time. The HO4S-1 on 23 December 1950 I was in charge of the successful mine sweeping feasibility study at Little Creek, Norfolk and it was completed 14 August 1952. This led to a transfer of VX-1 pilots and HRP-1 aircraft to Panama City for further mine sweeping development.

Had an HRS-3 aircraft as the first AIR-LANT helo detachment on a carrier in May 1953. April 6, 1955 was first Military pilot to fly Hiller's Flying Platform. On Feb. 19, 1959 accepted the last (not the first) production H21C for the military at Vertol, Morton, PA. Was first military pilot to fly the Army YHCIA, the forerunner to the H-46 and was also first in the modified version for Navy H-46 helo while it was in hover tests.

When Assistant Rotary Wing Section Head and Acting Rotary Wing Section Head in BUWEPS, I managed to fund a twin Kaman aircraft and flew in it while it was in Kaman test. Flew the CH53-A on January 5, 1965 while it was in production test. Retired 31 July 1965.

SQUADRONS

During my time on active duty associated with Helicopters for fifteen years the number of Squadrons grew from two, HU-1 & HU-2 Navy, one HMX-1 Marine and MARTD, and nine Coast Guard Search & Rescue Units in 1950 to 17 Navy Squadrons in 1965, 19 Marines and 11 Coast Guard.

This occurred before LAMPS, and Vertical Envelopment got going and before the new Belleau Wood. I was on the old one in 1943.

I was at the re-commissioning of the Thetis Bay as the first Marine carrier. Capt. South took command and the guest of honor was ADM Chester Nimitz (my boss during the big one).

We have many memories that have influenced our lives and influenced Naval Helicopter Operations. I believe each of us has contributed in some way to the

History of Naval Helicopters. I would appreciate any personal episodes. Yes, my story except for borrowing Marine HRS type aircraft is Navy oriented and limited. Yours could be all Marine or Coast Guard or more Navy. Please help in our search for historical events. Regular mail send to: NHHS, P.O. Box 974, Bonita, California 91908-0974 or E-mail to nhhs@home.com.

I have also had the good fortune of having stayed close to helos by being a Charter Trustee of NHA, VP NHA Scholarship Fund, and Director & Historian of the Naval Helicopter Historical Society.

CDR Hugh F. M. McLinden, Jr. USN (Ret).

HISTORIC HELICOPTERS

“The Story of the HoRSe”

by
Harold Nachlin
NHHS Historian



In November 1949 the S-55 made its first flight. “S-55” was the Sikorsky designation for this model. Once in production it had several designations: HO4S in the U. S. Navy and Coast Guard; HRS in the U. S. Marine Corps; and H-19 in the U. S. Air Force and Army. The design and fabrication of the first model was accomplished in record time. It had to be.

This model was actually born at a precarious time. The defense budget had been reduced following World War II, the country’s military budget was being reduced, its military structure was being re-organized and procurement was at its lowest ebb. At the time, Sikorsky was contemplating lay-offs as production of S-51 models was winding down and competition for available proposals had not been successful. In June 1950 the first H-19 was delivered to Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio for accelerated service tests. One week after delivery, the Korean War broke out.

The first test and production models were powered with Pratt & Whitney R-1340-57 engines, delivering 550 HP at normal rated power, 600 HP at maximum power. As users found more and more missions for this aircraft the need for more power resulted in a change that installed Wright R-1300-3 engines rated at 700 HP normal rated power, 800 HP at maximum

power. These models carried the designations HO4S-3, HRS-3, and H-19B&D.

The S-55 was 42 feet long, 13 feet high and had a 3-bladed main rotor with a 53-foot diameter. Its cabin had provisions for 10 passengers and its raised cockpit was configured for a pilot and co-pilot. It could carry internal cargo in lieu of passengers, or it could carry external loads on a cargo sling attached beneath the cabin. The aircraft could also be equipped with a hydraulically powered rescue hoist that lifted rescues up alongside the large cabin door.

A look at its pedigree explains, in part, why this aircraft turned out to be successful and popular. Helicopter production started at Sikorsky Aircraft in 1943 following successful development of the VS-300 and XR-4 helicopters. By the end of 1944 one hundred R-4S's, the first production model, had been delivered to the U. S. Army Air Corps, the U. S. Navy and Coast Guard and the British Royal Navy as HNS's. As R-4 production ended, manufacture of the R-5 series began.

The first R-5's were two-place aircraft, with the passenger in the front seat and the pilot in the rear seat. After a number were built in this configuration a change was introduced to increase the capacity of the cabin. The pilot's location was moved to the front seat and the rear-half of the cabin was widened to accept a 3-wide seat, creating a 4-place aircraft. A nose wheel was added under the pilot's seat. The designation was changed to R-5D. In a second "in-line" change the cabin exterior lines were smoothed out and the landing gear was modified to an inverted tricycle configuration. This changed the designation to R-5E through H for USAF and Army models, HO3S-1 for Navy and Coast Guard and S-51 for FAA certificated civilian helicopters.

While this was going on in the "production" side of the company, the "experimental" side built and flew three other models. The first, designated the R-6 (HOS in the Navy and Coast Guard), was a 4-place helicopter slightly larger than the R-4. It had an all metal fuselage, as an improvement over the fabric covered R-4. It was powered with a 6 cylinder horizontally opposed Franklin engine. Sikorsky built six (6) of this model and Nash-Kelvinator was selected by the War Production Board to build an additional 223.

In 1946, Sikorsky was selected by the U. S. Navy to build three (3) XHJS-1 helicopters. This model was a 4-place aircraft powered with a 525 HP Continental engine and was the same shape as the HO3S-1 helicopter, but a little larger. It was evaluated against the XHJP at Patuxent River. Both aircraft were close performance-wise, but the XHJS had the same undesirable center-of-gravity problems as the HO3S-1, so the Navy selected the XHJP, later changing its

designation to HUP. The XHJS-1 was fitted with metal main rotor blades with an 8-degree negative twist toward the tip. This type of blade construction became standard on future models.

The third model helicopter developed during this time frame was the S-52 series. Four 2-place versions were built. The first three were fitted with 165 HP Franklin engines. The fourth was modified with a 245 HP Franklin engine. This aircraft set international speed and altitude records. This helicopter was very agile and was capable of "un-helicopter" type maneuvers, including loops. The rotor head design, which featured offset flapping hinges, made this possible.

Four 4-place S-52's, designated YH-18, were built under a U. S. Army contract. This aircraft, with modifications requested by the Marines, became the HO5S-1. Ninety were built and some of them were used to replace the HO3S-1 at VMO-6 in Korea in the summer of 1952. The U. S. Coast Guard also procured a small quantity.

In designing the S-55, the designers used some of the aforementioned features. The fuselage size and configuration were new. They were selected to provide the largest passenger or cargo capacity available in a helicopter at the time. Most of the load was centered under the inner portion of the main rotor disc. This minimized shifts in the center-of-gravity and corrected a condition that was a chronic source of dissatisfaction on earlier Sikorsky models.

A major improvement in the S-55 was the metal rotor blades. They reduced so-called "helicopter" vibrations considerably for several reasons. All-metal construction made it possible to build the blades to closer manufacturing tolerances. Provisions were incorporated to locate balance weights used to adjust static and dynamic balance where they could readily be accessed during the balancing procedures. An improved main rotor blade dynamic test-stand and techniques refined from experience with earlier models, made it possible to produce inter-changeable blades. Previously, if one blade in a set was damaged all three blades had to be removed and returned for balancing as a set after repair. On the S-55, only the damage blade had to be replaced, thus reducing maintenance time and spare blade requirements.

The metal blades were manufactured with a span-wise negative 8-degree twist. This twist compensated for the difference in airspeed across the blade between the root and the tip of the blade. It equalized the lift across the span of the blade by reducing the angle-of-attack of the airfoil. This reduced the bending loads on the blade and extended its fatigue life.

The S-55 main rotor head was designed with “offset” flapping hinges, as first introduced on the S-52. This design used the centrifugal forces generated by the rotating blades in-flight to align the fuselage with the tilt of the main rotor disc in steady state flight regimes. This feature enhanced the controllability of the helicopter by maintaining ample range in the flight controls regardless of airspeed and center-of-gravity location, as long as they remained within prescribed limits.

Another improvement that enhanced the S-55 helicopter was hydraulic powered flight control servos. These devices are comparable to power steering in an automobile. Flight control servos were first installed in a company owned S-51 on an experimental basis. It was expected that they would be removed when the test program was completed. They worked so well that they were never removed. They were FAA certificated and left on the aircraft. When metal main rotor blades were installed on the last batch of USAF H-5H helicopters, hydraulic servos were installed in the main rotor flight control system to unburden the pilot from the slightly higher loads that came with the metal blades. The feedback forces in the S-55 flight controls were stronger than in the H-5H aircraft, but the servos provided fingertip control.

The net results of these improvements were most favorable. Many pilots after their first flight in this model came away praising it as the “Cadillac” of helicopters. Maintenance personnel also liked what they saw. Previous models had their engine installed in the bowels of the aircraft, making engine maintenance, repair and replacement difficult and time consuming. On this helicopter the engine was readily accessible by swinging open two hinged “clamshell” doors. The rear section of the engine and the installed accessories could be worked on from floor level. With planning and the use of spare engine change units, engine replacement could be reduced to hours from days. The maintenance crews at Marine and Navy squadrons affectionately referred to their HRS and HO4S aircraft as “the horse”, because they said it was as strong and dependable as a good horse.

This praise of the S-55 series is validated by the fact that 1,828 were built by Sikorsky for military and civilian users. The aircraft was also built under license in England, France and Japan. A derivative of the S-55, the S-62 (U. S. Coast Guard HH-52) provided years of service to air stations throughout the U. S. Coast Guard. Changes from the S-55 to the S-62 included a boat hull, a General Electric T-58 turbine engine and modification of the lower portion of the main gearbox to accept the output speed of the turbine engine.

The S-55 was flown by military and civilian operators around the world and was truly the “rotary winged” workhorse of its era.

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