

Race to the Future: the HAI and a look back at 64 years of helicopter history



BY MIKE BRODERICK
Helicopter Engine Repair
Overhaul Services

From the humble beginnings of

Leonardo DaVinci's drawings, the helicopter has come a long way; and now, in 2012, the Maya calendar tells us that this is it. According to the HAI, though, we are looking towards 2013 and beyond optimistically. Today, as we review the history of the HAI, we will discover that although our current and future technology continues to enhance the safety and reliability of rotorcraft flight, some of the same issues that caused that first group of helicopter operators to form an association continue to concern us.

The Helicopter Association International is governed by a Board of Directors elected from the membership, with daily operations conducted by a dedicated professional staff located in Alexandria, Virginia. For more than 64 years, HAI has provided support and services to the international helicopter community while it has flown over 2.3 million flight hours.

On September 14, 1939, Igor Sikorsky flew his VS 300, the first controllable helicopter, and less than 10 years later there were hundreds of different sizes and shapes of rotorcraft in service worldwide. Although the helicopter offered limitless uses, an uncertain business climate confronted the fledgling industry. Hmm, although we can no longer be called fledgling, some things never change.



On December 13, 1948, a small group of operators, including Art Fornoff, a representative from Bell Helicopter, met at the offices of AF Helicopters in Burbank, California, to form a helicopter association for the collective benefit of that small but determined group of helicopter operators. Fornoff was one of the first pilots hired by Bell, and having flown helicopters since 1945 (the date most agree was the beginning of the commercial helicopter industry), he had more experience than just about anyone. This initial group was so small that the offices of AF Helicopters provided plenty of space for this, the first of many meetings to come.

Present at that historic first meeting were Knute Flint, Harry Armstrong, Fred Bowen, and James Newcomb of AF Helicopters; Joseph G. Seward and Roy Falconer of Rotor-Aids; James Ricklefs and Arni L. Sumarladason of Rick Helicopters; Elynor Rudnick and Bob Facer of Kern Helicopters; Fred Blymyer and Bob Boughton of Helicopter Service, Inc.; and James I. "Tommy" Thomas, Ed Eskridge, and Phil Johnson of Sky Farming.

The association was founded for the purpose of disseminating helicopter information, organizing promotion of the helicopter, mutual assistance, and exchange of technical information.

The group initially chose the name of Helicopter Council, but the following year they changed the name to California Helicopter Association (CHA) and charged annual dues of \$10. At first, meetings were scheduled monthly, then as necessary. At the 1949 meeting, Jim Ricklefs was elected to be the organization's first president. Joseph Seward was appointed secretary, and Elynor Rudnick, treasurer. Stanley Hiller, Jr. demonstrated a Hiller 360, which was developed with help from Bell. All present agreed that competition was good for the industry. Also during that meeting, the members let it be known to all who would listen that helicopters had flown 400 hours of fire suppression work in California. Some inflation has had to be factored into the cost of operating a helicopter since that time. Training in 1949 was \$55 an hour, oil exploration was \$65 an hour, and passenger rides were about \$5.

By 1950, there were many issues of concern to the helicopter community, including work with the Forest Service, spare parts availability, flight regulations, insurance, and pilot training. Sound familiar? The CHA held an educational meeting on September 21, 1950 for the purpose of acquainting public officials with what the helicopter could do. Following the meeting, a helicopter flight demonstration was conducted by Knute Flint of AF Helicopter, Inc. Harold Gribble then gave each official a helicopter ride, which included an idling engine autorotation, landing on a fixed spot to demonstrate the remarkable safety characteristics of the craft. That year the association won its first legal battle when a court ruled that insurance companies could not use the findings of state agricultural hearing boards as grounds for invalidating insurance coverage.

By 1951, the CHA had revamped its statement of purpose and broadened its mission statement. The new group was growing and adding new members. With concurrence of the membership it was decided that membership in the association was to be opened to all operators and manufacturers in the United States and its territories so that helicopter companies throughout the country could more readily gain from the experience and knowledge of fellow operators. Also in 1951, membership voted to change the name of the association to the Helicopter Association of America

(HAA). However, for some unknown reason, this was not filed until November 1954, leading to some confusion as to when the changeover occurred. By May 1951 membership had grown to 17 commercial operators operating 50 helicopters and two associate (manufacturer) members, Bell and Hiller. By August, Sikorsky had joined as the third associate member.

By January 1954, member attendance at the annual meeting had grown to 50. This HAA meeting was hosted by Bell Helicopters at its plant in Hurst, Texas, where

an additional 75 guest attendees from the U.S., Canada, France, Italy, Japan, and Sweden heard presentations on lowering insurance costs, new air-cooled engines, overhaul costs, and the use of fuel additives. Members and guests were also given a tour of the Bell Aircraft Corporation plant in Fort Worth, Texas.

In 1955, Elynor Rudnick of Kern Helicopters was elected as the first female president of HAA. That year Rudnick resided over the 8th Annual Convention, held at the Piasecki plant in Morton, Pennsylvania.

USATCO
U.S. Air Tool Co.

Supplying the aerospace & metal working industries since 1951!

USATCO 34-214C
Single Cyl. C-Yoke Squeezer

USATCO 34-725A-1-1/2
Tandem Cyl. Alligator Yoke Squeezer

USATCO 34-351TA-12
Tandem Cyl., 12" Reach Alligator Yoke Squeezer

The only 12" 351 type riveter on the market!

USATCO 34-214A-3
Single Cyl. Alligator Yoke Squeezer

USATCO 34-720C
Tandem Cyl. C-Yoke Squeezer

*Large Inventory ~ Repairs On All Major Brands ~ Calibration
Over 50 years of exceptional customer service!*

www.USATCO.com Toll Free USA & Canada: **800-645-8180**
 Ronkonkoma, NY tel: 631-471-3300 fax: 631-471-3308
 Rancho Dominguez, CA tel: 310-632-5400 fax: 310-632-3900

Humble Oil sent several representatives and at that meeting, made arrangements with Rotor-Aids for offshore work. At the time, the going charter rate for offshore work was \$700 a month in Louisiana, with 750 hours flight time required per pilot per year. The late 1950s were a period of steady growth for both the industry and HAA.

In June 1957, while Carl Agar of Okanagan Helicopters was president, insurance for personnel and aircraft was still an industry concern. Helicopters during this year provided much emergency relief after Hurricane Audrey ripped through coastal Louisiana and Texas. The industry was growing as the number of commercial helicopter operators in the US totaled 160, with a fleet total of 635 helicopters.

At the 11th Annual Convention, which took place January 19-21, 1959, membership dues were increased to \$50, the first increase. At that meeting, discussion took place on a number of issues including high insurance rates, the need for new legislation, and also for better, less costly equipment – much the same as the issues that plague us today. It was at this meeting that

the decision was made to publish a monthly newsletter. Attendees to that convention could book a helicopter flight from Los Angeles to Anaheim for \$7. HAA's focus was on ethics, association publications, and a meaningful awards program for those deserving of recognition. The world's largest commercial helicopter operator at that time was still Rick Helicopters.

With 200 operators flying 700 helicopters in commercial service, helicopter operations were grossing roughly \$30 million annually in the United States and Canada. The industry had grown into a vital service business, which saved or made a considerable amount of money for industries including oil, agriculture, executive and public transportation, utility, pipeline and power construction, and forestry.

HAA opened its new headquarters on March 1, 1961, in Washington, DC under the direction of newly appointed Executive Secretary John T. Pennywell, formerly with Keystone Helicopter Corporation. The association's membership stood at 57 regular members, 24 associate members, and four government members totaling 85.

The convention netted a profit of \$1,700.36.

In 1961, Welch Pogue was named Honorary Member of HAA. Then president of HAA, Hal Connors said of Mr. Pogue: "You have proven yourself to be one of the staunchest friends of the helicopter operator. We are keenly aware of your extensive enthusiasm for the helicopter industry, and those of us engaged in the operation of these unique aircraft wish to express our appreciation for your splendid support."

The 14th Annual HAA Convention was held in Dallas, Texas, on January 21-24, 1962. The HAA planned its largest convention to date. Officials anticipated a total attendance of 400 to 500 attendees from around the world. The membership voted on amendments to the HAA's by-laws at the annual business meeting in January 1962. Among the amendments receiving approval were the corporate seal, an establishment of HAA as a 501 not-for-profit organization, and the establishment of four membership classifications, including regular, honorary, associate, and governmental members. Several major awards were presented at the banquet on January 23. These included the Lawrence D. Bell Pioneer Award, given to those organizations that had completed 10 years of helicopter operations, the Stanley Hiller, Jr. Pilot of the Year Award, presented each year to the commercial helicopter pilot who performed the most outstanding rescue feat, and the Robert E. Trimble Memorial Award. There was also a special award given to the pilot who traveled the greatest distance by helicopter to attend the 1962 convention.

The November 1963 HAA newsletter announced a near-future start-up date for helicopter Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations in the New York area after agreement was reached by the FAA and New York Airways, a scheduled passenger carrier.

That year, a Sikorsky CH3B performed a simulated water rescue for the Air Rescue Service at Orlando Air Force Base. At a special ceremony in June 1964, Sikorsky demonstrated one of the six WCH-54A Skycrane helicopters purchased by the U.S. Army.

The HAA Code of Ethics had been drafted in 1964, and was presented and



Canadian Airframe Solutions Inc.

Chilliwack BC p. (604) 846 5383
info@airframesolutions.com | www.airframesolutions.com

AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATION SERVICES - SPECIALIZATION IN AIRCRAFT INTERIOR
AND STRUCTURAL MODIFICATIONS AND REPAIRS.

DAR No. 349 ON STAFF



From Our Hands To Your Engine

...Quality, Integrity, Service



H.E.R.O.S. Inc. — Helicopter Engine Repair & Overhaul Services

- Providing Quality Model 250 Engine & Accessory Support
- Specialized Repairs & Custom Overhauls

Website: www.herosinc.com

HYE-Tech Manufacturing, LLC — "A Better Part for A Lower Price"

Specializing in FAA Approved Replacement Parts:

- For the Model 250 Engine
- Honeywell Fuel System Components for the Model 250, PT6, & LTS-101
- Argo-Tech Fuel Pumps for the Model 250 & PT6

Website: www.hyetechnology.com



Helicopter Engine Repair Overhaul Services, Inc.
627 Ruberta Ave., Glendale, CA 91201
Phone: (818) 265-9730 Fax: (818) 265-9731



Hye-Tech Manufacturing, LLC.
627 Ruberta Ave., Glendale, CA 91201
Phone: (818) 291-0338 Fax: (818) 291-0339

adopted at the Annual Membership Meeting in January 1965. In the mid-1960s, HAA compiled data in preparation for its first directory of commercial operators. At the time, there were 1,937 commercial helicopters in the western world, operated by 588 commercial helicopter operators. US operators totaled 439, accounting for 1,236 helicopters.

The 18th Annual Convention took on the flair of a Texas roundup in Arlington, Texas, on January 23-26, 1966. Four hundred and sixty-seven people, representing all 50 states and many other countries registered for the convention. In March, HAA's president, R. A. "Bob" Richardson inaugurated HAA's first newsletter. It was called *Our Rotor News*. This newsletter was issued by HAA to replace another publication titled "Confidential." The first issue of *Our Rotor News* noted that while 467 people registered for the 18th Annual Convention, 1,400 attended. Pete Brown and Walter Attebery were delegated the responsibility of finding a larger facility for the 1967 convention. HAA membership grew to 89 regular members, 27 associates,

and 36 government members for a total of 152 members.

The 19th Annual Meeting and Helicopter Showcase was held January 15-18, 1967, in Palm Springs, California. Attendance was three times larger than any in the history of the association. This huge attendance was attributed to a 300 percent increase in membership over the previous year. At that meeting a proposal was considered to change the name of Helicopter Association of America to Helicopter Association International, recognizing that during 1966, HAA's membership in all classes had increased resulting from new members from Canada, England, Australia, Japan, Africa, Columbia, and Ecuador. Following this discussion, no action was taken, however. They were among some 1,000 owners and operators attending the national convention.

HAA's 22nd annual meeting was held in Las Vegas, January 11-14, 1970, with 2,442 attendees and \$17 million in exhibit sales. As well, the first seminar on marketing and service programs was held. That year, the Robert E. Trimble Memorial Award was

presented to Helicopteros Nacionales de Columbia (HELICOL) of South America, for its role in construction of the Trans-Andean Pipeline, one of the largest and most difficult helicopter projects ever attempted. The award for distinguished mountain flying normally goes to an individual, but the entire HELICOL organization, including some 30 pilots, was awarded the honor. In August of 1970, HAA director John Ryan sent a letter to the President of the United States objecting to the government's use of military helicopters in civil roles, a matter in which we are still active.

Robert Richardson became Executive Director in April 1971 and returned the headquarters to Washington, DC. During his 11 years at the helm, Edward Hutchinson was selected as the HAA Safety Officer and Petroleum Helicopters had become the world's largest helicopter operator with 158 helicopters. The company's aircraft had logged 1,000,000 flight hours.

Among the \$20 million worth of helicopters, engines, avionics, and accessories on display at the meeting were a Sikorsky S-58-T modified twin turbine and a Sikorsky H-37, known in civilian life as a Mojave. The March 1972 issue of *Our Rotor News* provided a full account of an 11-helicopter rescue mission where 450 people were lifted to safety during 150 landings on top of the burning Andraus Building, a 29-story building in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Helicopter Association's next convention, the Silver Anniversary, was announced in this issue and was scheduled for January 14, 1973. As part of the Silver Anniversary celebration, a medallion was struck and presented to all registrants. In addition, HAA buried a time capsule, lowered to the ground by a helicopter.

The first HAA industry award was the Pilot of the Year Award. HAI currently has 13 "Salute to Excellence" Awards given out each year. The first HAA safety awards were presented at the 1973 annual meeting to member operators who had flown accident-free in 1972.

More than 1,500 registrations were tallied at the Silver Anniversary convention. Highlights included an 18-flight demonstration put on by Bell, Vought, Enstrom, Aviation Specialties, and Boeing Vertol, which lifted 2,540 passengers from the Stardust's north parking lot during 1,016 operations in one of the busiest flight



WWW.CONCORDEBATTERY.COM

PROVEN

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN HELICOPTERS

RG-380E/44

RG-390E

Safe & Reliable with No Threat of Thermal Runaway

Manufacturing certified aircraft batteries for over 30 years: Military, TSO, FAA-PMA, OEM.

HELI-EXPO Booth # 7533

CONCORDE BATTERY CORPORATION
PHONE 626.813.1234
ISO 9001 + AS9100 | Crafted for Quality in the U.S.A.

...the heart of your aircraft®
CONCORDE
Platinum Series®

schedules in HAA history. The association now claimed 209 regular members, 81 associate members, and 41 sustaining members – a 15 percent increase over the previous year. There were 29 international members.

In 1981, HAA became the Helicopter Association International, or HAI, in recognition of its truly international status. The title of Executive Director was changed to President when Frank Jensen took the position in March 1982. He served for 16 years, and is credited with taking the helm of a tiny, economically struggling trade association and growing its membership, its outreach, and its trade show, HELI-EXPO. He is credited with starting the Fly Neighborly Program, a key element in garnering public acceptance of helicopters. Jensen was also the main influence in the formation of the Helicopter Foundation International (HFI) in 1983, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history of the helicopter industry and helping to educate present and future generations of helicopter professionals.

Roy Resavage followed Frank Jensen as president on March 16, 1998. Resavage continued to improve the financial health of the organization, fought government encroachment, worked with a number of international organizations, and increased convention attendance. Upon Resavage's retirement, Matthew S. Zuccaro assumed the office of President on November 1, 2005 after a 40-year career in the helicopter industry. During Zuccaro's previous

25-year association with HAI, he had served as HAI Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Chairman of several HAI committees, and was a recipient of HAI's 10,000 hour Pilot Safety Award. President Zuccaro has expanded HAI's international outreach is an advocate for heliports and airspace access, aggressively challenging adverse legislative and regulatory concerns while focusing on the provision of additional membership programs and services. In 2006, under President Zuccaro, HELI-EXPO attendance reached a record high of 16,629 attendees. Matthew Zuccaro remains as president today with membership showing continued growth.

Our industry has always responded to disasters such as earthquakes, famine, and tsunami relief. No other aviation vehicle but the helicopter could have provided the relief required during the tragedies of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, the most destructive tropical cyclone to ever hit the United States. Each day, HAI member operators fill critical needs and play major roles in firefighting, EMS, forestry, offshore oil exploration, power line work, newsgathering, aerial photography, law enforcement, air tours, corporate transport, and many more. Each day, the HAI is there to support an industry that serves so many.

Since that first meeting in 1948, the HAI has provided for its membership with integrity and has taken many actions on behalf of helicopter operators throughout the world. The organization has benefited the entire industry, including manufacturers,

suppliers, operators, pilots and mechanics. The association's initiatives have had a direct and positive impact on international helicopter activities.

As our industry races to a future with visions of 300-mph helicopters, fly-by-wire controls, glass cockpits and avionics that anticipate dangers before pilots see them, we still face the same challenges that brought those original 16 members together: a tough economy, escalating insurance rates, parts shortages, truculent public support and a skeptical public, combined with a shortage of technicians and pilots. And to help us meet these challenges the HAI, at age 64, has the maturity and wisdom without having lost the youthful enthusiasm and vitality of those original twisted but dedicated 16 visionaries to solve the problems.

MIKE BRODERICK is Vice President of Business Development at Helicopter Engine Repair Overhaul Services (HEROS). Over the past 35 years, he has served as a shop technician, engine shop supervisor, Engine Program Director, Director of Maintenance, Director of Operations, and owner of a Rolls-Royce engine overhaul and MD Helicopter component overhaul shop. He is a certified A&P, and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Administration. As well, Mike has been appointed as an FAA representative for the FAA Safety Team (FAAST) and is a member of the HAI Tech Committee. Mike is a regular contributor to Air Maintenance Update. ■

MINIMIZE YOUR DOWNTIME

Whether you have a Continental or Lycoming engine, you need a piston engine overhaul facility.

Pro Aero Engines Inc. provides Exchange, Custom Overhauling and Repair Services, with an unsurpassed warranty. As a Precision Airmotive Warranty Centre, our 15,000-sq.-ft. modern facility is equipped to provide you with step-by-step overhaul, repair or modification of piston engines and accessories. From Non-destructive Testing, Cylinder Repairs, Camshaft Regrinding, Fuel Injection and Carburetor Repairs or Overhaul to Starter, Alternator, Turbo Component or Magneto Overhaul and Repair, we're your One Stop Service Solution!

All this boils down to proven dependable power, shorter down times, and maximum value.

Contact us today!



Built with Pride and Flown with Confidence

2965 Airport Rd., Kamloops, BC V2B 7W8 Canada (250) 376-1223

www.proaeroengines.com

FIRST IN SERVICE SINCE 1974