



Sikorsky Archives News

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S-47 (R-4)

S-61

Igor Sikorsky's "Angels of Mercy" Continue Saving Lives

S-65 (HH-53) Super Jolly Green Giant

2014 marks the 70th Anniversary of the First Helicopter Humanitarian Mission in the world.

On January 3, 1944 an explosion aboard the U.S. Navy destroyer Turner required blood plasma to treat injured crewmen. The medical

supplies were delivered by the Sikorsky R-4 (HNS-1) piloted by U.S. Coast Guard Commander Frank Erickson. The rapid response resulted in dozens of lives being saved. On April 26 and April 27, 1944 Carter Harman, U.S.A.A.F ferried his R-4 helicopter 500 miles along the border of Japanese held Burma to a secret airstrip deep in enemy territory. He rescued three wounded British commandos and their American pilot

after their medevac plane was shot down by enemy ground fire. These two operations marked the beginning of the "Sikorsky Angels of Mercy" historic life saving legacy.

There are millions of stories and this issue is devoted to the heroic events of individuals who have put their lives in jeopardy while performing amazing rescues to save lives on the battlefield and during natural disasters. 🙏



S-70 (UH-60) Medevac



S-92

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Dear Members,

As we enter a new year, I want to thank everyone for all the hard work and progress made in 2013. Together we have made great strides in improving our cataloging and retrieval system, and meeting our demands to answer queries and requests for research material from around the world. The preservation of historical artifacts and the dissemination of the facts of the life and history of Igor Sikorsky and his enterprises are important goals that membership donations support. We appreciate that support and encourage you to keep your membership current and encourage others to join.

Financial support alone is not enough. Although we are fortunate to maintain an active volunteer staff of an average of 19 people who participate weekly (Tuesday and Thursdays) in the required administrative activities, we need more volunteers. The majority of volunteers devote their time to updating our computer retrieval system. The magnitude of the material held can simply be stated as "huge." We have 43 categories of items, including negatives, scrapbooks, film, CDs, DVDs, Igor's personal files, records, and manuals and on and on. Each of these items must be cataloged and preserved. After eight years of active development, we are approximately two thirds of the way complete.

The remainder of the volunteers devote their time to outside communications, including responding to emails and telephone contacts, presentations to community organizations and various employee groups within Sikorsky Aircraft, newsletter publication and our web site update. The yearlong 90th Anniversary of Sikorsky Aircraft in 2013 was a major activity for the Archives. During that period the Archives made 15 presentations on the life and history of Igor and the company and supported many research questions related to the event.

We see the year 2014 to be equally active insofar as we will be celebrating two major milestones: the 125th anniversary of the birth of Igor Sikorsky on May 25th, and the 75th anniversary of the first liftoff of the VS-300, the helicopter that created an industry, on September 14, 1939. Preserving "*The Life and Legacy of Igor Sikorsky*" is a proud undertaking and I want to again express my sincere appreciation for your continuing interest and support. 🙏

Best wishes for a Happy New Year,

Dan Liberto, President

Best wishes

Volunteers In Action



Ed Covill, George Geffert and Jose Dantas working on one of 43 Archive databases



Al Dobyms, Bud Bennett planning audio tape storage methodology audio tapes



Ed Groves surrounded by many thousands of negatives



Joe Keogan with one of over 2900 engineering drawings



Paul Swanson finding one of 3,000 slides



Bob Brady looking over the 700 DVDs in our library collection



Hank Chmielewski reviewing one of 1075 books in our library

The H-60

Good Friday Mission

On April 2, 2010, a U.S. Army Black Hawk rescued 11 German troops under heavy enemy fire in Chahar Darrah, Afghanistan. A mission to disable a road side bomb turned into a battle of survival for German troops. Enemy fire erupted from all directions trapping the squadron when they were tending to wounded comrades and looking for a way out. Shortly after a call for assistance, three Black Hawk Dustoff helicopters arrived under intense enemy fire. Chief Warrant Officer, Jason LaCrosse stated, ‘Heavy fire came from all directions. I had two rocket propelled grenades criss cross under my tail, and the aircraft were getting hit so much by small rounds ricocheting, that you could see sparks flying off our tail. It was like flying into a hornets nest with 200 Taliban shooting at us from all directions.’ The Germans later told LaCrosse that it looked like the fourth of July to them.

*UH-60 Dustoff Medevac Aircraft
Without Range Extension Tanks*



... ‘Heavy fire came from all directions. I had two rocket propelled grenades criss cross under my tail...

The helicopters drew the Taliban fire allowing the German troops to relocate and tend to their wounded. LaCrosse ordered his crew to go around communicating that they would attempt another landing. Based on his 14 years of experience he realized that time was running out for the wounded, and he returned flying into the hornets nest stating that, ‘Allied troops on the ground are injured, and if we don’t get them to a hospital they are going to die, and I am not going to let that happen.’ During the go around he was able to direct ground forces to provide cover fire, allowing the aircraft to land twice picking up the wounded and delivering them to the hospital.

Over a period of three hours, LaCrosse and two other aircraft conducted three separate missions under heavy fire evacuating 11 soldiers to safety. During this period, LaCrosse’s aircraft had taken a beating. Several bullet holes dotted the tail, fuselage and rotor blades. LaCrosse stated, ‘We used tape to patch them up, and soon as the next call came we took off again’.

LaCrosse was awarded the Silver Star. Thirteen other soldiers received the Distinguished Flying Cross. All 14 crew members were awarded the German Gold Cross for Valor, Germany’s second highest military award. They became the first soldiers outside the German military to receive the award. 🇩🇪



The Good Friday Battle Was Revisited When The Black Hawk Crew Were Reunited With The Rescued German Soldiers During The German Air Show in Berlin in 2012.



Antonio Gadis & Jason LaCrosse



Jason LaCrosse with some of the German Troops Rescued

Chief Warrant Officer Jason LaCrosse recalls the relations between his small unit of about 20 U.S. soldiers and the German contingent in Kunduz, “When we arrived we did not enjoy close relations with the Germans, and we would not mingle with them. We felt like we were intruders on their base, eating their food. When the German troops saw that

we put our life on the line for them, it was like instant brother and sisterhood.” At the meeting in Berlin, the German troop members stated the same feelings of comradery for the Americans. LaCrosse stated, “It was sad that it took something so bad to foster something so good, but in the end it’s overwhelming how close our militaries have gotten”. 🙏

Sikorsky Aircraft Honors Pilot and Flight Medic of the Good Friday Mission

Jason LaCrosse and a Flight Medic, Sgt. Antonio Gattis who was part of the rescue operation received awards for their rescue efforts from Sikorsky Aircraft on Sept 11, 2012.

The awards were presented by Robert Kokorda, VP Sales and Marketing. Sergei Sikorsky and military representatives were present.

Painting in recognition of “The Good Friday Mission” was created by Joseph Keogan and presented to the German Airforce Authorities.



The United Kingdom Royal Naval Command Honored Mr. Kieran Murray of Her Majesty's Coastguard Rescue Service For His Distinguished Service Personally Saving Over 1000 Lives During His 40 Year Career

Kieran's career started as a member of the Royal Navy progressing to the civilian Search and Rescue field with Bristow Helicopters as Winchman and Senior Winch Operator. In 1994 Kieran Murray achieved the prestigious Crew of The Year Award from the Helicopter Association International.

Rear Admiral Harding of the Royal Navy presented a Naval Commendation to Kieran Murray, which read in part, "I am humbled that one man has given so much and saved so many. Of note was November 1993, where your crew rescued a total of 109 people in just four separate missions. Your rescue of 56 men from the Russian Ship Lunokhods was an outstanding feat of human effort and remains the greatest number of individuals saved in one operation by a single helicopter".



S-61 Sea King Flying Over The Russian Vessel Lunokhods



Commercial Fishing Vessel Lunokhods On The Rocks In Shetland

... "I am humbled that one man has given so much ... saved so many..."

The Russian fishing vessel MV Borodinskoye Polye shown in the left photo ran aground on the rocks north of Leewill Harbor, Shetland Islands on November 17, 1993. Crew of 36 were winched to safely.

The MFV Ocean Reaper in the photo on right required a crewman to be air lifted for emergency medical assistance on February 15, 1995. The flight took 5 hours and 10 minutes with rough seas and the winds of 40 to 50 kts.



MV Borodinskoye Polye Russian Fishing Vessel



MV Ocean Reaper



S-92

Kieran Murray's career in helicopter search and rescue operation rubbed off on his son Kieran. Young Kieran stated, "As a kid living in Dunrossness, next to what was then a very busy airport so you couldn't help but be exposed to aviation. That kind of generated an interest in it. Of course having dad working down at the airport for Bristow occasionally allowed for the opportunity to go into the hangar and look at helicopters up close. They would also fly over the house now and then, slow down and wave out the door. So from an early age it was something I aspired to be involved in, and I wanted to be a pilot first and foremost". Kieran was sponsored by Bristow Helicopters to complete his helicopters license and then became a pilot with Canadian Helicopter Corporation (CHC), flying helicopters out of Aberdeen to support the oil and gas industry. In 2007 CHC won the contract to provide search and rescue helicopters at four bases around the UK, so he decided to

take on the new challenge and come back to Shetland, enabling him to work alongside his father. Being new to search and rescue, Kieran started as a co-pilot before working



Capt. Murray, Ann and Kieran Murray in front of the S-92

back up to captain two and a half years later. When Kieran first began work in Shetland, his father was in the role of winchman, rather than winch operator, which provided young Kieran with some anxious moments as he stated, "I don't think I was massively keen when Dad was dangling on the end of the wire when I was flying the aircraft, because if I dinked Dad into the boat I was going to be in trouble. 🙄"



▼ Bristow S-61 Sea King

Anne and Kieran Murray receiving the Crew of the Year Award in 1994



*HC-130P Refueling
HH-53B Over North Vietnam*

U.S. Coast Guard Aviators Heroically Performed Combat Rescue and Recovery Missions In Southeast Asia During the Vietnam Conflict

In January of 1966 the Air Force Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRG) took charge of all rescue operations in Viet Nam. The HU-16s Grumman Amphibians were replaced by the HH-3E Jolly Green Giants. The name derived from the size of the helicopter and the green camouflage paint scheme. The name "Jolly Greens" would come to identify and reflect the proud heritage of their rescue forces. The rapid increase in rescue requirements generated by direct involvement of U.S. Forces created an acute shortage of experienced helicopter pilots. The Air Force approached the Coast Guard for supplemental help. In March of 1967 the Coast Guard

agreed on an implementing program, and the initial group of Coast Guard aviators arrived at the 31st ARRS, Clark AFB, Republic of the Philippines on June 3, 1968. The first group of helicopter pilots selected were assigned to the 37th ARRS at Da Nang for combat rescue duty after a training period with the ARRS group. The Coast Guard aviators were fiercely proud to be part of the Jolly Greens. They were called "Coasties." The term was one of respect. The second group of "Coasties" arrived in April of 1969. Their arrival and the fact that they were all qualified aircraft commanders was gratefully noted in the unit's historical record. 🌀

S-61 (HH-3) Jolly Green Giant



S-65 (HH-53) Super Jolly Green Giant

Rescue mission tactics evolved, and a rescue team known as STARF came into being. The STARF team was comprised of the HC-130P controlling aircraft, fixed wing aircraft for protection and ground fire suppression. The controlling aircraft was used to coordinate the rescue effort, and provide in-flight refueling for the helicopters. The A-1 Skyraider gave fire support to the helicopters. On a typical mission, tactics called for four A-1s divided into two flights. Sandy low and Sandy high. The Jolly Greens and Sandy high went into orbit, while Sandy

low accessed the situation. One of the Sandy low pilots became the on scene commander, with the job of locating the survivors, determining their condition, assessing the landscape, and seeking enemy presence. When conditions seemed best, he directed a helicopter in for pick up. This helicopter, swooped in escorted by Sandy high. The other helicopter, high bird stayed ready to rescue the low bird crew if they ended up on the ground. Depending on factors involved, fighter escorts referred to as "fast movers" were used as combat air patrol against MiG enemy fighters.

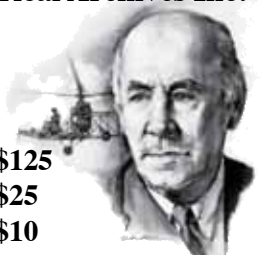
Few rescues in enemy controlled territory were accomplished without opposition. The enemy knew a rescue attempt would be made and developed tactics to ambush the rescuers. The Jolly Greens were determined to make the save under hostile conditions and enemy fire. By the end of the Viet Nam conflict, the Jolly Greens had saved 3,883 lives. The pilots and crews who flew these missions were true heroes who deserve the respect and thanks from all people who believe in freedom and justice. 🌀

Join *the* Sikorsky Archives

Igor I. Sikorsky Historical Archives Inc.

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- Life Membership** **\$125**
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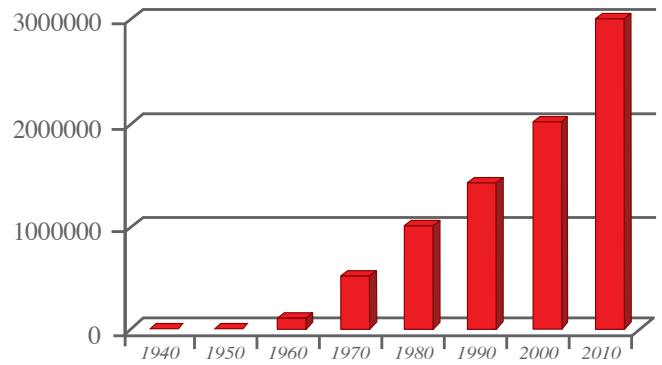
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Lives Rescued

Worldwide Helicopter Rescue History



Newsletter designed and edited by Lee Jacobson and Sikorsky Archive Members.



“It would be right to say that the helicopter’s role in saving lives represents one of the most glorious pages in the history of human flight.”

—*Igor Sikorsky*

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