

AHS HISTORY COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 1ST, 2005

Members in attendance:

Dr. Bruce Charnov
Roger Connor
Michael Hirschberg
Jay Hendrickson
W. Todd Hodges
Thomas Lawrence
Dr. J. Gordon Leishman
Tim Naumowicz
Jason Pereira
Raymond Prouty
Bob Wood (new)

Guests

Bob Beggs (Pres., American Helicopter Museum)
Erasmó Piñero (Lockheed Martin)
John Slattery (Helicopter Foundation International)

Election of officers for 2005-2006:

Committee Chair:	Michael Hirschberg (continuing)
Deputy Chair:	Roger Connor (continuing)
Secretary:	Jason Pereira
Forum 62 Session Chair:	Harry Pember
Forum 62 Dep. Session Chairs:	Jay Hendrickson and Dr. Leishman

Topics discussed:

1. Digitizing of handbooks, etc.

- 18 volumes of Liberatore handbooks exist entirely only on microfilm. Mike Hirschberg plans to have them converted to CD. Smithsonian digitized 360 photos to 11 CDs; proposal to convert all 5300 pages in PDF with lower resolution images on a single-volume DVD which could be offered for sale at ~ \$25. Mike Hirschberg will continue to work on this.
- Permission granted to Dr. Leishman by Steve Pitcairn to scan / reproduce / re-publish the Cierva Autogiro handbook; scanning (digitization) has begun; estimated cost for 500 print copies is \$10 – 20,000; publish on a CD? Publish as a printed book with a CD insert?
- Scanning of pre-Vertiflite (“AHS Newsletter”) issues – 1953-1957 have been digitized in PDF format (Hirschberg)
- Doman Helicopters’ archival documents being digitized to CD (Pinero)
- Scanning of magazine covers depicting autogyros / gyroplanes (Charnov)

- Platt-LePage documents / literature (Hendrickson)
- It is important, when digitizing all these archival materials, to store them in a format / on media that is appropriate / will last for a long time / is of good quality (Connor)

2. *Indexing / cataloguing of rotary-wing archival material around the country / world.*

- AATD Labs library at Ft. Eustis may have hardcopies of some of the Liberatore handbooks (Hodges)
- Original copy of Cierva engineering handbook (found by Charnov)
- Bibliography of gyroplane literature (Charnov)
- Index of exhibits of rotary-wing aircraft at museums across the country (world?) (Charnov)
- U. Texas, Dallas History of Aviation Collection (<http://www.utdallas.edu/library/special/aviation/>)
- Royal Aeronautical Society archives
- A collection of Kellett's documents, as well as an actual "Stable Mabel," were being carried around the US a few years ago, to be eventually put up for auction. The collection has since simply disappeared. Connor has been trying to track it down.
- Jay Miller's private collection (the largest such) of aerospace publications over the past 200 years is now in Little Rock, at the Aerospace Education Center (<http://www.cals.lib.ar.us/miller.>)
- The aerospace companies (Sikorsky, Bell, Boeing, etc.) have their own corporate archives, and have been getting rid of them / destroying them. These need to be saved and preserved. On the other hand, some companies are realizing the (monetary) worth of these archives, and are cataloguing them themselves, and charging fees for access to them (both to researchers like ourselves, and to for-profit "historians" like the History Channel). Sikorsky Archives is an independent organization, separate from Sikorsky Aircraft.
- Inventory of Sikorsky archives (being created by Lawrence)
- Cataloguing of material at the National Archives (by Hodges)
- Hodges (& Naumowicz?) --> designated focal point for accepting and cataloguing people's donations of archival material

3. *Use of helicopters for rescue missions*

- Wood working on a project documenting the use of rotary-wing aircraft for rescue missions
- ~2 million people were rescued by helicopters in the US in 2005, *not* counting medevac operations. Statistics and data like this could be used for a display at the AHM Rotorfest – provides a human-interest story that would interest a greater spectrum of the public that would bare-technical exhibits; good PR for the helicopter community among the general public

4. *"Another Day With The Pioneers" at Forum 62*

- Definition of “pioneer” – move up the time-frame from pre-1950 to ‘1950 – 1970’, because they too have valuable stories to tell, and we would otherwise spend all our time and effort on the pre-1950 pioneers.
- The health of many of these pioneers is an issue; so is the quality of the presentations they would give.
- Need definite topics of rotorcraft pioneering, instead of a motley jumble of disconnected talks / people.
- Instead of a big panel discussion with everybody, set aside a room with scheduled individual interviews (videotaped) – more focused. Pick the more dynamic speakers for the panel discussion (Connor)
- See Topic #5 – “Interviews with pioneers”

5. *Interviews with pioneers*

Other organizations already conducting similar interviews

- Videos of Twirlybird meetings (in possession of Slattery) – can identify the people in these videos
- Hodges: “Timeless Voices of Aviation”
- Helicopter Association International (HAI)
- Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) / Osh Kosh Airshow
- Sikorsky
- Naval Postgraduate School – videotaped panel discussions of pioneers associated with particular subjects / events (Wood)

Technical issues involved in conducting such interviews

- Hodges: owns handbooks / instructions on procedures for conducting (video) interviews – a “videography kit”
- Need to plan these interviews properly, to give them proper structure. A short pre-interview, perhaps.
- Professional production and editing, for better quality of the end product, is worth the money it takes.
- Issue – in *Vertiflite* – a call for people (pioneers, friends of pioneers) to come forward (--> Hodges)
- Connor, Hodges --> lead role in planning these interviews

6. *Better communication between committee members*

- “Virtual” updates / reports via e-mail on action items every x months (x = 2? 3?)
- Task for the Secretary: monthly e-mail updates of what everyone is working on

7. *Commemoration of centennial of first vertical flight machine (1907)? /. Establishment of “firsts” in rotary-wing aircraft development history*

- 1st helicopter flight – Cornu? No! There is no photographic or video evidence of the Cornu helicopter actually in the air (Leishman)

- What are the criteria for “first flight”? First “hop”? First vertical flight? First rotary-wing aircraft? First helicopter?
- Unlike the Wright Brothers, no one single person accomplished all (or most of) the steps for a successful helicopter flight. A lot of little steps were made by lots of different people, all over the world.
- Need something definitive to give to the public / the media; need to establish the facts, and we (the AHS History Committee) are the ideal people to do it.
- The media often show (repeatedly) incorrect information, because their *sources* are not technically correct.
- We – the helicopter community, historians *and* technical experts on the subject – are the best authority on the subject.
- Why did some concepts / ideas / inventions become widely known and used, and others not? Why did some concepts fade away from public consciousness? We need to also investigate and document the social / political aspects of history, not just the technological. (Connor) How would history have changed if certain things had or had not happened? (Charnov)
- Charnov working on putting together a timeline of gyroplane development / history
- Lawrence compiling a list of early rotorcraft
- Lawrence, Connor --> lead role in this issue of first flight

9. *Presentation by Schneider award recipient at AHS Forum*

- John Slattery, for Forum 62.

10. *Other topics*

- Piñero writing an article on Doman Helicopters (for *Vertiflite*)
- Some members of the committee will be at the International Powered Lift Conference in October (Tim Naumowicz is chairing a history session). Those members of the committee who will be attending the IPLC will try to get together at the conference for a mini-meeting.