

Minutes: AHS History Committee Meeting, December 16, 2005

Attendees:

Mike Hirschberg

Roger Connor

Bruce Charnov

Gordon Leishman

John Romanski

Todd Hodges (call-in)

I. Forum Sessions

A. Oral History Session

1. Todd noted the success of a historical helicopter development summary presented at the recent AHS-supported conference in Nanjing China. Mike recalled a similar event held in conjunction with the 2000 European Rotorcraft Forum where representatives from several countries presented historical overviews. Todd thought this might be an interesting idea for a future session at Forum 63 or 64.
2. Insufficient papers have resulted in the session being folded into the Vertical Flight History session
3. Discussed options for improving participation, such as invitation or soliciting in Vertiflite

B. Future History Sessions

1. Discussed the need for one vs. two sessions and how we might increase participation. Possibilities include invited papers (and/or invited session) and increasing scope of emphasis to areas such as operations
2. Session chairman selected at the last Forum failed to step forward to take responsibilities. Mike has been filling in on an ad-hoc basis. Roger volunteered to serve as Chair for Forum 62, and Todd will serve as assistant, so that he may chair a session for Forum 63. Consensus is that future sessions will require the assignment of an assistant Chair to ensure adequate understanding of the process. Also, Chairs will be selected outside of the Forum meeting. More volunteers are needed to ensure success, especially to facilitate multiple sessions.
3. Process for ranking/reviewing papers needs to be improved
4. An award should be put forward for the best paper. Guidelines will need to be put forward. Consensus is that originality and quality of new research should be emphasized. Bruce suggested that it be a named award. The group decided to consider this and discuss at the next meeting.

II. Oral History Interviews

A. Where to conduct?

1. Roger raised the possibility of having a booth set up on the exhibit floor to accommodate “walk-ins.” After discussion, this seemed likely to interrupt scheduled sessions which could run to an hour in length. Current thinking is for a quiet area separate from other functions of the conference. Todd and Roger will coordinate implementation.
2. On the issue of topics to solicit interviews, consensus was to focus on 1950s-era as the generation of initial helicopter pioneers and engineers has already been fairly well documented. Roger would like to increase emphasis on operational aspects in addition to developmental aspects.
3. Maximum accommodation will be 16 interviewees of ½ hour each or 8 interviewees of up to 1 hour each.
4. Rhett will check with Boeing-Mesa to see if they can support camera and operator for the two days
5. **Action Items:**
 - Write an article in Vertiflite detailing the project and encouraging participation
 - Target specific individuals (survey pre-registration list) and solicit potential candidates
 - Todd will explore “Timeless Voices” oral history program experience at EAA and examine National Archives oral history packets for suitability
 - Prepare questions in advance and advise interviewees of questions to be asked. Prepare several common background questions that all interviewees can answer (e.g. what was the biggest technical innovation of the period)

III. Misc. Matters

A. Stauffer 1931 gyroplane

1. Todd saw the remains of a three-bladed gyro in a barn in Michigan, which the owner claimed to be Stauffer’s. There is some confusion over what this actually is, as the only known Stauffer was a two-bladed rigid rotor type along the lines of the Herrick HV-1 convertiplane.
2. Liberatore has no mention of Stauffer and the only thing in the NASM files is the same newspaper clipping that Bruce has. Stauffer is pretty insignificant, but this may be an interesting relic once we can figure out what it is.

B. 2007 anniversary?

1. Consensus is that 2007 should be an anti-centenary.
2. Mike proposed that two or three Vertiflite articles could detail why 1907 is not the milestone that other years might be and what should be recognized.

C. Artifact preservation

1. Loss of XCH-62 highlighted gaps in the communication process within the historical community
 2. Boeing 360 at Wilmington is in danger of being lost
- IV. Membership reports
- A. Charnov
1. Autogiro/gyroplane bibliography is nearly complete, now with 37,000 words. Is willing to post on AHS website, but copyright must exist to meet Hofstra's requirements – can AHS publish as pamphlet?
 2. Scanning nearly complete of 62 gyro magazine covers
 3. Survey in progress of museums containing rotary wing exhibits
 4. Timeline of gyroplane development in progress (also for web publishing?)
- B. Leishman
1. Liberatore handbooks – Ft. Eustis librarian may have more hard copies available.
 2. 3-page foldouts currently make reproduction of “Theory of Cierva Autogiros” impractical. John offered the services of Piasecki's scanner. Once scanned, foldouts could be placed on CD or reduced to more economical size.
- V. Membership Issues
- A. Mike raised concerns over the present pattern in which there is general interest and enthusiasm at meetings of the History Committee at the Forums, but little follow through occurs and some who make commitments fail to follow through. Consensus is that additional meetings of core Committee members are required and that specific performance goals need to be set
- B. Next meeting suggested for early March at University of Maryland with teleconference option for those unable to make the trip**