

# Sikorsky *Heritage*

Published by the Igor I. Sikorsky Historical Archives, Inc. M/S S578A, 6900 Main St., Stratford CT 06615

## *The Queen of the Sky*



## *Restoration of the VS-44A Flying Boat*

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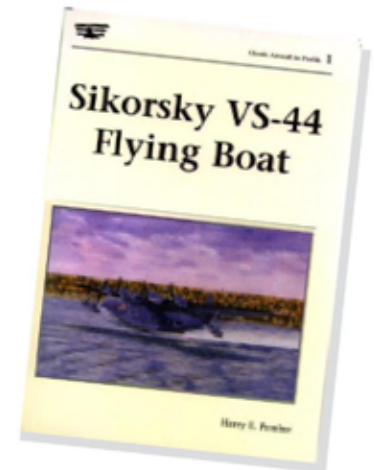
**March 2002**

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## Saga of the Queen of the Sky

There is not room to tell the full story of the VS-44A here. A book has been written by Harry Pember and a very good video ("The Queen of the Sky") has been made by TV Station WGBY in Massachusetts which tells the full story of the aircraft and of the involvement of people like Charles Blair and his wife Maureen O'Hara Blair, Dick Probert, and many, many others. The book and video may be purchased at the Sikorsky Store, and at the New England Aircraft Museum Store.

The people who steered the final course to the New England Aircraft Museum were Eugene Buckley, Tony Ravino (Chairman, VS-44A Restoration), and Harry Hleva, who with the assistance of Sikorsky Aircraft, and many volunteers from the ranks of Sikorsky and Avco-Lycoming retirees and others, restored the aircraft to the condition and placed it where it can be seen by the public of today and for many generations to come. This Edition of *Heritage* is dedicated to all these players in the VS-44A story.



Tony Rivino



Eugene Buckley



Harry Hleva

## Timeline

- Nov. 4 1987:** Restoration Opening ceremonies
- Spring 1988:** Preparation. Donated materials, surplus tools and equipment gathered. Hull skin carefully peeled away.
- Winter/Spring 1989:** Hull restoration begins. Supporting structure repaired, hull reskinning begins.
- Spring 1990:** Work on wing center section. Replacement spars made and installed. Entirely reskinned. Horizontal and vertical stabilizers refurbished. Work begins on outer panels.
- 1994:** Engine restoration begins. Engines obtained from the Marines Corps Museum (1), Long Island School of Aviation (2), and New England Air Museum (1).
- 1995:** Interior work begins on flight deck and passenger areas. Most are restored to original condition from donated and purchased materials.
- Winter/Spring 1994:** Hull 98% complete. Windows and windscreen installed. Propellers restored by Hamilton Standard.
- Winter/Spring 1997:** Center wing section moved to Windsor Locks for mounting and other finishing work. Interior restoration complete. Preparations to move hull to same location.
- June 18 1997:** VS-44 Hull is transported to the museum. Center section installed. Volunteers are shuttled to the museum to continue restoration.
- Summer 1998:** The aircraft is painted in the original colors of American Export Lines and moved into its final home at the Museum.
- Nov 19, 1998:** Recommissioning ceremony held at the New England Air Museum



Ted Coley (L) and Bill Digney(R)



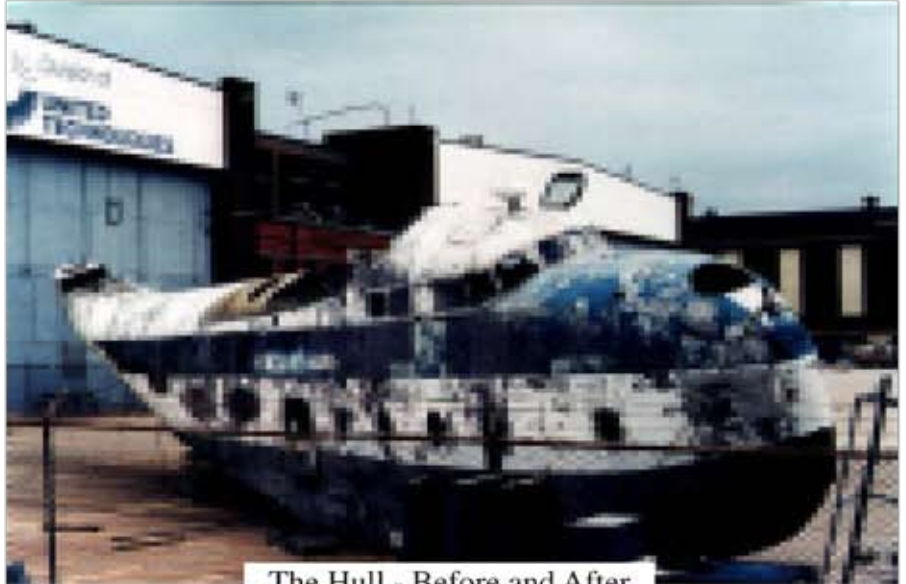
Wally  
Wanamaker



Charlie Sharp



Joe Losardo



The Hull - Before and After.



Ray Holland



John Gill, Larry Dzialo, Art Stanko

**It took many volunteers, only a few of whom are shown, to reverse years of neglect.**

**Are you a member of the Sikorsky Historical Archives yet?**



Bob Porter



Augie Cuomo and Fred Ghirardini



Bob Franklin (L) John Sawicki (R)



Pete DiCarlo



John Kopchik



Above and right: Instrument panel, Engines and Radio Operators station after restoration.



Moving Day



Engine installation at the Museum



On the Road

Below and right: Finishing off the Job.



Join the Sikorsky Historical Archives *today!*



**Reeve Lindbergh**

## They were There

**An Evening of Rememembrance  
with Reeve Lindbergh and Sergei Sikorsky**

The I.I. Sikorsky Historical Archives together with American Helicopter Association International held an evening of reminiscence at the Bridgeport Holiday Inn during October 2001. Talks were featured by Reeve Lindbergh and Sergei Sikorsky. During the evening three framed copies of a new painting by Joe Keogan, celebrating the day in August 1934 when an S-42 flying boat flown by Boris Sergievsky broke eight world records, were presented to Reeve, Sergei, and The New England Air Museum. The painting depicts the aircraft passing the Stratford Point Light at the end of the record breaking flight.



**Sergei Sikorsky**



**M.C. Ron Schlegel**



**Joe Keogan makes presentations.**



**L: Dennis Calfous admires Model of S-58**

**R: Joe Keogan, Dick and Nancy Sykes. Below L: Alex Voight, Henriett Wilson, Evelyn and Jack Connors.**

**Below R: Audrey and Bob Brady.**



**See us on the web at [sikorskyarchives.com](http://sikorskyarchives.com)**

# Welcome to New Members

## JOIN THE ARCHIVES

Igor I. Sikorsky Historical Archives  
MS S 578A  
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Life Membership        \$125  
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Please send a check or money order (do not send cash) payable to The Igor I. Sikorsky Historical Archives, Inc.

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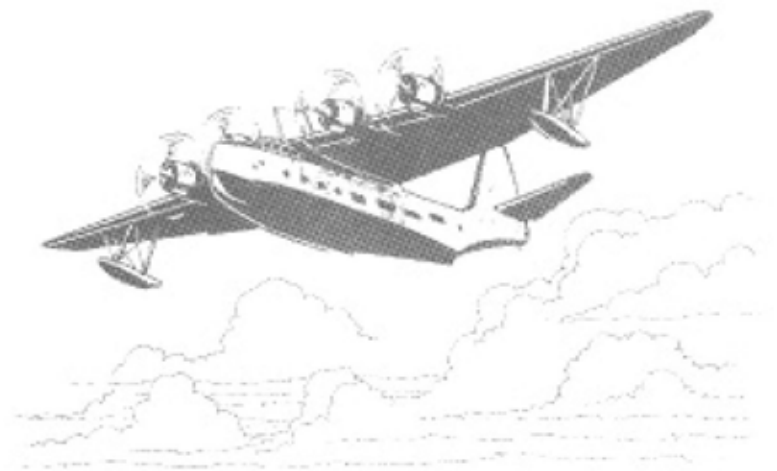
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The Archives welcomes the following new members who contribute to the preservation of the History of Igor I. Sikorsky and his genius:

**James Cycon**  
**Herbert Shoheit**  
**John Rosen**  
**John Williamson**  
**Patsy White**  
**Bruce Kay**  
**John Uhelsky**  
**Ray Leoni**

**Scott Smith**  
**Dana Shumaker**  
**Dr. John Gaffey**  
**Margaret Gaffey**  
**Timothy Cronan**  
**Paul Kulkosky**  
**Evan Fradenburgh**  
**Wyman Historical Museum**



## Sikorsky Archives News

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