Igor I. Sikorsky’s Office

Igor Sikorsky’s office on North Main Street, Stratford, has been preserved in fundamentally the same configuration as when he occupied it from 1956 through 1972. Throughout his three careers in aviation: Russian fixed wing aircraft, early American fixed wing aircraft and helicopters, Igor Sikorsky received 89 prominent awards and honors and met with thousands of dignitaries. His office contains many of these artifacts and interactions. This issue of the Archives News highlights some of these.

Visit us at Sikorskyarchives.com
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Russian/American Fixed Wing Memorabilia

1. Painting of Igor Sikorsky’s S-21 (The Grand). On August 2, 1913 the Grand set a record by flying 1 hour and 54 minutes over St. Petersburg while carrying eight passengers.

2. On December 18, 1925 Igor Sikorsky, returning to wooded Long Island, made a hasty dusk landing in his S-29A. The wing of the sesquiplane airliner severed a tree limb. A piece of the embedded tree was mounted on a plaque to remind him of his narrow escape.

3. Igor Sikorsky is pictured at the controls of his S-5. The photo was used when he was issued Federation Aeronautique International (FAI) Pilot’s License No. 64, dated August 18, 1911.

4. A 1938 design concept, designated as the S-45, would carry 100 passengers nonstop from New York to London. The project was terminated.

5. The Ilya Muromets (S-22). A group of officers of the “Squadron of Flying Ships” and a 1,000 pound bomb. Igor Sikorsky is fourth from the left and Russian Major General Shidlovsky is third from the right.
Early Rotary Wing Memorabilia

6. On October 6, 1943, the VS-300 was donated to the Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. (l to r) Henry Ford II, Charles Lindbergh, Sikorsky test pilot Lester Morris, Henry Ford and Igor Sikorsky.

7. Igor Sikorsky and Charles Lindbergh on October 9, 1940. Mr. Lindbergh was a witness when, on that day, the VS-300 established an altitude record of 100 feet.

8. Igor Sikorsky’s helicopter license #1, awarded by the Federation Aeronautique International (FAI).

9. Igor Sikorsky, Orville Wright and Colonel Frank Gregory meet at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. The Sikorsky XR-4 2-place helicopter was flown from Bridgeport, Ct. to Dayton for test flights and pilot training by the Army Air Force in May 1942.
Igor Sikorsky’s desk contained a library of books including four he authored (The Story of the Winged-S, The Evolution of the Soul, The Invisible Encounter and The Message of the Lord’s Prayer). Several editions of the Bible and aeronautical reference books, his slide rule and models of the S-43 and S-38 aircraft are also on the desk.
Igor Sikorsky’s fedora (not shown in above picture). During the Korean war the helicopter proved itself as a lifesaving aircraft and thousands of lives were saved. Around that time, word spread within the U.S. Marine Corps that if a pilot wore the Sikorsky fedora for just a few seconds, he would never be hurt while flying a helicopter. This special protection became legend, and Igor Sikorsky made certain that the hat would be readily available to his aviator visitors.
Igor Sikorsky met with a number of U.S. presidents, including Lyndon Johnson (above) and Dwight D. Eisenhower (below).

President Harry Truman awarded the Collier Trophy to the helicopter industry for its service in the Korean conflict, the military services and the Coast Guard on December 17, 1951. Mr. Sikorsky represented the helicopter industry.

In 1967 Igor Sikorsky was awarded the National Medal of Science, an honor bestowed by President Lyndon Johnson.

Scroll presented from his friends and associates to Mr. Sikorsky at his retirement party – May 1957.


19. A plaque from the Apollo 16 crew to Igor Sikorsky contains an American flag carried to the moon. The handwritten message states “To Mr. Igor Sikorsky, with thanks for the leadership and vision that helped make this possible.”

Igor Sikorsky’s Last Letter

While on summer vacation with his father in Germany in 1908, Igor Sikorsky learned the details about the successful flights of the Wright Brothers. Following the trip, Sikorsky made the firm decision that aviation would be his life work. His entrance would be by way of the helicopter, a vehicle that could hover in one spot, rise and land vertically and fly in any direction chosen by the pilot.

In February 1972, a horrific fire engulfed the 26 story Pirani building in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The fire swept up from a lower floor and trapped people on the roof. Twenty helicopters took part in the rescue operation; 400 were rescued.

Mr. Jerome Federer, Director of the Flight Safety Foundation, sent Mr. Sikorsky details of the fire and the lifesaving role helicopters played. Mr. Sikorsky’s response confirmed that his life-saving vision 64 years earlier had come to fruition.

Prepared by Frank Colucci and John Bualkowski with graphic art and layout by Jodi Buckley.

Igor Sikorsky’s Last Letter

October 25, 1972

Mr. Jerome Lederer
Flight Safety Foundation, Inc.
1800 N. Kent Street
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Mr. Lederer:

Please accept my sincere thanks for your recent letter and for the enclosure describing the Sao Paulo helicopter rescues. I had it read to me (my eyesight has failed to such extent that I can no longer read) and found it interesting indeed.

I always believed that the helicopter would be an outstanding vehicle for the greatest variety of life-saving missions and now, near the close of my life, I have the satisfaction of knowing that this proved to be true.

It was good hearing from you and I thank you again for sending me this information.

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

I.I. Sikorsky

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The last letter dictated and signed by Mr. Sikorsky. He passed away the following morning, October 26, 1972 at the age of 83.