

PHPA Main Rotor



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75 Years Young - LASD Aero Bureau

Article by PHPA Board Member James Paules

Recently an airborne law enforcement unit best known for its vision of the future took an afternoon to look back and celebrate its past.

It's hard to imagine that Los Angeles County Sheriff William Traeger could have envisioned the bright future of airborne law enforcement in Southern California when, on September 27, 1926, he swore in the first five volunteers as Deputy Air Sheriffs. During the ensuing decades the LASD Aero Bureau has grown to become one of the most innovative organizations in the dynamic field of airborne law enforcement and on December 7th

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PHPA Welcomes New Board Members

PHPA recently welcomed the following new board members.

DEBORAH SHANE - Burbank

Deborah's passion for helicopters developed within the first five seconds of her first helicopter ride on a tourist ship in Hawaii. From that point on, she was hooked as a bonafide rotorcraft enthusiast.

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PHPA General Membership Meeting

Thursday, January 24
2002

94th Aero Squadron Restaurant
Van Nuys, California
Raymer Street West of Woodley
Registration @ 6:30

More details @ www.phpa.org

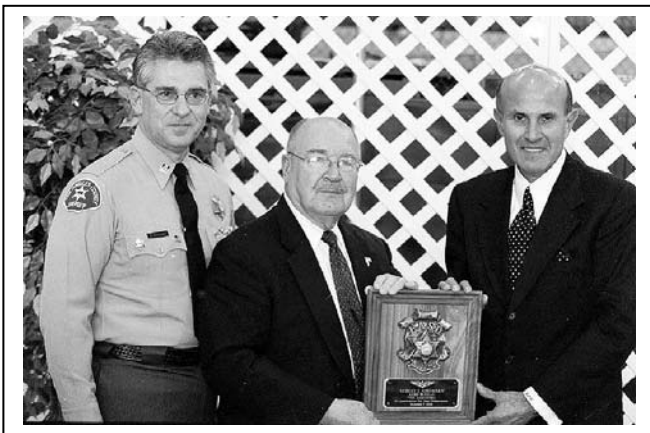
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Next Issue - Career Profile of long time PHPA member and previous President Bruce Speirs as he concludes 13 years as the Sergeant in charge of the Burbank PD Air Unit - Find out what's next for Bruce .

they paused briefly to look back at their many accomplishments.

Touted as the 75th Jubilee Anniversary, the afternoon luncheon at the Aero Bureau facility in Long Beach featured a full crew of dignitaries, local politicians along with aviation and law enforcement officials. Units representing airborne law enforcement units came from as far away as Santa Barbara County to listen as Aero Bureau's commander and ALEA member, Captain James Di Giovanna welcomed everyone and introduced the afternoon speakers.



Captain James Di Giovanna, Commander of Aero Bureau (left) and Sheriff Lee Baca (right) present award to Sergei Sikorsky during 75th Jubilee Anniversary festivities.

Photo courtesy of Jeff Miller

Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca took the podium to commend Aero Bureau's history as well as to introduce Sergei Sikorsky, the eldest of Igor Sikorsky's children. Sheriff Baca lauded Igor Sikorsky, as "... the visionary engineer and aviator that made the helicopter successful..."

Sergei Sikorsky fondly related the early days of aviation, recalled a number of interesting anecdotes and explained his father didn't get it right the first time - but kept at the single main rotor - single tail rotor design that many 'experts' felt would never get off the ground. "Back in those days of early aviation," Sergei related, "my Dad explained that engineers were also the test pilots and that had the unintended effect eliminating poor engineers very quickly" Sergei explained that much of the success was sheer determination from his father but also his father had also confided in him that, "... we built the helicopter because we were so ignorant we simply didn't know we couldn't do it..."

Sergei also pointedly highlighted the mechanics today and then as the real backbone of aviation units and concluded by " ... extending my thanks to all of you for making my Dad's dream of saving lives come true ..."

Fast forward 75 years and Sikorsky's dream of saving lives with helicopters has become a routine reality for LASD's Aero Bureau. With its current complement of 15 helicopters (3 MD500D & E's, 6 MD520N's, 3 MD 600N's and 3 Sikorsky H-3's) along with two Cessna 210's and a recently acquired King Air B200, Aero Bureau provides patrol support, tactical transport for SWAT, prisoner and VIP transport as well as perhaps their best known role in Search & Rescue operations with their AIR RESCUE 5 Program.

The unit has an especially long relationship with Sikorsky products in their Search & Rescue mission since 1972 when Aero Bureau acquired Sikorsky CH-34's for mountain rescue. In 1983 Aero Bureau upgraded their SAR platforms with Sikorsky S-58T's

and made the move to their current Sikorsky H-3 "Sea Kings" last year. Used by civilian and military units around the world, the Sikorsky H-3 is touted by many as the " ... DC-3 of helicopters ..." referring to its rugged reliability.

The anniversary celebration was also an opportunity for Aero Bureau to put into service the last of three Sea Kings to support their AIR 5 program. The first two aircraft featured N- numbers N950SB and N950DF to honor Sheriff Sherman Block and Senator Dianne Feinstein

The latest member of the Sea King fleet, N240HJ, carries this tradition forward and honors retired LASD Sergeant Harry Jones, - a man also known for rugged reliability during his long tenure as Crew Chief on the AIR RESCUE 5 program. In addition to a framed and signed picture of the Sikorsky H-3 in Aero Bureau colors, Jones received a enthusiastic standing ovation from the audience for his years of service to the AIR 5 program and the community.

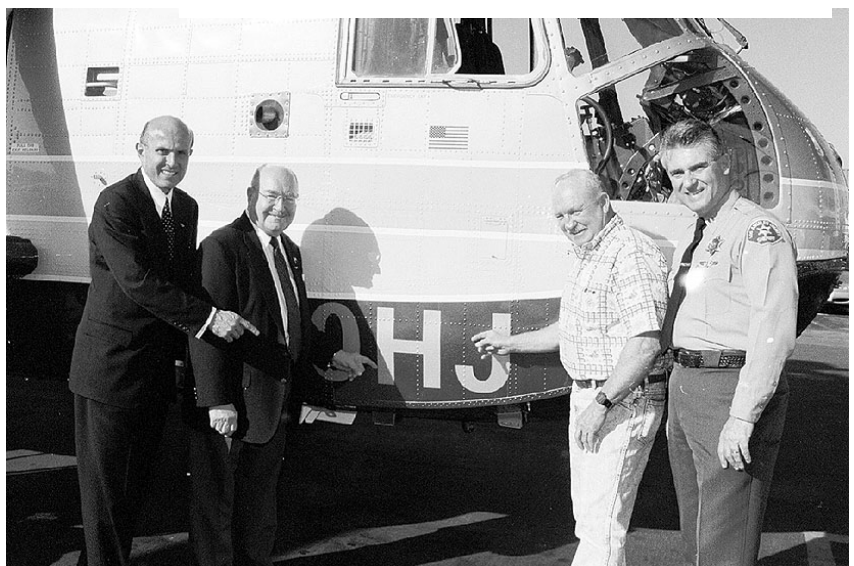
In between speeches and hosting duties Captain Jim Di Giovanna took time to reflect back on the progress made at Aero Bureau. "I've been very fortunate to be assigned to the Bureau during some historical periods

of growth and acquisition of new equipment and aircraft," Di Giovanna admitted. He added that plans are now underway to expand the Aero Bureau facility to property adjacent to their current facility. "This will hopefully provide some much needed relief to what is otherwise a very overcrowded facility and flight ramp," he explained.

Di Giovanna relates that the future also holds changes in the aircraft based on their replacement program. "Our hope is to take delivery of the first of 15 AS350 B2's by late 2002 - which will eventually replace all of the MD products we currently fly." Di Giovanna noted that for the first time, they are evaluating the merits of acquiring the new aircraft with an "operational lease" instead of a straight purchase. "We have the full support of Sheriff Baca, who has really been our champion, and we will, of course, be seeking concurrence and approval soon from the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors."

A Tradition of Airborne Service to the Community -
This is the motto of Aero Bureau that greets visitors in their main entrance and we look forward to the next 75 years of innovative service from this leader in airborne law enforcement. ##

Standing left to right, Sheriff Lee Baca, Mr. Sergei I. Sikorsky, LASD Sgt. Harry Jones (retired) and Aero Bureau Commander, Captain James Di Giovanna review the N number on LASD's newest H-3 Sea King



Deborah has her own firm as a Crisis Management Consultant, working extensively within the entertainment and fire service industries where she does extensive disaster training as well as volunteer motivation. Deborah brings a focus on safety and an insight into some of the special considerations of the PHPA membership to her role as a board member.

KEITH JOHNSON -

Recently retired after managing the Los Angeles Police Department's helicopter operations for 20 years, Keith brings more than 4,000 hours of flight-time and over 2,500 hours of specialized education and training to the PHPA Board. Keith is the author of several comprehensive documents on aviation safety issues as well as serving on the LAX committee for developing helicopter procedures. Keith currently operates his own business as a consultant and expert witness on aviation safety, helicopter rescue and accident reconstruction along with instructing in these areas.

BILL GRAHAM -

An active PHPA member since 1997 Bill currently holds a private pilot's certificate. Bill has extensive experience working with PHPA in developing ramp management protocols for our Helicopter Awareness Days. Bill lives and works in the Antelope Valley area of Los Angeles County.

JOHN GILKERSON - Glendale PD

A PHPA member since 2000, John is a 15 year veteran of the Glendale PD currently flying for the Air Support Division.

MARK R. LEINS Aerial Camera Technician

Mark has spent the past 8 years as a freelance aerial camera technician in the motion picture industry. Mark primarily techs the Learjet-based Vectorvision system for Wolfe Air Aviation and is a member of the International Cinematographers Guild, Local 600 and the Society of Operating Cameramen.

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