



SIKORSKY CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF INNOVATION

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One hundred years ago, immigrant and aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky founded Sikorsky Aero Engineering Company on a chicken farm near Roosevelt Field, on Long Island New York. With a small team of engineers, many of whom who were also immigrants who fled the Russian Revolution, Igor established his new company and started work on development of a new fixed-wing aircraft, the S-29A.

Although the S-29A was never mass-produced, it created publicity that encouraged investors, later enabling the company to produce the S-38 amphibian and a number of other fixed-wing “flying boats.”

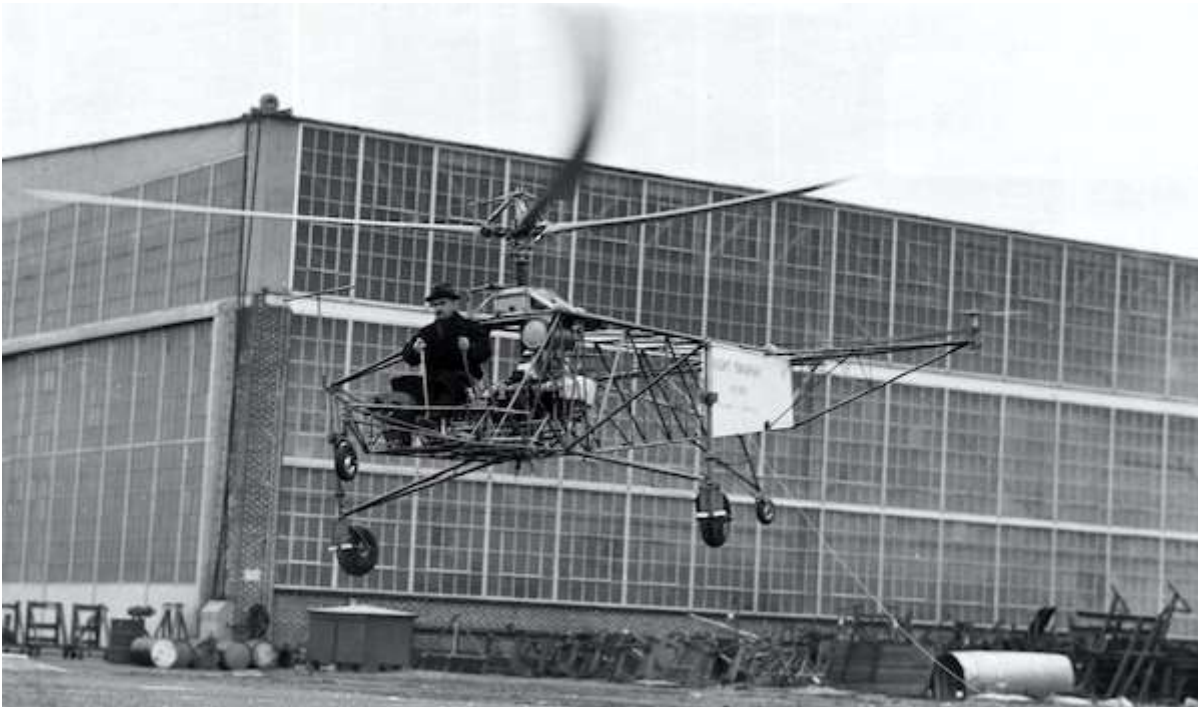
Revisiting an idea whose time had come

Igor had attempted to design helicopters as early as 1908, but engine technology hadn't developed enough to enable rotorcraft to take flight. He shelved the experiment, but took the opportunity to revisit his helicopter idea in the 1930s as engine technologies matured.

In 1929, Igor moved his company to Stratford, Connecticut. The company grew and increased aircraft production.

“By 1934, 1935, I was acutely aware of the fact that Dad would come home from the factory, at that time busily building the great Pan American clipper ships, the flying boats for the North Atlantic and the Pacific,” said Sergei Sikorsky, Igor’s eldest son. “But at night, he would come home and spend two or three hours in a private little office that he had.

“It was there that the first sketches for what would become the VS-300 appeared. And I would sneak in there once in a while and watch Dad either calculating or sketching the very first helicopter.”



On March 19, 1935, Igor was granted patent no. 1,994,488 for his “Direct Lift Aircraft” design.

He brought the design, his dream, to reality September 14, 1939, when he piloted the first practical helicopter, the VS-300, as it left the ground for about 10 seconds.

“I remember about the second or the third day after the VS-300 had lifted inches off the ground, Dad taking Mom and my brother, Nikolai, and I, and we stood patiently out in the field and watched, once again, a liftoff, probably liftoff number three or four of the VS-300, with Dad at the controls,” Sergei said.

On May 14, 1940, Igor received Helicopter Pilot’s License No. 1 from the State of Connecticut. By 1942, Igor matured the technology enough to deliver the first of thousands of military helicopters, the XR-4, to the U.S. Army Air Forces.



Sikorsky's company prospered in the decades that followed, with thousands of employees designing and manufacturing helicopters that enabled aircrews all over the world to perform challenging missions and save lives.

"Igor Sikorsky demonstrated a passion for innovation and the grit to see his vision through to fruition," said Paul Lemmo, Sikorsky President. "For 100 years, our employees have carried on the culture of innovation he started as we help customers around the world perform difficult and sometimes dangerous missions."

Thus started not only a new aviation industry, but a legacy of pioneering flight solutions designed to bring people home everywhere, every time. It all started with Igor Sikorsky's dream.



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