



Press Release

Contact:

Valerie Sheehan
1-703-684-6777 x107
pr@vtol.org

**Vertical Flight Society Announces
2022 Group Recipients of Its Prestigious Awards**

11 groups exemplify excellence in vertical flight advancements

Fairfax, VA, March 17, 2022 — The Vertical Flight Society today announced the 2022 group recipients of its prestigious awards program. Since its establishment in 1944, VFS Awards have paid tribute to the outstanding leaders of vertical flight and served as a catalyst for stimulating technological advances. This year’s winners will be recognized at the Grand Awards Breakfast on Thursday, May 12, 2022, during the Society’s 78th Annual Forum & Technology Display in Fort Worth, Texas: www.vtol.org/forum.

“VFS has been recognizing the most significant accomplishments in vertical flight since the birth of the industry nearly 80 years ago,” said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. “Today, we recognize the inspiring results of teamwork and collaboration that have demonstrated and advanced the capabilities of vertical flight aircraft.”

The **Leonardo International Fellowship Award** recognizes significant contributions to international vertical flight cooperation. This year’s winner is the **Turkish Utility Helicopter Program (TUHP) Systems and Test Team**, consisting of Sikorsky Aircraft in the US, Aselsan in Turkey, and Turkish Aerospace in Turkey. Together they conducted an extraordinary international cooperative effort to design, develop and test a new avionics system with state-of-the-art industry standards. The avionics system was then integrated into the prototype and production line of the T70, the Turkish Aerospace-produced variant of the S-70i Black Hawk.

The Society’s **Captain William J. Kossler, USCG Award** is given for the greatest achievement in the practical application or operation of vertical flight aircraft, the value of which has been demonstrated by actual service during the preceding 18 months. This year the award goes to two US Armed Forces helicopter units.

- The **Oklahoma Army National Guard** Detachment 1, Company B, 2-149th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB), 2-25 Aviation Regiment supported Louisiana state-of-emergency relief efforts during the Category 4 Hurricane Ida in September 2021 by conducting numerous logistics and humanitarian missions. The unit’s CH-47F Chinooks and crew moved some 102,000 lb (46 metric tons) of critical equipment and airlifted 59 people.
- The **US Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod** CG6032 and CG6039 aircrews answered a call for assistance from the Royal Canadian Air Force to aid a disabled ship approximately 200 nm (370 km) east of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. 142-ft (43-m) long Fishing Vessel *Atlantic Destiny* was taking on water in 35-ft (11-m) high seas. The two MH-60T Jayhawk crews delivered dewatering pumps and rescued 21 crew members while battling 50-kt (90-km/h) winds.

The **Grover E. Bell Award** is given for an outstanding research and experimentation contribution to the field of vertical flight development. This year’s recipient is Sikorsky’s **Project Convergence 2021 Autonomy Demonstration** with an S-70 Optionally Piloted Vehicle (OPV). Several firsts were achieved, including multiple autonomous re-supply missions, including autonomous aircraft startup, pre-flight checks, flight and shutdown; launch of uncrewed air launched effects (ALEs) from the OPV that was itself acting as a drone; first autonomous Black Hawk commanded by soldiers; first time a Black Hawk helicopter has been commanded off-board via an operational Army Ground Control Station (ATAK tablet).

RedViking is this year's recipient of the **VFS Supplier Excellence Award**. This award is given to a supplier who, through the quality, innovativeness and cost-effective technology of its products, has made a notable contribution to improving the state of the art of vertical flight aircraft. RedViking's transmission testing capabilities supported the design and build of Sikorsky's 1.2-million-pound (545-metric-ton) Production Engineering Test Stand (PETTS) for larger helicopter transmissions. RedViking was recognized for its drive for continuous improvement and investments in its infrastructure to better support its customers.

The **Robert L. Pinckney Award** is given in recognition of notable achievement in manufacturing research and development for vertical flight aircraft or components brought to fruition in recent years. This year's recipient is the **3D Printed Aircraft Parts Team** at Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company. The team successfully developed and implemented 3D printed parts on H-60 production aircraft, as well as the company's Raider X competitive prototype.

The **Harry T. Jensen Award** is given for an outstanding contribution to the improvement of reliability, maintainability, safety or logistics support through improved design or technical achievement. This year's award is given to the **Sikorsky Usage and Load Monitoring Team** for its development of world-class fleet usage monitoring capabilities, which have proven invaluable through multiple fleet sustainment needs and investigations related to safety, reliability, logistics and maintainability for the S-92, H-60 and CH-148 fleets.

This year's recipient of the **Howard Hughes Award**, given in recognition of an outstanding improvement in fundamental helicopter technology brought to fruition in the previous 18 months, is the **Mars Helicopter Ingenuity Team** for accomplishing the first powered flight on another planet on April 19, 2021, with a 39.1 sec. flight of the 4-lb (1.8-kg) Ingenuity helicopter on Mars. It still continues its mission with more than 20 successful flights made to date.

The **Frederick L. Feinberg Award** is presented to the pilot or crew of a vertical flight aircraft who demonstrated outstanding skills or achievement during the preceding 18 months. This year's award is given to the **Bell V-280 Experimental Test Pilot Team**. The Bell V-280 Valor test pilots — Don Grove, Paul Ryan, Ernie McGuinness and Terry Glover — safely performed a full suite of test activities and demonstrated all key performance parameters of this transformational aircraft. The pilots completed 173 sorties totaling 214 mishap-free flight hours, reached 305 knots (565 km/h) true airspeed in level flight, with a total of nine different pilots, including five US Army test pilots.

The **Vertical Flight Heritage Sites Program** is intended to recognize and help preserve locations with the most noteworthy and significant contributions made in both the theory and practice of helicopter and other vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft technology. This year, **Sikorsky's Bridgeport, Connecticut, facility** is recognized for 70+ years of historic contributions — from its start in 1943 as the production site for “the world's first production helicopter,” the Sikorsky R-4, to modern engineering and technological contributions to the vertical flight products of Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company.

The Vertical Flight Society was founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943 by the pioneers of the helicopter industry who believed that technological cooperation and collaboration was essential to advance vertical flight. VFS is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For more than 75 years, the Society has led technology, safety, advocacy and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on VTOL technology.

The Vertical Flight Society previously announced the winners of its individual awards for 2022. Descriptions of all the awards and past recipients are available at www.vtol.org/awards.

VFS is @VTOLsociety on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#).

The Vertical Flight Society
2700 Prosperity Ave, Suite 275, Fairfax, VA 22031 USA
+1-703-684-6777 | staff@vtol.org | www.vtol.org