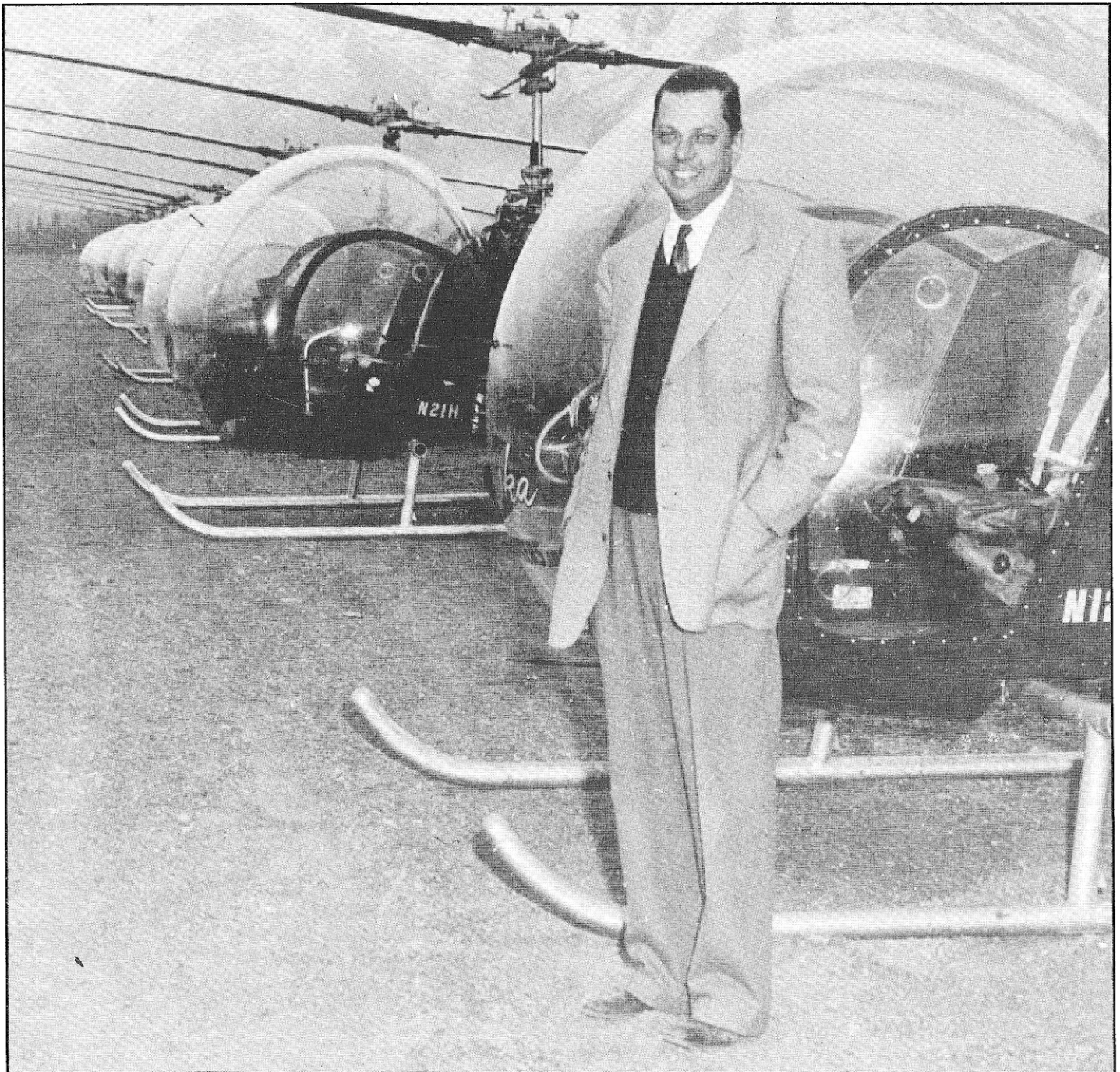


The Aero Club of  
Northern California

1995 Award Winner

**JAMES S. RICKLEFS**





**February 7, 1956.**

*Rick Helicopters' hangar on the San Francisco Airport with part of the helicopter fleet outside. Note the burned down Southwest Airlines hangar in the background.*

*(On the cover)*

*Rick Helicopters, Inc. and Alaska Helicopters, Inc. eleven helicopter formation on ground and in the air at Merrill Field, Anchorage, Alaska just before going out on an Army Map Service surveying contract. The machines are Bell model 47D-1s with 200 HP Franklin engines.*

# JAMES S. RICKLEFS

JAMES S. "RICK" RICKLEFS was born in Monticello, Iowa on March 9, 1914, where he attended grade school and high school.

His first flight instruction was at Monticello in 1933 in an OX5 Waco 9, and his first solo was later that year on October 24 at Stanford Airport in a Kinner Fleet.

After graduating from Stanford in 1937 with a B.S. degree, Rick worked briefly for Schwabacher & Co., an investment firm in San Francisco. However, the aviation bug had bit him and he knew this type of work was not for him. From 1940-42, he utilized his degree in Aeronautical Engineering from West Coast University and went to work as a stress analyst for Northrup Aircraft, and from 1942-1944 as Chief Engineer, Education Division, for West Coast University and Aero Industries Technical Institute in Glendale.

Rick became Vice President of Landraf Helicopter Company in 1944 in Los Angeles. While there, he soloed their model H-2 helicopter at Vultee Field, Downey. This was his first helicopter experience and from that time until his semi-retirement, he was involved mainly with helicopters.

He formed Rick Helicopters, Inc. in 1948. With the purchase of two Bell 47Bs, he started a commercial helicopter charter operation and by 1953, Rick Helicopters was the

largest in the world, both from gross income and number of helicopters (35). His gross was larger than any one of the passenger carriers in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.



He also owned Alaska Helicopters, Inc. in Anchorage, and Rick Helicopter Maintenance Company with branches in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In subsequent years, he and his company did pioneering cold weather work on the North Slope of Alaska, establishing many new piloting and maintenance procedures for cold weather flying, which enabled year round operations.

They were the leaders in pioneering work on sling load procedures. The Federal Aviation Agency sent a team of their pilots and administrative men to be trained by Rick. He helped them

write what later became Part 135 of the FAA regulations. He also trained FAA inspectors to be pilots in the early 1950's.

In retirement, much of his time has been spent in restoring and flying antique airplanes and helicopters. He owns a World War I Sopwith Pup with a LeRhône radial engine, and has restored a Spad VII with a Hisso Model A engine. He has also restored several early model Sikorsky Helicopters and has two Hiller Rotorcycles and a Hiller Experimental Ram Jet Copter.

Rick flies a Fairchild 24 with a Warner engine which he restored and, in addition, has a sizeable collection of World War I and other early engines, and a collection of World War I machine guns.

Rick was a three-time Grand Champion winner at Watsonville with his restored 'Honeyman Special'. His prior winners were his famous replica World War I Spad and another Fairchild.

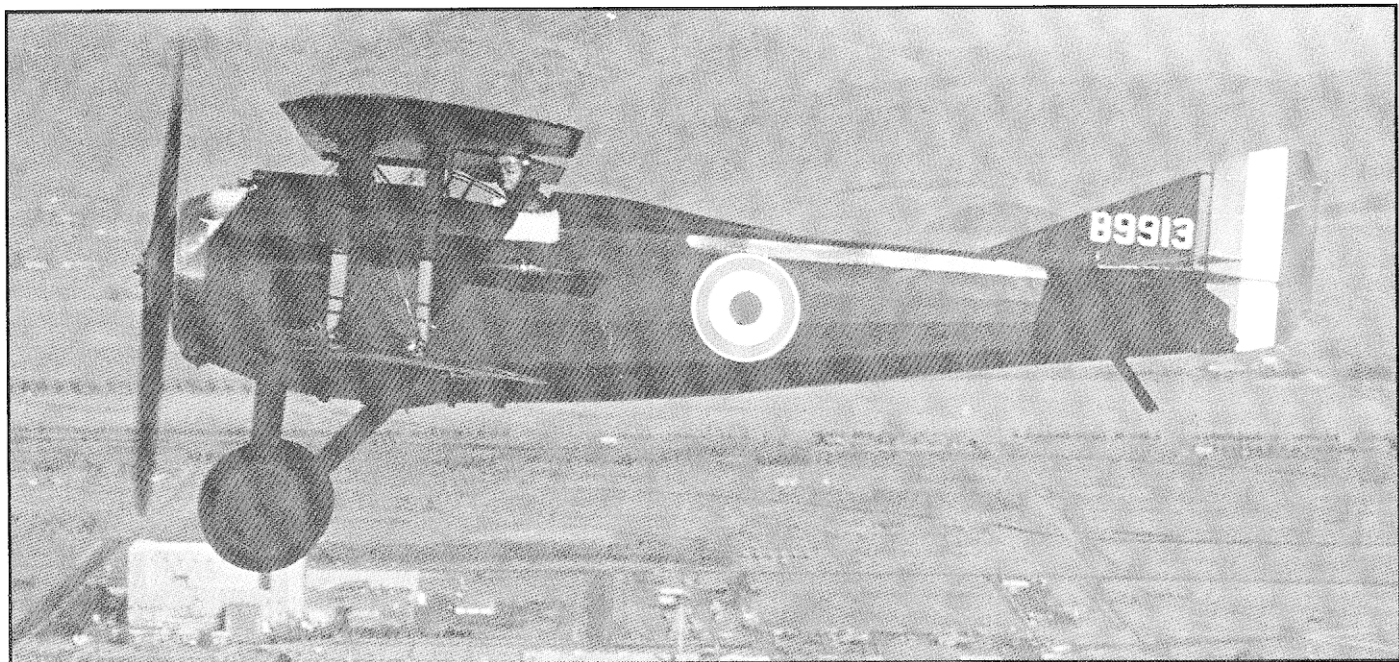
Rick has written many technical papers and delivered numerous speeches. He is also the recipient of the California Aeronautics Commission Certificate of Merit, the Lawrence D. Bell Helicopter Pioneer Award, the West Coast University Nason Alumni Achievement Award and the Helicopter Association of America Pioneer Award.





*April 27, 1991.*

*Jim Ricklefs' 1935 Fairchild model 24C8C, No. NC15921, being warmed up on the ground at Hollister, California. On May 26, 1991 this airplane won the Grand Champion Trophy at the Watsonville Antique Airplane Fly-in.*



*James Ricklefs' Squad VII, B9913, seen flying from Meadowlark Field, Livermore, California, is the only airworthy example of its type. Its owner spent 5000 hours, \$40,000 and 2½ years on the restoration.*

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# Thirteenth Annual Awards Presentation

The Aero Club of Northern California

June 10, 1995

San Jose, California

Welcome and Introduction ..... Pat Fox

Invocation ..... Bill Potter

## DINNER

Introduction of Aero Club Officers and Board Members ..... Pat Fox

Aero Club - NAA Special Honor Awards

• Rex Hardy ..... Janet Hitt

• Harry Lancaster ..... Tom Leonard

James M. Nissen Scholarship Award

• Craig Beveridge ..... Jane Nissen Laidley

Roy Hester Scholarship Award

• Patrick Langlet ..... Rolph Stoddard

Guest Speaker .....

• James S. Ricklefs ..... Jerry Bennett

Crystal Eagle Award Presentation ..... Pat Fox

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## The Crystal Eagle Award

The Crystal Eagle Award is presented annually by the Aero Club of Northern California to recognize an individual whose accomplishments have significantly contributed to the advancement of aviation or space technology.

### The Crystal Eagle:

#### A distinctive work of art

The Crystal Eagle Award is a unique work of art crystal handcrafted in Italy.

It is fitting that the eagle should be the symbol for the Aero Club's annual award. The North American eagle is recognized as a bird possessing great strength, natural grace, keenness of vision and power in flight. The eagle has been used by man to identify with flying since its inception to our current successes in space.

The crystal reflects the medium of flight -- transparent, yet ever present.

The Crystal Eagle is mounted on a California redwood base, unique to Northern California.

In its natural state redwood has unusual durability, commensurate with the recipients of this coveted award.

#### Crystal Eagle Award Winners

1983: General James "Jimmy" Doolittle

1984: Brigadier General Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager

1985: Stanley Hiller, Jr.

1986: William "Bill" Lear, Sr.

1987: James M. "Jim" Nissen

1988: Anthony W. "Tony" LeVier

1989: Elbert "Burt" L. Rutan

1990: George S. Cooper

1991: Allen E. Paulson

1992: Jeana Yeager

1993: Robert T. Jones

1994: Frank L. Christensen



## Our Special Thanks to:

Hillis Printing/Chuck Hillis  
Hugh Center Trust/Art Lund  
Sixteenth St. Design/Bill & Kim Pfahnl  
Student AAAE Chapter - SJSU

San Jose International Airport (SJC)  
Special Recognition  
• Shirley Ibay

The Aero Club of Northern California was formed to promote those activities which advance aviation and aerospace within Northern California.

We are a chapter of our parent organization, the National Aeronautic Association (NAA), which having been founded in 1905 as the Aero Club of America is the oldest independent, non-profit aviation organization in the United States, and the sole U.S. representative to the Federation Aeronautique International (FAI).

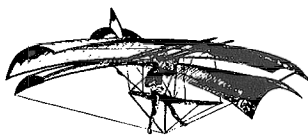
So central to aviation was the Aero Club that it issued all pilot licenses in the United States

until 1926. The first five pilot licenses issued by the Aero Club were as follows: 1) Glen H. Curtiss, 2) Lt. Frank P. Lahm, 3) Louis Paulham, 4) Orville Wright, and 5) Wilbur Wright. All other pilot licenses issued in the United States subsequent to these five were until 1926 issued by the Aero Club of America.

We embrace the goals of our parent organization in our efforts to support a vigorous aviation and space program for students at all levels of learning, and to recognize and honor those who make outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation and space flight.

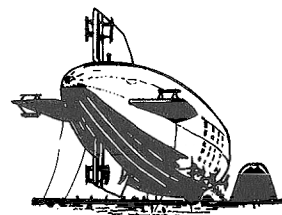
## About our logo ...

Incorporated in the logo of The Aero Club of Northern California are some of the most significant contributions the Northern California area has made to the art and science of flight.



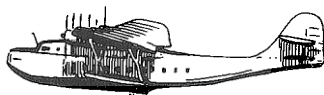
*Montgomery Flight · 1904*

Often referred to as "The Father of Basic Flying" Dr. John Montgomery was a true aviation pioneer. San Jose was the site of many of his historic achievements. Alexander Graham Bell noted that, "All subsequent attempts in aviation must begin with the Montgomery Machine."



*Moffett Field · 1933*

Dedicated April 12, 1933, Moffett Field until recently was the United States guardian of the Pacific. It continues to be a major aviation facility supporting significant military and non-military operations.



*China Clipper · 1939*

Lifting from San Francisco Bay waters on November 22, 1935, the Clipper became the first airplane to fly the Pacific non-stop. Cutting over 15 days off the best surface time from San Francisco to Manila, it led to the elimination of the barriers of space and time.



*NASA Ames Research Center - 1940*

Northern California's continued contributions to involvement in our quest for our ultimate destiny is assured by the ongoing advancements in aerospace science and technology at NASA's Ames Research Center.