



Press Release

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**Vertical Flight Society Announces
2023 Group Recipients of Its Prestigious Awards**

Nine groups exemplify excellence in vertical flight advancements

Fairfax, VA, March 22, 2023 — The Vertical Flight Society (VFS) today announces the group recipients of its prestigious 2023 awards. For nearly 80 years, the VFS awards program has 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 79th Annual Grand Awards Banquet on Thursday, May 18, 2023, during the Society's 79th Annual Forum & Technology Display in West Palm Beach, Florida (www.vtol.org/forum).

“Since 1944, VFS has been recognizing the most significant accomplishments in vertical flight,” said VFS Executive Director Mike Hirschberg. “This year's group award winners highlight the incredible capabilities of vertical flight aircraft and those who develop and operate them.”

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 in the preceding 18 months. This year, the Kossler Award is presented to two groups who exemplify the lifesaving capabilities of vertical flight.

- **The US Army 3-82 General Support Aviation Brigade (GSAB) Task Force Talon** rescued and evacuated nearly 10,000 persons during the evacuation of Kabul under enemy fire in August 2021.
- **The Crew of the US Coast Guard Rescue Helicopter 6036** rescued two aboard Fishing Vessel Glory in February 2022 sinking in Sitka Sound, Alaska, under heavy rain, fog and 55-kt (100-km/h) winds with violent downdrafts.

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 the **Autonomous Sustainment Technologies for Rotorcraft Operations (ASTRO) Rotors team** — consisting of personnel from the US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Aviation & Missile Center (AvMC) Technology Development Directorate (TDD) and Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company — for their experimental contribution to the development and test demonstrations of technologies for automated in-flight rotor track and balance (RTB).

Elbit Systems of America 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. Elbit's support and partnership with The Boeing Company on Apache production and fielding of their products, as well as development and support of new products on other vertical lift programs and efforts, has been exemplary.

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 **Strap Pack Data Collection Electronic Logging System (DCELS) Deployment Team** at

The Boeing Company. The team successfully developed and implemented DCELS software to connect an advanced torque tool, measurement system and other hand tools directly to a records keeping system. The streamlined process facilitated significant time savings and the removal of a second inspector, saving the Apache program nearly \$700,000 annually.

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 **Sikorsky's 5G Radar Altimeter Team**. Working with the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) 5G Task Force and other US government agencies, associations and radar altimeter manufacturers, the Sikorsky/Lockheed Martin team made several breakthrough innovations toward mitigating the 5G radar altimeter interference issue; this has contributed to the continued safe operation of both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft in US airspace.

The **Frederick L. Feinberg Award** is presented to the pilot or crew of a vertical flight aircraft who demonstrated outstanding skills or achievement. This year's award is given to **Alexander Neuhaus and Antoine van Gent** for the exceptional achievement of landing the Airbus H145 five-bladed prototype helicopter on the highest mountain in the Americas — the 22,837-ft (6,961-m) high Aconcagua mountain in the Andes mountain range in Argentina. This set an unprecedented milestone for twin-engine helicopters in a particularly challenging high-altitude environment.

The **Leonardo International Fellowship Award** recognizes significant contributions to international vertical flight cooperation. This year's winner is the **MH-139A Supplemental Type Certification (STC) International Test Team**. The team comprised of Leonardo and Boeing personnel across multiple sites executed flight testing in support of the MH-139A expanded envelope and did so amid challenging programmatic and schedule constraints. The test planning and development effort involved over a year of technical collaboration between Boeing engineers in Philadelphia and Seattle, and Leonardo engineers in Italy and the UK.

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 VTOL aircraft technology. This year, the **Sikorsky Development Flight Center** in West Palm Beach, Florida, is being recognized as the test site for dozens of significant research, development and certification programs. It has been the home to a significant number of rotorcraft technology breakthroughs, including fly-by-wire flight control systems, next-generation coaxial rotor development and the practical demonstration of full autonomous flight, and has witnessed numerous helicopter world speed and altitude records.

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 were essential to advancing vertical flight. VFS is the global non-profit society for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For more than 80 years, the Society has led technology, safety, advocacy, and other important initiatives, and has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology. Descriptions of the awards and past recipients are available at www.vtol.org/awards.

The Vertical Flight Society

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