

# The American Helicopter Society's

## Honours Award

to

MR RAOUL HAFNER

During the Honours Night Banquet of the American Helicopter Society's Ninth Annual Forum, held in Washington D C on Saturday, May 16th, 1953, Mr RAOUL HAFNER was the recipient of that Society's highest Award, presented each year to honour the memory of the late Dr ALEXANDER KLEMIN

The following is the citation of the Award as made by Mr BARTRAM KELLY, President of the American Helicopter Society

“ And now we come to the principal Award which our Society presents each year It consists of a plaque present by Mr Frank Piasecki to honor the memory of the late Dr Alexander Klemín, a great enthusiast, teacher, and writer on rotary wing subjects For those of us who knew him personally, I am sure that his influence will last the rest of our lives

I am happy to announce that Mrs Klemín and Miss Klemín are with us this evening and I would like to ask them to stand for a moment by way of introducing them to you We are delighted to have these ladies with us and hope that we will be able to welcome them at this gathering every year

The Dr Alexander Klemín Award has always been presented to someone who has been a genuine pioneer in helicopter work and who has been solely responsible for the existence of a given type of machine The award is for a lifetime of achievement, though we do not mean by this that the recipient's career is on a decline or in its final stages On the contrary, we expect still more achievements from him I say this because the recipient this year has more energy than any three of us, and is in the midst of very important helicopter work It is my pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, to announce that the Society presents the Dr Alexander Klemín Award this year to Mr Raoul Hafner, Chief Designer, Helicopter Department, Bristol Aeroplane Company, Bristol, England

Mr Hafner was born in Austria and educated in Vienna He produced his first helicopter design in 1927, and in 1930 flew the R-2 in Vienna, before bringing it to England in 1933 He designed the AR-III Hafner Gyroplane, which flew at Heston in September, 1935 Mr Hafner carried out rotating wing research for the British Ministry of Aircraft Production from 1939 to 1945, and, on acquisition by the Bristol Aeroplane Company in September, 1944, of the AR-III designs, he was appointed Chief Designer in charge of helicopter development He is presently engaged in development of Bristol's Type 171, four-seater, and Type 173, twelve-seater

We all know that in the process of making helicopters many natural



*Mr Bartram Kelly, President of the American Helicopter Society, presenting the Dr Alexander Klemm Award to Mr Raoul Hafner*

laws must be defied There are no handbooks to lead the way, and the experimenter must make bold strokes and look for exceptions when the rules obstruct his progress As an example I would like to draw your attention to the well known fact that a piece of iron will sink when placed in water Yet a needle can be made to float on water by means of the phenomenon of surface tension Raoul Hafner is the kind of pioneer who was sometimes near sinking, but remained afloat due to his own great personal surface tension It is, then, my very great pleasure, on behalf of the American Helicopter Society, to present the Dr Alexander Klemm Award to you, Mr Hafner ”

#### MR RAOUL HAFNER

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen What am I to say ? My vocabulary does not contain words adequately to express my great appreciation of the honour which the American Helicopter Society has conferred upon me in the presentation of the Dr Alexander Klemm Award

This award, I understand, is for lifetime achievement, but, ladies and gentlemen, that does not, in fact, fit my case On the contrary, my lifetime experience in the venture of helicopters has been one of perpetual ups and downs few ups and many downs Perhaps I come nearest to the point

I wish to make if I say that the experience seems like that of a fatigue specimen being subjected to repeated reversals in the fullest sense of the word It is indeed fatiguing, and a severe test on the endurance of the fibre

If you will bear with me for a minute, I will outline briefly the history of the helicopter as I see it , and for this, if I may, I will borrow the words of a great classic I have in mind Ovid in his song of the Four Ages, in which he says—

“ Aurea prima sata est ae tas, quae vindice nullo,  
“ Sponte sua sine lege fidem rectumque colebat  
“ Poena metusque aberant Nec verba minacia fixo  
“ Aere legebantur nec supplex turba timebant  
“ Judicis ora sui sed erant sine vindice tuti ”

If you will allow a free translation, I would suggest “ Golden was the first age, and the age knew no laws, no crimes, no fears, and no judges ”

Golden, indeed, ladies and gentlemen, was the first age of the helicopter it was an age of blissful ignorance Then came the second, the silver age, when we began to apply science and mathematics to our problems , but because of lack of a real understanding of these problems, science was often misapplied and frequently we obtained the exact mathematical solutions to the wrong problems rather than the approximate solutions to the right ones

Other ages followed, and now, in this modern age of the helicopter, we find our efforts harnessed by a surfeit of formulae and regulations, by the C A A and the A R B , by the Ministry of Supply and the Bureau of Aeronautics, by Wright Field and by Farnborough At present, substantial advance in rotating wing developments is only possible through the mighty channels of Government contracts and appropriations

It would appear that we have reached the iron age of central control on the grand scale

So, ladies and gentlemen, that is my song of the Four Ages of the helicopter

I come now to another and most important aspect of this award , it exists to honour the memory of Dr Alexander Klemm Dr Klemm was a great man, and I was fortunate to know him as a friend I recollect many most stimulating discussions with him, notably on one occasion in his home at Greenwich, in the Spring of 1947, when he remarked “ It is fairly obvious, Raoul, that the helicopter is born, but it has turned out to be a difficult, even a problem child, and we shall make a success of it only if we give it our whole attention, our life ”

Today, ladies and gentlemen, I repeat his words, “ We must give our life ” , and with this awareness I humbly and with the deepest pleasure accept your Dr Alexander Klemm Award

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On behalf of all Members we have much pleasure in placing on record our warmest congratulations and best wishes for Mr Hafner's continued success in the future