

The Vertical Flight Heritage Sites Program
Pratt & Whitney Canada
Longueuil, Québec
Remarks by Mike Hirschberg, AHS International

Welcome to the presentation of the second plaque in our Vertical Flight Heritage Sites Program.

AHS International is the world's only international technical society for engineers, scientists and leaders working to advance vertical flight technology. We bring together industry, academia and governments to tackle the toughest challenges in vertical flight. AHS International was founded in 1943 in Stratford, CT as the American Helicopter Society, just a few weeks after Sikorsky received its first quantity order for the XR-4 helicopter. Since then, AHS has been the primary forum for interchange of information on vertical flight technology. From promoting vertical flight research and development, to developing our next generation of engineers and scientists, to initiatives to reduce accidents and community noise, AHS helps lead the way.

The AHS International Vertical Flight Heritage Sites Program is intended to recognize and help preserve sites of the most noteworthy and significant contributions made in both the theory and practice of helicopter and other VTOL aircraft technology. AHS hopes to promote to the public, the rich history of the worldwide vertical flight community through this program.

We started the AHS Vertical Flight Heritage Sites Program last year with the recognition of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia - the site of the original 1937 Rotary Wing Aircraft Meeting - the world's very first technical conference on rotorcraft.

Knowing that our 70th Annual Forum would be held in Montreal, the AHS History Committee thought we should recognize the location of the most significant contribution to vertical flight in Canada. We could have recognized the site of the first helicopter flight or the first helicopter built in Canada. But neither of those sites had the legacy that would have qualified them. That is a key word - legacy. No other location in Canada has contributed more to advancing vertical flight in Canada than right here. For 68 years - almost as long as there has been a helicopter industry - Pratt & Whitney Canada has been a key contributor to it.

Allow me to read the citation for the award (in English):

On and near this site, Pratt & Whitney Canada has made tremendous contributions to the advancement of vertical flight. In 1946, the company became one of Canada's helicopter pioneers when it obtained the Canadian sales and service rights for helicopters made by Sikorsky, and later established one of Canada's first heliports and the country's first helicopter overhaul facility. In 1957, the company began developing its PT6 turboshaft engine, which has become one of the most prolific powerplants in the vertical flight industry. Together, the PT6T Twin-Pac, the PT6B and the PT6C, the PW200 and the PW210 have accumulated over 50 million flight hours.

To the employees of Pratt & Whitney Canada, past and present, thank you for all you have done - and continue to do every day - to advance vertical flight.