

US COAST GUARD AIRCRAFT

Sikorsky S-55/H-19

Aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky's company is probably best known for its post World War II helicopters. What is arguably Sikorsky's most important helicopter, the S-55, made its first flight on November 7, 1949. The S-55 carried a crew of two pilots and up to 12 passengers. The flight crew compartment is situated above the 700 horsepower Wright R-1300-3 engine, which allows speeds of 100 mph (163 kph). Large fuel tanks under the floor enable long, multi-hour flights.



Over 1,000 S-55s were produced for military use, several hundred were built for commercial customers, and still more were license-built by Westland in England as the Whirlwind. Marine Corps S-55s participated in major assaults and troop supply missions during the Korean War (1950–53). Civil versions were the first helicopters to be used by commercial services in Europe in 1952–53 and, soon after, by American carriers.

This S-55 is restored to its original colors as a Coast Guard HO4S as seen in the archival photographs from the U.S. Coast Guard. It was flown at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, New York and was used to test experimental flotation devices. The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum acquired this aircraft in 2006 and it can be seen exhibited on the flight deck.

Sikorsky HH-52 Sea Guardian

In 1962, the U.S. Coast Guard selected a modified version of the Sikorsky commercial model S-62 (first flown in 1958) as a replacement for its HH-34 helicopters for search-and-rescue operations. How good was this modified S-62, now known as the HH-52? It has the distinction of having rescued more people than any other helicopter in the world!

The HH-52 was the Coast Guard's first turbo-shaft helicopter. It flies at 104 mph (167 kph) and has a range of 350 miles (503 kilometers). It also featured a watertight boat-hulled shape with two outrigger floats that contained retractable landing gear, making the Sea Guardian fully amphibious.



This particular aircraft is painted as one that was stationed at Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, New York and was donated to the museum by the U.S. Coast Guard. It is displayed on the flight deck.