

APRIL 2024

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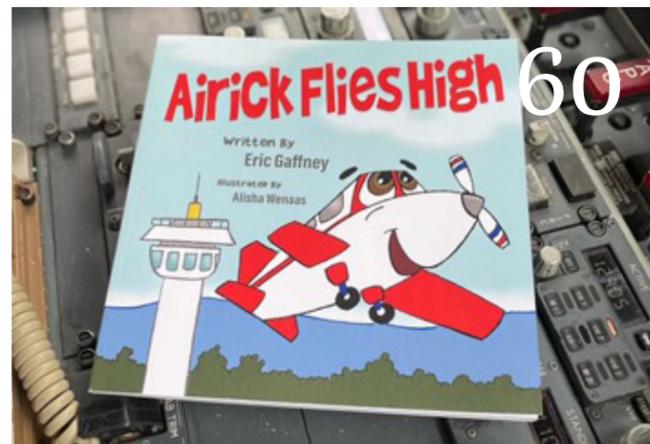
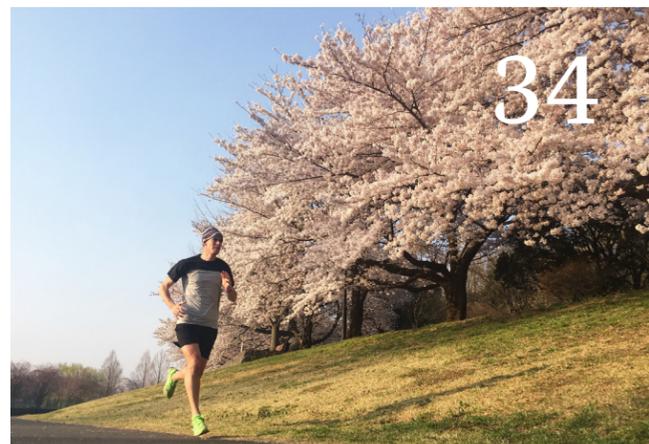
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APRIL 2024

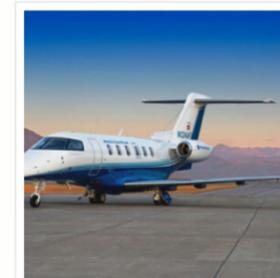
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BY CLICKING ON THE TITLE OR PHOTO.



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PlaneSense, Inc

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JetBlue Airways

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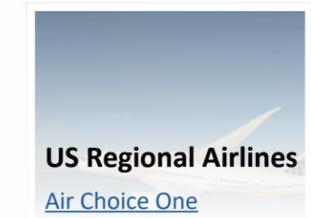
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The Grid (contract comparisons, pay charts, company details, etc.) has moved online. Click on the airlines above to go directly to that airline's information, or go to [www.AeroCrewNews.com/go/thegrid](http://www.AeroCrewNews.com/go/thegrid).



# Dear readers,

The voting for our 2024 Photo Contest has started! The fifteen finalists have been chosen and we are ready for final selection. This year's theme is "vintage aircraft" which we have defined as any aircraft no longer in production. The photographers who submitted entries and the staff of Aero Crew News are counting on you to participate. Follow the link to select your favorite photo! ([www.aerocrewnews.com/photo-contest-2024](http://www.aerocrewnews.com/photo-contest-2024)) Voting will remain open until April 15th. Vote early but only once. You're being tracked!

Aero Crew News would like to individually thank and recognize each of our sponsors for this year's photo contest. Our Titanium Sponsor is GoJet Airlines, the Gold Sponsor is Envoy, and Bronze Sponsors are PSA Airlines and Airline Transition Manual.

We also wish the best of luck to our top 15 entries and appreciate the submissions from those who did not place among the top picks. Watch this space for the announcement for our next photo contest. Keep those shutters busy!

Fly Safe,

*Craig D. Pieper*

Craig D. Pieper



## About the Publisher ✈️

**Craig Pieper** is the Publisher and Founder of Aero Crew News. Craig obtained his Bachelors of Science in Aeronautical Science, along with a minor in Aviation Weather, from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 2001. Craig is also a captain for a major airline with a type rating in the Boeing 737 & Embraer 145 and has logged over 8,000 hours of flying time since his introductory flight on November 14th, 1992.



## March 2024

### What you may have missed in March

**Feature** – Envoy Air, the largest American Airlines regional carrier, might be right for you.

**Fitness** – Are you the strong, silent type or the strong, shout-it-loud-and-proud type?

**Food Bites** – Home Sweet Home on Grand Turk is a gem off the beaten path.

**Grey Matter** – Part 3 in a series about disaster striking at home while you're on a trip.

**Knowledge Base** – Convective activity is coming – "weather" we like it or not.

**Love Flying** – French Polynesia is worth the trip if relaxation in beauty matters.

**Money** – Lyrics in a Tim McGraw song make sense where your wealth is concerned.

**Perspectives** – Those NTSB reports provide valuable intel.



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**Aviator Bulletins**  
Provided by the companies listed

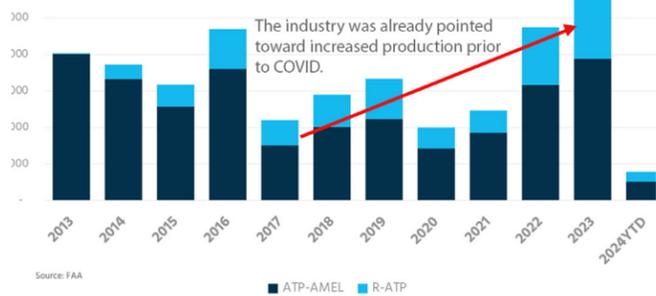
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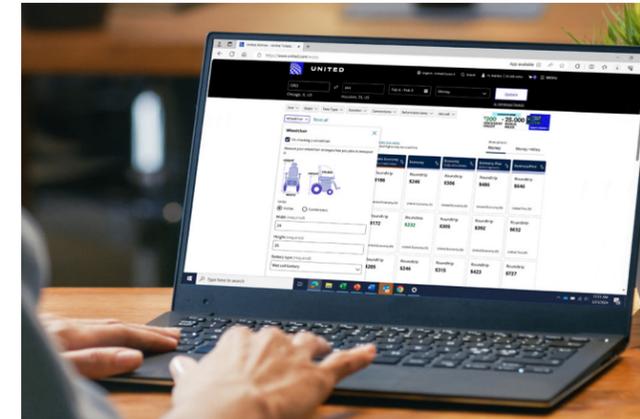
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Edith Duran

Full Year ATP-MELs Reach 11,225 for 2023



## Pilot Production Remains Strong as Demand Slows

As Congress continues work on the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which is now on its third short-term extension that expires on May 10, the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) urged caution in making arbitrary changes to the safest aviation system in the world. [Read More](#)



## United Makes It Easier for Customers Who Use Wheelchairs to Book Flights That Can Accommodate Their Personal Device

United Airlines has launched a new digital tool on its app and united.com that makes it easier for customers who use wheelchairs to find flights that can best... [Read More](#)



## Alaska Airlines welcomes STARLUX Airlines to Seattle, our hometown airport

Atlas Air Inc., a subsidiary of Atlas Air Worldwide Holdings, Inc., a leading global provider of outsourced aviation logistics, today announced the expansion of its strategic partnership with YunExpress... [Read More](#)



## A Glimpse of the Future – airBaltic Tests SpaceX’s Starlink Internet

The Latvian airline airBaltic announces it has conducted an initial test of SpaceX’s Starlink internet connectivity system onboard its Airbus A220-300 aircraft. The ground test was conducted at the airline’s home base in Riga... [Read More](#)



## Atlas Air and YunExpress Expand Strategic Partnership with Second Boeing 777-200 Freighter

Delta will add service from Boston (BOS) to Honolulu (HNL) and from Seattle (SEA) to Miami (MIA) next winter, reinforcing the airline’s leading position in BOS and connecting MIA customers to all nine of Delta’s U.S. hubs. [Read More](#)



## FedEx Pilots Elect New Master Executive Council Chair

The FedEx Master Executive Council (MEC) of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) today announced it has elected Capt. Jose Nieves, a 28-year FedEx pilot, as the new MEC chair to lead their pilot group. [Read More](#)



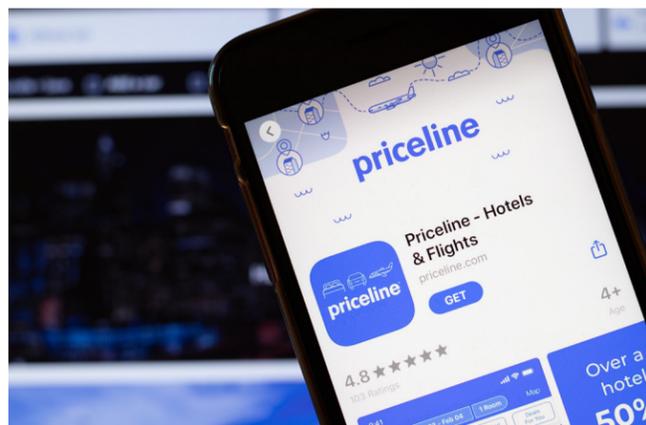
Breeze Airways Announces 5 New Cities: Bangor, Dallas/Fort Worth, Lancaster, Lansing and Pensacola; Also Debuts Co-Branded Credit Card and Loyalty Program

**B**reeze Airways, the U.S.' only NLCC, or 'Nice Low Cost Carrier,' is announcing five new cities with service from Bangor, ME [Read More](#)



United Becomes First Airline to Add New, Larger Overhead Bins to Embraer E175 Aircraft

**U**nited Airlines announced today that it is installing new, larger overhead bins on its Skywest operated Embraer E175 fleet that will provide more room for passengers' roll aboard carry-on bags. [Read More](#)



Priceline Takes Flight as Breeze Airways' First-Ever OTA Partner

**N**orwalk, CT and Salt Lake City, UT — Today Priceline, the iconic innovator of online travel, and Breeze Airways, the U.S.' Seriously Nice™ NLCC, or 'Nice Low Cost Carrier,' announced a first-to-market partnership. Priceline is the first online travel agency (OTA) to establish a direct API connection...[Read More](#)



First look: Delta employees preview new uniform prototypes

**A**fter more than a year and a half of development and design, Delta employees are getting a first look at prototypes of an all-new, modern and "distinctly Delta" uniform collection... [Read More](#)



FedEx Pilots Respond to Q3 Earnings Amid Ongoing Labor Issues

**F**edEx Corporation reported stronger-than-expected earnings for the third quarter of 2024, but not without committing once again to buy back millions in stock in the current quarter. As FedEx continues to help its margin by measures including parking aircraft and reducing flight hours... [Read More](#)



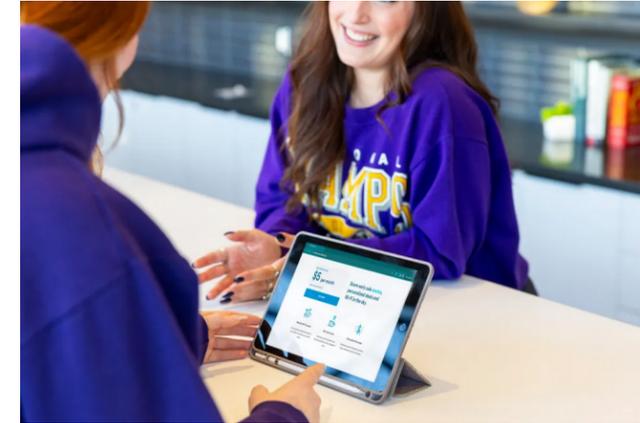
United Makes it Easier to Share Award Miles with Family and Friends

**J**ust in time for summer travel planning, United today launched MileagePlus miles pooling – a new way for MileagePlus members to contribute and combine their miles into a joint account. Available on United.com, groups of up to five members can now share and redeem miles in one linked account. [Read More](#)



Alaska Airlines deepens commitment to Bay Area with new nonstop service between Santa Rosa/Sonoma County and Las Vegas

**A**laska Airlines is deepening its commitment to the San Francisco Bay Area with convenient, nonstop service between California's wine...[Read More](#)



Introducing Alaska Access: A new subscription service by Alaska Airlines to save on travel planning and costs

**A**laska Airlines is launching a new subscription program for savvy, price-conscious guests that will save them time and money throughout the year. [Read More](#)



Contract Extended for CommuteAir CEO

**C**ommuteAir, a leading regional airline, announced it has extended President and CEO Rick Hoefling's tenure through 2028 in an amended contract approved by its Board of Directors. [Read More](#)



Embraer showcases the C-390 Millennium and A-29 Super Tucano at inaugural visit to Melbourne, Florida

**E**mbraer hosted the C-390 Millennium and A-29 Super Tucano of the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) on March 18 and 19, marking a significant event for both aircraft as they made their inaugural visit to the area. [Read More](#)



FedEx Express Pilots Will Conduct Informational Picket on Wall Street

**F**edEx Express pilots, represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), will conduct an informational picket in front of the New York Stock Exchange to demonstrate their frustration.. [Read More](#)



airBaltic Continues Expansion from the Baltics – Adds Three New Routes

**T**he Latvian airline airBaltic has announced a further expansion from the Baltics by adding three new routes – Riga–Madeira (Portugal), Tallinn–Kittilä (Finland) and Vilnius–Oslo Torp (Norway) – for the upcoming winter season that will start... [Read More](#)



Frontier Announces New Service on Several Routes Starting in May and June, Including a Return to Newark, the Airline's First Operation from New York-JFK, and First International Route from Phoenix

**U**ltra-low fare carrier Frontier Airlines will launch nonstop service on several new routes in May and June. [Read More](#)



John and Martha King outlast Nixon, Rubik, Skylab and sideburns: King Schools celebrates its 50th birthday

**I**n 1974, Richard Nixon was President, Erno Rubik invented his eponymous puzzle cube, US astronauts were orbiting earth on the nation's first space station Skylab,... [Read More](#)



AeroGuard Flight Training Center Announces Partnership with China Airlines to Train Cadet Pilots

**A**eroGuard Flight Training Center, an industry leader in ab initio pilot training, is proud to announce a new partnership with Taiwan-based China Airlines. This significant agreement marks a pivotal milestone for AeroGuard [Read More](#)



It's official: Alaska Airlines technicians vote YES on new contract

**A**laska Airlines' aircraft maintenance technicians, maintenance controllers and other employees who support aircraft maintenance and are represented by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) have ratified a new five-year contract. [Read More](#)



ATSG Delivers Additional Boeing 767 Freighter TO DHL

**A**ir Transport Services Group, Inc. today announced that it has commenced a new lease agreement with DHL Network Operations (USA), Inc. under which ATSG's Cargo Aircraft Management (CAM) has leased a 767-300 freighter aircraft to DHL to operate within DHL's global network. [Read More](#)



FedEx Pilot Leadership Responds to Inflammatory Statements

**T**he FedEx Master Executive Council (MEC), represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), issued the following statement today regarding the spread of misinformation by corporate executives and the accusation that FedEx pilot leadership is divided in their quest for a new collective bargaining agreement. [Read More](#)



### Frontier Airlines Opens Crew Base at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport

Ultra-low fare carrier Frontier Airlines today celebrated the opening of a new crew base at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. Frontier Airlines representatives, along with Cleveland Director of Port Control... [Read More](#)



### Frontier Airlines Introduces New UpFront Plus Seating with a Guaranteed Empty Middle Seat for Added Personal Space and Comfort

Ultra-low fare carrier Frontier Airlines today announced the introduction of UpFront Plus, a new upgraded seating option with extra space and comfort in the first two rows... [Read More](#)



### Embraer's E2 Cleared For ETOPS-120 Operations

São José dos Campos, Brazil – Embraer has secured 120 minute extended twin-engine operations (ETOPS) approval for the E190-E2 and E195-E2 from the Brazil's Civil Aviation Authority ANAC... [Read More](#)



### airBaltic Continues Growth Path – Passenger Numbers Up 19%

During today's investor call, Martin Gauss, President and CEO of the Latvian airline airBaltic, along with the Board Members – CFO Vitolds Jakovļevs and COO Pauls Cālītis – presented the company's financial results of Q3 and the first nine months of 2023. [Read More](#)



### JetBlue Flights to the Emerald Isle Taking Off Today

JetBlue announced it has expanded its transatlantic offerings with new, nonstop flights taking off from New York and Boston today. Daily summer-seasonal service from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) to Dublin Airport (DUB)... [Read More](#)



### United Raises Miles for Girls Scouts of the USA to Help Inspire the Next Generation of Leaders

This March, in celebration of International Women's Day and Girl Scouts' 112th birthday, United is encouraging MileagePlus® members to donate miles to Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) to help fund life-changing experiences... [Read More](#)



## Remembering Capt. David E. Harris

**A**merican Airlines CEO Robert Isom issued the following statement following the passing of Capt. David E. Harris. “We are deeply saddened by the passing of Capt. David E. Harris, a trailblazer in aviation who became the first Black commercial airline pilot when he was hired by American Airlines in 1964...”

[Read More](#)



## United Airlines Update on Pilot Hiring

**A**ero Crew News has learned from Marc Champion, VP Flight Operations and Kirk Limacher, VP Flight Ops Planning and Development at United, that due to continued new aircraft certification and manufacturing delays at Boeing, the airline will slow the pace of new-pilot hires, which includes the pause of new-hire classes during May and June. They expect classes to resume in July. [Read More](#)



## Allied Pilots Association: “Perceived Pilot Shortage is Over”

**T**he Allied Pilots Association (APA), representing the 16,000 pilots of American Airlines, cited the slowdown in hiring as further evidence that the U.S. pilot supply is sufficient to meet forecast demand and that the mandatory retirement age for pilots should stand at 65. [Read More](#)



## United Continues to Expand Global Network; Introduces Three New International Destinations and Four New Flights

**T**oday United announced it is expanding its leading global route network, adding new non-stop flights between New York/Newark-Marrakesh, Morocco; Tokyo/Narita-Cebu, Philippines and... [Read More](#)



## FedEx Pilots Request Release from the National Mediation Board

**M**arch 8th, the FedEx Express pilots, represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), filed a request with the National Mediation Board (NMB) to be officially released from mediation. [Read More](#)



## airBaltic Expands in Vilnius, Adds Two More Routes for Summer 2024

**V**ilnius. The Latvian airline airBaltic has announced a further expansion in Vilnius by adding two more routes – to Lisbon (Portugal) and Hamburg (Germany) – to its upcoming summer schedule from the Lithuanian capital. [Read More](#)



Breeze Airways Now Offers Samuel Adams Boston Lager On All Flights; Celebrates New Partnership with Prize Giveaway Including Flights and Swag

**B**reeze Airways, the U.S.' only NLCC, or 'Nice Low Cost Carrier,' is now offering Samuel Adams Boston Lager... [Read More](#)



Spirit Pilots Reelect Union Officers

**T**he Spirit Airlines Master Executive Council (MEC) of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) today announced it has reelected its officers to lead the nearly 3,700 Spirit pilots for another term. [Read More](#)



American Airlines places orders for Airbus, Boeing and Embraer aircraft

**A**merican Airlines today announced orders for 260 new aircraft, including 85 Airbus A321neo, 85 Boeing 737 MAX 10 and 90 Embraer E175 aircraft. The orders also include options and purchase rights for an additional 193 aircraft. [Read More](#)



JetBlue Pilots to Move Forward with Negotiating their Next Contract

**I**n light of termination of the merger agreement between JetBlue Airways and Spirit Airlines, JetBlue Airways pilots, represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), announced their focus on negotiating a successor collective...[Read More](#)



American Airlines Places Order for up to 133 Embraer Aircraft

**S**ão José dos Campos, Brazil, March 4, 2024 – Embraer has secured a major order for 133 aircraft from American Airlines Group Inc. to meet domestic demand in the United States. American has placed a firm order with Embraer for 90 E175s, with purchase rights for 43 additional jets. [Read More](#)



A Blue Debut: JetBlue and Empire State Development Commemorate Rebranded Terminal 5 Skywalk at New York's JFK Airport

**J**etBlue and Empire State Development marked a significant milestone yesterday as they unveiled the newly rebranded Skywalk at John F. Kennedy International... [Read More](#)



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## PROFESSIONAL PILOTS OF TOMORROW

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Professional Pilots of Tomorrow is a mentor program comprised of volunteers and designed to assist up-and-coming pilots make informed decisions regarding which regional airline will best suit their needs.

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## Know What Everyone Else Is Paying Negotiate a Better Compensation Package

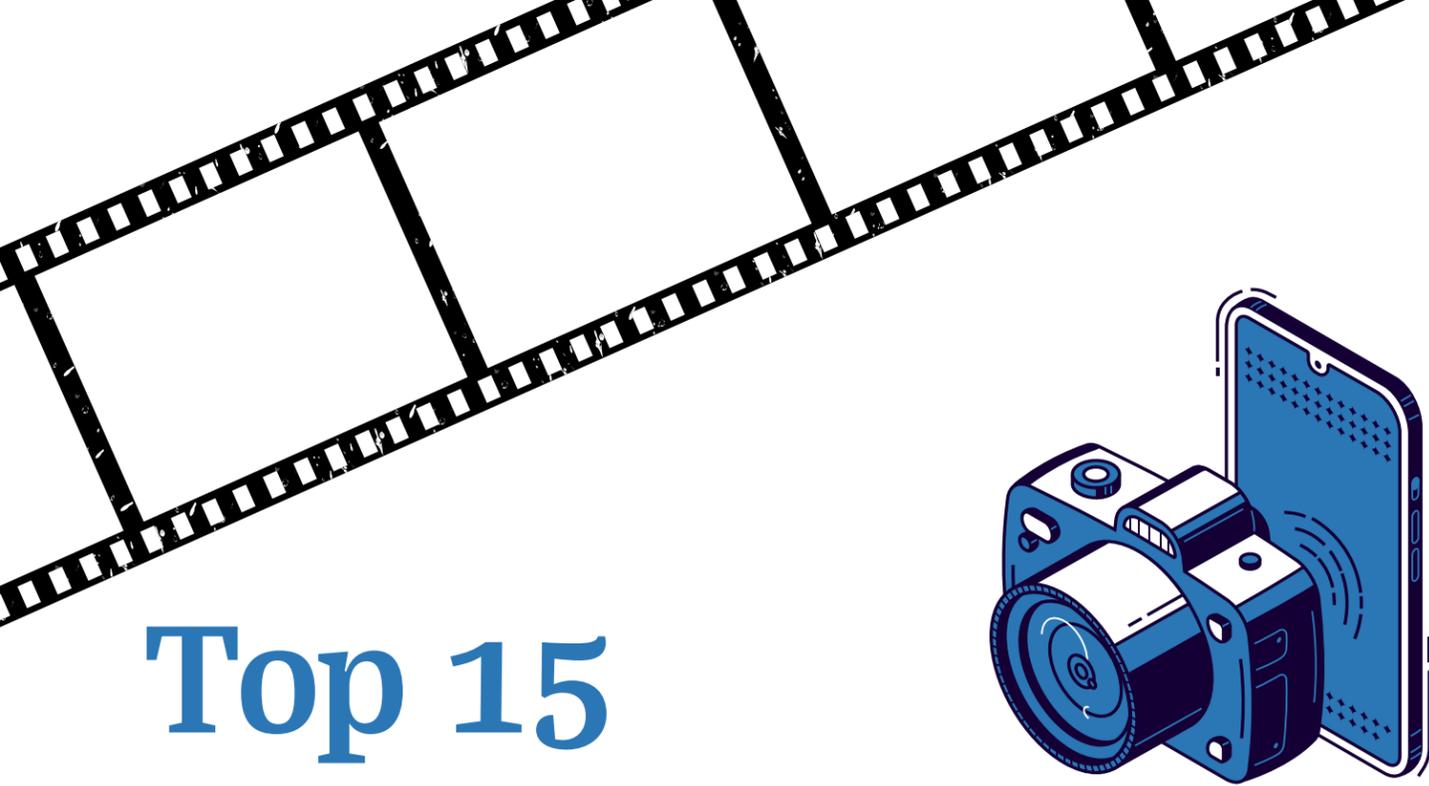
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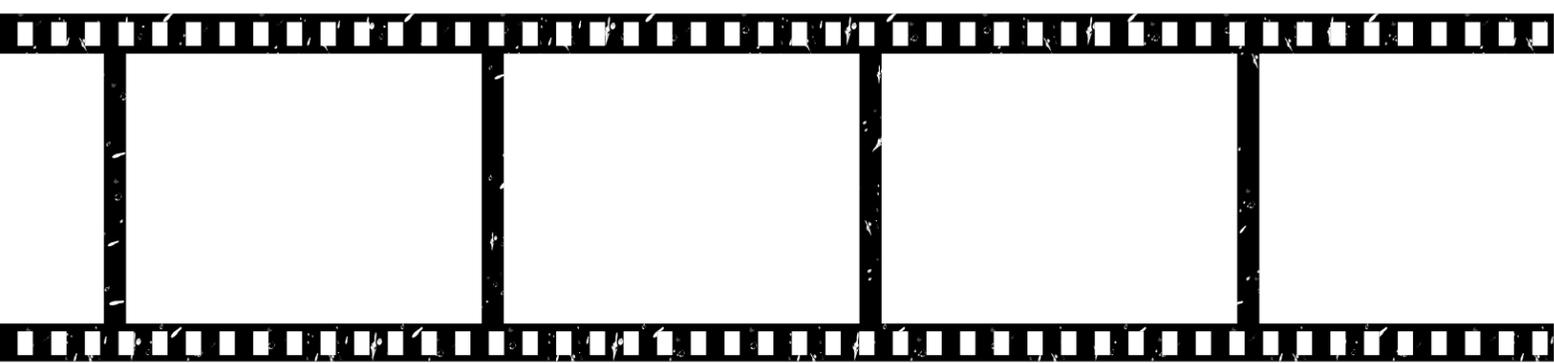
# Top 15 AERO CREW NEWS 2024 Photo Contest

## Theme: Vintage Aircraft

To take a closer look at the photo submissions and VOTE for your favorite photo, please visit

[aerocrewnews.com/photo-contest-2024](http://aerocrewnews.com/photo-contest-2024)

## Voting Ends April 15<sup>th</sup>



### Enduring the Storm: C-118 Stands Strong

PHOTO BY TODD K.



McGuire Air Force Base boasts numerous iconic static exhibits, among them the C-118, a military iteration of the DC-6 renowned for its pressurized cabin, enabling increased passenger capacity and enhanced efficiency in flight. As a formidable thunderstorm loomed overhead one evening, I parked along the roadside, awaiting a safe moment to venture out for a long exposure, eager to capture the backdrop of electrifying lightning. The resultant image encapsulates this endeavor."

### The C-118 Weathers the Storm

PHOTO BY TODD K.



McGuire Air Force Base proudly houses various notable static displays, including the C-118, a military variant of the DC-6 famed for its pressurized cabin, facilitating greater passenger capacity and improved flight efficiency. Amidst a vast thunderstorm engulfing the night sky, I waited by the roadside, biding my time until I deemed it safe to venture out for a long exposure, hopeful of capturing the mesmerizing backdrop of lightning. The resulting photograph encapsulates this endeavor.

### Rural Alaskan Lifeline

PHOTO BY PATRICK S.



1/9/19 Everts Air Fuel, Noatak AK. Taken on my first shift of my first flying job as a FO with Hageland Aviation and this was the first time I had experienced -40 degrees (C/F). You can see #1 is still running keeping the aircraft warm as they pump essential stove oil for the village of Noatak. Photo taken with a 1+ 5 phone.

### Goose Landing

PHOTO BY CARL M.



Airplane spotting on lake Hood late summer of 2023, caught this beautiful bird in my lense.

### “Betty”, a 1943 Stearman waiting on the fog to clear.

PHOTO BY JEREMY B.



Taken at the Rockport Aransas County Airport, where she taught military aviators to fly 80 years ago

Vintage Air Tours flies this airplane and others to offer unique flying experiences and share this history behind these vintage machines, as well as to share the stories of those who operated them in their glory days. We are based in Rockport, TX.

### Paradise Found

PHOTO BY DUSTIN B.



Flying the Cessna 172 has been my absolute favorite, even when compared to flying the CH-47 and the 737. It’s what initially sparked my passion for aviation and got me into flying. There’s just something about the Cessna 172 that holds a special place in my heart. The feeling of being in control and soaring through the sky in that aircraft is truly unparalleled. It’s where my aviation journey began, and it will always have a special significance to me.

### B-29 ‘DOC’ lifting out of Tucson International Airport

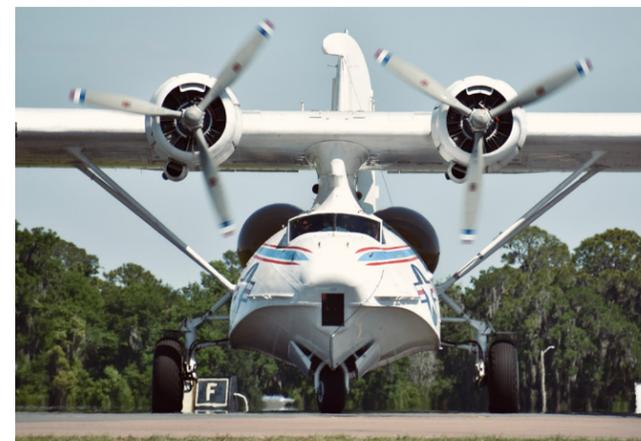
PHOTO BY RICKY M.



I was at Tucson International Airport at a spot that other fellow plane spotters have spotted at so I decided to try taking photos at that spot myself and got this shot!

### Master of the Sea and Air: PBV Catalina

PHOTO BY BRANDON M.



This was taken during Sun N Fun 2022. This was my first ever airshow and was one my greatest experiences in aviation. I also was able to see many of my favorite military aircraft, especially the one in the photo, the Catalina.

### Ascot404 Thunders into Portsmouth!

PHOTO BY LUCAS R.



This is a shot that makes me count my lucky stars that I live so close to an Air National Guard base with a heavy RAF presence. This is my favorite shot from since I’ve started planespotting, and for good reason. 2023 brought a lot of military action into KPSM - being so close to the East Coast shoreline, it’s an ideal stopover for refueling before or after a Transatlantic journey. We saw a lot of RAF traffic over the summer, just like the one pictured. I got the call a couple of hours before this A400 arrived, and I made my way out. Something inside me just said “you have a sidelong shot, why not try something different?” So that’s what I did. I positioned myself under the localizer bars, and just waited. I heard the familiar buzz of a turboprop, and thought “I need a shorter lens”. I ran to my car to get my short lens, and saw the plane in the distance. I ran back to my spot and got myself situated again. Then, out of nowhere, it appeared, blowing away leaves and everyone’s hair. Time slowed down for a moment as I lined up my shot - all I heard for the next 10 seconds was shutters clicking. And then it was over. I checked my camera, did I get any good shots? You bet I did.



### Lucky Liz

PHOTO BY SCOTT P.

I flew one of the only private BAE-146 in the US. She was named Lucky Liz and flying so slow was never more fun. This picture was taken on the ramp in Gunnison, Colorado.

### The most perfect 120

PHOTO BY SADA W.



This is a photo of a 120 that my dad and I restored. I decided to sell it and this photo was taken New Year's Day 2023 in Faribault, MN awaiting the buyer to arrive.

### Good Morning Montana

PHOTO BY ROB G.



Great Falls MT. Had been there overnight and thought the light was right for a good picture the next morning. No setup required.

### Vintage 767 Departure

PHOTO BY JACOB E.

I was jumpseating out of CVG behind one of the oldest 767's still in service (operated by ABX) with a fresh coat of paint. Thought it'd make for an interesting photo.



### Nearby wildfires created an apocalyptic looking morning as the Dash-7 is being loaded for departure

PHOTO BY COURTNEY R.



The mighty de Havilland Dash-7, on an early morning, loading up to deliver an essential load of supplies to a remote northern community. Deadly and destructive wildfires occurred all over Canada this year and were especially bad in the Northwest Territories. Shot in Yellowknife, NWT Canada. Air Tindi operates in mainly in the far north of Canada serving many isolated and remote communities. Most of these places do not have roads and rely on air transport for everything (groceries, construction supplies, medical needs, etc). Tindi operates the largest remaining fleet of Dash-7s, an aircraft well known for its fantastic STOL performance.



### A PSA Bombardier CRJ-900LR posing in front of the US Capitol building while flaring for runway 33 at KDCA.

PHOTO BY CASPER W.

I was at daingerfield Island When I photographed N549NN posing in front of the US Capitol building. I practically waited 8 hours for this shot. I did nothing all day but stand on the boardwalk in the burning sun and photograph every single arrival I could landing at DCA on this very day.

Photo entries have been cropped to fit, please visit [our voting page](#) to see the full photos and vote for your favorite.



# How I Learn About Flying Outside the Cockpit

WRITTEN BY: JOHN McDERMOTT

I recently took a new job as a flight instructor in central Florida. The company I work for, besides providing instruction, also provides FBO and airport management services at a small county-owned airport. Even in the short time I've been with the company, I've learned a lot about managing aircraft, both local and transient, and airports. Plus, I have been able to learn about flying by performing seemingly mundane tasks around the office.

One of the best ways to do that has been through conversations with operations workers at the airport. These employees know

a lot about aviation through not only working the ramp, but also by meeting transient pilots who take on fuel, picking up passengers, or renting a crew car for a few hours. They provide meaningful insights that help me expand my own understanding of the aviation industry and flying.

Making similar connections becomes easier when I'm not flying. Without stepping foot in an airplane, I can grow by meeting with pilots as they travel through the airport in their own aircraft. Whether operating multi-engine, turbine aircraft or single-engine, piston

planes, the professional and amateur pilots offer a new perspective that add to my "flight bag" and bring with me to a new scenario.

Equally interesting is to learn about the business side of aviation from fellow flight instructors who have a hand in running the company. Years of running a flight school – not only instructing but also meeting with students who are learning with other instructors, developing training curricula, and picking the best aircraft to use for training – illuminate insights that you cannot learn just from teaching. As I have begun work for the first time, I note that this wisdom has been passed down through the hiring and onboarding processes I experienced.

It is convenient that many of the business leaders I have met at my school either have or are connected to people who have decades of experience in the cockpit. I can ask endless questions about teaching and flying and grow myself through what I learn. Making these connections is critical and would not have happened without access to people in various sectors of the aviation industry.

I can't overlook mentioning the mechanics and maintenance technicians who work on local aircraft. I can speak to them when I have questions about the aircraft I fly. Being able to interact with my aircraft in a new, hands-on way does wonders to help me connect to concepts I learned on paper from the Pilot's Operating Handbooks that depict and describe the aircraft's physical structures. Through these individuals, I am making connections

that I otherwise might not. This networking enriches my flying and makes me a safer, more well-rounded pilot and flight instructor.

Of course, a variety of flight schools can provide a range of opportunities that might not be found otherwise. I have encountered schools that will take students to air traffic control towers to meet with familiar voices and learn about another side of aviation. Club meetings and aviation-interest organizations can provide a deeper dive into a particular topic that may not otherwise be accessible. Even well used social media has connected me with experienced, knowledgeable pilots and instructors whom I have been able to turn to with questions and concerns about my path forward.

Simply being present at the airport without meeting with students can bring me and my career great benefit. If I were not there, I would lose out on many opportunities to meet new people, see new things, and even interface with new students who will eventually help me grow in some way. Whether it be through attending talks and special events or simply striking up a conversation with someone nearby, I have found that there are many ways to continue growing and learning as I pursue my career.



## About the Author

**John McDermott's** passion for aviation began in a Michigan bookstore when he found a story about a chance encounter between enemy pilots during World War II. Soon, after watching countless hours of fighter jets and traffic from his home near O'Hare International Airport, he was hooked forever. [Read More...](#)



# Reflections on the Pilot Shortage

WRITTEN BY: CHRISTOPHER M. BROYHILL, PH.D., CAM

Over the last few months, the major airlines' formerly frantic pace of pilot hiring seems to have eased somewhat. United recently paused its hiring due to aircraft delivery delays. American, Southwest and Delta have all indicated they will hire fewer pilots in 2024, although American has stated it will continue to need about 1,300 pilots per year for the foreseeable future (Maharishi, 2024). But what does this mean from a big-picture perspective? Are these occurrences mere anecdotes, or are they indicators of a significant change in pilot demand? I've been asked variations on this question many times over the last few months, and several people who are considered authorities on hiring and retention have opined that the demand for pilots is waning.

I don't agree.

First of all, I've seen many articles in industry publications and posts on social media (primarily LinkedIn) that dispute whether a pilot shortage ever existed in the first place. Airline unions lead the charge here, saying there is a pay shortage,

not a pilot shortage, and plenty of pilots for the jobs that pay well. Keep in mind that these are the same organizations that have negotiated pay increases of 32% to 46% for their respective airlines, so it literally pays for them to have that attitude. My opinion is fueled by the concept of supply and demand, straight from Econ 101. If a particular commodity is in demand, the supply of that commodity is limited and the price for it increases. From 2022 to 2023, pilot compensation increased by an average of 12%, according to the NBAA Compensation Survey (NBAA, 2023). That's more than twice the increase for all private-industry workers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That tells me pilots are in demand and the supply of them is limited. The numbers don't lie.

But, when it comes to the state of pilot demand, we need to keep in mind that none of the basic conditions that created this state have changed:

- 1) Airlines are still hiring, and some are expanding their fleets. Keep in mind that the recent record demand was largely fueled by the airlines having to replace the pilots they offered early retirement to or furloughed during the COVID-19 slowdown.
- 2) Boomers, the oldest and still the largest age demographic in aviation, will retire in droves over the next five years, creating empty seats to fill.
- 3) The military, which used to be the largest source of trained pilots, is far smaller than it was during the Cold War and will never produce pilots at the levels it did previously.
- 4) Civilian flight training remains expensive, and the prices are only increasing. Although it will take less time to pay off training costs than it did previously, thanks to higher pilot compensation, a candidate still needs to be able to front the funds for their training, and that can often be well into six figures.

- 5) Airline ab initio programs will not generate the output necessary to fill the gaps.

According to the latest version of the Boeing Pilot and Technician Outlook, the commercial fleet will grow 3.5% in 2024, and 649,000 new pilots will be needed over the next twenty years, the majority in Eurasia, China, and North America (Boeing, 2024). The study goes on to predict that the industry has "insufficient training capacity to support (this) significant personnel shortage" and "(t)o support the recovery and growth driven by the expansion of global fleets, the aviation industry will need a long-term strategy that addresses upcoming labor challenges" (Boeing, 2024).

In short, while the airlines' demand for pilots may have tapered from the immediate post-pandemic high, the long-term steady demand that we were seeing pre-pandemic is still strong and expected to remain so.

On the business aviation side, in 2024, deliveries from the top-five OEMs are forecast to increase from 575 in 2023 to 670, surpassing the 652 new aircraft delivered in 2019. Leading this growth are new aircraft like the Gulfstream G700 and Falcon 6X (Lynch, 2024). These new aircraft will require pilots to fly them, and if we presume at least one crew per new aircraft, that's a minimum of 1,440 seats to fill. The pilots will have to come from somewhere, and since new aircraft typically require more experienced crews, the likely place is from another operator. According to the 2023 edition of the Gallagher Aviation Compensation Survey, 49% of the respondent organizations had sustained some pilot turnover, with the majority of those operators losing personnel to either another operator or the major airlines (Gallagher, 2023). Interestingly, 12% of the losing organizations had pilots resign so they could retire, indicating that business aviation has its own retirement issues.

From an anecdotal perspective, there is rarely a day that goes by where I don't see multiple position ads from aviation recruiters or management companies looking for pilots to staff new or existing accounts. In concert with those ads, I've seen extremely high demand for individual AirComp Calculator reports, usually purchased by those considering a new position.

In short, I don't think the demand for pilots will significantly lessen any time soon, both in the commercial sector and in business aviation. Apart from a post-pandemic level set, none of the other conditions causing that demand have changed. Correspondingly, wage pressure for pilots in business aviation will continue to exist,

and compensation levels will continue to be pushed higher. You may not like that, particularly if you're an aircraft owner or operator, but it is the current reality, and it will remain that way for the foreseeable future.

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About the Author ✈️

**Dr. Chris Broyhill** is an industry veteran with over 40 years in aviation. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1982, served with distinction for over 20 years in the Air Force and flew multiple aircraft. [Read More...](#)

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# New Season, New Attitude Toward You! Now what?

WRITTEN BY: ERIC RAY

**A**pril showers bring May flowers, and the tides turn toward full-blown spring with renewal, and of course, the cherry blossoms! I am often told by people seeking fitness or nutrition advice that they know what they should be doing, but they cannot determine where to begin. As you likely know, I am a huge proponent of movement (walk, run, swim, bike, etc.), lifting weights (good for bone density), and stretching (for muscle growth and recovery), but that's what you should do and it doesn't answer the question about how to begin. Let's look at steps and options.

## Consult a healthcare professional or nutritional counselor.



Prior to beginning any new fitness program or making a drastic change in diet, you should always check with your doctor. As aircrew members subject to pressurization changes more than the average person, it's important to have a thorough baseline health assessment. This is more than just your annual or semi-annual flight physical. If you haven't been overly active or want to make a change

in your fitness journey, start with guidance from your healthcare professional. The same is true for if you want to make dietary changes. Seek the advice of a nutrition counselor or dietician, and do not make drastic changes to your diet without doing research and getting advice from someone versed in the application of dietary needs.

## Enlist a personal trainer.



Most gyms/fitness centers have personal trainers onsite. While it may cost you a few dollars to have a one-on-one session with a personal trainer, having a coach walk you through a physical fitness assessment or show you options for what you are trying to achieve can be invaluable. Most gyms will even offer a free session to introduce you to the equipment they use and how to incorporate that into your program. But you must have the physical examination conducted by a doctor prior to meeting with a physical fitness expert or personal trainer. Only then can you have a discussion about your limits that will further inform your trainer.

## Conduct a physical fitness assessment.



There are several ways to conduct a physical fitness assessment. If you have the means and the time, you can have one done professionally. Likely, you can also have one conducted at your gym. Or you can use some variation of the military standards that vary

from branch to branch. (These can range from pushups, sit-ups, running, or some variety of strength exercises, stamina and cardio output.) I was fortunate enough to have had a VO2-max study conducted on a military base. With probes connected everywhere and a mask covering your mouth, you learn a lot about cardio output and various other nuances based on your own metabolism. Plus, it takes a long time – like a next-level elite athlete assessment. I only mention this to illustrate that there are a variety of ways to determine your baseline.

When it comes to aviation, we are subjected to major time-zone changes, operating at high altitudes in a pressurized vessel with limited access to proper nutrition, so finding a baseline health level is imperative to staying in aviation for the long haul. Remember, you're only one physical away from being grounded. Make the most of your career by controlling the things you can. Seek guidance from health professionals, nutritionists, wellness coaches and trainers.

I invite your comments and ideas for fitness topics we can address in this space. Write to me at [Ericray4470@gmail.com](mailto:Ericray4470@gmail.com).



### About the Author ✈️

**Eric Ray** is a certified personal trainer and nutrition coach. He is the co-creator of the Hii360 Coaching Method and current president of Hii360 Coaching. [Read More...](#)

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# Building Your Identity Outside of Being a Pilot

WRITTEN BY: REINI THIJSSSEN

Finally, you get to a career airline after years and many hours working as a flight instructor or a regional pilot. Who are you? What do you do? How are you? Chances are that you will bring up your work when answering these questions. Do you let your work determine how you feel and who you are? What if you derive your entire identity from your career? What if your professional identity determines everything? You want to avoid thinking about what happens if you are furloughed or retire. Who are you without your job?

Your job and career are essential parts of your identity, especially for pilots, traveling frequently, being away from home, surrounded by other pilots, having social support connected to your job, and even wearing a uniform. Society emphasizes that success depends on how well we do at our jobs. However, the work you do is only one of your various identities. We all have different identities and roles that consist of parts built up from personal and social elements. The

trap occurs when you associate your entire identity and self-worth with your work, and it becomes difficult to separate the idea of meaningful work from a meaningful life.

Many pilots experience a lack of accomplishment when it comes to career advancements. Often, they will reach the next career step, and rather than feeling pride in it, they look for the next step and feel a sense of unrest. Along the way, they have sacrificed a lot, increasing the chance that they over-identify themselves as pilots.

## Cons

When people invest a disproportionate amount of time and energy in their careers, the boundaries between work and private life can blur. This phenomenon is called “enmeshment,” a form of identity entanglement. Over-identification with work mainly happens to people who do not have a nine-to-five job and set their hours or have irregular hours.

Enmeshment can jeopardize your personal life and contacts unrelated to your job. It consumes one’s time and energy, leaving less opportunity for involvement in other hobbies and interests. This can make building connections with people outside of work more challenging.

Moreover, your self-esteem takes a big hit if you see your job as the defining part of your identity. Likely, the successes and setbacks within your career or the industry will directly impact your self-worth. Since the aviation

industry is consistently susceptible to change and affected by external factors, there is a likelihood that you will have to adjust your route and expectations as well. When you switch airlines or are furloughed, this can lead to an identity crisis.

## Test Yourself

Is your professional identity dominant? According to psychologist Janna Koretz, you can ask yourself the questions below to determine if you are too entangled with your job.

1. How often do you think about your job outside of work?
2. Do you frequently have work-related thoughts?
3. With others, is it challenging to participate in conversations that are not about your work?
4. How do you describe yourself? How much of this description is related to your position, title, or company?
5. Are there other ways you would describe yourself?
6. With people you just met, how quickly do you tell them about your job?
7. Where do you spend most of your time?
8. Has anyone ever complained to you about spending too much time at work?
9. Do you have any hobbies outside work that are not directly related to work-related skills and abilities?
10. Do you spend time training other parts of your brain?
11. How would you feel if you could no longer continue with your profession? How

difficult would this be for you?

If the answers to these questions cause concern that you are too enmeshed with your job, you can use some of the following steps to restore and change your self-esteem.

### 1. Develop Connections Unrelated to Work

Investing time in relationships with people who have nothing to do with your work life helps encourage you to develop interests, hobbies, and connections. Having other experiences can be very beneficial; this will help remind you of who you are regardless of professional setbacks or accomplishments. In addition, setting goals for dedicated time to develop these hobbies/interests/friendships is helpful.

### 2. Leave the Job at Work

It is okay to talk about work and vent frustrations. However, be mindful of how much time this consumes on your days off and how it affects your mood. A potential compromise is restricting yourself to half an hour after coming home or waiting until the day after to indulge in work-talk with your partner or friends, or participate in work-related forums. We need to get to a place of acceptance where we need to talk about work but also understand that too much is not helpful, especially when building an identity outside of flying.

### 3. Redefine Success

In today's society, we are conditioned to think that success equals money and status. But what does success mean to you? Having

more time with your family, living a fulfilled life, feeling comfortable in your skin, and making meaningful connections with others and ourselves can be other examples of success. Defining success by your values will undoubtedly shift how you view success and mental health. It is okay to derive part of your self-worth from professional achievements, after all, you have worked hard to reach this point in your career. However, success comes in many different forms, and your achievements in your personal life matter, too.

### 4. Reassess your Values

We all have our own unique set of values – things that we find important in life. Values are an essential part of our identity and remain mostly the same. Honesty, creativity, freedom, autonomy, and justice are examples of values. Sometimes, people lose sight of their primary values when life and day-to-day stressors get in the way. Therefore, it is essential to check in with yourself now and then. Has your loyalty to your flying career pulled you away from your core values? If so, reassess your values and let them drive your professional and personal goals again.

### 5. Exercise: Value Exploration

#### Step 1

Reflect on what you did and enjoyed doing when you were young. Grab a piece of paper and write about events and activities that fulfilled you in your childhood. If you write down five (or more) memories, you might recognize a pattern. More presently, what activities or moments gave you energy today? These can be big or small; for example, feeling

fulfilled and happy when you spend time outside with your partner or child. Write them down. Does this align with what you enjoyed when you were young? What choices have you made that aligned with your interests when you were young?

**Tip:** Seek out areas and activities that help bring clarity. For example, exercise, meditation, or spending time in nature can be helpful ways to gain new insights about yourself.

#### Step 2

Once you have written down memories and fulfilling moments, reflect on why those moments are valuable to you and which values align with them. Reflecting on your values can give direction to your life. Being true to your values gives you a higher purpose and helps you set priorities and fulfill goals.

### Ask Yourself These 5 Questions:

- What do I want my life to be about?
- What kind of relationships do I want to build?
- What do I find important?
- How do I feel most of the time?
- What kinds of situations make me feel truly alive?

#### Final thoughts

It is wonderful to be passionate about being a pilot. However, work should add meaning to your life, but work should not be the meaning of your life. If you feel that your professional identity is affecting your self-esteem and

overall well-being, it is time to reel it back. Keep a healthy dose of perspective by distinguishing between who you are and what you do. Remember that you exist out of more than your professional identity. You can seek a coach or therapist to help you explore various parts of your identity and implement changes.

Another way to further develop insight is by asking trusted friends to list your qualities and talents. In addition, online self-tests about values and identity are available, for example, Daniel Ofman's Core Quadrants. When you have a strong sense of self, you will gain more confidence, you will perform better in your different roles, and you will be able to live a more wholesome life.



#### About the Author ✈️

**Reini Thijssen** is a Mental Health Counselor and avid traveler. She moved to the United States from the Netherlands in 2019 to pursue a career in counseling. She is a writer for Aero Crew News and specializes in helping aerospace professionals. [Read More...](#)

### Resources

Why we define ourselves by our jobs - by Kate Morgan  
<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210409-why-we-define-ourselves-by-our-jobs>

What Happens When Your Career Becomes Your Whole Identity - by Janna Koretz  
<https://discboulevard.com/en/blogs/core-quadrant-by-daniel-ofman/>

# Five Considerations When Determining What to do With Your Thrift Savings Plan



WRITTEN BY: JASON REAGAN

A common question we receive from our former military clients is what to do with funds they have built up in their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Leaving funds in the TSP or rolling them into your 401k/IRA is a big decision and should not be taken lightly. There are many factors to consider, and we'll go through some of them here.

This is not meant to be an all-encompassing treatise on the best path for you, but it will give you some things to consider and discuss with your spouse or trusted financial planner. I personally made the decision to roll my TSP funds into my workplace 401(k) and have recently completed the process.

Before we consider some of these factors, it is important to note that many military personnel who served in a combat zone and received tax-exempt pay will have some additional complications with their TSP funds.

If you made traditional (pre-tax) TSP contributions with tax-exempt pay, those contributions are not taxed when withdrawn, however the earnings on those contributions are. These tax-exempt funds will be delineated in your TSP statement.

Until recently, leaving tax-exempt funds in the TSP or receiving a check were your only options as other custodians had no systems in place to track these tax-exempt, pre-tax contributions. However, it is now possible to roll these tax-exempt funds into a Roth 401K or Roth IRA.

If you made Roth (post-tax) contributions with tax-exempt pay it is treated the same as the rest of the balance since Roth contributions and earnings are always tax-free (assuming it's a qualified withdrawal).

Note: Personally, if Roth TSP was an option when I was receiving tax-exempt pay, I would have selected the Roth option without question.

**Below are five factors to consider when deciding what you should do with your TSP:**

## 1. The Annuity Option:

An important consideration is the annuity option. If you and your trusted advisor have determined that an annuity should be (or likely will be) a part of your financial plan, then you would want to evaluate the annuity option within the TSP before going a step further.

On my last year-end TSP statement, a Single Life annuity was available with a 7.7% payout rate, or for a Joint and Survivor annuity the payout rate was 6.6% (assuming age 67). You

would want to compare these options with other commercially available annuities.

## 2. The G-Fund:

There is an investment option available in the TSP that is not available anywhere else and that is the G-Fund. It is essentially a money market mutual fund on steroids. The treasury securities in the G-fund are specially issued to the TSP. The securities earn a long-term interest rate. However, they are redeemable on any business day with no risk to principal. If a large allocation to a money-market-type investment is part of your financial plan, then the G-fund may be an important consideration.

## 3. Investment Options and Expenses:

In the TSP there is a menu of five "core" funds (plus the target date options). The funds are all based on large, well-known indexes and are very inexpensive.

At one time the TSP had the lowest expense ratio funds available anywhere. That is not the case anymore as there are plenty of low-cost exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and mutual funds that compare or even beat the options within the TSP.

Additionally, an IRA or 401k offers a much broader universe of investments to choose from. However, if having hundreds of investment options seems daunting to you, then it is hard to beat the simplicity of the TSP.

#### 4. Withdrawals and Distributions:

There are four options for withdrawals from the TSP:

1. Partial distribution
2. Full distribution
3. Installment
4. Annuity purchase (discussed above)

With a partial distribution, you are limited to one every 30 days. In a 401k or IRA there is no such limitation. The full distribution is what I chose to do, and the installment option is basically a partial distribution that is automated (monthly). In general, I favor the distribution flexibility of the 401k or IRA.

#### 5. Simplicity:

Finally, an important factor in my decision to roll funds out of my TSP was simplicity. I wanted to have all my funds in one place where I have unlimited investment and distribution options and make it easier for my wife. The last thing I want is for my funds to

be scattered across multiple custodians and accounts if something were to happen to me.

My experience with rolling funds from my TSP was relatively seamless. I was able to roll all my pre-tax TSP funds into my workplace 401k and the tax-exempt funds discussed earlier rolled into my workplace Roth 401k.

These funds could have been rolled into traditional and Roth IRAs but having funds in a traditional IRA creates tax complexity (and probably a tax bill) when executing back-door Roth conversions. Be sure to consult your financial and/or tax advisor about these tax implications.

Warning: Be sure your chosen custodian will accept the tax-exempt funds before starting the process! I cannot emphasize this enough. Not all custodians will. I used Schwab, so I know they will allow the rollover of the tax-exempt portion of your TSP. The mechanics of doing the TSP rollover are beyond the scope of this article and it can be a little confusing but feel free to reach out to us and we can help walk you through it.

Hopefully, you found this article interesting and helpful. If you have any questions, contact our airline planning team at 865-240-2292 or email me at [Jason@leadingedgeplanning.com](mailto:Jason@leadingedgeplanning.com).

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#### About the Author

**Jason Reagan**, Originally from Annandale, Va., Jason earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Tennessee. [Read More...](#)

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# Understanding Mortgage Interest Rates

What Drives Them and What You Should Watch if You'll be in the Market

WRITTEN BY: SPENCER WARTMAN



**M**ortgage rates have been on a roller coaster for the last few years. From some of the lowest rates in history to the steepest jump in such a short time, it has not been boring to follow. Deciphering where rates are going has its challenges, but hopefully this article will help explain some variables that determine rates, what to watch for, and other things to consider. Whether you are a first-time buyer with a fresh CJO or looking to upgrade to a new property because of an upgrade, airline or domicile change, understanding what drives mortgage interest rates can potentially save you thousands of dollars over the life of your loan. By keeping an eye on certain indicators, you can make more informed decisions when it comes to securing the best rate for your mortgage. Here are some indicators that should help you decipher trends.

## The Federal Reserve and Monetary Policy

The Federal Reserve plays a crucial role in influencing mortgage rates. When the Fed raises

or lowers interest rates, it directly impacts the cost of borrowing for banks and lenders. Mortgage rates tend to follow the direction of the Fed's monetary policy. If the Fed raises interest rates to combat inflation or stimulate economic growth, mortgage rates are likely to increase. Conversely, if the Fed lowers rates to encourage borrowing and investment, mortgage rates may fall. The Fed's meeting calendars are helpful to have an idea when potential policy changes will occur.

## Economic Indicators

Keep an eye on key economic indicators such as GDP growth, unemployment rates, and inflation. A strong economy typically leads to higher mortgage rates as lenders demand higher returns to compensate for the increased risk of inflation. An example of that happened in early February driving one of the steepest day-to-day rate jumps in recent history. Conversely, a weak economy may result in lower mortgage rates as lenders lower their rates to attract borrowers.

## Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The CPI measures changes in the cost of living and is a key indicator of inflation. High inflation erodes the purchasing power of money over time, leading to higher interest rates. One recent example was mid-February's CPI news that was not ideal for mortgage rates. When inflation is on the rise, lenders may increase mortgage rates to maintain their purchasing power. Monitoring CPI reports can provide insight into future trends in mortgage rates.

## Bond Market

Mortgage rates are closely tied to the bond market, particularly the yield on the 10-year Treasury note. Investors often view bonds as a safer investment compared to stocks during times of economic uncertainty, leading to increased demand for bonds and lower yields. When bond yields fall, mortgage rates tend to follow suit. Monitoring bond market trends can provide valuable insights into potential movement in mortgage rates.

## Housing Market Conditions

Keep an eye on local housing market conditions. Supply-and-demand dynamics, home price trends, and inventory levels can all influence mortgage rates. A competitive housing market with high demand and limited inventory may result in higher mortgage rates as lenders adjust to market conditions. That was noticed especially over the last couple of years.

## A Viewpoint to Consider

It is believed that rates will be lowering over the next year or two. Lower rates lead to conventional refinance and VA streamline refinance opportunities in the future. If you are in the market now and worried about not being able to capitalize on lower rates later, refinancing to lower your

interest rate may be an option if rates do indeed trend lower later this year or next.

Staying informed about the factors that drive mortgage interest rates can help you make smarter decisions when it comes to buying a home. By monitoring some of the indicators listed above, you can position yourself to potentially secure the best possible rate for your mortgage.

Consulting with a mortgage professional can provide personalized insights and guidance tailored to your unique situation. Trident Home Loans (Equal Housing Lender, NMLS 65716) is an airline industry leader for securing the right mortgage for you. Contact Spencer Wartman (NMLS 2109932) at [spencer@mythl.com](mailto:spencer@mythl.com) and let him help you secure your future home! Also, feel free to reach out to Spencer directly if there's a topic you'd like for him to touch on here.

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## About the Author

Spencer Wartman is a Loan Originator at Trident Home Loans, a veteran-owned and operated mortgage lender located in Pensacola, FL. [Read More...](#)



# Disaster on the Road – Pt. 4

Battle Plan: Disaster

WRITTEN BY: ANDREW ROSS

In parts 1 through 3 of this series, Andrew detailed his experience with a tornado that struck his house while he was on a trip and how he had to deal with the fallout while 3500 miles from home. In this instalment of the story, Andrew outlines his most important suggestions for getting yourself and your family prepared in case the worst should happen.

With my house on the way to a full recovery, I have been able to debrief myself and my family on what happened, and how we plan to prepare for a future event should something like this happen again. I'd like to share with you what our review found and concluded.

## 1. The best defense is a good offense. Prepare your emergency equipment and plan.

Take stock of your emergency-equipment inventory and find out what you need. We are all

pretty good at making sure our smoke detectors aren't beeping, but what about having a fire extinguisher in your kitchen (most fires start there), or having one in your basement or safe room so you can fight a fire during an escape? What about a supply of drinking water in that safe room should you be trapped by debris? The website [ready.org](https://www.ready.gov/plan) is an amazing resource to review and build an emergency plan for your family. You can find it here: <https://www.ready.gov/plan>

Oh, and don't forget, one of the most important parts to any plan is knowing what to do in the event of the emergency in the first place, and what you should do immediately following. (See part 2 of this series.) Then, ensure everyone in your family knows the plan also!

## 2. Update your contacts and save them in your phone.

This was embarrassing, because not saving your emergency numbers to your phone can hold things up significantly when securing your property. Make sure you have all local emergency numbers saved in your phone, including your insurance company and a board-up company that is local to you. Having your utility companies' phone numbers can also help. At a minimum, find a board-up company and save that phone number, because the chances are that they will be in high demand, so the sooner you get on their list, the sooner your house will be secured.

## 3. Have a running inventory of important items.

This list is not just for your family treasures, but everything under or around your roof that is of significant value. We often think of TVs or vehicles, but what kind of appliances you own, all the types of furniture in each room, what materials your home was built with (if you able to find out), what is in all those boxes in storage that you forgot about, even what is in your pantry can help you put together a list that will help build your life back. It's hard to articulate what is missing/broken/damaged when you aren't even sure what it is you have.

## 4. Know thy neighbor.

We had only been in our house for a month and a half, but we met ALL of our neighbors that night. Luckily, we can report that everyone is wonderful and gracious. One neighbor even volunteered to take our dog! In fact, the neighbor who took the picture of the tornado hitting our house is the one who called 911 for us. Also, when we first saw possible damage on the Ring camera, it was our old neighbors who drove to over to see for

themselves what had happened. When you live life on the road, it absolutely pays to have people you can rely on and have a plan in place.

## 5. Establish exactly what the procedures and expectations are for informing you if you're on the road.

This is a topic that hadn't been discussed prior to this event, and was the cause of a lot of concern for my family. "Do we tell him while he's flying, or do we wait?" Honestly, this one will be up to each of you, but make sure your family is clear about what and when to tell you that something has happened. My rule from this point forward is to not tell me if someone has died until I'm at the hotel, but everything else I want to know about ASAP.

At the end of the day, my mantra over this whole incident became, "It's just stuff, no one was hurt, life is good." If there is one piece of advice, I implore you to explore (after step one above), it is to adopt this view if this happens to you. It will make things go much easier and lower your stress level tremendously. Just as in the airplane, emergencies happen, but it's how we conduct ourselves in the face of these events that make or break the day. Study, prepare, and plan for the worst, hope for the best and with any luck, unlike me, you and your family won't be picking up pieces of your roof from your neighbors' yards.



### About the Author

Andrew Ross is a pilot at a major airline flying the Boeing 787, previously the Boeing 757 and 767 domestically and internationally, and prior to that flew the Embraer 145. [Read More..](#)



# Fuel Awareness

WRITTEN BY: SERGIO SOVERO

**F**uel awareness is critical for pilots of all experience levels. Complying with the regulatory requirements regarding fuel is simply the first step in managing your fuel reserves. It is imperative to understand what we plan for is not always what may take place. Weather deviations, ATC assigned reroutes, medical emergencies can all lead to alterations of the initial plan and may have a significant effect on fuel status.

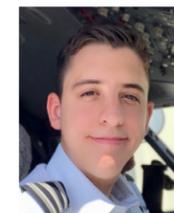
Throughout the flight, you must pay close attention to fuel consumption, specifically planned versus actual fuel burn. In order for your initial calculations to be accurate, you must adhere to pre-planned power settings

and altitudes. Accurate calculations start by knowing your aircraft performance, located in the airplane flight manual, or POH. Always include a safety margin to your computations and establish your own personal minimums.

Fuel gauges can be prone to inaccuracy and malfunctions, hence the importance of keeping track of fuel consumption in order to diagnose any gauge problems promptly. Visually inspect the fuel tanks prior to flight, if your aircraft allows to do so. As you do, ensure the fuel is free of contaminants and that the appropriate fuel grade is being used. Do not assume your fuel quantity and quality to be correct.

If you are calculating fuel-burn estimates with the mixture “leaned,” be sure to do so once airborne. Leaning the mixture can significantly improve fuel economy and provide a longer range of operation. Should the mixture be leaned during all phases of flight? Specific, leaning procedures can be found on the POH of your aircraft. As a general rule, for normally aspirated engines, lean anytime the power setting is 75% or less. Use full throttle for operations below 5000 feet above density altitude. When taking off or landing from a high-altitude airport, understand the effect of density altitude on engine performance. Examples include leaning to maximum RPM, enriching the mixture for decent, and going full rich when in the traffic pattern.

Always remember a tank full of fuel is a tank full of options and time. You do not want to run out of either. Plan for contingencies and never exceed your personal minimums. It is important to utilize all resources available, including ATC, when fuel is a concern. Do not hesitate to declare an emergency when the fuel level is critical. These guidelines will help avoid a fuel starvation event from unfolding in your future and enhance your situational awareness.



## About the Author

**Sergio Sovero** was born and raised in Lima, Peru, and is currently a captain for Delta Air Lines. [Read More...](#)



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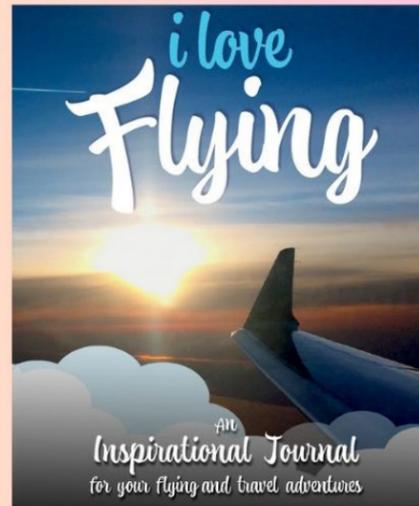
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# The Land of Smiles, Temples, Elephants, and a Shopping Mecca

WRITTEN BY: LIA OCAMPO

**O**n a recent work trip, a man in his mid-20s said, “Can you show me my seat, please? It’s my first time traveling.” As a flight attendant, it’s normal to hear these words, so naturally, I smiled and showed him where to sit.

That moment reminded me of my first international trip to Bangkok, Thailand 26 years ago. I was fortunate to travel to Bangkok as part of my job with the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Since then, my aspirations to travel have grown to become my passion.

Thailand is special to me, not just because it was my first travel, but because I will never forget my wonderful experiences. There, I also developed my taste for Pad Thai and started to collect

miniature elephants with their trunks up which in the Thai culture is a symbol of good fortune, money and good will.

Known as the “Land of Smiles,” Thailand is one of the world’s most remarkable and welcoming countries. Thailand’s nickname is true to its reputation. Thai people are renowned for their genuine hospitality and friendly nature. They welcome visitors with radiant smiles and make you feel at home.

Thailand offers a diverse experience for every visitor. It is an enchanting land where culture and nature unite, creating fascinating experiences. The country’s cultural heritage is evident on every corner, whether you explore ancient temples, engage in local customs and traditions, or savor delicious street foods.

Bangkok’s temples are sacred places, architectural marvels, sources of spiritual comfort, and cultural riches. Each temple, from the majestic Grand Palace to the peaceful Wat Arun, has a unique story and a tranquil ambiance. Wandering through temples and observing monks chanting their mantras will give you a deeper understanding of Thai culture and history.

Thai cuisine is a treat for your appetite and a feast for your eyes. Street food is a famous part of Thai culture that travelers should experience. Wander through the bustling streets of the Chatuchak Weekend Market and savor Thai flavors and dishes. Many tourists travel to Thailand for a culinary adventure.



A ride in a tuk-tuk is an unforgettable cultural experience that brings you close to the sights, sounds and aromas of Bangkok’s streets.

A tuk-tuk ride is a must-do experience in Bangkok. It’s not just a mode of transportation but a cultural experience that will exhilarate you. Hop on an adventure riding a tuk-tuk through the bustling streets, taking in this vibrant city’s sights, sounds, and smells. Feel the wind in your face as you zip through the chaotic traffic. Embrace the thrill and soak in the energy.

Bangkok is a shopper’s paradise. From the weekend markets to the upscale shopping malls, Bangkok offers a diverse shopping scene for every budget and style. Alleys lined with stalls sell everything from traditional handicrafts to designer labels. Indulge yourself in unique finds and trendy fashion with unbeatable prices. Don’t forget to haggle with local vendors. Whether you’re a fashionista or a casual shopper, Bangkok’s shopping scene promises fulfilling retail therapy. Get ready to shop ‘til you drop. That’s me! I splurged and brought home two boxes of clothes!



An intimate encounter with these gentle giants delivers a treasured experience.

Thailand is also known for its elephants which captivate tourists. Elephants are a symbol of grace and strength. Tourists can witness these magnificent creatures up close and personal in conservation parks and sanctuaries. Interacting with elephants is sure to be an unforgettable experience.

Set sail to explore Bangkok's waterways and the serenity of the Chao Phraya River. While dining, be mesmerized by the charm of iconic landmarks. A daytime cruise will allow you to witness the beautiful skyline, while an evening cruise will allow you to adore the city's shimmering lights. If you have ample time, do both.

April is an ideal time to visit Bangkok. Thai New Year (Songkran Festival) takes place from April 13 to 15 and is one of the most anticipated events in Bangkok. Locals and tourists come together to celebrate with water

fight and traditional rituals. Joyfully splashing each other with water is a way of cleansing and purifying the spirit. It symbolizes washing away the past year and welcoming the new one.

We each have countries or places to which we keep coming back. A decade after that memorable first trip, I returned to Bangkok on a personal trip, and I fully expect to return. Because Thailand also boasts a diverse range of beach destinations, my next trip to Thailand will be to experience its pristine beaches and waters. Flying to Asia from the U.S. may be a long flight, but for me, the journey and the destination both matter.



#### About the Author

**Lia Ocampo** is a passionate flight attendant and author. Her flying experiences give her the opportunity to meet amazing people and create wonderful memories. [Read More...](#)



# Scrumptious in Seattle

## Sharps RoastHouse

WRITTEN BY: VICTOR SOLER

Just a stone's throw from SEATAC lies a culinary gem that is sure to satisfy your cravings after a day of flying. Sharps RoastHouse deserves far more space than I have here, but I'll do my best to convey its excellence. The owners come from a long line of restaurateurs dating back to the 1800s. Sharps was established in 1988 and has been turning the heads of both locals, weary aircrew and travelers alike. It's a very short walk from baggage claim and on the way to several crew hotels.

I've been a regular at this establishment for years, and I can honestly say I've never had a disappointing meal or cocktail. Be forewarned, whatever you try first will set a high bar for your future visits and make it harder to select something else on the menu. The first menu item I will talk about was highly recommended by the staff, and I was stuck on it for a long time – the Beecher's Buffalo Chicken Mac and Cheese. This fusion dish combines the creamy goodness of mac and cheese with the bold flavors of buffalo chicken breast, leaving you craving more. Made with four different types of Beecher's cheese, tossed with fresh sourdough noodles and rotisserie chicken, this dish is a generous portion that reheats beautifully if you can muster the strength to put the fork down.



I would like to thank my readers for helping me summon the willpower to try something new this month – the Prime Rib. As you enter the restaurant, you’ll spot the next day’s Prime Rib on their unique cold smoker, where it sits for 13 hours before being cooked to a perfect medium rare. Arrive after 5 pm to savor this delectable dish, as it won’t be ready before then. And don’t get stuck in a holding pattern on your way to Seattle, as it’s often sold out by 9 pm. Trust me, you won’t have any leftovers because you won’t be able to resist finishing every bite. The Prime Rib comes with sides of sour cream Yukon gold mashed potatoes, sautéed Guemes Island (Washington State) mushrooms, citrus Parmesan broccoli, stock-pot jus, and fresh horseradish. This is sold by

the pound, and the ½ pound portion I had was plenty to leave me satisfied.

Now for the cocktails. I enjoy sitting at the bar where on the wall is a massive wheel that is spun every hour, offering various deals on alcohol. If you are indecisive as I am, you will want to land on “bartender’s choice,” where a made-from-scratch vodka martini was selected for me. This cocktail has been on the menu for over 25 years. Did I mention they have their own distillery? Norwest Spirits is the birthplace of this vodka that is distilled six times, delivering its delicious flavor and smooth finish. Next on my adventure, selected for me by my bartender guide, was the Savor Spear Bourbon Whiskey, which had a slightly



smoky taste with a little sweetness on the front end. This can be served neat, over ice, or mixed as in an Old Fashioned. Of all the libations I have sampled, none disappoint.

With the variety of dishes and convenient location, this restaurant near SEATAC comes highly recommended from your traveling foodie. I hope you have a long enough overnight to partake in the accompaniment of adult beverages with what is sure to be one of the best meals you have had on the road. As I said before, this restaurant is addictive, and the chef will have you coming back for more.

What is your favorite restaurant when you layover in Seattle? I’d love to hear about



the memorable spots you’ve encountered anywhere in your travels. Write me, foodie to foodie, at Aero Crew News to let me know. [info@aerocrewnews.com](mailto:info@aerocrewnews.com).

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#### About the Author

**Victor Soler** is a retired Army UH-60 helicopter pilot with a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Occupational Safety and Health. Currently, Victor is a 767/757 first officer. [Read More...](#)



# Pilot, Father, Author

Captain Eric Gaffney shares his story to encourage the next generation to never give up

WRITTEN BY: SARINA WILLIAMS

*“In my flight training and throughout my career, I faced many obstacles. At different times I had to find my own ways to perform certain tasks. Like Airick in the book, I persevered and overcame these challenges to become a restriction-free airline pilot today!”*

**- Captain Eric Gaffney, United Airlines**

When COVID-19 interrupted the lives of people all over the world, many of us used the lockdown time to think about new opportunities. In April 2020, **Captain Eric Gaffney** decided to take a month off from flying to spend time with his wife and two children. This time at home gave him a chance to tell his unique compelling story. Gaffney was born without his right hand yet worked his way up to become a captain for a national airline.

## The Journey

Gaffney’s journey to become an airline pilot was one filled with dreams, self-doubt, red tape, adjustments, and perseverance. Gaffney grew up learning about aircraft with his dad

who was an airplane mechanic. He wanted to fly his whole life. Two obstacles held Gaffney back from pursuing his dream of becoming a pilot. He faced self-doubt, questioning if he could become a pilot with one hand. He also doubted if being a pilot was conducive to his other dream of becoming a family man with a wife and children.

When his college years came around, Gaffney veered away from aviation and enrolled in a pre-med program at The University of Oklahoma with his sights set on becoming a doctor. The medical field had fascinated him as well. After completing his freshman year and learning some of the basics of medicine, it became apparent that working in the medical field wasn’t what he wanted. His

dream of becoming a pilot never faded. He was motivated to overcome the obstacles and changed his course of study to aviation.

Gaffney graduated in 2010 with his Bachelor of Science in Aviation with a Professional Pilot Concentration and a minor in Air Traffic Control. He started his professional flying career as a flight instructor at OU, and then entered the University’s flow program. A year after college, he joined Pinnacle, a Delta Connection carrier with a preferential hiring agreement with OU. From there, he worked his way up through regional airlines.

Gaffney faced major hurdles along the way in the form of government restrictions due to his limb difference. He was issued a total of six

restrictions and had to go through the process of completing a medical flight test for each one. Each restriction came with paperwork, waiting time, and the pressure of an in-person individual test. As an individual going through flight training, scheduling with the government often felt like a nightmare. It would sometimes take several months to hear back to continue the process of completing a medical flight test. Simple miscommunication could turn into a major setback on Gaffney’s timeline.

To prove his abilities, Gaffney had to adjust to each airplane and circumstance. There were no demonstrators that could teach him the best way to perform each task. However, Gaffney was accustomed to adjustment. Doing things differently has always been a part of



his life. As a young child, Gaffney remembers spending recess periods practicing tying his shoes because he had to learn his own way of completing the task. When it came time for him to perform each flight test, he was quick to adjust, and the physical tests proved to be the easiest part of cutting through the red tape. Gaffney proved his abilities, and every restriction was lifted.

In 2016, Gaffney joined United Airlines. Becoming a pilot for a major national airline was his ultimate career dream. He can also proudly say he has a beautiful family today. They deal with his pilot schedule and support him fully.

### Airick Flies High

Encouraged by his wife Natalie to write his autobiography while he had time off, Gaffney decided COVID lockdown was the time to start writing. He had been encouraged to and wanted to write his story for years, but while at home, Gaffney was faced with a new dilemma. How could he focus on writing when he had two energetic, young children excited to have their father home for a month? It was difficult to find the time.

Gaffney kept his idea for an autobiography on his mind and continued to enjoy time with his family. One day, Gaffney and his children, Cameron and Austin, were playing around as usual. They acted like airplanes, holding their arms out and “flying” around the yard, making sound effects to complete the scene. It dawned on Gaffney that his right personal airplane wing was shorter than his left. He

thought it a great analogy for children to relate to and understand limb differences. The idea for *Airick Flies High* was born.

Symbolic of his own story, Gaffney wrote the tale of Airick, a young plane with a wing difference. With one wing shorter than the other, Airick wishes to fly like the other planes. With determination, he learns his own way of flying.

Gaffney talked about his project with his wife and friends and was lucky to

be connected to the perfect illustrator, Alisha Wenaas, who created adorable visuals to accompany the story.

The planes throughout the story hold significance in Gaffney’s life, representing its different stages and the planes he encountered along the way.

Gaffney stands with a Piper Cherokee like the ones he flew in flight school at The University of Oklahoma. Airick was illustrated to resemble this plane.



The newest iteration of Gaffney's book has been translated into Spanish with the help of Red Universitaria, a network of Costa Rican universities through the country's Ministry of Education. In Spanish, the book is titled *Airick Vuela Alto*.

To purchase *Airick Flies High* directly from Gaffney, visit <https://aerocrewnews.com/airick-flies-high>. To purchase *Airick Vuela Alto*, available through Amazon, visit <https://aerocrewnews.com/airick-vuela-alto>.

Since writing his story, Gaffney has visited numerous events, schools, libraries, and children's centers to do live readings and share his story. He has met children with limb differences and many other differences as well. His message is always the same – never give up on your dreams.



### About the Author ✈️

**Sarina Williams** is the layout designer for Aero Crew News and the creative director for Riza Marketing. She earned her BA in Advertising/Public Relations from the University of Central Florida. [Read More...](#)



## 2024 Conference

Orlando, Fla.

On behalf of Aero Crew News, Scott Rehn and Edith Duran attended the 35th Annual Women in Aviation International Conference at Orlando World Center Marriott.

**Thank you to all the attendees who took the time to speak with us.**

*All photos by Edith Duran.*



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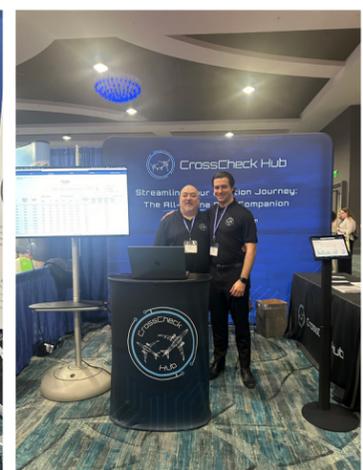
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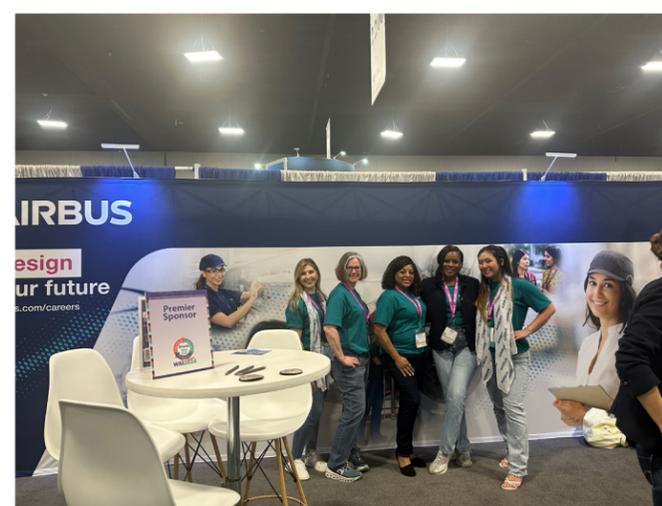
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