April 2025

Aero Crew News®

Your Industry Connection



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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.

Dear readers,



I just got back from the 36th annual Women in Aviation International conference in Denver. I know you are looking forward to seeing the who's-who edition in Aero Crew News, but unfortunately, we're up against deadline so that will have to wait until our May issue.

What I can tell you is that competition is fierce if you are looking for a pilot job with a major airline, or even a regional job. The consensus I gleaned from the recruiters with whom we have a working relationship is that they have plenty of qualified pilots' résumés on file. The days of recruiters overturning rocks to find résumés of qualified pilots are gone again—for now.

What does this mean for you? You will need to find a way to stand out among others (and not in a bad way). If you don't yet have a mentor, find one. If you need that connection, start with Professional Pilots of Tomorrow (PPOT). This organization will connect you with one of their volunteers who has been where you are now and can help you navigate your course. This kind of career networking is just the beginning. Seek out ways you can contribute to the success of your current flight school, airline or charter company. Become a check airman, or top training instructor, or a chief pilot. Find a way to positively distinguish yourself at your current job.

This type of on-the-job accomplishment will help you land your dream job sooner.

Continue to network and meet people. Attend aviation career fairs, meet-and-greet events, and any other aviation-related gathering from which you can gain contacts. These connections will help you stand out among others and contribute to your success down the runway of your career.

As with everything, there exists an imaginary line that you don't want to cross. Don't stalk recruiters or blow up their inboxes with messages of desperation. Recruiters will attest that this can quickly backfire on you. Be respectful of the recruiters' positions and efforts.

Lastly, don't despair because there is hope and help. Consider connecting with the professionals at Aero Crew Solutions who will review your application, polish your résumé, and conduct interview preparation with you. The tips they will provide will guide you toward your dream job.

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... Read More...

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What you may have missed in March

Feature – Learn about the organization Employees 4 Health Freedom and the work they are undertaking.
Aero Medical – Examine one's disclosure options related to mental-health issues and FAA certification.
Baggage – Sports betting can be hazardous with impact to flight safety.
Business Vector – Pay for aviation maintenance professionals is examined.
Coffee & Pretzels – Here's what is going on when warm meets cold.
Fitness – Supplements are not all created equally.
Grey Matter – Read this author's perspective on TCAS.
Money – Your income is rising and that brings greater opportunity and responsibility for managing it well.
Mortgage – Take a look at what the real estate market has done to date and indicators as we head further into 2025.
Perspectives – It takes time to deal with tragedy and those who teach need to address it.
SkyLaw – Learn about BasicMed, the FAA's exception to the medical certificate for PIC.



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CREDITS

Publisher / Founder
Craig Pieper

Aero Crew Solutions, CEO
Scott Rehn

Editor
Deborah Bandy

Layout Design
Sarina Williams

Additional Contributors
John McDermott
Sergio Sovero
Greg Kaley
Howard Parkin. MBE BSc, BEd, FRAS
Richard Swindell
Zeke Denison, J.D.
Reini Thijssen
Eric Ray
Charlie Mattingly, MBA, CFP®
Christopher Broyhill, Ph.D., CAM
PALS SkyHope

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Photographs as noted or licensed by Aero Crew News, LLC

Grid Updates Email
GridUpdates@AeroCrewNews.com

Social Media Marketing By
Nate Racine

Social Media Advertising By
Edith Duran

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TSB issues preliminary report on February 2025 accident of Endeavor AirCRJ-900 LR aircraft at Toronto Pearson Airport

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) released a preliminary report concerning its investigation (A25O0021) into the February 17, 2025 accident involving a Bombardier CRJ-900 LR aircraft operated by Endeavor Air (dba Delta Connection) at the Toronto Pearson Airport, Ontario. Read More



FedEx Sells Out Its American Pilots, Ships U.S. Jobs Overseas

FedEx Corporation is shipping American jobs overseas, according to the FedEx Master Executive Council (MEC), represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA). The April flying schedules reveal a stark reality: European intra-theater 757 routes, once flown by FedEx ALPA pilots, have vanished from mainline operations—outsourced entirely... Read More



American Airlines is springing into next winter with new routes to warm weather getaways

Spring is here, but planning for next winter's getaway is easier with American Airlines. Later this year, American will offer customers new routes to two popular destinations — Cancun, Mexico (CUN), and Punta Cana, Dominican Republic (PUJ), — and expand services on routes... Read More



Alaska Airlines flight attendants vote YES on new contract

Alaska Airlines' flight attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), have ratified a new three-year contract that includes significant improvements such as increased pay, greater flexibility, and better benefits. Read More



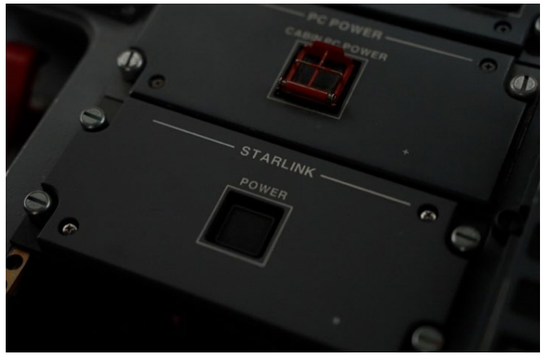
Hawaiian Flight Attendants Reach Tentative Agreement on Contract Extension

Hawaiian Flight Attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, reached a Tentative Agreement on a Contract Extension through February 2028. Read More



Spirit Airlines Emerges from Financial Restructuring, Better Positioned to Advance Its Transformation and Enhanced Guest Experience

Spirit Aviation Holdings, Inc., parent company of Spirit Airlines, LLC, announced that Spirit has emerged from its financial restructuring... Read More



United Installs Starlink on First Regional Aircraft

United announced it installed Starlink on its first regional aircraft and unveiled details of the process to underscore the technical operations benefits associated with the equipment, including size and weight as well as the ease of install and maintenance. Read More



United Flight Attendants Pressure Management at Airports Worldwide to Pay Aviation's First Responders Fair Share

United Flight Attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants, demonstrated at nearly 20 airports worldwide to demand that United... Read More



United Airlines Breaks Ground on New $177M Ground Service Equipment Facility and Opens New State-of-the-Art Technical Operations Training Facility

United announced another investment in its Houston hub by breaking ground on a new 140,000-square-foot... Read More



The REAL ID deadline is just around the corner

Starting May 7, 2025, every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, state-issued enhanced driver's license or another acceptable form to fly within the United States. Read More



Explore new fairways: American Airlines gives golfers more ways to get to their favorite links

Warm weather and freshly cut greens signal the start of golf season, and American Airlines is giving golfers a chance to score a hole-in-one with ideal itineraries for the perfect golf trip. From Scotland to Georgia and more, American has the flights golfers need... Read More



Wheels Up Announces December Quarter and Full Year 2024 Results

Wheels Up Experience Inc. announced financial results for the December quarter and full year ended 2024. Highlights of the December quarter and full year 2024, including GAAP results, non-GAAP financial measures and key... Read More



Southwest Airlines Outlines Changes to Drive Revenue Growth and Reward Its Most Loyal Customers

Southwest Airlines Co. is evolving rapidly, implementing new initiatives that support business objectives and create choice for current and future Customers of America's largest domestic carrier.
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Breeze Airways Brings Seriously Nice™ Service to Key West, Florida

Breeze Airways, the premium leisure carrier offering affordable nonstop service across the U.S., today announced it will offer service to Key West, Florida, beginning June 12, 2025. Key West becomes the airline's 10th Florida destination as well as its 70th city served nationally as the airline continues to see strong demand for its... Read More



San Antonio Travelers Gain First Nonstop Flight to the Caribbean with Spirit Airlines' New Service to San Juan, Puerto Rico

Spirit Airlines' San Antonio Guests can trade cowboy boots for flip flops with the launch of the airline's new nonstop service to the "Island of Enchantment."
Read More



South Carolina's Skies Shine Brighter with Spirit Airlines' Yellow Planes Landing in Columbia this Summer

Spirit Airlines announced that it will touch down in the heart of South Carolina this June with new, high-value service at Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE). The carrier will offer nonstop service... Read More



Spirit Airlines' New Chattanooga (Cha) Service Arriving Soon with Nonstop Flights to Three East Coast Cities

Spirit Airlines announced its bright yellow planes will soon be soaring over the Scenic City with new service at Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (CHA) launching June 4, 2025. Read More



Frontier Airlines Announces Four Additional Routes Launching Late Spring, Including First-Ever Service to Seattle Paine Field and Puerto Plata

Frontier Airlines will launch an additional four routes in late spring, including its first-ever service from both Seattle Paine Field International Airport... Read More



Sun Country Teamsters Ratify Five-Year Contract

Flight attendants for Sun Country Airlines represented by Teamsters Local 120 have overwhelmingly ratified a new contract with the ultra-low-cost carrier. The five-year agreement, which immediately raises wages and improves benefits, followed a credible strike threat by more than 700... Read More



Japan Airlines Orders 17 Additional Boeing 737 MAX Jets to Refresh Fleet

Boeing and Japan Airlines finalized an order for 17 737-8s to leverage the fuel efficiency and flexibility of the 737 MAX. The airline aims to launch the new 737 MAX jets on its robust domestic network, amid continued record-breaking tourism. Read More



Alaska Airlines announces new nonstop flights between Seattle and Seoul Incheon beginning Sept. 12 on Hawaiian Airlines

Alaska Airlines has set the date for new nonstop service between Seattle and Seoul Incheon on Hawaiian Airlines. Starting Sept. 12, 2025, guests can fly in comfort on our long-haul, widebody Airbus A330-200 aircraft to South Korea's capital city. Read More



Staying Motivated in a Stationary Spot



Written by: John McDermott

After nearly 4.5 hours of flying, I finally reached the coveted 1500-hour checkpoint last November. Despite signing a conditional job offer at a regional soon after, I find myself still waiting on a class date months later with the potential of more months to come. Staying motivated and excited to fly and teach on a day–to-day basis has posed a challenge I did not foresee while working towards my ATP minimums.

In the time sense, I've looked for new ways to keep advancing my aviation career and credentials. The first decision I made was to keep flying—as my airline recruiter said when I got hired, "Don't quit your day job," as this is how I keep my flight chops proficient and stay prepared to get the call to report any day.

But more importantly, I needed to decide what I could do that would satisfy the huge goal that flying 1500 hours represented. That goal loomed so large in my sights for so long that no longer having it seemingly left a gap in my list of hopes and dreams. What is there that can fill the gap?

Some parts of filling the gap are easy. I am lucky to have opportunities to expand my portfolio of aircraft beyond those I have been flying day in and day out for the last year. Though I enjoy my light sports, being able to fly high performance, IMC-capable airplanes with students has brought a layer of diversity that I appreciate.

Yet at the same time, I need to find ways to keep my sights focused forward; not only do I want to remain grounded in my teaching and enjoy my day-to-day work, but I also need to keep in mind that the next level is coming. I am spending an increasing amount of time preparing for the three training months I know are coming somewhere down the line. Just as with the day-to-day flying, I want to stay proficient and prepared with the basic information I learned for my airline interview so I can be even more prepared entering class.

One of the more challenging parts of my situation is learning how to appreciate my current position. In aviation, it's easy to stay focused on the next career step: when you'll reach the next level of certification, when you'll start your dream job, or when you'll get the next opportunity for advancement. Learning to enjoy my present moment is a skill I can refine in order to appreciate each step I take in the process.

This isn't to say I necessarily want to take a step back but rather that I want to find ways to thoroughly enjoy a situation I might not find myself in again. Once I move on from instructing full time, I'm not sure when I'll have my next opportunity to enjoy general aviation in such a unique, diverse way. At the very least, this may be the last time I fly full time in this part of the country, where flying into such a wide variety of airports – from small, single-runway uncontrolled airports to busy Class B and Class C hubs on a regular basis.

While flying for an airline will bring its unique excitements and challenges, and while I have absolutely no plans to give up on general aviation, I may never again find myself in quite the same position I'm in now. That alone makes appreciating this extra time more valuable so I can recall how formative this time has been.

I'm looking forward to what the remainder of my time instructing will bring, and I'm excited for where my career takes me afterward. I am excited to pursue no goals and to find new ways to appreciate all the benefits my current position affords me.



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...

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Low-Level Windshear Detection



Written by: Sergio Sovero

Low-level wind shear is one of the most hazardous weather phenomena affecting aviation, posing significant risks to aircraft during takeoff and landing. Wind shear refers to a sudden change in wind speed or direction over a short distance, and when occurring at low altitudes, it can cause rapid and unexpected changes in an aircraft's performance. To mitigate these dangers, low-level wind shear advisory systems have been developed to detect and provide timely warnings to pilots and air traffic controllers, enhancing aviation safety.

Wind shear can be caused by several meteorological factors, including thunderstorms, frontal systems, and temperature inversions. One of the most common and dangerous sources is microbursts, which are intense downdrafts of air that spread out rapidly upon reaching the ground. When an aircraft encounters a microburst, it may first experience an increase in headwind, causing a temporary lift, followed by a strong tailwind that leads to a sudden loss of altitude. This sequence can be catastrophic, particularly during takeoff or landing when an aircraft is flying at low speeds and has limited room for recovery.

The need for reliable wind shear-detection systems became evident after several fatal airline crashes attributed to wind shear in the 1970s and 1980s. In response, aviation authorities and meteorological agencies worked to develop advanced warning systems. Modern low-level wind shear advisory systems incorporate a combination of radar, lidar, ground-based sensors, and onboard avionics to detect and predict hazardous conditions in real time.

One of the most widely used systems for wind shear detection is the Terminal Doppler Weather Radar (TDWR). TDWR operates at major airports, using Doppler radar technology to identify wind shear associated with thunderstorms and microbursts. By measuring wind velocity and detecting rapid changes in wind patterns, TDWR provides crucial warnings to air traffic controllers and pilots, allowing them to adjust their approach or takeoff plans accordingly. This system has been instrumental in reducing wind shear-related accidents by improving situational awareness.

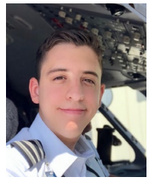
Another critical component of wind shear detection is the Low-Level Wind Shear Alert System (LLWAS). This network of ground-based sensors is strategically placed around airports to monitor wind conditions at multiple points. By continuously measuring wind speed and direction, LLWAS can detect sudden variations indicative of wind shear and issue alerts to pilots. While LLWAS is highly effective in detecting wind shear caused by frontal boundaries and other large-scale weather patterns, its capability to detect microbursts is enhanced when integrated with TDWR.

Aircraft are also equipped with onboard wind shear detection systems, utilizing advanced weather radar and predictive algorithms. These systems analyze Doppler radar returns from precipitation and airborne particles to identify potential wind shear events ahead of the aircraft's flight path. When wind shear is detected, automated voice warnings alert pilots to take immediate corrective action. Modern aircraft are designed with flight control systems that help pilots respond to wind shear encounters, including automated thrust and control surface adjustments to counteract sudden changes in wind conditions.

The implementation of low-level wind shear advisory systems has significantly improved aviation safety, reducing the number of wind shear-related incidents and fatalities. Pilots undergo extensive training on wind shear recognition and recovery techniques, ensuring they can respond effectively when encountering adverse conditions. Additionally, advancements in meteorological forecasting and numerical modeling have improved the ability to predict wind shear events, further enhancing preparedness and mitigation efforts.

Despite these advancements, wind shear remains a challenge for aviation, particularly in regions prone to convective storms and strong frontal systems. Continuous research and technological development are essential to improving the accuracy and reliability of wind shear detection and warning systems. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, hold promise in refining predictive models and enhancing real-time data analysis.

Low-level wind shear advisory systems play a crucial role in aviation safety by detecting hazardous wind conditions and providing timely warnings to pilots and air traffic controllers. Through a combination of radar, ground-based sensors, and onboard avionics, these systems have significantly reduced the risks associated with wind shear encounters.



About the Author

Sergio Sovero was born and raised in Lima, Peru, and is currently a captain for Delta Air Lines. Read More...

coffee & pretzels

Greg Kaley





[Check Out Last Month's Cartoon]



About the Author

Greg Kaley is a pilot with a major airline who also happens to be a cartoonist. He started the cartoon "Coffee & Pretzels" in 2016. After graduating from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Prescott Campus), he flight-instructed and subsequently... Read More...

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SKYWATCH

View From the Flightdeck in Spring

What to look for in the night sky from April to June 2025

Written By: Howard Parkin. MBE BSc, BEd, FRAS

Following the magnificent views of the stars and planets in the night sky from December to February, we are now heading into the April to June period when the night skies are often being termed as being "quiet," as the bright stars in the constellations of Orion, Gemini and Taurus steadily process westwards and will soon disappear into the twilight sky.

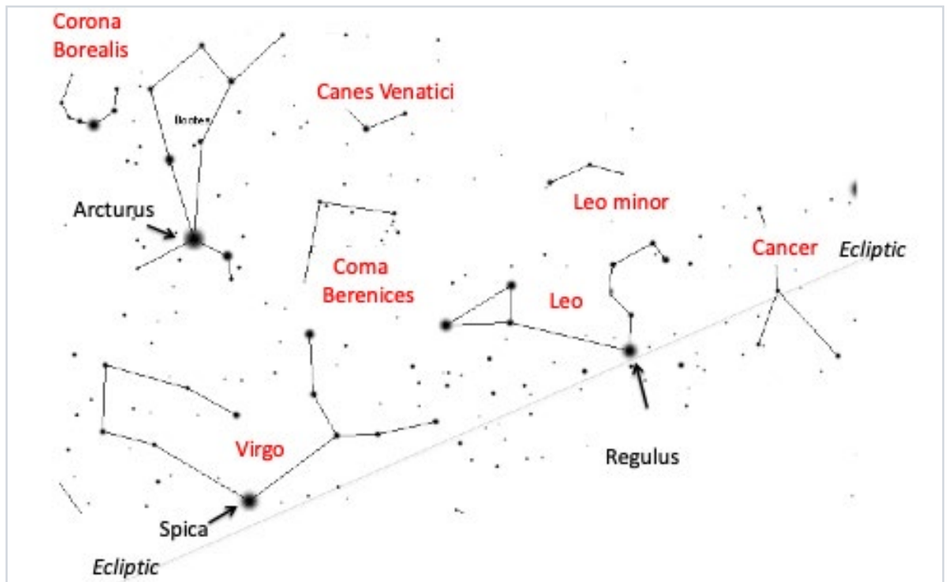
This seasonal change in the view of the night sky is brought about by the Earth's changing position as we orbit the Sun, and as we head into April and beyond, it is immediately noticeable that the night sky just does not have as many bright stars within it as the preceding three months. At this time of year, there are just three bright stars visible in the eastern sky compared to the twelve that were visible in January. Most of the stars visible at the turn of the year are still visible but are now in the western sky and will be disappearing into the evening twilight. So, take this last opportunity to look at these bright constellations and the others that we have been looking at over the last few months for the last time until the early hours of the autumnal mornings in about six months' time.

Since January, we have had not just the bright stars to look at, but we have also had three very bright planets strung out across the night sky after sunset. These are also now slowly setting in the western sky and will soon disappear. The brightest and most westerly of these, Venus, passed between the Earth and Sun on March 22 at what we call "inferior conjunction" and will reappear in the morning sky from mid-April onwards. It will be at its brightest in the morning sky on April 24, and at its maximum distance "western elongation" from the Sun on May 31.

Following Venus towards the western horizon are Jupiter and Mars which are nestled within the constellations of Taurus and Gemini respectively. Jupiter will pass behind the Sun on June 24 at what is termed "superior conjunction," or more commonly just known as conjunction. Being closer to us, Mars will fade quickly as it moves eastwards before going through conjunction in November 2025. By the time we get to May and beyond only a faint Mars will be visible in our evening night sky, so we get the opportunity to catch a breath and enjoy the spectacle of the constellations of the spring (or autumn) sky depending on which hemisphere from which you are viewing.

In the northern hemisphere the stars of the Ursa Major, which contains the well-known asterism of the "Big Dipper" will be difficult to see because around midnight it will be almost overhead. So, unless you are performing some night aerobatics, it will be difficult to see! However, the stars of Cassiopeia at this time of the year sit astride the northern horizon and can be easily identified with a distinctive "W" shape. The two constellations of Ursa Major and Cassiopeia are roughly equidistant; each side of the constellation of Ursa Minor and the Pole star, Polaris which sits at the northern celestial pole. In six months' time, Ursa Major will sit on the northern horizon and will thus be easier to see from the flight deck.

Looking after midnight the three bright stars mentioned above, lyrids, will be clearly visible. These three are the fourth, sixteenth and twenty-first brightest stars in our night sky respectively.



Leo and Virgo sit astride the “ecliptic,” the path in the sky that the Sun, Moon and planets transit along on our annual journey around the Sun. There are twelve constellations on the ecliptic which are called the zodiacal constellations. The constellation that the Sun is passing through at the time of your birth determines your birth sign. However, due to the wobble or “precession” of the world’s axis, the constellation the Sun passes through is out by one constellation, so if you think you were born under the star sign of Leo you may be more correctly born under the sign of Cancer, the crab!

Leo is one of the few constellations that looks a bit like what it is meant to represent and relatively easy to see as a lion. The star Regulus marks the “dot” in a reversed question mark which makes up the lions’ head and chest. Regulus is also known as the “King” or “Royal” star and is located near the lion’s heart. To the east (or left) of Leo is the constellation, Virgo.

Virgo, the Virgin, and the bright star Spica is lower and to the left of Regulus. Spica represents a sheaf of wheat held in Virgo’s hand. The Sun passes through Virgo in September, this denotes the time of the harvest. Virgo tends to be seen as a big letter “Y” with Spica at the bottom.

The constellation of Bootes the herdsman, contains Arcturus the fourth brightest star in the northern celestial sky. To find it, locate the stars of the big dipper. Follow the curve of the handle down towards the horizon and find Arcturus, which has a distinctive orangey-white colour. Arcturus is at the bottom of a kite shaped constellation that is quite easy to spot in a dark sky. If you follow this same line down toward the horizon you will come to Spica in Virgo.

In 1933, Chicago wanted something special and innovative to mark the opening of its “Century of Progress Expo.” It was looking for a way to indicate to the participants and visitors just how far the city had come since its establishment 100 years earlier. The organisers wanted to pay tribute to history, and notably to the Worlds Columbian Expo of 1893 (a.k.a. The Chicago World’s Fair) held in 1893. A unique idea was born—to light up the 1933 Expo site using a beam of light that first left a star in 1893.

Astronomers of the time estimated that Arcturus was located 40 light years from Earth. The light emitted from Arcturus during the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 would therefore reach the Earth in 1933. So, at 2115 hours on 27 May 1933, four telescopes located in different observatories in the region captured the light from Arcturus and focused it onto photoelectric cells. These cells then transformed the light into an electrical current that was amplified and sent to the Expo site on the shores of Lake Michigan. The current lit up the floodlights before a crowd of 30,000 people gathered outside the Hall of Science.

Today, we know that Arcturus is a little nearer at 37 light years away, but back in 1933, Arcturus was one of the most famous stars in the cosmos, and even today this feat is seen as a shining example of the technological progress of the time and of the Expo 1933’s theme “Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Adapts.



Finally, in late April, keep your eyes peeled for some Lyrids meteors in the nights sky. The Lyrids shower is one of the oldest meteor showers with records of observations going back over 2,000 years. The Lyrids may be seen April 13 to 28, peaking on the night of April 21/22. Lyrids meteors tend to be bright but very fast. In April the radiant at midnight will be halfway between the eastern horizon and your zenith. That will be a night to bid a red eye!



About the Author

Inspired by the space race in the 1960s, **Howard Parkin** has been an enthusiastic astronomer since childhood and has become an accomplished and entertaining speaker on the subject throughout the… Read More…



Editorial photo credit: Abdulkadir Hirabe / Shutterstock.com

Notices to Airmen-Missions-Airmen

Really?

Written by: Richard Swindell

In 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) changed Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) to *Notices to Air Missions* (still NOTAMs though) in a stated effort to be more gender neutral as well as recognize the growing presence of remotely piloted drone operations in the national airspace system.

On February 10, 2025, the NOTAM acronym was reversed and became again Notices to Air*men*. This time however, the FAA did not provide a rationale for the change.

For those unfamiliar with NOTAMs, this aeronautical alert system provides time-sensitive operational information regarding events, changes, and hazards along and within airways and airspace, including modifications to arrival and departure procedures, as well as airport conditions that pilots might not otherwise be immediately aware of.

Based on an antiquated habit going back to the creation of the male-dominated, air-transportation industry at the turn of the twentieth century, many masculine-tagged terms linger including airman certificate (the actual term for a pilot license in the U.S.) and having recently returned, Notices to Airmen. After nearly 30 years in this industry, most pilots I know (regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, sex orientation, or gender) do not seem overly bothered by this language legacy, although to some, a sense of second-class status surely exists. Even airline pilot union contracts customarily use male-oriented language when outlining provisions or providing examples within these documents, unless there is a reason to identify a gender-specific condition. Yet, most contracts also include an opening declaration stipulating that using male pronouns is not intended to be exclusionary, but rather avoiding the constant use of dual pronouns, along with gender or sex descriptors. Again, most pilots I know do not seem to have a particular problem with this. Not that it shouldn't continue to evolve over time, but airline pilots are generally more interested in pay, benefits and scheduling provisions than they are about whether the union and company go out of their way to draft holistically inclusive language.

When the 2021 NOTAM amendment occurred, it landed without much fanfare or discussion, being largely met with some eye rolling and overall indifference. Personally, I thought Notices to Air Missions sounded dumb. Yet, I nonetheless appreciated the attempt by the FAA at greater inclusivity and recognizing (if a bit meekly) that this industry is not limited to men. Perhaps the change should have been instead "Notices to Pilots" – then again, neither NOTPI nor NOTPOTs make for a clean acronym, but I digress. The point here is that the change to *Air Missions* was not overly meaningful or impactful, but at least somewhat positive in nature.

While the presence of female airline pilots in the U.S. remains still at only about 5% and airline pilots of color constitute and even smaller percentage, it is of course slowly and rightly changing. Talented people from all walks of life and backgrounds are realizing that becoming an aviation professional—a controller, dispatcher, manager, mechanic, pilot, etc.—is open to everyone, if they are willing to dedicate themselves and work hard to attain the necessary education, training and experience. Securing funding for school and training might be a barrier to entry, but your gender, orientation, and skin color are not—should be.

This is an industry absolutely open and accessible to everyone.

In February though, and in the wake of the heartbreaking collision between an airliner and a military helicopter over the Potomac River, some officials in Washington took the shameful opportunity to up their attack on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives by suggesting via "common sense" that the root cause of this tragedy was somehow related to DEI. For my part, I'm dismayed and discomfited by this absurd and baseless assertion.

Whereas the modification of the acronym's composite phrase went relatively unnoticed in 2021, in 2025 this reversal has caught everyone's attention, and can only be viewed as a message, by virtue of the current administration, that the air transportation industry should only be open to men—and by extension, white (straight) men.

In my experience, both personal and professional, the more diverse the composition and background of the pilots on the flight deck, the greater the combined experience and potential for robust decision-making, routinely leading to positive outcomes. Moreover, when I was completing doctoral research a decade ago on mediating factors in cultural affinity among professional aviators (a fancy way of saying airline pilot backgrounds), the data conclusively pointed at the individual pilot's background being muted by their self-identification as an airline pilot. Stated differently, those who take up the role and responsibility of a professional pilot and don the uniform, leave behind their individual differences (internal and external), arriving on the flight deck ready to execute safely and effectively on the mission.

Maybe it should be *Notices to Air Missions* after all.



About the Author

Richard Swindell left active-duty military service and transitioned to the airline industry where he flies and works as a line check airman for a major airline. Read More...

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the right things are timeless.

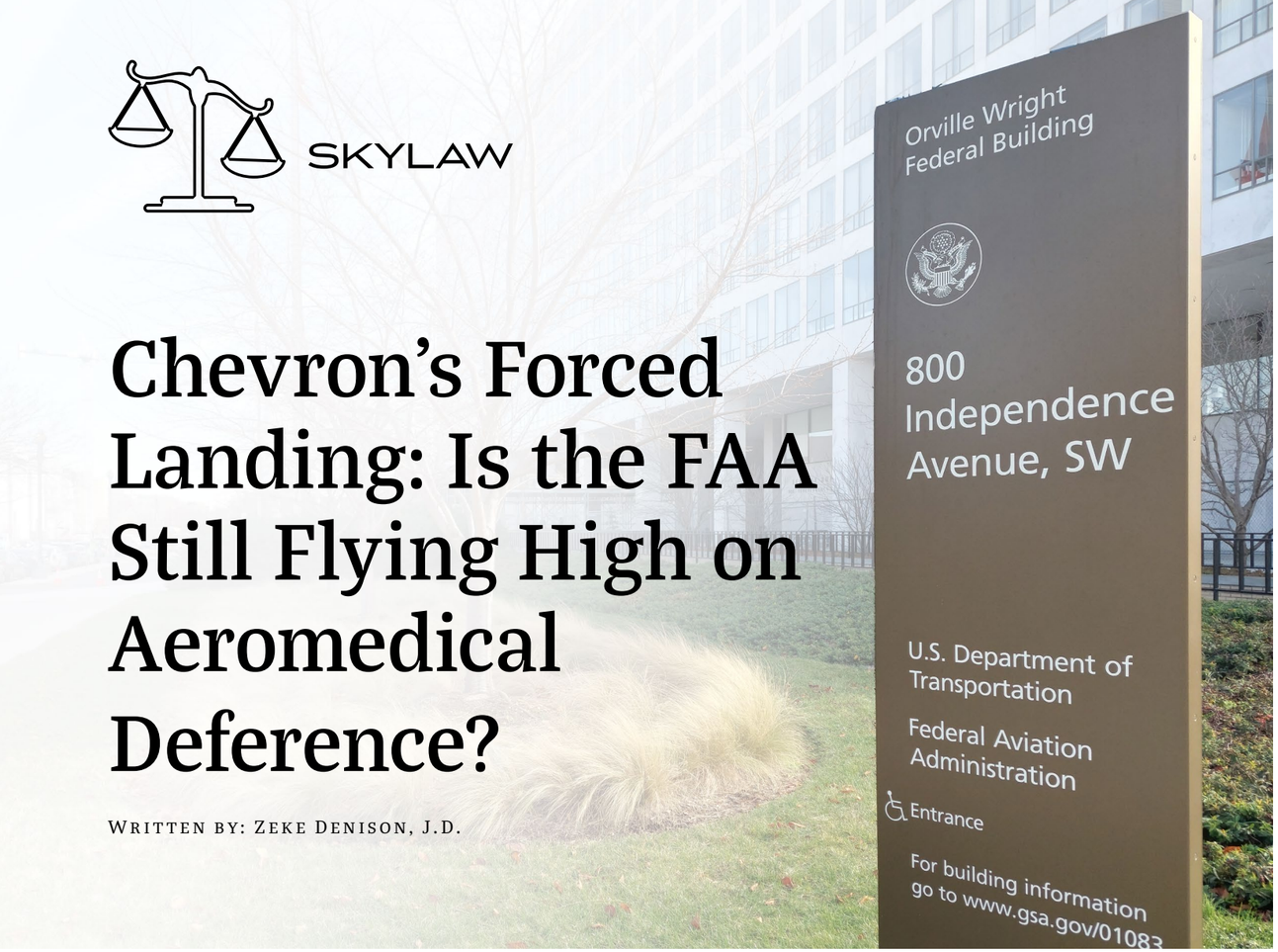


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Chevron's Forced Landing: Is the FAA Still Flying High on Aeromedical Deference?

Written by: Zeke Denison, J.D.

Pilots who have dealt with the FAA's medical certification process know the medical standards are not always clear. The difference between disqualification due to an *aeromedically* significant condition and eligibility under the federal regulations can be slim. What is clear is that the FAA's Civil Aerospace Medical Institute holds extensive authority to make the decision. This power can feel overwhelming, leaving many airmen confused and lost on their path to obtaining a medical certificate.

With the recent overturning of a landmark administrative law case, many are revisiting the FAA's agency power for the first time in decades. Has anything changed in the aeromedical division with the new developments? To answer that, we must first provide some background.

The Chevron Doctrine

In 1977, Congress amended the Clean Air Act (CAA). The amendment required any state that had not attained national air quality standards, as established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to set up a permit program to regulate "new or modified major stationary sources" of air pollution. A permit for a new or modified major stationary source could not be issued unless strict conditions were met. For context, stationary sources are buildings or structures like power plants or oil refineries that release air pollutants. The problem was the amended CAA did not explicitly define, nor did the legislative history behind the amendment directly indicate, what Congress considered to be a "stationary source."

In 1981, the EPA promulgated new regulations that allowed a state to adopt a plantwide definition of the term "stationary source" which, in essence, permitted existing plants with multiple pollution devices to install a single piece of equipment *without* having to meet the strict permit conditions. This sparked the controversy in *Chevron, U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.* which was eventually argued in front of the Supreme Court of the United States in 1984. The major issue was whether the EPA's actions and interpretation of "stationary source" were legal. What resulted was a landmark decision that would come to rule administrative law cases for decades and create the influential "Chevron Doctrine."

The Chevron Doctrine governed how a reviewing court examined a federal agency's interpretation of the statutes that said agency (the EPA, FAA, Department of Commerce, etc.) administers. The Chevron Doctrine implements a two-step framework:[1]

1. The "reviewing court must first assess 'whether Congress has directly spoken to the precise question at issue.' If, and only if, congressional intent is 'clear,' that is the end of the inquiry." I.e., Congress' clear intent behind the statute is adopted.
2. If, however, "the court determines that 'the statute is silent or ambiguous with respect to the specific issue' at hand, the court must, at *Chevron's* second step, defer to the agency's interpretation if it 'is based on a permissible construction of the statute.'" I.e., the agency's interpretation of the statute holds, even if the reviewing court reads the statute differently.

The Supreme Court in *Chevron v. NRDC* ultimately concluded 1) Congress had not specified their intention with the term "stationary source" (i.e., they were silent on the matter), and therefore 2) the EPA's interpretation was adopted as it was a permissible construction of the statute by the EPA's administrator.

Loper Overturns

For 40 years the Chevron Doctrine mandated that the reviewing courts defer to agency interpretations of an ambiguous statute if their interpretation was reasonable. The doctrine was narrowed over time to clarify its scope, such as only allowing deference to the federal agency that oversaw the statute in question. For example, only the FAA, not the EPA or others, can interpret aviation related statutes. The Chevron Doctrine was divisive, with some parties agreeing that the agency with expertise in the area rightfully had the

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benefit of the doubt, while others called for the courts to be the authority and exercise their judgment in each case.

The Chevron Doctrine's reign ended in June of 2024 with the decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*. The case was initially brought by a group of commercial fishermen regarding at-sea monitoring programs but was eventually taken by the Supreme Court to openly consider whether the Chevron Doctrine should be overruled. The Supreme Court's Opinion in *Loper* provided a thorough examination of the history of agency authority in the U.S., the separation of powers, the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), and the reasoning behind the Chevron Doctrine. In summary, the Supreme Court concluded:[2]

> *Chevron* is overruled. Courts must exercise their independent judgment in deciding whether an agency has acted within its statutory authority, as the APA requires. Careful attention to the judgment of the Executive Branch may help inform that inquiry. And ***when a particular statute delegates authority to an agency consistent with constitutional limits, courts must respect the delegation, while ensuring that the agency acts within it***. But courts need not and under the APA may not defer to an agency interpretation of the law simply because a statute is ambiguous.

What Do Chevron and Loper Have to Do with Pilot Medical Certification?

The administrator of the FAA is given general authority under the United States Code to issue airman certificates. Statutes related to airman medical certification, including the delegation of the administrator's authority and the medical standards, are outlined in Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 67 (14 C.F.R. § 67). When a pilot is denied based on the FAA's interpretation of these standards, they can become understandably frustrated as there is often vague statutory language as the basis for the denial and little to no explanation from the FAA. Given the recent *Loper* decision, the question has arisen whether the FAA's interpretation of the statutory medical standards in relation to a pilot's case will be granted the same level of deference it held during the Chevron Doctrine years?

The short answer: we aren't sure. There may be no uniform application moving forward. It is important to note that with any legal appeal, there are many case-by-case variables that sway the outcome (medical history of the applicant, professional medical opinions on file or lack thereof, specific regulations in question, etc.). Time will tell how the review of medical certification decisions will be affected as the *Loper* decision matures out of its infancy and more cases are argued in the courts. The hope is that decisions will be more fluid and individualized to the case with the fall of the Chevron Doctrine and the lessening of an agency's deference.

Unfortunately, there is language in the statutes that strongly indicate the FAA, specifically the Federal Air Surgeon (FAS), will continue to have broad interpretive authority. Recall that *Loper* proclaims that agencies are no longer given deference for their interpretations of *ambiguous* statutes. *Loper* still requires that "when a particular statute delegates authority to an agency consistent with constitutional limits, courts must respect the delegation," and many medical standard statutes explicitly state that the decision is "at the discretion of" the FAS. For example, 14 C.F.R. § 67.107(c) states:[3]

> No other personality disorder, neurosis, or other mental condition that **the Federal Air Surgeon**, based on the case history and appropriate, qualified medical judgment relating to the condition involved, **finds**—
>
> 1. Makes the person unable to safely perform the duties or exercise the privileges of the airman certificate applied for or held; or
>
> 2. May reasonably be expected, for the maximum duration of the airman medical certificate applied for or held, to make the person unable to perform those duties or exercise those privileges.

Notably, this allocation of authority is also explicitly given to the FAS for special issuance of medical certificates under 14 C.F.R. § 67.401.

These specific delegations to the FAS suggest the intention of Congress was to place the FAS directly in the position of the ultimate decision maker for medical certification, not the courts. This is consistent with constitutional limits and the authority of the FAA to maintain safety in the national airspace system by determining aeromedically significant conditions. Accordingly, it appears that *Loper's* decision will not be the broad overhaul in medical certification that many thought, at least initially.

What Can We Do?

Despite the explicit delegation to the FAS, *Loper* also made it clear the courts must still ensure "that the agency acts within [its delegation]." Before, there was a pervasive attitude adopted by the courts of deferring to agencies due to the Chevron Doctrine's longstanding precedent. Perhaps moving forward with *Chevron* overturned there will be more room to argue. As the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in *Erwin v. FAA*, a case involving FAA medical certification and a potential alcohol dependence finding under 14 C.F.R. § 67, previously decreed:[4]

> Granted, an exegesis may not be necessary but the FAA has not provided even one sentence demonstrating a "rational connection between the facts found and the choice made." . . . It argues that it may rely solely on the positive test and Erwin's history of alcohol dependence but ignores Erwin's evidence scientifically attacking the positive test, notwithstanding the withdrawal regulations explicitly provide that a request for review "may be accompanied by supporting medical evidence." . . . In our view, Erwin's reconsideration

request and accompanying evidence . . . merits the FAA's explicit consideration. Its Final Order does not do so. And **the FAA is a repeat offender**. As we have previously told the agency, **it "cannot simply declare its 'expertise'; it must exercise that expertise and demonstrate sufficiently that it has done so else we have nothing to review much less defer to**."

Loper's overruling is a step in the right direction to probe more into the paternalistic, "declaration of expertise" culture rampant in the FAA's medical division. However, pilots and advocates must continue to remain vigilant and appeal certification decisions to keep the FAA in check. The FAA's standing as a safety-sensitive government agency and the statutory delegations to the FAS do *not* give the medical division a "blank check" to determine the aeromedical significance of a condition without proper, reasonable review and explanation.

Furthermore, to maintain progress, the aviation community can support legislative initiatives aimed at refining the medical standards. In April 2024, the FAA's Pilot Mental Health Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) published 24 recommendations for aeromedical reform and mental health. These recommendations remain unimplemented. However, two proposed acts are currently under review after introduction into the House of Representatives in 2024: the **Aviation Medication Transparency Act of 2024 (H.R.9243)** and the **Mental Health in Aviation Act (H.R.9687)**. Implementing new laws that provide more detailed medical standards and clarifying Congress' intent would make it harder for the FAS and other reviewers to deny cases without proper reasoning (i.e., based on simply declaring expertise). This is especially true in mental health cases where the standards, like 14 C.F.R. § 67.107(c) quoted above, are vague. Legislative action directly delegating the bounds of discretionary authority for the FAA is the next step in continuing the shift of deference on a pilot's health and certification decision towards the opinions of the pilot's medical providers (who are intimately familiar with the pilot's health) and away from the strict, isolated FAA review we currently have.

For more information on how to support these and other legislative initiatives, visit the Pilot Mental Health Campaign's website at https://www.pmhc.org/. For legal assistance with your medical certification case, visit Ramos Law's Aviation Division's website at https://www.ramoslaw.com/aviation-division/.



About the Author

Lead Certificate Defense Attorney **Ezekiel Denison**, Esq. is an aviation attorney in Denver, Col. who currently practices in Ramos Law's Aviation Division. Read More...

Endnotes

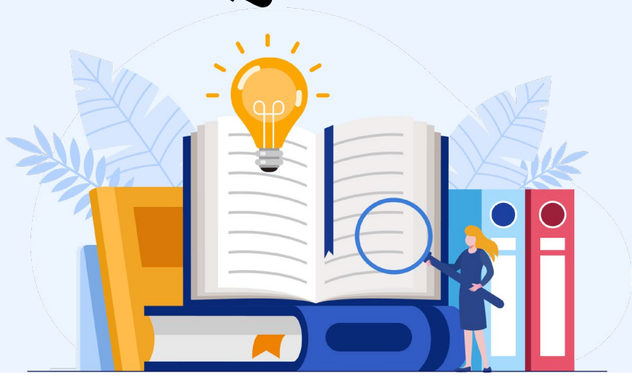
1 Language of the two-step framework is directly cited from Loper Bright Enterprises vs. Raimondo, 603 U.S. 369, 379 (2024).
2 Loper Bright Enterprises vs. Raimondo, 603 U.S. 369, 412-413 (2024) (emphasis added).
3 Emphasis added.
4 Erwin v. FAA, 21 F.4th 154, 161 (2021) (emphasis added).

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BAGGAGE

Ruminating–Your QRH to Rumination and How To Let Go

Written By: Reini Thijssen



What if something I said to that First Officer last year still bothers them? What if that comment I made about their procedure has created tension between us that I have not even noticed? What if I missed a crucial detail during the pre-flight briefing that could compromise the safety of the flight, and I did not catch it at the time? It is natural to replay conversations or decisions like these in your mind, especially when you are unsure of the impact they might have had. However, when this kind of rumination takes over, it can spiral into endless "what-ifs" that drain your energy and productivity. Do you often lie awake at night, rehashing past interactions or second-guessing your choices? This article offers practical strategies to help you break free from the cycle of rumination and regain your peace of mind.

Rumination is the habit of getting stuck in a cycle of overthinking past events, mistakes, or worries. It is a deeply human response, where we endlessly replay situations in our minds, trying to make sense of them or to avoid future mistakes. Studies show that around 40-50% of people regularly ruminate, often fixating on personal relationships, past errors, or awkward social moments (Joormann & Vanderlind, 2014; Ramel & Gross, 2022). This mental loop typically shows up as a constant inner dialogue, filled with "what if" scenarios or self-criticism like, "Why did I say that?" or "I should've done it differently." People might also find themselves mentally obsessing over negative experiences, analyzing them from every angle, and trying (often unsuccessfully) to make sense of them.

While reflecting on the past is normal, chronic rumination can make it hard to focus on anything else, and it typically increases feelings of stress, guilt, and sadness and contributes to anxiety or depression, as it keeps you trapped without offering real solutions or closure.

Rumination vs. Worrying

Rumination and worrying both involve repetitive thinking, but they differ in focus and impact. Rumination typically revolves around past events, often dwelling on mistakes, regrets, or things we could have done differently. It is a kind of mental replay that does not lead to problem-solving, but instead keeps emotions stuck in the past. Worrying, on the other hand, is more future-oriented, involving anxiety about what might go wrong or potential problems that have not yet occurred. While both can be distressing, rumination tends to reinforce negative emotions, whereas worrying is often rooted in uncertainty and anticipation of challenges that may or may not happen.

Why Do We Ruminate?

At its core, rumination is a coping mechanism. When people feel distressed, their mind may fixate on what's troubling them, whether it's a stressful situation, a regretful memory, or an overwhelming feeling. Instead of finding a solution or taking action, the focus remains on the distress itself. This process can feel like an attempt to gain control or make sense of the situation, but it usually does not lead to problem-solving.



Consequences of Rumination

When rumination becomes chronic, it can have a range of negative effects on both mental and physical health, including:

- **Increased Anxiety:** Constantly thinking about potential dangers or worst-case scenarios can heighten stress.
- **Depressive Feelings:** Rumination often reinforces negative emotions, leading to feelings of helplessness and sadness.
- **Cognitive Impairment:** Ruminating can impair concentration and problem-solving abilities, making it harder to focus on tasks.
- **Fatigue:** The mental effort of repetitive thinking can lead to mental exhaustion.
- Sleep Disturbances: Since the mind remains active and stuck on the same thoughts, it can interfere with falling or staying asleep.
- **Social Isolation:** As rumination tends to focus inward, individuals may withdraw from social interactions, further exacerbating feelings of loneliness.

How to Stop Ruminating Without Therapy or Medication

If you are looking to stop ruminating by yourself, there are several strategies you can try. These techniques and exercises can help you break the cycle of repetitive thinking and regain control of your mind. Here are some practical methods:

- **Distraction:** Engage in activities that fully capture your attention, such as exercising, cooking, reading, or doing a puzzle.
- **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings. Journaling helps externalize your worries and offers a safe space to process emotions.
- **Mindful Breathing:** Practice deep breathing exercises to calm your body and mind. Focus on your breath to center yourself in the present moment.
- **Scheduled "Worry Time":** Set aside a specific time each day, such as 15 minutes, to actively think about and problem-solve any worries. Outside of this time, gently remind yourself that it is not the moment to ruminate.
- **Self-Compassion:** Be kind to yourself. Acknowledge that it is natural and okay to have negative thoughts but remind yourself that you do not have to be defined by them.
- **Physical Activity:** Engage in physical exercises, like walking, yoga, or dancing, which can release endorphins and shift your focus away from distressing thoughts.

✏️ Exercise 1: The Five-Minute Grounding Technique

This quick grounding exercise can help interrupt rumination in the moment. It uses mindfulness to bring you back to the present and calm the mind:

1. **Stop and Breathe:** Sit comfortably or stand still. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so.
2. **Ground Yourself:** Focus on the physical sensations of your body. Feel your feet on the ground, your back against the chair, or your hands resting on your lap.
3. **5-4-3-2-1 Technique:** Identify:
   - **5 things you can see** (e.g., a clock, a plant, the sky, a piece of furniture, a book).
   - **4 things you can feel** (e.g., your feet touching the floor, the texture of your clothing, the air on your skin, your heartbeat).
   - **3 things you can hear** (e.g., birds chirping, a ticking clock, the hum of an appliance).
   - **2 things you can smell** (e.g., coffee, fresh air, a candle).
   - **1 thing you can taste** (e.g., the aftertaste of a meal or drink, or a fresh mint).
4. **Focus on Your Breath:** Take deep, slow breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Repeat for a minute or two.

This exercise helps shift your focus from ruminative thoughts to your physical surroundings, bringing you into the present moment and reducing the power of intrusive thoughts.

✏️Exercise 2: ACT Exercise

A recent approach is ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy), which involves accepting that emotions are “real” and consciously choosing to think and feel differently. It is not wrong to experience “negative” emotions; view them as signals of underlying struggles and reflect on them.

This exercise offers a structured way to break the cycle of rumination. By first accepting and observing emotions without judgment (Acceptance), you avoid getting stuck in negative thought patterns. Choosing a positive direction and focusing on progress (Direction) shifts the focus away from past mistakes and overanalyzing what can’t be changed. Finally, committing to action (Action) reinforces resilience and the importance of moving forward, preventing the mind from spiraling back into rumination. This combination of mindfulness and proactive thinking helps stop the repetitive thinking that often fuels rumination.

Example:
Imagine a pilot, during a pre-flight briefing, mistakenly says, “We will be cruising at 38,000 feet today,” when in fact the flight plan specified 35,000 feet. The first officer does not correct them, and the briefing continues without issue. Later, as the flight progresses, the pilot starts to ruminate on the mistake, thinking, “What if I caused confusion for the crew? What if that small error affects the flight plan later on?” The pilot might replay the situation in their mind, worrying about the potential consequences and how others might perceive their professionalism, even though there was no actual impact.

The pilot can apply this exercise to break the cycle of rumination about their mistake during the briefing.

1. **Acceptance:** First, the pilot acknowledges the feelings of discomfort or self-doubt without judgment—recognizing that making mistakes is part of being human. Instead of criticizing themselves, they simply observe the emotions that arise, such as embarrassment or worry, without getting caught up in them.
2. **Direction:** Next, they choose to focus on the positive steps they can take moving forward. They remind themselves that the flight is proceeding smoothly, and that they are capable of handling any potential issues that arise. The pilot refocuses on the present moment—such as checking flight data or coordinating with the crew—rather than dwelling on the past mistake.
3. **Action:** Finally, the pilot commits to staying resilient and flexible. If any confusion arises due to the mistake, they will address it calmly and professionally. By choosing to focus on what they can control (like effective communication with the crew or following standard protocols), they actively reinforce the importance of moving forward rather than replaying the error.

By applying these steps, you can avoid getting stuck in a cycle of rumination, shifting your focus from what went wrong to what you can do now to keep the flight running smoothly.

Final Thoughts

Rumination is a common mental pattern that many people experience, especially when faced with stress or emotional discomfort. While it can offer temporary comfort in regaining a sense of control, it often deepens anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Recognizing when rumination is taking hold is an important first step in breaking the cycle. With the right exercises or therapeutic interventions, you can learn to manage your thoughts more effectively, reduce stress, and enhance your overall well-being.



Are you struggling with rumination or feeling overwhelmed by persistent, repetitive thoughts? Emerald Mental Health offers individual coaching and therapy for pilots and aviation professionals designed to help you break free from the cycle of overthinking and develop healthier mental patterns. A personalized approach can guide you in managing stress, building resilience, and enhancing your emotional well-being. Reach out for a free consultation by emailing reini@emeraldmentalhealth.com or visit www.emeraldmentalhealth.com to learn more.

Resources

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About the Author

Reini Thijssen is a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC, LPC) and a certified life coach specializing in supporting pilots and individuals in high-demand professions both within and outside of aviation. She has been a writer for Aero Crew News since 2019 and covers various aviation-related topics... Read More...

Recovery Mode After an Injury



Written By: Eric Ray

If you have been an avid reader of my fitness articles over the years, you'll have noticed that I often talk about nutrition, fitness goals and how to improve. What I haven't really talked about is how to recover after an injury.

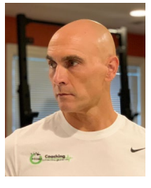
Recently, I had multiple injuries, one self-inflicted and another an accident. The problem when you get hurt, is how to recover. I have long been promoting walking as a way to keep fat levels low and to keep cardio fitness levels up. I have been doing this low-impact version of fitness with the addition of a weighted vest to increase/ramp-up my heart rate.

One day, I put on the vest and cinched it down, probably a little tighter than normal. Since the weather is starting to break where I live, I had a good opportunity to get outside and take advantage of the warm sunshine. I felt good and repeated it the next day. The problem arose two days later when I realized I must have pulled something on my side. Not to let it get the better of me, I naturally kept up my workout routine, which kept aggravating the muscles across my upper abs and rib cage. After enduring ten days, I went to the emergency room because I could barely breathe. It's never a pleasant experience when you're not sure what is happening to your body. We even had to rule out the possibility of a clot! I am fine now, and the final assessment was that I likely pulled some muscles and was having severe muscle spasms.

Two days later, I was injured when I was hit on the head by a falling, full Yeti water bottle. A small laceration on the side of my head required yet another visit to the doctor. Again, no long-lasting effect, just a small cut, but it decidedly took me out of the workout mode for another week.

Why am I telling you this? So you can learn from my mistakes, of course. First, take care of yourself. Listen to what your body is telling you and don't be afraid to seek medical help when it's warranted. Second, if you do hurt yourself, slow down and take time to recover. I was so focused on the fitness side of my routine that the pulled muscle worsened because I kept pushing myself. Third, if you are in any type of accident/incident, the most important thing is to heal yourself. The weights and the gym will still be there when you recover. Expect it to be a process to get back into the routine. Fourth, when you are finally able to get back to your routine, take it slowly. You will do more damage if you hit it too hard to fast.

Our goals are always to prolong our lives, to live a healthier lifestyle, and to enjoy the time we have here! Remember, sometimes it helps if you have a partner or coach to support you in your journey as they will help hold you accountable to YOUR goals.



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...

MONEY

Tariffs, Layoffs, Negative GDP, Oh My!

Written by: Charlie Mattingly, MBA, CFP®



It's shaping up to be a fascinating year in the markets already! New president and administration, government layoffs, airline layoffs (SWA), tariffs roiling the U.S. markets and so on.

So, what should you do? How might you invest right now to make sure you're going to be okay whether you are a brand-new first officer or you're preparing for retirement this year? We'll get to this in a moment, but first...

A client and friend texted me the other day: "A retired banker is running around saying market is getting ready for a correction bigger than 2008. Because of tariffs and the new global economy. What should we do?"

Here are a few other headlines that are sure to get your attention:

- Ray Dalio, billionaire and founder of Bridgewater Associates hedge fund, predicts a U.S. debt crisis "Heart Attack" within three years
  - https://awealthofcommonsense.com/2025/03/predicting-a-financial-crisis/
- From the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta:
  - *The GDPNow model estimate for real GDP growth (seasonally adjusted annual rate) in the **first quarter of 2025 is -2.8 percent on March 3, down from -1.5 percent on February 28**. After this morning's releases from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Institute for Supply Management, the Nowcast of first quarter real personal consumption expenditures growth and **real private fixed investment growth fell from 1.3 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively, to 0.0 percent and 0.1 percent.***
  - https://www.atlantafed.org/cqer/research/gdpnow
  - Many of you may know that one of the many criteria for a recession is two consecutive quarters of negative GDP. It appears that we'll have at least one quarter of negative GDP by the time you read this article.
- Chief Economist at Redfin, author and former Academic Advisory Council Member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Daryl Fairweather, Ph.D., recently posted the following on X (formerly Twitter):
  - "*Unless we all wake up from this collective tariffs nightmare, the reality is recession. Recession with inflation which is called stagflation. It's the worst kind of recession, because people lose their jobs and prices stay high along with interest rates.*"

At the beginning of every year and at every point in time within the year there are scary headlines and many people making forecasts that make you want to remove your money from the stock market and get off this crazy roller-coaster ride called investing.

There will never be a time when there is an absence of headlines, events or forecasts that makes you not want to invest. I know that's a lot of double negatives but it's true. To quote Daryl Fairweather, Ph.D. again, she says this about forecasting:

> "What most people get wrong about forecasting: The thing that almost no one understands about forecasting is that almost all forecast models are unfalsifiable. So that means that if I say there is a 10% chance that it's going to rain tomorrow and it doesn't rain, you can't prove whether or not I was wrong. If it does rain, you can't prove whether or not I was wrong, because I said there was at least some probability that it would rain or not rain. And that's how almost all economic forecasting works..."

Let's continue with the weather-forecasting theme. Warren Buffett said he hasn't read an economic or market forecast in over 25 years. "There is no value, they only make weatherman look good."

Now back to the focus of this article; what does this mean for you and what should you do about it?

Here are a few (less-than-ideal) options:

1. Invest in what did the best last year. The S&P 500 was up almost 25%! Surely that would work going forward.

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2. We could look to the retired banker or other prognosticators for advice and simply do what they say. There are some really smart people out there shouting Armageddon from the rooftops already. It seems like if we just did what they said, we'd be okay.

3. Why not just ask Google, Siri or even ChatGPT? Those sources will consolidate all the loudest voices - I mean, best advice.

What makes investing so hard is that we have no idea what the impacts of tariffs will be. We have no idea if the investment that did well last year will continue to outperform all other areas of the global market. And we have no idea what a retired banker means when he says, "the new global economy." In fact, the banker doesn't know either, but it sounds smart.

I'm not sure who gets the credit, but one of my favorite quotes on investing is, "The best investors in the world must be prepared for multiple outcomes." In other words, nobody can accurately predict the future. Therefore, we must invest in multiple strategies at once. Some investing strategies may do really well, depending on how the unknowable future plays out, and other strategies or investments may do poorly. Only in hindsight can we know which ones will thrive.

Below are three steps to ensure that you are a successful investor whether you are a brand-new first officer, or you are on the cusp of airline retirement.

1. I always feel like recommending diversification is such a disappointing strategy.

   I just assume everyone is tired of hearing about it. Plus, it's really not a fun way to invest. In fact, my second favorite investing quote is, "You know you're properly diversified when you want to throw up!"

   Even though you may want to throw up, or fire your advisor, diversification is what allows us to prepare for multiple unknown outcomes at once.

   Last year the S&P 500 returned nearly 25% and a growth-focused index fund almost returned 35%. It's very tempting to try to invest in yesterday's returns. In fact, some experts call this, "investing in the rear-view mirror." I will never criticize any of those strategies because they might work for you. We'll only know in the rear view!

   Interestingly, both investments I mention above are in negative territory as of the writing of this article (early March) and an international index fund is one of the better performing investments so far this year with a year-to-date return of approximately 10%. (Schwab International Equity Index Fund)

2. Maintain focus on your investment game plan and do not use headlines, forecasts or your Google feed to influence your investing decisions.

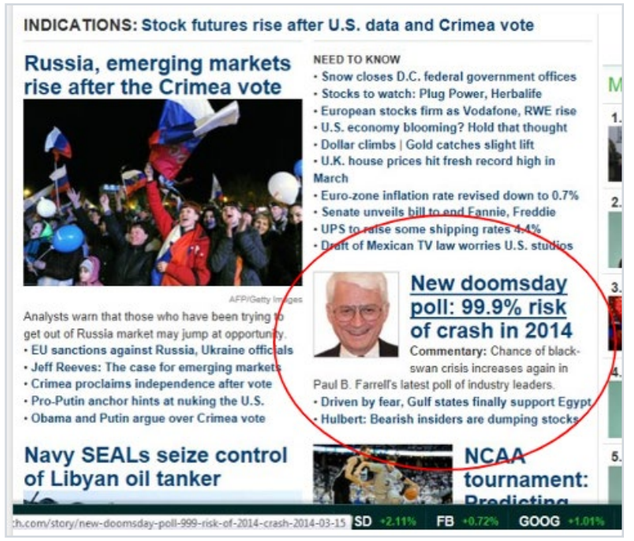
   It sounds obvious but this is really hard. We are bombarded by social media influencers, experts on the news, and even political influences that make us want to change what we're doing. In fact, this influence is happening without us even knowing it. It's almost impossible to turn off the noise. The best thing we can hope to do is acknowledge the noise and treat it as entertainment if you enjoy that sort of content.

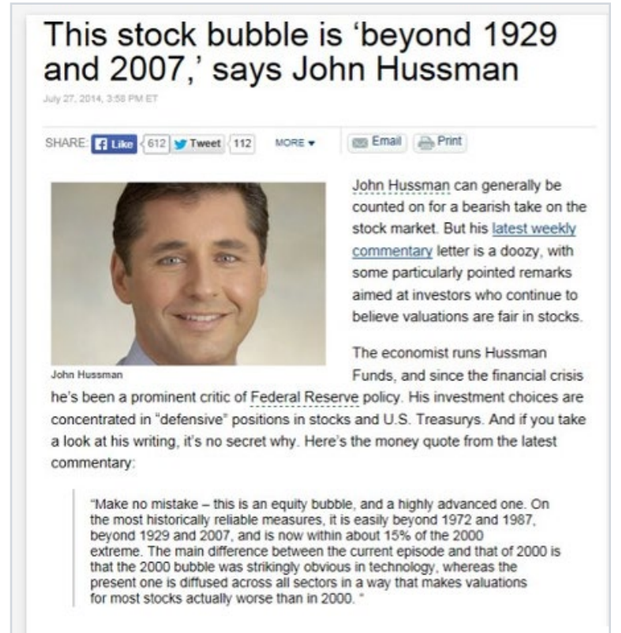
   Can you imagine if you acted on or followed the advice of the following article headlines?

   The screenshots on the right are from MarketWatch.com.

   - March 2014. "New doomsday poll: 99.9% risk of crash in 2014." There were some scary events going on for sure in 2014. Interesting to see the Russia/Ukraine war was brewing long before 2022. And they made a movie about the headline in the bottom left!

   - The second MarketWatch headline screenshot is from a few months later in July 2014. John Hussman is a highly respected economist and head of Hussman Strategic Advisors.





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By the way, the S&P 500 returned nearly 14% in 2014!

Neither John Hussman nor Paul B. Farrell lost any money from writing those articles for MarketWatch in 2014. Both are still in the business of writing books and managing investments. However, if you took action based on their articles, you could have lost a significant amount of your retirement nest egg.

3. Understand the quality of your information, where it comes from and use extreme caution for the **confirmation bias**.

Here's a definition of confirmation bias from Britannica.com: *Confirmation bias; people's tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with their existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision making is largely unintentional, and it results in a person ignoring information that is inconsistent with their beliefs. These beliefs can include a person's expectations in a given situation and their predictions about a particular outcome. People are especially likely to process information to support their own beliefs when an issue is highly important or self-relevant.*

My Google and YouTube feeds are filled with financial articles, sports scores and headlines. Google and Meta design algorithms to keep me scrolling through Google and using YouTube as a go-to source of information or even stalking my friends on Instagram. And I kind of like it! (Full disclosure, I'm not on Instagram and I know nothing about it. So, I'm not actually sure you can stalk your friends on Instagram!)

There's nothing inherently wrong with these algorithms because Google wants to get the content in front of me that I like to click on the most. This is how they get their advertisements in front of me so they can get paid by their customers.

However, just type this in your Google search if you want to learn why you should use caution and how those algorithms might feed your confirmation bias; "Do Facebook and Instagram have algorithms that promote confirmation bias?"

Here's one sample from SkillFloor.com's article "Impact of Social Media Algorithms on User Behavior":

"Social Media Algorithms tend to show you content that aligns with your existing beliefs and opinions. While this can be comforting, it also creates echo chambers where you only see one side of an argument. This confirmation bias can lead to a skewed perception of reality and hinder critical thinking."

I believe that if you work these three principles into your investing philosophy it will go a long way towards ensuring a successful investing experience regardless of where you are on your investment and professional-pilot journey.

In summary, it takes a lot of discipline to maintain your portfolio diversification. Do not listen to predictions or forecasts, regardless of the source. There are studies that show you may be better off flipping a coin to predict the future of economic and financial markets. And finally, use extreme caution and discretion about the source of your financial information—it's everywhere and most of it doesn't apply to your financial situation!

Hopefully, you found this article interesting and helpful. If you have any questions, contact us at 865-240-2292 or Charlie@leadingedgeplanning.com.

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About the Author

Charlie Mattingly a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional, is a first officer for Southwest Airlines based in Atlanta. Read More...

BUSINESS VECTOR

On Pilot Hiring and Price Fixing

Written By: Christopher M. Broyhill, Ph.D., CAM



Following are a few random discussion topics for this month based on some observations I've made and ongoing discussions on my LinkedIn feed. If you're reading this and we're not connected on LinkedIn, make the connection request and I'll accept it. I take all connection requests from folks in the aviation industry, regardless of what sector they're in.

Coming Out of the Eye

Back in the COVID heyday of pilot hiring, I frequently mentioned that the business aviation was in a perfect storm hiring-wise. Competition for a limited pool of qualified pilots drove compensation rates skyward, and business aviation operators struggled to attract and retain personnel.

Then came the perceived lull—delays in aircraft deliveries slowed airline hiring and business aviation slowed as aircraft sales decreased and those who bought aircraft during the COVID frenzy began to rethink their expenditure. But during this timeframe, several things happened. The pilot unions for nearly every major airline landed contracts for increased compensation. NetJets' pilots' union landed a contract raising compensation 52.5% over a multi-year period, and compensation for business aviation professionals rose 16% over the two-year period from 2022 to 2024. These events begged the question: why were wages still increasing if the demand was decreasing?

The answer is that the conditions that created the demand were still in the background and those who were paying attention saw that. They knew the demand would return in time. And now, we're seeing signs that pilot demand is again increasing – signs that we're coming out of the eye of the hiring storm.
In early March, business jet broker Jetcraft predicted 5.8% annual growth in pre-owned business aviation transactions through 2029, a total of 11,202 transactions worth almost $74 billion (Alcock, 2025). Nearly all bizjet OEMs have record delivery backlogs, most notably Gulfstream's G700 with a 20-unit backlog from 2024 that will feed into 2025 (Lynch, 2025).
A previous article in ACN indicated that the major airlines will be hiring 500 – 800 pilots each in 2025, while this is a slower rate than initially planned due to lingering aircraft delivery delays, it still creates demand – a demand that will continue to increase as Boeing gets back on its feet and mandatory retirements occur.

The eye of the pilot hiring storm is fleeting, folks. Those who are wise will act and prepare appropriately.

Pay Discussions and Federal Law

It can start with innocent intentions.
Maybe two aviation managers are at the local watering hole and talking about their retention problems.
"I guess we're not paying our captains enough," one of them may say.
The other may respond "Well, you fly the same types we do, what are you paying them? We're paying them $265,000 and we're not having any issues."
"Oh wow," says the first manager, "I guess we need to up our game. We're only paying $240,000." "
Just don't go any higher than $265,000," the second replies, "maybe $270,000 if you have to. We don't want to drive pay up any higher than it needs to be."

What starts out as a simple pay discussion can violate federal law if two or more companies competing for the same candidates discuss specific pay rates for particular jobs in real time. But it can get worse. Have you ever heard of aviation managers in a specific airport or a metro area getting together to discuss pay rates? Or informal surveys being conducted by aviation managers to poll their competitors about pay rates? That scenario is definitely a violation of federal law, particularly the Sherman Antitrust Act.

The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 was passed as the U.S. entered the industrial age and large corporations attempted to monopolize entire industries. A key focus of the act is anti-competitive price fixing. It prohibits agreements, combinations, or conspiracies that restrain trade. Any agreement to fix prices or the use of wage surveys in a manner that encourages agreement on wage levels violates the act (World at Work, 2025).
During the 1990's, a term called "safe harbor" was introduced and outlined specific practices to minimize potential harm to competition.

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These practices include:

- A third party must administer compensation surveys;
- Information provided by participants should be based on data that is at least three months old;
- At least five organizations should be represented in a benchmark;
- No individual provider should represent more than 25% of the benchmark population; and
- Benchmarks and statistics should be sufficiently aggregated to prevent identifying contributions of any single organization ((World at Work, 2025).

If you've ever been frustrated about the timeliness of compensation data, now you know why it's always old. It must be at least three months old to avoid real-time price fixing.

If you're an aviation manager and you've ever participated in discussions like the one above or engaged in one of those "around the field" surveys, in the eyes of the federal government, you've engaged in a conspiracy. If an employee had reported you for it, you could have been investigated by the U.S. DOJ, the enforcing federal agency for antitrust crimes. So, my advice here is simple: don't do it.

By the way, non-poaching agreements violate the Sherman Anti-Trust Act as well, because they too reduce competition. So, if you have any of those "gentlemen's agreements" in place with other operators at your field or in your area where you mutually agree that you won't hire personnel away from each other, you're violating federal law. All it takes is one disgruntled employee or candidate to make the effort to report it and the DOJ might be paying you a visit.

Words to the wise. More next month.

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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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PALS SkyHope: 15 Years of Changing Lives Through the Power of Flight

For fifteen years, PALS SkyHope has been a beacon of hope for those in need, bridging the gap between patients and life-saving medical care through the generosity of volunteer pilots. Since its inception, PALS SkyHope has soared to new heights, completing over 34,000 flights and serving thousands of families facing serious medical challenges. As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, we reflect on the remarkable journeys, the selfless dedication of our pilots, and the lives transformed through the power of aviation.

The Birth of a Mission

Fifteen years ago, a group of pilots recognized an urgent need: patients across the country struggled to reach specialized medical treatment due to financial constraints and geographic barriers. These pilots understood that their love of flying could serve a greater purpose, and thus, PALS SkyHope was born. What started as a small initiative has now blossomed into nearly a nationwide network of compassionate aviators committed to making a difference.

From the beginning, the mission was simple yet profound—ensure that distance is never a barrier to medical care. PALS SkyHope has since expanded its services beyond patient transport, providing flights for veterans, disaster relief efforts, and humanitarian missions. This spirit of giving has defined the organization and continues to drive its growth and success.

Theresa's Journey: A Veteran's Path to Independence

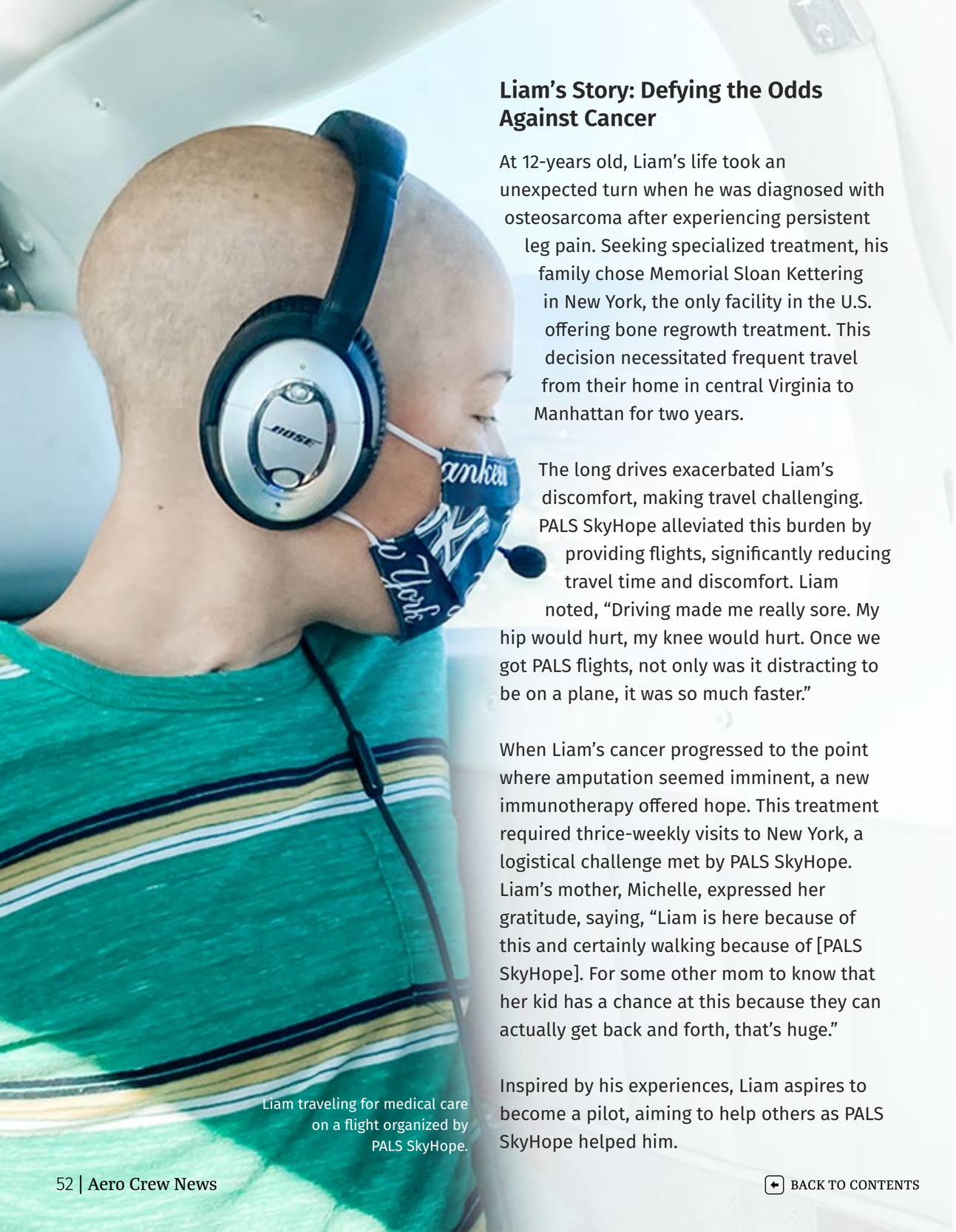
During her service in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Theresa sustained severe injuries, including orthopedic trauma, traumatic brain injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Seeking to regain her independence, she applied for a mobility service dog from America's VetDogs, a Smithtown-based nonprofit that provides service dogs to veterans and first responders with disabilities. Theresa was matched with Oscar, a service dog specifically trained to assist her with daily mobility tasks such as walking, negotiating stairs, retrieving items, and providing positional cues to alert her if someone is approaching from behind. Oscar also offers comfort during loud noises like thunder.

Days before her scheduled flight to New York to meet Oscar, Theresa's plans were jeopardized when Ohio, her home state, was added to New York's quarantine list, requiring a 14-day isolation period. Unable to accommodate the quarantine, Theresa faced the prospect of losing her opportunity to receive Oscar, as the service dog would be assigned to the next veteran on the list. Recognizing the urgency, PALS SkyHope intervened, arranging a flight that allowed Theresa to meet Oscar without the need for quarantine. Reflecting on the experience, Theresa stated, "Being united with my service dog is paramount in gaining independence both at home and in the community."



Theresa and her VetDog Oscar

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Liam traveling for medical care on a flight organized by PALS SkyHope.

Liam's Story: Defying the Odds Against Cancer

At 12-years old, Liam's life took an unexpected turn when he was diagnosed with osteosarcoma after experiencing persistent leg pain. Seeking specialized treatment, his family chose Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York, the only facility in the U.S. offering bone regrowth treatment. This decision necessitated frequent travel from their home in central Virginia to Manhattan for two years.

The long drives exacerbated Liam's discomfort, making travel challenging. PALS SkyHope alleviated this burden by providing flights, significantly reducing travel time and discomfort. Liam noted, "Driving made me really sore. My hip would hurt, my knee would hurt. Once we got PALS flights, not only was it distracting to be on a plane, it was so much faster."

When Liam's cancer progressed to the point where amputation seemed imminent, a new immunotherapy offered hope. This treatment required thrice-weekly visits to New York, a logistical challenge met by PALS SkyHope. Liam's mother, Michelle, expressed her gratitude, saying, "Liam is here because of this and certainly walking because of [PALS SkyHope]. For some other mom to know that her kid has a chance at this because they can actually get back and forth, that's huge."

Inspired by his experiences, Liam aspires to become a pilot, aiming to help others as PALS SkyHope helped him.

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The Heart of PALS SkyHope: Volunteer Pilots

PALS SkyHope pilots are volunteer aviators who dedicate their time, aircraft, and resources to flying patients and their families to medical care, transporting veterans to support programs, and assisting others in need of critical transportation.

PALS SkyHope pilots often develop strong bonds with the patients they fly, as they become a consistent source of support in their journey to treatment. Many pilots fly the same passengers repeatedly over the years, forming meaningful connections. One such example is Mark Hanson, who has been flying a longtime PALS SkyHope passenger Piper, since she was a newborn. Now eight-years old, she has completed 38 flights with PALS SkyHope to receive treatment for a rare cardiovascular disease. These relationships showcase the heart of PALS SkyHope's mission—not just providing transportation but offering compassion and care along the way.

PALS SkyHope pilots are the backbone of the organization's mission, giving their time and resources to help those in need. In recognition of their dedication, pilots are honored annually at PALS SkyHope galas for their outstanding contributions. Their efforts are also celebrated through social media, newsletters, and other communications to highlight the profound impact they have on the lives of those they serve. PALS SkyHope is proud to recognize and support the pilots who make these life-changing flights possible.









Transforming Lives, One Flight at a Time

PALS SkyHope plays a critical role in removing social determinants of health by providing vital air transportation to individuals who face barriers to accessing medical care. Social determinants of health—such as transportation, income, and access to healthcare—significantly affect a person's well-being and the ability to receive necessary treatments. By addressing these barriers, PALS SkyHope ensures that patients, especially those with chronic or life-threatening conditions, are not restricted in their ability to access specialized care.

Transportation is one of the most significant social determinants that many patients struggle with, especially those in rural or underserved areas and those with lower incomes. For individuals who need to travel long distances to receive treatment, the physical toll of driving long hours or the inability to afford commercial flights can prevent them from receiving timely care. PALS SkyHope alleviates this challenge by offering free, charitable flights, ensuring that patients can get to hospitals and medical centers without the added stress and financial strain. By removing the need for expensive travel options, PALS SkyHope removes a significant barrier to healthcare access, allowing patients to prioritize their health rather than worrying about logistics or costs to focus on their health and recovery without being held back by financial limitations.

Access to healthcare facilities is often limited in remote or rural areas. People in these locations frequently find themselves needing to travel to urban centers for specialized treatments. By providing air transportation, PALS SkyHope effectively bridges this gap, bringing patients from areas with limited access to advanced medical care to those facilities where they can receive the treatment they need. This not only increases access to essential services but also ensures that patients are not left behind because of geographical location. Furthermore, connecting patients to necessary care through air transportation enhances their overall health outcomes. When patients can receive treatment promptly, they are more likely to recover successfully. For those requiring frequent visits, such as for cancer treatment or specialized surgeries, having reliable, free transportation ensures that their treatment schedule is uninterrupted, helping to avoid setbacks and improving their long-term health prospects.

Offering these services at no cost, PALS SkyHope strengthens the social safety net and fosters an equitable healthcare environment. Access to healthcare should not be a privilege reserved for those with resources; it should be a universal right. PALS SkyHope helps level the playing field, ensuring that patients from all walks of life can get the care they need. This makes a significant impact on the overall health of communities by improving health outcomes and promoting wellness, particularly among vulnerable populations.



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Finally, PALS SkyHope's work helps build social capital in the communities it serves. By partnering with pilots, volunteers, and donors, the organization fosters a sense of unity and collective responsibility. People from all backgrounds come together to ensure that patients receive the care they deserve, breaking down barriers not just in healthcare access but in social division. This communal effort strengthens communities and helps create a more equitable and inclusive healthcare landscape, where everyone has a chance at optimal health. Through these efforts, PALS SkyHope removes many of the social determinants of health that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, helping to create a more equitable and healthier society for all.

Expanding Horizons: PALS SkyHope's Growth and Achievements

PALS SkyHope has experienced tremendous growth, thanks to its strategic partnerships with foundations, major donors, and airline partners. These collaborations have been essential in expanding the organization's reach and increasing its impact. PALS SkyHope's robust grant-writing program plays a key role in filling funding gaps, helping to ensure the organization's sustainability and positioning it for rapid scalability.

The success of PALS SkyHope is also evident in its vibrant community of supporters, whose contributions directly support life-changing missions. The organization is participating in several high-profile marathons, including the NYC, Tokyo, and Marine Corps Marathons, to further engage with its community and raise funds.

Looking Ahead: The Future of PALS SkyHope

As PALS SkyHope celebrates its 15-year milestone, the organization reflects on a decade and a half of unwavering commitment to those in need of free medical, humanitarian, and veteran flights. Since its founding, PALS SkyHope has flown thousands of missions, easing the burden for families facing serious illness, veterans seeking medical care, and those impacted by disasters. Now, the focus shifts to the future—ensuring that even more people receive the life-changing transportation they deserve.

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PALS SkyHope Goals

- **Recruiting More Volunteer Pilots** – Volunteer pilots are the heart of PALS SkyHope. As demand for flights grows, so does the need for dedicated aviators willing to donate their time, skills, and aircraft. The organization is committed to increasing pilot outreach efforts, engaging with aviation communities, and fostering mentorship programs to encourage more pilots to take to the skies for a cause.

- **Increasing Flight Capacity** – No patient should ever be turned away due to a lack of available flights. PALS SkyHope aims to expand its flight capacity by not only growing its pilot network but also through strengthening relationships with airline partners, corporate sponsors, and donors who can help fund mission-critical operations.

- **Strengthening Partnerships** – Collaboration is key to reaching more patients. PALS SkyHope is actively working to build and enhance partnerships with hospitals, medical centers, social workers, and nonprofit organizations that serve critically ill patients, veterans, and those in need of disaster relief. By strengthening these connections, the organization ensures that more people become aware of and gain access to free air transportation.

- **Raising Awareness About Public-Benefit Flying** – The impact of public-benefit flying is profound, yet many people—both in the aviation world and beyond—are unaware of the difference it can make or that it even exists. PALS SkyHope is dedicated to educating the public, engaging with the next generation of pilots, and sharing powerful stories that highlight the impact of its work. Through media outreach, digital storytelling, and community engagement, the organization aims to inspire more people to support and participate in this mission.



A Milestone Celebration

A major highlight of the 15th anniversary celebration will be PALS SkyHope's 'Soaring Together' Long Island Gala on May 8, 2025, at the Cradle of Aviation Museum. This special evening will bring together the pilots, supporters, and patients who have been instrumental in shaping the organization's journey. Guests will hear inspiring stories, celebrate the achievements of volunteer pilots, and contribute to the future of PALS SkyHope. The gala will serve as both a moment of reflection on past successes and a launching point for the next chapter—one filled with even greater impact, innovation, and hope.

As PALS SkyHope looks to the future, one thing remains clear: the mission is soaring higher than ever. With the support of pilots, donors, and partners, the organization is ready to take on new challenges, expand its reach, and ensure that every patient who needs a flight gets one.

Join the Mission

PALS SkyHope's 15-year journey has been one of compassion, resilience, and unwavering commitment to helping others. But the mission is far from over. Whether you're a pilot looking to lend your wings, a donor eager to make a difference, or a supporter ready to spread the word, there's a place for everyone in this incredible movement.

As we look to the skies and the future ahead, we are reminded that hope has no boundaries. PALS SkyHope will continue to soar, ensuring that every patient who needs a flight will always have a way to reach the care they deserve.

Learn more at www.skyhope.org

PALS SkyHope





How You Can Join the Mission

To become a PALS SkyHope pilot, individuals must meet specific flight experience requirements and provide necessary documentation, including a pilot's license, medical certificate, and insurance. Once selected, they will go through an orientation with PALS SkyHope's pilot-relationship manager to familiarize themselves with the organization's mission, procedures, and expectations. Once approved, they can begin selecting flights that align with their schedule, aircraft type, and preferred routes.

How it Works

After accepting a mission, pilots work closely with PALS SkyHope mission coordinators to arrange logistics, ensuring they pick up patients at an airport that works best for both pilot and passenger.

On the day of the flight, the pilot meets the patient and any accompanying companions at the designated airport then provides a free, safe, and comfortable flight to the airport closest to their treatment center. PALS SkyHope also covers the cost of ground transportation to and from the airport ensuring a seamless journey for the patient, alleviating fin ancial and logistical barriers in accessing medical care.

After landing, the pilot will submit a brief post-flight report and can choose to accept additional missions based on availability.



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