May 2024

@Aero Crew News

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May 2024

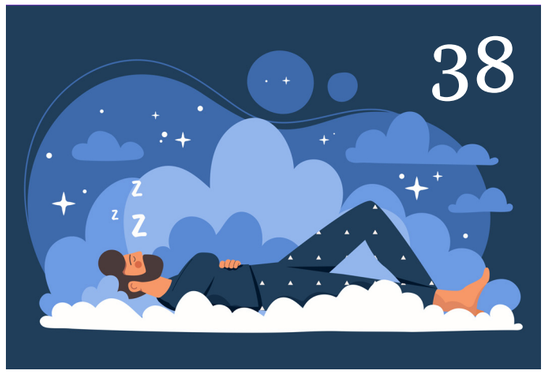
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JetBlue Airways

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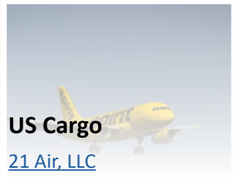
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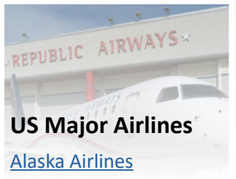
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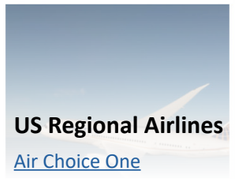
JetBlue Airways

Southwest Airlines

Spirit Airlines

Sun Country Airlines

United Airlines



US Regional Airlines

Air Choice One

Air Wisconsin

Cape Air

CommutAir

Elite Airways

Endeavor Air

Envoy

GoJet Airlines

Grant Aviation

Horizon Air

Key Lime Air

Mesa Airlines

‘Ohana by Hawaiian

Piedmont Airlines

PSA Airlines

RavnAir Group

Republic Airways

Silver Airways

Skywest Airlines

Star Mania Air, Inc.

US Cargo Regional

Alpine Air

Empire Airlines

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,

One of the reasons I became an airline pilot was because I love to travel. Seeing different cities, countries, cultures and sceneries was inspired in me by my parents while growing up in an airline family. I was very fortunate to have had that as a child and to be able to continue that as an adult.

There is a negative aspect of traveling for a living and that is missing family events, birthdays, holidays, etc. Our homes away from home are the hotels where we stay. Being made to feel welcome and valued is huge for us as we check in to our “home” for the evening.

The company I work for partnered with a major hotel brand and we usually stay with that hotel chain while at work. Most hotel brands, like all large corporations, have a loyalty program to encourage customers to stay with them on future visits. Some hotels will give their guest pilots credits and/or points if they purchase a meal or drinks at the hotels’ restaurants and charge it to the room, but most will not. But for corporate pilots, all hotels will give stay credits and points regardless of whether they purchase food there or not.

So why the big difference between what we get depending on for whom we fly? My understanding is that the airlines provide a lot more pilots and flight attendants staying at the same hotel every night which translates to higher guaranteed occupancy. The airlines are therefore able to negotiate a lower rate. The flipside is that crew members are not credited with the stay because the hotel hasn’t budgeted their rewards-program costs into what they charge the airlines. For a corporate flight crew, often there too few stays to put the company in a position to negotiate with a hotel. Those companies are paying a higher rate and have no problem crediting each stay to the occupant of the room.

A friend of mine just shared his company’s hotels policy with me. He remediates kindly by telling them that If the hotel doesn’t offer airline pilots stay credits or points, he will not be buying any food or drink at their hotel. He reports that at least one hotel manager has inquired of him, “Is that why pilots don’t eat here?” Yep!

Fly Safe,

Craig D. Pieper

Craig D. Pieper



About the Publisher

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

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April 2024

What you may have missed in April

Feature – Read this inspiring story of Captain Eric Gaffney triumph over his physical difference and how he inspires children to never give up on their aspirations despite their differences.

Baggage – Is being a pilot too large a part of your identity? Perhaps you need better balance.

Business Vector – Is the high demand for pilots waning? Our expert shares his insights.

Fitness Corner – Spring into action with a deliberate approach to your fitness.

Food Bites – Within walking distance of SEATAC, the gem that is Sharp’s RoastHouse can’t disappoint.

Grey Matter – The final installment of Disaster on the Road provides tips to help you be prepared.

Knowledge Base – Here, you’ll find fuel for thought about fuel management.

Love Flying – Bangkok, Thailand offers amazing sights, smells, tastes and smiles from its warm people.

Money – Explore your options when considering what to do with your Thrift Savings Plan.

Mortgage – Understanding what drives interest rates can help you gauge when it’s best to buy or refinance.

Perspectives – There is knowledge to be gained outside the cockpit, too.



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AVIATOR BULLETINS



Airbus reports First Quarter (Q1) 2024 results

Airbus SE reported consolidated financial results for its First Quarter (Q1) ended 31 March 2024. "We delivered first quarter 2024 results against the backdrop of an operating environment that shows no sign of improvement. Geopolitical and supply chain tensions continue... Read More



Alaska Airlines expands presence in Southern California with new routes and increased service to popular West Coast destinations

Alaska Airlines is expanding service at two of its major hubs in Southern California with new routes and additional capacity to popular West Coast destinations as part of the carrier's ongoing commitment to...Read More



No More Stalled Negotiations: Tell Congress to Stand Up for Our Rights

Over 100,000 Flight Attendants have been in drawn-out negotiations across the industry. Without the credible threat of a strike, management across our industry is perfectly happy to prolong negotiations for years and delay paying for the...Read More



Private Pilot Maneuvers Course Will Save Student Pilots Time & Money on Their Private Pilot Journey

Student Pilots working toward their Private Pilot certificate have a new course available to help them achieve their goals and to be safer, more confident Private Pilots. King Schools has just released...Read More

Southwest Airlines Reports First Quarter 2024 Results

Bob Jordan, President and Chief Executive Officer, stated, "While it is disappointing to incur a first quarter loss, we exited the quarter with healthy profits and margins in the month of March.. Read More



American Airlines reports first-quarter 2024 financial results

American Airlines Group Inc. reported its first-quarter 2024 financial results, including: Record first-quarter revenue of approximately $12.6 billion...Read More

AVIATOR BULLETINS



Embraer backlog reached the highest level over past 7 years and deliveries increased 67% in 1Q24

Embraer delivered 25 jets in 1Q24, an increase of 67% compared to the 15 aircraft delivered in 1Q23. Executive Aviation showed robust delivery growth, soaring from 8 to 18 jets...Read More



Breeze Announces New Service from Westchester, Myrtle Beach, Portland, Raleigh-Durham, Akron-Canton, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and West Palm Beach; And Returns Seasonal Routes from Norfolk and Jacksonville

Breeze Airways, the U.S.' only NLCC, or 'Nice Low Cost Carrier,' announced that it will be introducing five new routes.
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Delta Releases 2024 Most-Searched Summer Destinations

Delta is running its largest international schedule ever this summer – and our customers are ready to see the world.
Read More



JetBlue Elevates Seamless Living in the Sky with Blueprint by JetBlue™: A Personalized Inflight Experience

JetBlue announced Blueprint by JetBlue™, a personalized inflight experience platform that will provide customers with more customizability across their travel journey, beginning with new inflight entertainment features, some of which have never... Read More



JetBlue Pilots Mark 10 Years as Union Pilots

JetBlue ALPA pilots marked the tenth anniversary of their successful organizing campaign to join the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l—the world's largest airline pilot union. JetBlue pilots were the first employee group at the airline to have union representation... Read More



Boeing Reports First Quarter Results

The Boeing Company recorded first quarter revenue of $16.6 billion, GAAP loss per share of ($0.56) and core loss per share (non-GAAP)* of ($1.13). Boeing reported operating cash flow of ($3.4) billion and free cash flow of ($3.9) billion (non-GAAP)*. Results primarily reflect lower commercial delivery volume. Read More



Frontier Airlines Announces New Service from San Juan to Barbados and Santiago, Dominican Republic, Plus Charlotte to Miami

Ultra-low fare carrier Frontier Airlines will launch nonstop service between Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in San Juan (SJU) and Cibao International Airport in Santiago de los Caballero...Read More



airBaltic Introduces Additional Pop-Up Flights for Summer

Riga. The Latvian airline airBaltic has announced that it will operate additional special pop-up flights this summer season, serving the increased passenger demand to selected destinations for a specific period of time. Read More

Epic Flight Academy Opens Aircraft Mechanic School at CVG Airport

Epic Flight Academy opened its 32,000-square-foot, $8 million aircraft mechanic school on the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport's (CVG) campus. Staff, students, and guests celebrated the opening of the new FAA Part 147-certified school... Read More



airBaltic and Tez Tour Latvia to Continue Their Extensive Cooperation

Riga. airBaltic, the national airline of Latvia, together with the tour operator Tez Tour Latvia, is delighted to announce an extension of their on-going collaboration. This partnership, which includes 12 popular destinations among Latvian travelers such as Spain, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria...Read More



Alaska Air Group reports first quarter 2024 results

Alaska Air Group reported financial results for the first quarter ending March 31, 2024, and provided outlook for the second quarter ending June 30, 2024. Read More



2024 King Schools' National Association of Flight Instructors Scholarship Winner Announced

When Eric Heigis was a teenager, he learned the value of a dollar. He also quickly learned just how many dollars it would take to fulfill an aviation dream.... Read More

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ALPA President Statement in Response to Senate Boeing Hearings

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, president of the Air Line Pilots Association Int'l (ALPA), issued the following statement following the United States Senate hearings on Boeing safety practices... Read More



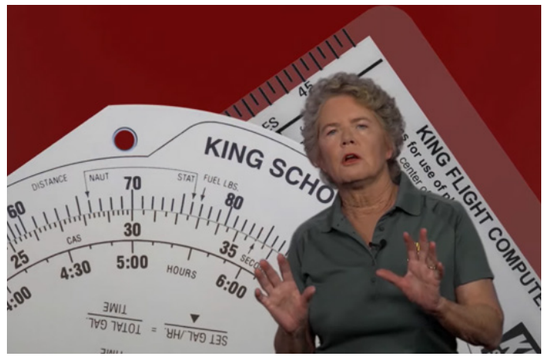
United Airlines Announces First-Quarter 2024 Financial Results; Exceeds Revenue and EPS Expectations

United Airlines reported first-quarter 2024 financial results. The company had a pre-tax loss of $164 million, a $92 million improvement over the same quarter last year; adjusted pre-tax loss1 of $79 million, a $187 million improvement...Read More



Reimagined onboard experience with American Airlines takes off with launch of new amenities, elevated dining and more

American Airlines is heating up the inflight experience ahead of the summer travel season with a wave of premium onboard enhancements to make travel even more enjoyable. Read More



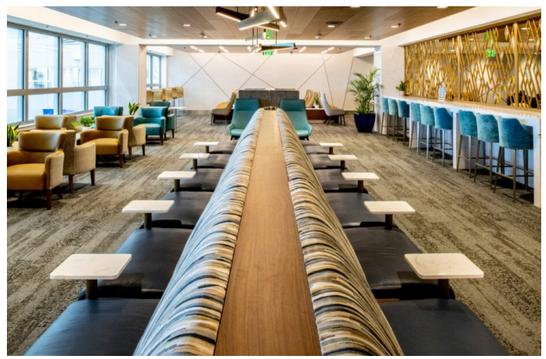
The E6B Flight Computer Made Easy

There are many digitally savvy Student Pilots who still struggle to comprehend and use a manually operated E6B flight computer. In the new, free King Schools course How to Use Your E6B Flight Computer, Martha King simplifies and teaches how to master the infamous "Wiz Wheel".
Read More



Photographer of "History's Most Amazing" Eclipse Photo Has Done It Again

Photographer Jon Carmichael is known for capturing a famous photograph of the 2017 solar eclipse. Back then, he took that shot from a commercial Southwest Airlines flight.
Read More



Delta Sky Club levels up in Miami with major lounge expansion

Delta Sky Club raised the curtain on its newly expanded Miami lounge. With the addition of nearly 4,000 square feet and 100-plus seats to the Club—a capacity increase of more than 50%— the Club now stands at just over 12,000 total square feet, ready to welcome around 300 guests. Read More

AVIATOR BULLETINS



Delta Air Lines Announces March Quarter 2024 Financial Results

Delta Air Lines reported financial results for the March quarter and provided its outlook for the June quarter. Highlights of the March quarter, including both GAAP and adjusted metrics, are on page five and incorporated here. Read More



First E-Jet converted to transport cargo aircraft makes its debut

The first E190F, a converted jet from passenger transport to freighter (E-Freighter), has successfully completed its first flight in São José dos Campos, Brazil. The Embraer team flew the E-Freighter jet for around two hours, carrying out a complete evaluation of the aircraft.... Read More



Embraer and Horizon Air sign agreement for Collaborative Inventory Planning

Embraer and Horizon Air signed a contract for the Embraer Collaborative Inventory Planning (ECIP), a customized expendables spare parts inventory management program designed to help customers reduce operational costs by optimizing inventory levels. Read More



JetBlue Expands Transatlantic Service to Paris With Launch of Daily Nonstop Flight From Boston

JetBlue announced it has expanded its Paris service with its inaugural flight from Boston, which departed from Boston Logan International Airport (BOS). JetBlue's new flight between Boston and Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport... Read More



Breeze Airways Marks Major Milestone in March, Announcing First Full Month of Operating Profit

Breeze Airways, the airline industry's only 'NLCC', or 'Nice Low-Cost Carrier,' reported an operating profit for March, a major milestone for the fast-growing startup airline. Read More



Frontier Airlines Announces New Routes, Expanding Operations Across 12 Airports

Ultra-low fare carrier Frontier Airlines will launch nonstop service from various airports across the U.S. in June and July of 2024, to destinations spanning the East Coast to West Coast and Pacific Northwest to the Southeast. Read More

AVIATOR BULLETINS



Your Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan miles go farther with Global Getaways

Eager to get even more bang with your Mileage Plan miles? Alaska Airlines has just the ticket with Global Getaways. We're offering savings of up to 50% on award redemptions to select international destinations with us and our global...Read More



JetBlue Pilots Open Negotiations for a New Contract

This week, JetBlue Airways pilots, represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), served written notice to JetBlue Airways of their intent to open negotiations for a successor collective bargaining agreement (CBA), pursuant to Section 6 of the Railway Labor Act (RLA). Read More



American Airlines, Make-A-Wish® and Disney host Wish Flight in support of 28 children battling critical illnesses

American Airlines, Make-A-Wish and Disney will grant the wishes of children battling critical illnesses in celebration of World Wish Month. On April 17, 28 wish families will board the Wish Flight and fly on a one-of-a-kind... Read More



Brazilian Navy and Embraer sign innovation partnership agreement

The Brazilian Navy and Embraer have signed a partnership agreement for mutual support in research, development and innovation. The cooperation aims to develop on-board Surface Search and Coastal Surveillance Radars, with an increase in the maturity of the Gaivota X Radar. Read More



ALPA Applauds DOT's Commitment to Safety, Two-Person Crews

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, president of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), issued the following statement after the Department of Transportation (DOT) announced a mandate requiring most freight and passenger railroads... Read More



FedEx Pilots Statement Regarding United States Postal Service Contract

The FedEx Master Executive Council (MEC) of the Air Line Pilots Association Int'l (ALPA) issued the following statement following the announcement by FedEx Corporation that negotiations to extend its agreement to provide domestic... Read More

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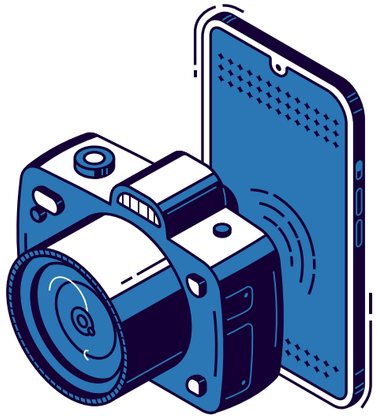


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AERO CREW NEWS

2024 Photo Contest

Theme: Vintage Aircraft

AND THE WINNERS ARE:

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Grand Prize Winner

Enduring the Storm: C-118 Stands Strong

PHOTO BY TODD K.



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

First Runner-Up

The C-118 Weathers the Storm

Photo by Todd K.



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

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Second Runner-Up

Paradise Found

Photo by Dustin B.



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

Third Runner-Up

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

PHOTO BY JEREMY B.



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

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

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Rural Alaskan Lifeline

PHOTO BY PATRICK S.



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

Goose Landing

PHOTO BY CARL M.



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



Lucky Liz

Photo by Scott P.

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

Vintage 767 Departure

Photo by Jacob E.

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





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

Photo by Casper W.

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

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The most perfect 120

Photo by Sada W.



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

Good Morning Montana

Photo by Rob G.



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

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

Photo by Courtney R.



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

Honorable Mention

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

PHOTO BY RICKY M.



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

Ascot A400 Thunders into Portsmouth!

PHOTO BY LUCAS R.



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

Master of the Sea and Air: PBY Catalina

PHOTO BY BRANDON M.



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

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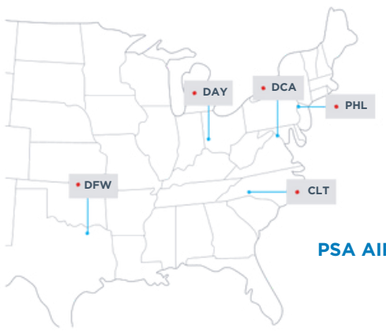


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Witnessing the World's Beauty Through Flight

Written by: John McDermott

After the lunar eclipse last month, many pilots posted stills and videos from the air that they had taken. This media received considerable attention thanks to the eclipse's spectacle. These events come at most once every few years, and it will be decades before the next one reaches the United States.

This is a great example of a time when the beauty of the world can be best appreciated from our aviation angle. But many pilots, myself included, often ignore the ways aviation allows us access to the world's beauty every day. Granted, it can be fairly easy to neglect the scenery and environment around us. Many pilots, especially professionals, often fly within the same regions, and as a flight instructor, I see the same lakes near the same airport multiple times per day. Engrossed in the business of a jet's cockpit or in a training flight in a Cessna, focus is drawn inward instead of outward. Too seldom is the natural environment truly admired and appreciated.

What is equally easy to forget is how much of a privilege it is to be able to fly in the first place. In the history of mankind, flight is still a relatively new concept, and its accessibility is only growing. Yet various barriers stand in the way of becoming a pilot, not the least of which are the stresses and pressures of completing training. Being under such pressure shifts the focus of new pilots during the training process and often makes the simple act of flying seem mundane.

I am always impressed by the awe new students show when I take them on discovery flights. I have also witnessed residents of the area do a double take upon seeing their homes from the sky for the first time. I wish all my students could appreciate how incredible flight is in the midst of their training. I lost that wonder myself during my flying journey, but being able to vicariously experience first-time flights again through new students is a pleasure I savor. It is beautiful, after all, to look out over the lakes and forests near my home base and remember how vast, beautiful, and detailed the world really is.

One of the first things I tell students to do when they pass a checkride is to use the privileges of their new certificate. I suggest they take themselves flying for fun and to bring family and friends along. Their time for more training will come but being able to simply enjoy the world – and share it with those who are most important – makes aviation a greater pleasure.

Aviation does not only provide easy access to the world's physical beauty, it also brings people together and creates shared experience not otherwise possible. Pilots fly together, friends travel together, and enthusiasts gather to take pictures and attend shows. Beyond connecting people to the world, aviation brings the world to even the smallest places. Many of my best friendships have been borne from a shared love for flight, and I am incredibly lucky for the relationships I have built since becoming a pilot.

Aviation itself is beautiful. Many in the industry are so accustomed to tons of metal lifting into the air that it is all so routine. I believe it is important to appreciate the ingenuity, brilliance, and sacrifice that have gone into designing, building, and flying each aircraft, the logistics of building even the smallest airports, and the intricacies of the national airspace system. The fact that so many flights take off and land each day without problems is an amazing balance of physical power and incredible respect for what it takes. Decades of design and reform have created a fully formed industry that provides the world access in safety.

Aviation combines layers of beauty that are often lost on the people regularly around it. It is easy to forget how awesome the sceneries, relationships, and intricacies of aviation are. Do not let the beauty of flight become lost on you; rather, cherish it with every opportunity you have.



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...

Focus

Written By: Eric Ray



Well, April's Tax Day is behind us and if that isn't a reminder to keep your life in order, I don't know what is. As we move into May and as the summer is fast(er) approaching, now is a good time to consider focusing your attention on your goals. Tony Robbins constantly says (among other coaches and influencers), "Where focus goes, energy flows. And where energy flows, whatever you're focusing on grows. In other words, your life is controlled by what you focus on." That brings me to this month's food for thought: What are you focusing on?

Well, April's Tax Day is behind us and if that isn't a reminder to keep your life in order, I don't know what is. As we move into May and as the summer is fast(er) approaching, now is a good time to consider focusing your attention on your goals. Tony Robbins constantly says (among other coaches and influencers), "Where focus goes, energy flows. And where energy flows, whatever you're focusing on grows. In other words, your life is controlled by what you focus on." That brings me to this month's food for thought: What are you focusing on?

When it comes to focusing your efforts it becomes vitally important to know what makes up the elements of you and your life. I am a huge fan of the five-pillar model of life: Health, Financial, Family, Work, Play. (Models vary depending on who you research or use as a coach.) Generally speaking, when it comes to the whole-person concept, each element forms the foundation of who you are and creates whatever version of you that exists. Since I am a fitness coach, this article and all of my coaching emphasis focuses on the health pillar. Understand that if you don't pay attention to an element of your life, that particular pillar will crumble.

When it comes to focusing on health, you probably already have an idea of what to do. Eat less, move more. Often, just like creating and following a budget, you know you should do it, but if you pay semi-attention (which means little too none) you won't find success. You must have a very measured approach to achieve your goals. That means, right down what you are doing, what you are eating, and what your 90-day or 180-day goals looks like.

I watched an interesting YouTube video from Codie Sanchez. She basically said, if you want to get healthy, then clean up your eating habits and clean up or change you work-out habits. She was essentially riffing off the clean your bedroom idea. What focus comes down to is narrow your attention onto the specific pillar necessary in order to build yourself a solid foundation. You can do the same thing on other areas of your life too. Drive your attention to the individual areas of your life and make it a point to circle back on each area throughout the year. You cannot focus on only one area or spend all your energy on one pillar.

As always, when it comes to your health, it's up to you to create a goal and follow through. It doesn't mean you have to go full-on bodybuilder or fitness influencer, just move more and eat less. Find something you like and do it consistently.

As always, you can seek additional guidance from health professionals, wellness coaches and trainers. Come back each month for more areas to help you in your journey. I invite you to reach me at Ericray4470@gmail.com for ideas on how to create a goal or with suggestions for areas you'd like addressed in this space.



About the Author

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

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BAGGAGE

A Pilot's Guide to Improving Sleep Without Medications

Written By: Reini Thijssen



As pilots, achieving restorative sleep is not just essential; it's imperative for ensuring optimal performance and overall safety. However, the demanding nature of the profession, irregular schedules, and time-zone changes often lead to sleep difficulties. While medications are commonly used to manage insomnia symptoms, it does not address the underlying causes of sleep disturbances. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is a highly effective non-pharmacological treatment option offering lasting relief and promoting better sleep. This article provides tips and tools for utilizing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) to enhance sleep.

The impact of sleep disturbances on the ability to function effectively on the flight deck and overall well-being is a common issue. Insomnia, characterized by difficulties falling asleep or staying asleep, can lead to daytime fatigue, impaired cognitive function, and decreased alertness – factors that affect performance and safety.

Limitations of Medications

While medications may offer temporary relief from insomnia symptoms, they are not without drawbacks. Potential side effects, such as daytime drowsiness and cognitive impairment, can pose significant risks for pilots, affecting their ability to make critical decisions and respond quickly to changing conditions in the air. Therefore, various over-the-counter sleep medications are not approved by the FAA. Additionally, sleep medications do not address the underlying factors contributing to insomnia, making them less effective as a long-term solution.

Tips To Use CBT-I

CBT-I involves a collaborative effort between the individual and a trained therapist and is uniquely suited to address the specific challenges in managing sleep disturbances. CBT-I is a structured approach to focus on the underlying thoughts, behaviors, and habits contributing to sleep disturbances. Targeting both the cognitive and behavioral aspects of insomnia offers a comprehensive approach to improving sleep quality and duration. Utilizing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) techniques can be valuable for optimizing sleep quality. Here's how you can implement some steps from CBT-I:

Step 1: Education

Educate yourself about healthy sleep habits and the principles of CBT-I. Understand the importance of maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, creating a relaxing pre-sleep routine, and minimizing factors that disrupt sleep, such as caffeine or screen time before bedtime.

Step 2: Assessment

Evaluate your current sleep patterns, noting any factors contributing to insomnia, such as irregular sleep schedules or pre-flight stress. Keep a sleep diary to track your sleep habits and identify patterns or triggers for sleep disturbances.

Step 3: Cognitive Restructuring

Challenge and reframe any negative thoughts or beliefs about sleep. Replace worries about insomnia with more realistic and positive thoughts. Remind yourself that occasional sleep



difficulties are normal and that you can improve your sleep over time.

Step 4: Stimulus Control

Associate your bed with sleep by limiting activities in bed to sleep-related behaviors only. Avoid stimulating activities in bed, such as working or watching TV. Reserve your bed for sleep and intimacy to strengthen the association between the bed and sleep.

Step 5: Sleep Restriction

Adjust your bedtime and wake-up time to match your actual sleep duration. Avoid spending excessive time in bed awake, as this can perpetuate insomnia. Gradually adjust your sleep schedule based on your sleep diary to maximize sleep efficiency.

Step 6: Relaxation Techniques

Incorporate relaxation exercises into your pre-sleep routine to promote relaxation and reduce arousal before bedtime. Practice deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or mindfulness meditation to calm the mind and body.

Step 7: Maintenance

Implement strategies to maintain improvements in sleep quality over the long term. Stay consistent with your sleep schedule and relaxation practices, even during layovers or irregular flight schedules. Monitor your sleep patterns regularly and adjust strategies to address recurring sleep difficulties.

Benefits of Better Sleep

By applying these techniques, you can take proactive steps to improve your sleep quality. Prioritize sleep, hygiene, and self-care to ensure you are well rested and alert for safe and efficient flight operations.

Enhanced Cognitive Function – Quality sleep is essential for cognitive function, memory consolidation, and decision-making. Addressing insomnia helps people experience sharper cognitive abilities, which can benefit various aspects of their lives, such as problem-solving skills and interpersonal relationships.

Better Physical Health – Chronic insomnia is associated with an increased risk of various health problems, including cardiovascular issues, obesity, and diabetes. Improving sleep habits can help reduce the risk of these health conditions and lead to overall better physical health.

Stress Reduction – Insomnia often goes hand in hand with increased stress levels. Implementing strategies to improve sleep can also help reduce stress levels, leading to better mental and emotional well-being at work and in personal life. Enhanced Relationships – Quality sleep can contribute to better mood regulation and emotional stability, which can improve relationships with family and friends. Well-rested people are likelier to have the patience, energy, and emotional resilience to nurture healthy relationships.



Relaxation Exercises

Incorporating relaxation exercises into our daily routine can help reduce stress, improve sleep quality, and enhance our ability to cope with life's challenges. Here are some simple yet effective relaxation exercises that you can easily incorporate into your life to promote relaxation and mental clarity.

Limiting Screen Time – Before bedtime, minimize screen exposure, especially blue light from electronic devices. Engage in screen-free activities like reading or listening to relaxing music to signal your body that it's time to wind down.

Journaling – Before bedtime, jot down thoughts, concerns, tasks, or reflections. Writing in a physical journal can help you process your experiences and emotions, enabling you to clear your mind and prepare for sleep.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) – Before bedtime, systematically tense and relax different muscle groups. This technique helps release physical tension accumulated throughout the day, promoting relaxation and better sleep.

Deep Breathing Exercises – To relax the mind, practice diaphragmatic breathing or the 4-7-8 technique wherein you inhale for four seconds, hold for seven seconds, and exhale over eight seconds. Deep breathing can alleviate stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness Meditation – Practice mindfulness to focus on the present moment without judgment. This practice can help quiet the mind, reduce stress, and prepare you for restful sleep.

Stretching – Incorporate gentle yoga poses and deep breathing into your pre-sleep routine. Yoga helps release muscle tension, improve flexibility, and promote relaxation.

Guided Imagery or Visualization – Use guided imagery to imagine peaceful scenes or scenarios, such as flying in clear skies or hiking in nature. Visualization techniques can help calm the mind and ease you into a restful state before sleep.



Incorporating these exercises into your nightly routine can significantly improve sleep quality, ensuring you are well rested and alert. Addressing insomnia without medications benefits performance at work and positively impacts your overall health and well-being outside of work.

Final Thoughts

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) offers tailored, evidence-based tools to address sleep disturbances, helps empower to overcome insomnia, and promotes better sleep without reliance on medications. By prioritizing sleep health, you are able to enhance your performance in the air, ensure the safety of every flight, and improve your overall quality of life.

If you find it challenging to change your sleep patterns despite your efforts, reaching out to a therapist can provide valuable support. Emerald Mental Health can offer personalized guidance, identify underlying factors affecting your sleep, and introduce effective interventions tailored to your specific needs. Together, we can work towards improving your sleep quality and overall well-being.

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About the Author

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



MONEY

Is a Custom-Fit Financial Plan Right for You?

Written By: Robert Eklund

"The only sensible person is my tailor. He measures me anew each time he sees me."

George Bernard Shaw

Our lives here in the good ole U.S.A. are as varied as ice cream flavors nowadays. (Think Ben & Jerry's Marshmallow Sky or the tried-and-true Cherry Garcia.) We are all free to enjoy and prefer different hobbies, places to live, and professions. We love different people, drive different cars, and enjoy different vacations and recreations. This variety helps make life exciting!

Thank God we are different. If we all enjoyed the same things, this would be a pretty dull world and would come nowhere close to the innovative planet we live on today. Some people love science, others love art. Some like flying planes, while others love finance, and some crazies actually enjoy both!

NEWS ALERT - We are not the same, and never will be! These variations and aspirational differences make us uniquely us. These differences illustrate why our financial plans should be more than just one-size-fits-all carbon copies. Our plans should be specifically tailored to our ambitions, values, and life goals.

The term tailored used to describe a suit that fits precisely to your body and no one else's is bespoke. We know there are all kinds of suits differing wildly depending on the occasion, size of the individual, the expected weather, and the budget. Nevertheless, there are articles all suits should include, such as pants, a jacket, buttons, a tie, and shoes.

Similarly, our financial plans should be tailored to our circumstances, values, goals, income levels, time horizons, and risk tolerance. However, all competent professionals in wealth management should include risk assessments, retirement planning, estate planning, education wishes, insurance needs, etc.

Ideally, everyone would have tailored clothing. However, for many people, a bespoke suit or financial plan is outside their budget, and an off-the-rack suit or financial plan that fits their circumstances can put them on the right path to accumulating wealth. Once assets grow and circumstances become more complex, a tailored financial plan may make more sense than the off-the-shelf approach.

Let us take a 23-year-old, minimum-wage worker living paycheck to paycheck. Let's call him "Rooster." Rooster has ambition, is disciplined, and would like to retire at age 67. He wants to live a comfortable but not extravagant life in retirement. At this point, he does not have a family or much in the way of assets or complexity. His plan may look like this:

Step 1.

Ensure Rooster has three-to-six months of living expenses in a high-yield savings account.

Step 2.

Save 15-20% of every dollar earned in a Roth IRA.

Step 3. Put these dollars to work for Rooster in a low-cost, target-date retirement fund for now.

Step 4. After Rooster begins to see the benefits and power of compounding, talk to a fiduciary advisor about how to invest those dollars more deliberately outside of a target-date fund.

Step 5. Save for short- to mid-term goals in a separate taxable brokerage account invested in a money market fund or short-term bond fund.

Now, we will consider a 59-year-old airline catain. Let's call him Captain Maverick. Now, Maverick is married to a younger bar owner who is 49 years old. You guessed it, her name is Penny.

They have one child they want to put through college and aging parents they will help care for. Maverick will retire at age 65, and Penny will

retire at 55. They would like to continue their current lifestyle in retirement and aspire to travel the world. Penny wants a new Porsche 911 in retirement, and Maverick wants a new Kawasaki motorcycle and to fly his P-51 Mustang ten hours a month.

Maverick is maxing out his airline's 401k 2023 IRS 415(c) limit of $69,000 plus his $7,500 414(v) catch-up contributions (for folks 50 and older). Luckily, Penny's bar does well because of all the drunken sailors. Unfortunately, she feels frustrated because even though her income is significantly less than Maverick's, her income pushes their joint income into a much higher marginal tax bracket. She wonders if she should even waste her time with the bar since (seemingly) a substantial part of her income is going to the tax man!

Fortunately, Penny learned that she could contribute up to $69,000 to her Solo or Individual 401k because she is a self-employed business owner. The 401k is especially beneficial since Penny can contribute a significant percentage of her self-employed income. Furthermore, she can contribute pre-tax or Roth, just like Maverick!

Additionally, they both max out their after-tax IRA contributions and convert them to Roth including catch-up contributions ($7,000 for Penny, $8,000 for Maverick). They also contribute $15,000 annually to their Schwab taxable brokerage accounts using tax-efficient exchange traded funds (ETF) which can nearly mimic tax-deferred growth if invested correctly.

Maverick's airline also contributes to a Market-Based Cash Balance Plan for their pilots, approximately $16,100 per year, including 401k spillover. You might have guessed that Maverick has a Navy pension ($54,000 per year) and a military disability benefit of $12,000 per year.

Developing a retirement income plan would help them determine if they are on track and ensure they can prepare for unexpected life changes that come their way.

Furthermore, their plan would be stress tested for potential market declines and evaluate the sequence of return risks and mitigate said risk using the Three Bucket Retirement Income strategy.

Here are other beneficial strategies Maverick and Penny consider helping to simplify the complexity of their financial lives:

- College planning: What are the best places to save for Maverick (or Penny) Jr.'s education? What if Jr. Decides to skip college and attend a trade school or United's Aviate program?
- Long-term care planning: What if one (or both) has the need for long-term care during their lifetime? Plus, how can they help their aging parents in this difficult area?
- Should they convert pre-tax dollars (401k) to Roth during retirement and before required minimum distributions begin?
- Tax-loss harvesting strategies may be implemented for their taxable brokerage accounts thus reducing the potential tax drag due to capital gains taxes.
- Utilize a risk-appropriate, diversified ETF approach to their portfolio to mitigate unseen risks to their investment strategy.
- Perform a thorough audit of life, liability, and health insurance needs.
- A tax-efficient charitable plan would be developed to maximize their philanthropic contributions.
- Legacy planning would be thoroughly discussed to help stabilize and solidify not only their financial futures but the future of generations to come.

As you can see the Maverick-Penny Plan is significantly more complex than Rooster's. Maverick and Penny are likely to have quite a bit of income in retirement and they do not want to risk making a big mistake with their future.

A personalized financial approach could add tremendous value to Penny and Maverick's financial lives, reduce their stress, and increase their peace of mind!

If you made it this far and are still awake, I thank you. As you now know, I am a fiduciary and vow to protect my clients' hard-earned money with the highest devotion to their goals.
If you want to chat further about your personal financial goals or any other subject, please give me a buzz at (719) 624-7055 or shoot me an email at robert@leadgingedgeplanning.com.

Until next time, I hope you have only tailwinds and blue skies!

Please let us know if we can help you on your journey to financial peace and prosperity! Click here to sign up for our newsletter or click here to schedule a time to chat about your circumstances in more detail. Also, check out our Pilot Money Guys podcast, where we regularly discuss these types of financial topics along with some fun airline news updates and interesting guest interviews—even the editor and founder of Aero Crew News – Craig Pieper!
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About the Author

Robert Eklund is a Southwest Pilot and retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. He grew up working on his family's ranch in Colorado and went to high school in Alaska. Read More...

MORTGAGE

Love the Home, Rent the Mortgage

The best time to buy is when rates are elevated

Written by: Jonathan Kulak



Buying a home is no doubt a big decision and not one that people do often in their lives. Having originated close to 2,000 loans, I've seen the market swing many times over my career and the financial decisions people make as a result. There is no perfect time to buy a home because no one can perfectly time the market, but what you can control is finding the right home for you. In the mortgage world there is a saying "Love the home and rent the mortgage." Let's break down what that means.

During the peak of COVID, we saw the Federal Reserve drive interest rates down into the 2% range in order to stimulate the market and prop up the economy. During that time home values soared so rapidly that appraisals couldn't keep up with the rapidly rising values. Potential homebuyers were waiving every inspection, waiving appraisals, offering more than list price, getting no money from the seller towards their closing costs and still losing out on their offer. It was a seller's market because interest rates were so low that overpaying was rampant, but buyers looked the other way due to low interest rates.

Now, owed to too much cheap money introduced during COVID, the Federal Reserve is combating high inflation by making the cost of money more expensive. With the cost of money more expensive, fewer people want to sell their homes to buy a new home because they don't want to exchange a cheaper mortgage for a more expensive one. There are also fewer first-time buyers in the market during a time of higher interest rates. This dynamic has reduced competition for homes and opened the door for better deals for buyers to include reduced purchase prices and sellers giving money towards buyers' closing costs. So, what happens next?

Everything we've talked about is based on the Federal Reserves' standard playbook in which every three months they release their projections for the next three years. Based on the most recent projections released in March, the Federal Reserve will ease their benchmark rate by 3% over the next three years by between 0.75% and 1.25% per year, based on how the economy progresses. This doesn't mean mortgage rates will be 3% lower in three years, but it does mean they will be significantly below where they have been at their peak. Even right now, rates have come down over 1% from their peak last fall. So, you can go back to the beginning of this article if you have forgotten what happens to the real estate market as rates come down – a sellers' market is coming again.

I don't expect extremes like the COVID-era market again because rates won't get that low and there will be more home inventory available because people who have wanted to sell/move will finally have their chance, but competition will grow and deals will go away. So, when is the best time to buy a house? When can you get a better deal but pay more in interest? Or when will you pay more for the house but less in interest? My answer is, "love the house, rent the mortgage."

Buying the right house now before the market changes gets you into the house you love at a good price but with a higher payment because of interest. The solution is to refinance. Thanks to the Federal Reserve's playbook, we know that rates will not only decline but significantly decline over the next three years, so if you get a mortgage now, there will be plenty of opportunities to lower your payment over the years. In some states, it is very cheap to refinance while others are more expensive, so determining the break-even point is key. Another option is to do a lender-paid refinance in which the lender pays the refinance costs for you thus removing the break-even. This is done all the time and allows you to refinance more often as rates come down. Regardless of what option you go with, make sure you keep the long-term picture in sight if you're considering buying a home. By waiting to try to avoid extra interest today is highly likely to cost you a lot more money in the long run.

I and Trident Home Loans are always to help, whether it's doing your loan or just offering advice. So please, feel free to contact me with any questions at jk@mythl.com or on my cell phone at 850-377-1114. I'm always happy to help a fellow pilot navigate the mortgage process. Also, to further understand the process, review previous articles on pilot mortgages that are available on Aero Crew News in this column.
For more information visit https://tridenthomeloans.com/jonathan-kulak, call 850-377-1114 or email jk@mythl.com.



About the Author

Jonathan Kulak, Senior Loan Originator at Trident Home Loans which is a pilot/veteran-owned and operated mortgage lender licensed in 47 states and located in Pensacola, Fla. Read More...





Disaster on the Road – Pt. 5

Managing Yourself When Disaster Strikes

WRITTEN BY: RICHARD SWINDELL

From tornadoes to floods, power outages to break-ins, wildfires and other general mayhem, things will occur while you are out flying. Having contacts, a plan, and the ability to compartmentalize the situation until you can safely conclude your flying duties and adequately face the situation is imperative. In this month's installment of dealing with disaster on the road, the focus is getting off the road and back home.

"What would I do if ...?" is something you probably do in the plane all the time: Where would I go right now if I lost an engine? What are my procedures if I have a rapid decompression over the mountains? We think about and plan for these exigencies of the air, but often neglect developing one for the ground. What would you do if your home experienced a flood, fire, or break-in? What is your plan for getting out of a trip and getting where you need to be in order to deal with an emergency?

Whether you are single, have a significant other, partner or spouse at home, ask yourself where the "line in the sand" is for calling off a trip and heading there as quickly as possible. What can a spouse or partner (or even a neighbor) handle and not handle in your absence? Is this line a flooded basement? What about a tree branch that fell and crushed your carport? How about a sick or injured child or family member in an emergency room?

Next, what are your company's policies for emergency leave – whom should you speak with if you need to punch out in the middle of a trip, or drop a trip before it starts? Will your company help you get home? What assistance does your union or pilot group offer? Do you have these contacts and phone numbers readily available?

Then, how would you actually get home from a trip? If you fly domestically, perhaps catching the next available passenger or cargo flight is a relatively easy option, or maybe driving is a possibility if flights are not available. Would you try to secure a one-way car rental, a train ticket perhaps, or call a friend or family member for a ride?

If you fly internationally, this might be trickier depending on timing and location, but ultimately the same problem exists – how to get back as quickly as possible. You might not have much of a choice but to simply wait for your scheduled flight back. The decision you do have to make however, is whether or not you can continue flying safely. The IMSAFE checklist definitely applies here, and if you elect to continue flying, you should certainly consider discussing (to the extent comfortable and appropriate) the situation with your flight crewmates. Then absolutely continue to self-monitor and reevaluate your fit-to-fly status. Lastly, and although not typically high on the general list of concerns as far as a critical situation goes, but how (if required) are you going to pay for the arrangements to get home if necessary? Non-revving is great, but flights are often full and standby travel may not be the best option if time is of the essence. Thus, you might need to buy a ticket on your own airline (or perhaps another airline) if your employer is unable or unwilling to provide you with positive space transportation to get you where you need to be. A vehicle, lodging, and food may all be needed as well. Do you have space on a credit card for a full-fare plane ticket plus other logistics and necessities? Do you keep an "emergency only" credit card that you can utilize? If you routinely do not have available assets and/or you do not have an emergency-use-only credit card in your flight kit, consider getting one as soon as possible.

Next month we will talk more about dealing with disasters while you are on the road, along with resources and assistance to get you where you need to be. Until then, give your ground emergency plan some thought.



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...



Collision Avoidance

Written By: Sergio Sovero

Midair collisions can occur at any point of the day in VFR conditions. Statistically, the majority happen within five miles of an airport where the greatest concentration of traffic occurs. No pilot is immune to a collision, as it can happen to pilots from all experience levels.

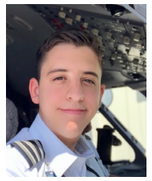
Given most VFR traffic is processed by the human eye, certain limitations must be taken into account. Elements such as dust, fatigue, windshield distortion, oxygen, acceleration, glare, heat, lighting, and aircraft design all affect vision. While some may be avoidable, pilots must adhere to effective scanning techniques.

Each pilot can develop a scan that works. First, know where to concentrate your search. Focus on the areas most critical to you at any given time. In the traffic pattern especially, clear before every turn, and always watch for any potential traffic making an improper entry into the pattern. On descent and climb out, make gentle S-turns to see if anyone is in your way. During straight and level flight, you can generally avoid the threat of an in-flight collision by scanning an area 60 degrees to the left and to the right of your center visual area. Be aware that the slower your airspeed, the greater your vulnerability because the slower you fly, the area necessary to scan increases.

Aside from developing a scanning technique, make sure to be proactive in eliminating unnecessary distractions. Have charts folded in proper sequence and within handy reach. Keep your cockpit free of clutter. The goal is to reduce heads-down time. Check in advance for restricted areas and other high-density spots for student training. During the external aircraft inspection, make sure the windshield is clean and free of debris. Likewise, ensure to follow Standard Operating Procedures and adhere to the regulations of flight, such as correct altitudes and proper pattern practices.

Listen, listen, listen! Use your radio, when approaching an airport. Find out what the local traffic situation is. At an airport with radar service, call the approach control frequency and let them know where you are and what you are going to do. At non-towered fields, listen to the common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF) to develop a mental picture of the traffic around you.

Following the previous guidelines are meant to provide a deeper understanding of the tools and techniques to avoid a mid-air collision. As always, use see-and-avoid practices, follow regulatory guidelines, and adhere to standard operating procedures. Fly safe!



About the Author

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



Travels & Inspirations
by Lia

MENTOR, AUTHOR, FLIGHT ATTENDANT



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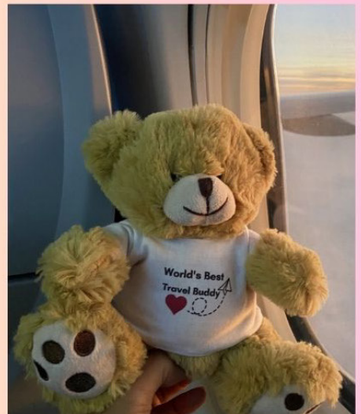
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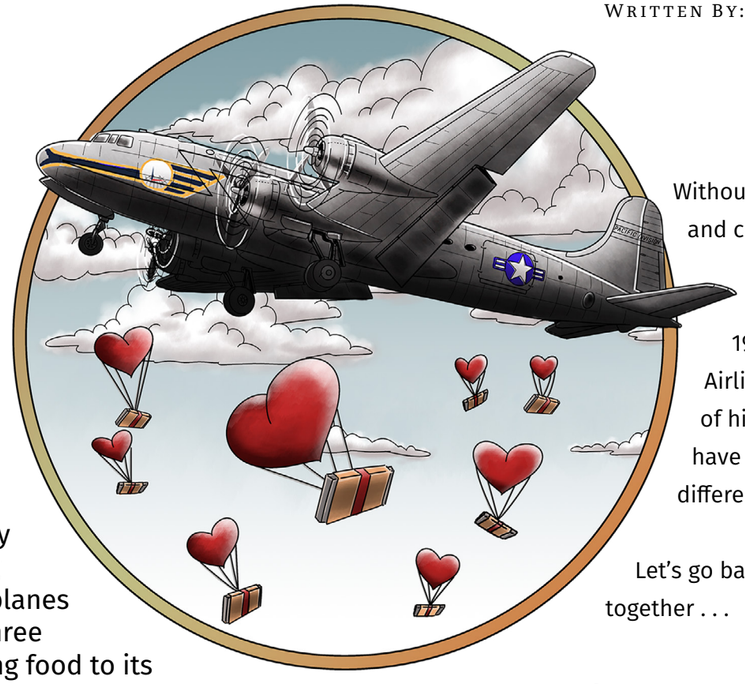


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Wings of Freedom – The Story of the Berlin Airlift

Written By: Bibi LeBlanc



I grew up in the divided city of Berlin during the 1960s and 1970s. I was always intrigued by the story of the Airlift – the story of my city being supplied by airplanes landing every three minutes, bringing food to its people. A city isolated from the world by the Soviets and left to submit to communist rule or starvation. Growing up during the Cold War in a city enclosed by a wall, I experienced firsthand the lasting impact of the events that unfolded in the aftermath of World War II.

In a time when we are divided over many issues, I feel a strong desire to share the story of the Berlin Airlift because I feel we can learn so much from it. As this year marks its 75th anniversary, I decided to put pen to paper and wrote Wings of Freedom – The Story of the Berlin Airlift.

Without the efforts and contributions of the men and women of the 1948-1949 Berlin Airlift, the course of history would have taken a vastly different direction.

Let's go back in time together . . .

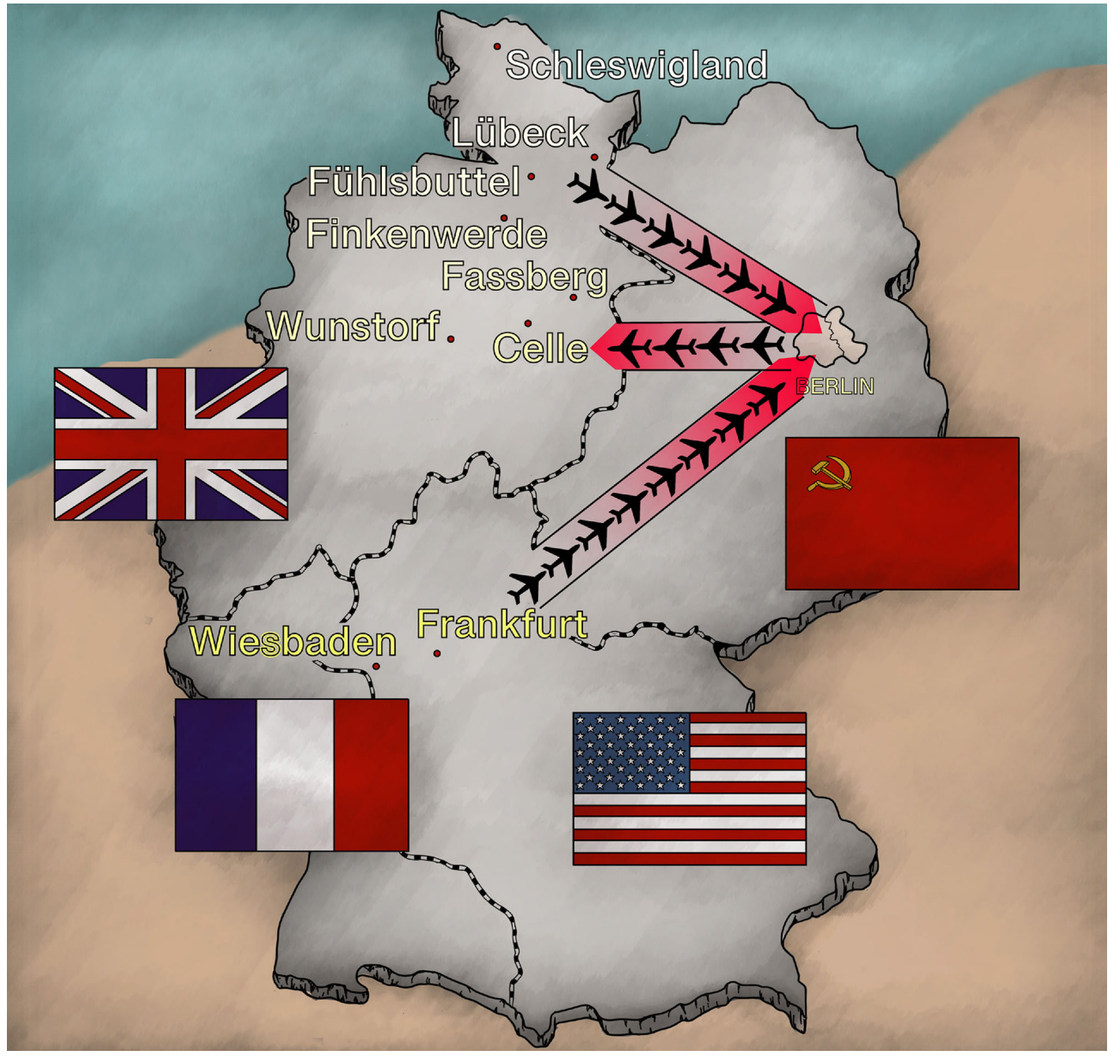
Germany in 1945

At the end of World War II, the victorious Allied countries divided Germany into four zones of occupation. The USA, Great Britain, and France occupied the western zones and the Soviet Union the eastern zone. This division of Germany was supposed to be temporary, but the Soviet Union and Western Allies had vastly different visions for Germany's future. While the Western Allies sought to rebuild the country's economy and introduce a democratic form of government, the USSR aimed to spread communism throughout Germany and Europe.

Berlin, Germany's capital, 110 miles inside the Soviet zone, was also split, and people referred to the divided city as West Berlin and East Berlin.

The powers agreed that each would supply its own zone of occupation with the necessary supplies to feed the people and rebuild. This meant the Western Allies had to transport all supplies for their sector of West Berlin through the Soviet Zone of occupation.

In the fall of 1945, the Allied Control Council addressed aviation security in the Soviet occupation zone, resulting in a signed agreement for three restricted flight corridors from West Germany to West Berlin. In contrast, access to the Western Allied sectors of Berlin by land and water was never formalized in writing.



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The Blockade

The Soviets wanted to dislodge the Western allies from West Berlin and used threats, propaganda, and confrontational tactics, to no avail. Thus, in a dramatic effort to put pressure on the West, the Soviets cut off access to Berlin. Just after midnight on June 24, 1948, citing “technical difficulties,” they cut the power supply to West Berlin. They began dismantling railroad tracks and closed the Autobahn “for repairs,” thus effectively sealing off all access by land. Closing the waterways further isolated the city from the rest of the world.

For over three years, the people of Berlin had lived on the precipice between survival and famine. By mid-1948, the effects of hunger and malnutrition had taken a toll on the health of 70% of the city’s inhabitants, especially its children.

Berliners were restricted to using 25 minutes of gas a day from a single burner. Households were granted four hours of electricity, divided into two-hour intervals during the day and the night, supplied to neighborhoods on a rotating schedule. The blockade shattered any hope Berliners held for a brighter future. As a result of the blockade, 2.5 million people in West Berlin faced immense challenges, including severe shortages of supplies essential for their survival. As it was, stocks of food would last no more than a month. But what West Berliners feared even more than hunger was a Soviet takeover.

Difficult Decisions

While Berliners faced hunger and uncertainty, the Western Allies had limited options to respond to the Soviet blockade. Withdrawal was not one of them as it “would inevitably entail a surrender of all of Germany and of Europe,” warned The New York Times.

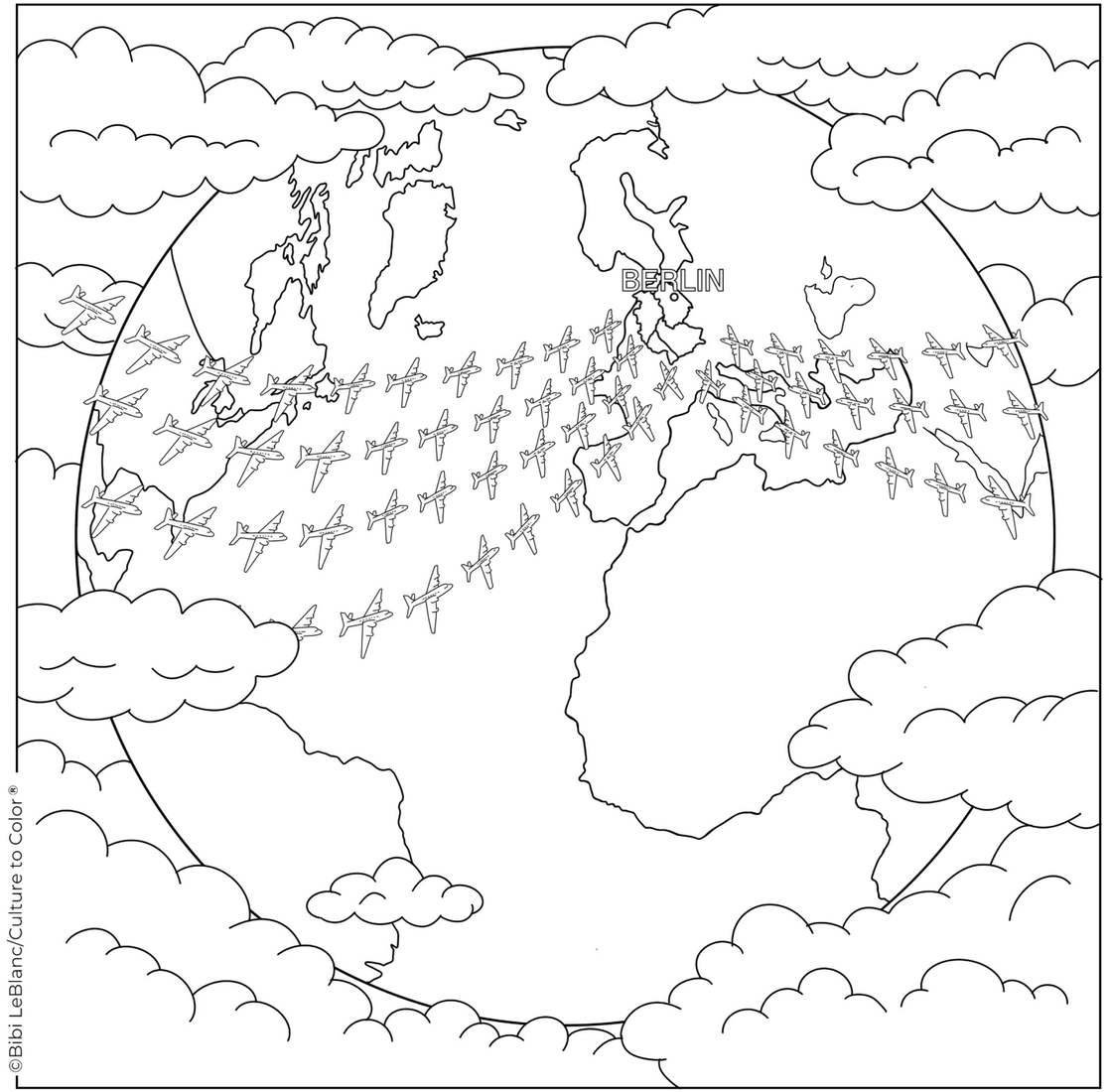


“We shall stay. Period,” declared U.S. President Harry S. Truman.

Military action was too risky. Negotiations with the Soviets continued to fail. Imposing a counter-blockade would worsen the suffering of the already-beleaguered citizens. Ultimately, the Western Allies opted for a daring and unprecedented approach – to supply Berlin by air, thereby circumventing the Soviet blockade.

The Airlift

General Lucius D. Clay, Commander of the U.S. Forces in Europe, decided to launch the Airlift, codenamed “Operation Vittles,” demonstrating the determination of the Western Allies to support West Berlin and uphold their commitment to the city’s freedom and survival.



On June 26, 1948, the U.S. and Great Britain launched a massive humanitarian and logistical effort to sustain the people of West Berlin. Many doubted this extensive, intricate, and perilous undertaking could supply the city by air alone for any length of time.

On the first day of the airlift, American and British planes landed at Tempelhof and Gatow airports in West Berlin with fresh milk in glass bottles and bags of flour. They delivered 93 tons, far short of the minimum of 4,500 tons of vital supplies needed daily.

Hundreds of planes of all types and sizes, both military and civilian, were called into service from around the globe, and the airplanes became West Berlin’s only link to the outside world. To supply the city by air, the Western Allies flew within the bounds of the three 20-mile-wide air corridors

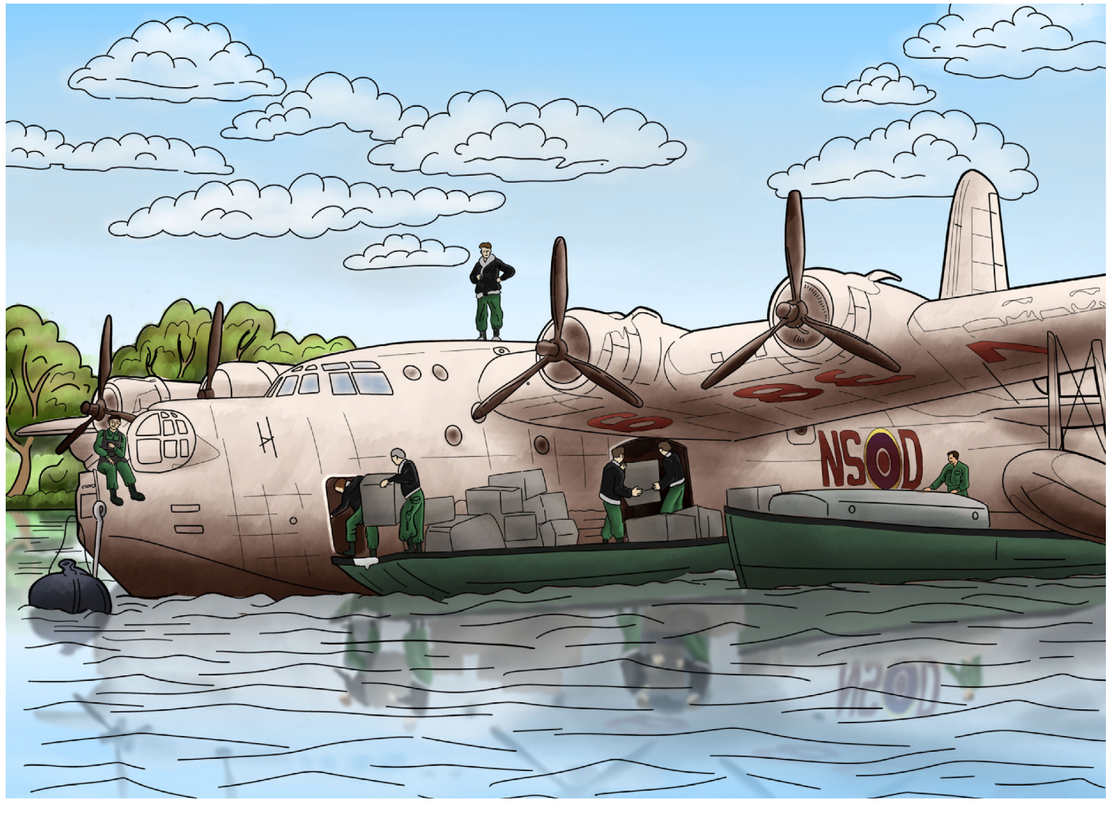
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through the Soviet-controlled airspace over East Germany. The northern and southern corridors were used for flights to Berlin, and the center corridor for return flights to the Western zones of Germany. Seasoned pilots used these vital routes to fly coal, food, raw materials, medicine, and all other supplies needed for a city of 2.5 million people.

The air traffic controllers had a challenging time coordinating up to 400 aircraft each day. On average, a flight landed or took off every three minutes. To keep the people of Berlin from starving, the airports had to remain open around the clock, regardless of weather conditions.

Upon landing, the cargo planes had to be unloaded quickly. The Allied Forces trained Germans to work side by side with them to complete the meticulously orchestrated unloading tasks. Theirs was an astonishing level of cooperation, considering they had been fierce enemies only three years earlier!

But it was not food that made up the majority of supplies. To rebuild the economy and keep Berliners warm through the winter, the predominant cargo was coal, which constituted 65% of the total tonnage. The Airlift delivered a total of 1.5 million tons of coal to Berlin.



General Tunner

General William H. Tunner had arrived in Germany as the newly appointed commander of the American and British Airlift operation. His task was to organize and transform the hastily assembled humanitarian effort into a well-oiled machine.

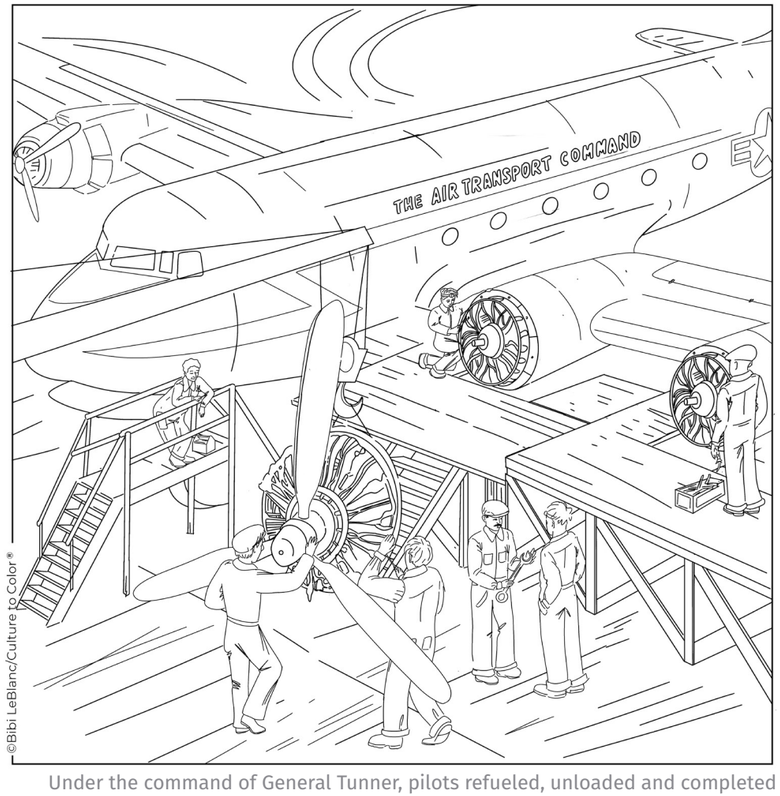
From his experience organizing an airlift over the Himalayas, Tunner knew he needed to take drastic measures in coordinating the operation. He introduced new flight and landing protocols for the Berlin airfields. He made instrument flying mandatory, regardless of the weather conditions. Also, if a pilot missed his landing, he was not allowed a second attempt but would have to return to his base in West Germany. This prevented the backup of airplanes in holding patterns and ensured safer landing operations.

Tunner recognized the importance of reducing the turnaround time of the airplanes. After touchdown, a pilot had four minutes to park his plane. Refueling, unloading, and minor maintenance were then completed simultaneously. All procedures were timed perfectly to maximize the usage of the available airplanes and ground facilities.

“The actual operation of a successful Airlift is about as glamorous as drops of water on stone,” Tunner wrote in his memoir. “There’s no frenzy, no flap, just the inexorable process of getting the job done.”

All pilots were ordered to stay with their planes from landing until takeoff. Weather updates and information were brought directly to the aircraft during unloading, eliminating the crews’ need to enter the terminal. Gen. Tunner also converted several trucks to mobile snack bars, staffed by charming Berlin women, allowing crews to obtain coffee, snacks, or other supplies without leaving the vicinity of their planes.

Under Gen. Tunner, dubbed “Willie, the Whip” for his unrelenting demand for precision, the Combined Airlift Task Force succeeded in



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Under the command of General Tunner, pilots refueled, unloaded and completed minor maintenance in minutes to maximize the usage of available airplanes.

optimizing the operation. New tonnage records were set almost every week, and at the height of the Airlift, an aircraft landed in Berlin every 63 seconds.

Gail Halvorsen – Changing Hearts from the Sky

One day, a young Air Force pilot, Lt. Gail S. Halvorsen, talked to some children at the airport fence. Before leaving, he pulled out two sticks of gum. The children divided the gum and even treasured the smell of the wrappers. Wanting to give them more, he promised to drop candy the next day, not at the fence but from the sky. Before leaving, a child asked how they would recognize him. With a smile, Halvorsen replied, “I’ll wiggle my wings.”

To keep his promise, Halvorsen crafted parachutes using his handkerchiefs and attached candy. As he approached Tempelhof airport the following day, he rocked his wings, and his crew dropped the small candy parachutes. Little did he know this simple gesture would become a cherished symbol of hope during those dark days.

Soon, many other pilots participated, and candy parachutes were assembled by school classes and church groups across the U.S. and sent to Germany for the children of Berlin.

The End of the Blockade

As 1948 transitioned into 1949, the rumble of engines in the skies over Berlin continued. Against all odds and challenges, the Airlift persisted, proving the western Allies could sustain Berlin indefinitely.

Realizing the Western Allies were not going to abandon Berlin, the Soviets lifted the blockade on May 12, 1949. The Autobahn, railways and canals were reopened. After 10 months and 16 days of intense standoff with the Soviet Union, the end of the Blockade marked a pivotal chapter of the Cold War!

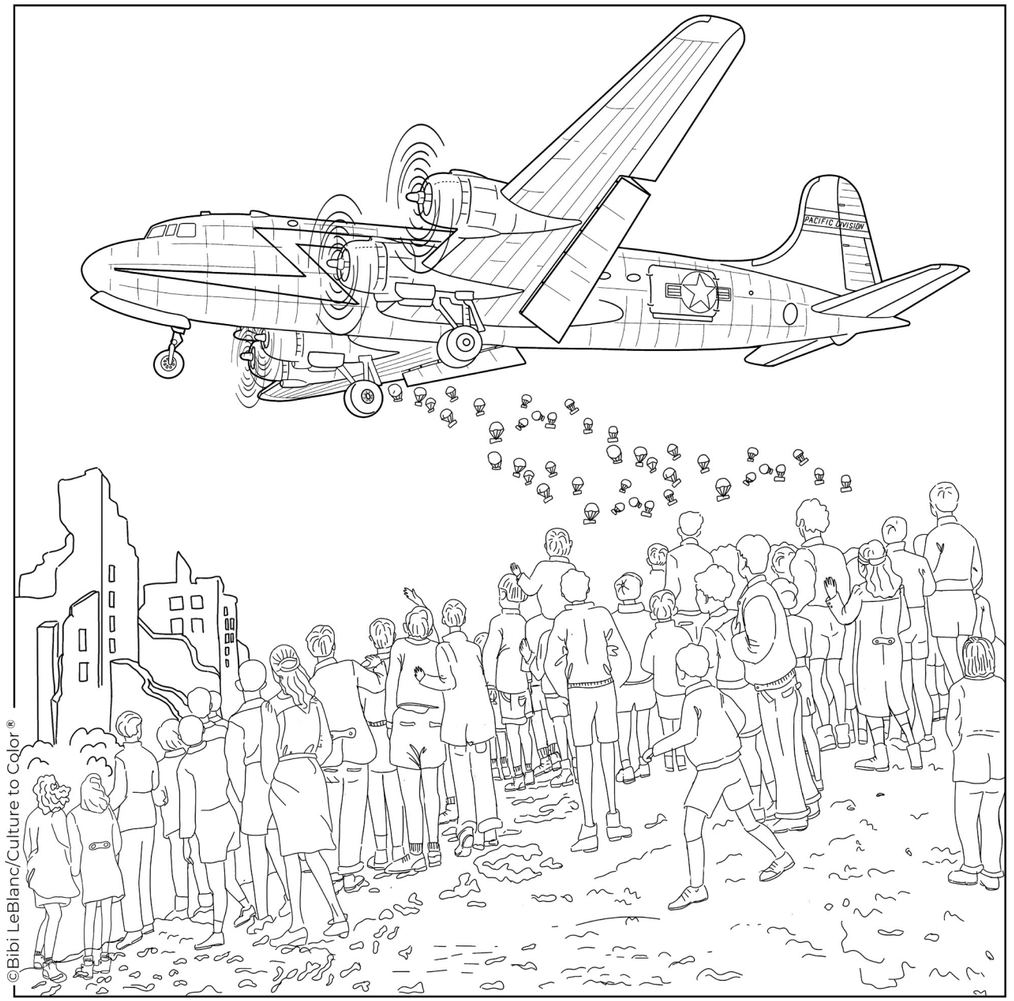
Despite what many had believed impossible, Berlin was supplied solely by air from June 26, 1948, until May 12, 1949, with airplanes landing every three minutes day and night for almost a year!

Conclusion

The hardships the Germans and Western Allies shared in the face of the Blockade transformed the once strained relations into friendships. The newfound mutual respect became the cornerstone for rebuilding West Berlin and West Germany and stabilizing post-WWII Western Europe.

The candy drops created a tangible connection between the children of Berlin and the pilots in the planes. Once meaning danger, the planes now represented goodwill and friendship and served as a powerful catalyst for changing the hearts and minds of young and old alike.

This year, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, the story of Berlin’s citizens and the Western Allies resonates through time. It illustrates how communication and cooperation can overcome even the darkest hours of history. Its legacy teaches us that when we stand together, we can bridge gaps and transform enmity into friendship.



Under the direction of Lt. Gail S. Halvorsen, U.S. planes dropped candy to the children of Berlin, offering kindness during a time of fear.

“The blockade of West Berlin ended on May 12, 1949. This was not just a victory for the Allied Forces, but a victory shared with all of the citizens of Berlin. These were citizens who braved the hardships, the hunger, and the cold. These were the citizens who toiled long hours unloading aircraft and making new runways. Berlin was no longer the defeated, demoralized capital of a vanquished foe. The new West Berlin was a city, emerged from the rubble, unified, and proud of its peoples’ accomplishments. Berliners had earned their right to celebrate and stand among the free people of the world.”

National Museum of the United States Air Force

This story also serves as a reminder that each of us can show we care with even a small gesture, just as Gail Halvorsen, the Candy Pilot, did with two sticks of gum. You never know the impact you might have in shaping the world around you!



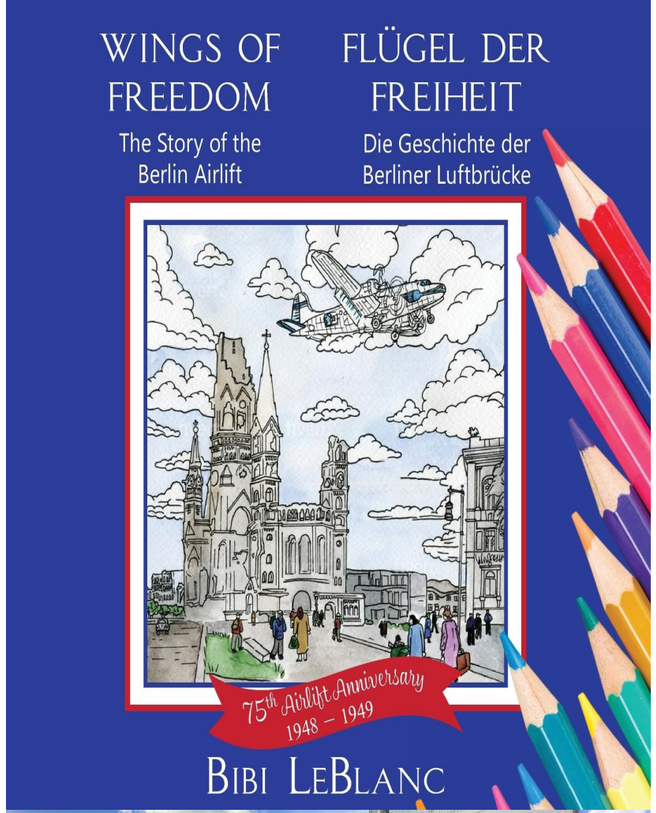
About the Author

Bibi LeBlanc is an entrepreneur and world traveler with a passion for storytelling and creating community. Born and raised in West Berlin during the Cold War, she received her education in business administration before embarking on a career as a flight attendant. Read More...



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