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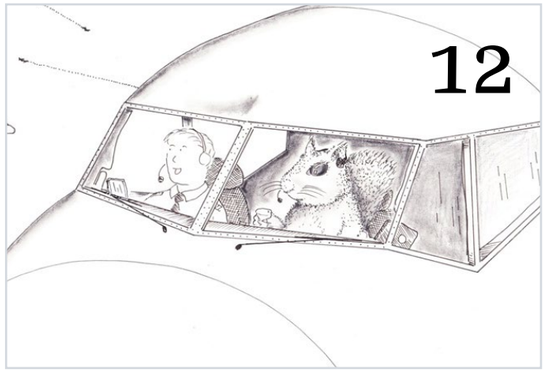
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contents

May 2025

Jump to each section Below
by clicking on the title or photo.











Also Featuring:

Letter from the Publisher	4
Aviator Bulletins	6
Making the Best of Sitting in Limbo	10
Phones on Planes	14
How ‘Good Enough’ Helps Overcome FOBO (Fear of Better Options)	18
Time, Distance, Heading for Fitness	22
Understanding Weather Delays, Flight Delays, and Cancellations	30
On Leadership, the Military-Civilian Transition, and the Great Robin Olds	35
Man, That Lizard is Loud!	41

the grid



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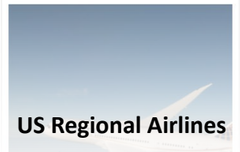
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The Grid (contract comparisons, pay charts, company details, etc.) has moved online. Click on the airlines above to go directly to that airline’s information, or go to www. AeroCrewNews.com/go/thegrid.

Dear readers,

First, congratulations to the winners of our Rarely Seen Airlines photo contest! In third place we have Thomas A. with “The best of the west!” Jamison M. takes second and first places with “Dreamlifting” and “The Polar Express” respectively. Austin W. takes the grand prize with “Don’t nok it till you try it!”

Our winners will receive the following prizes: Austin will receive a Bose A30 Aviation Headset, a $50 gift card toward merch from the Aero Crew Shop, plus, Vath Publishing is providing a copy of Airline Transition Manual (ATM) with a reservation of their yet-to-be-published book and some ATM swag. As a two-places winner, Jamison will receive the Travelpro ® FlightCrew™ 5 luggage set including a 21″ Rollaboard®, the Large Crew Cooler, Horizontal Rolling Overnighter, Crew Cooler and Flight Tote. In addition, Method Seven has provided a pair of Altitude FLT18 eyewear. He will also receive two gift cards valued at $40 and $30 toward Aero Crew Shop merch. Vath Publishing is providing a copy of Airline Transition Manual plus swag. Thomas will receive Travelpro’s FlightCrew 5 Large Crew Cooler, a $20 gift card for the Aero Crew Shop, Vath Publishing is providing him a copy of Airline Transition Manual and swag. Additionally, each will receive an 11″x17″ commemorative, ready-to-frame photo of their entry.

Of course, we also extend our congratulations to the eleven runners up! Dylan H., Chris R., Nathan L., Ramon A., Brian R., Joe D., Amber R., Matthew O., Cameron B., Andrea E., and Kurt S. will each receive swag from Vath Publishing (notable for their Airline Transition Manual) and a discount coupon for the book. Additionally, each of them will receive an 8″x10″ commemorative, ready-to-frame photo of their submission.

Aero Crew News would like to thank all our generous sponsors, Bose, Travelpro, Method Seven, Vath Publishing and Aero Crew Shop.

If you missed this year’s photo contest, be sure to look for the 2026 photo contest that starts in January. Every year, the staff of Aero Crew News conceives the annual theme, but this year we would like to hear your ideas for next year’s theme. We always go through our own photos for inspiration—maybe that could work for you. Please, please help us out by emailing us at info@aerocrewnews.com with at any ideas.

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...

BACK TO CONTENTS

April 2025

What you may have missed in April

Feature – PALS SkyHope celebrates 15 years of impacting lives with vital flights.

Baggage – Letting go can be cathartic and very important for your healthy state of mind.

Business Vector – Understand the safeguards against price fixing in pilot hiring.

Coffee & Pretzels – Have you looked at your ID lately?

Fitness – A period of recovery is vital after an injury.

Grey Matter – NOTAMs stands for what now?

Knowledge Base – How is low-level windshear detected?

Money – Tariffs, layoffs and a GDP moving in the wrong direction affects our mindset.

Perspectives – It’s important to maintain motivation when things are hardly moving.

SkyLaw – We learn more about the FAA’s aeromedical deference.

SkyWatch – The night views from the flight deck in spring offer some celestial highlights.



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Hawaiian AFA Flight Attendants Ratify Contract Extension

Hawaiian Flight Attendants voted to ratify a Contract Extension through February 2028. This Extension includes continued pay increases, retirement improvements, better profit sharing, and a strong foundation to build upon as negotiations for a Joint Collective Bargaining Agreement (JCBA) began last month. Read More



American Airlines reports first-quarter 2025 financial results

American Airlines Group Inc. reported its first-quarter 2025 financial results, including: first-quarter revenue of $12.6 billion, first-quarter GAAP net loss of $473 million, or ($0.72) per diluted share, excluding net special items1, first-quarter net loss of $386 million, or ($0.59) per diluted share, and ended the quarter with $10.8 billion of total available liquidity Read More



From Flight Deck to Family: ALPA Pilots Gather in NYC for Landmark Union Event

April 12 marked a historic milestone for the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), as the union held its first-ever joint MEC (Master Executive Council) event in New York City at The Standard. Organized by United ALPA's Captain Colleen Lambert and Delta ALPA's Captain Marc Cervantes, the event brought...Read More



Allegiant Air Pilots File for Release from Mediation

Allegiant Air pilots represented by Teamsters Local 2118 have requested that the National Mediation Board (NMB) release them from mediation with the company. Read More



Mesa Airlines' Pilots Respond to Merger Announcement with Republic Airways

The pilots of Mesa Airlines, represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), acknowledged this week's announcement regarding a proposed merger between Mesa Airlines and Republic Airways. While details of the agreement are still emerging, Mesa pilots are... Read More



United Airlines Reports Best First-Quarter Financial Performance in Five Years Despite Challenging Macroeconomic Environment

United reported a first-quarter profit, with record revenue of $13.2 billion, and total revenue per available seat mile (TRASM) growth of 0.5% year-over-year. Read More



Delta Air Lines announces March quarter 2025 financial results

While the first quarter unfolded differently than initially expected, we delivered solid profitability that was flat to prior year and is expected to lead the industry," said Delta CEO Ed Bastian. "I would like to thank our people for their outstanding performance and hard work during the quarter." Read More



U.S.-Based Norse Atlantic Airways Flight Attendants Reach Tentative Agreement

Norse Atlantic Airways U.S.-based Flight Attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, have reached a tentative agreement on their second ever contract with the low-cost trans-Atlantic airline. Read More



United Continues Growth at San Francisco International Airport, Adding 20% More Flying in 2025

United announced it will add 20 percent more flying out of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) in 2025, reflecting its long-term strategy to re-establish SFO as a global gateway. United is now larger in SFO than it was pre-pandemic, with capacity.... Read More



United Grows its Leading Pacific Network with New Flights to Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Adelaide and Manila

United announced it intends to be the only U.S. airline to offer flights to Bangkok, Thailand, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, with new daily service from Hong Kong planned to start this fall*. Read More



Alaska Airlines continues to grow in San Diego with a 30% increase in flights and three new nonstop destinations

Alaska Airlines is adding new nonstop routes in San Diego, along with offering additional flights on existing routes and improved flight connectivity – all to give our guests more convenient travel options as San Diego's leading airline. Read More



Teamsters Fight Allegiant Air's Job-Killing Scheme

The Teamsters Union strongly opposes Allegiant Air's efforts to enter into a joint venture with Viva Aerobus, an ultra-low-cost carrier based in Mexico.. Read More



Making the Best of Sitting in Limbo

Written by: John McDermott

Late last year, I was thrilled to receive a job offer from my goal regional airline. After years of training and a thousand hours as a flight instructor, preparing to move to the next step was the culmination of hard work and seemingly endless study and preparation. But as many at the top end of the time-building process know, getting “in the door” isn’t the end of the process. My company, as with many, is still waiting to assign me to a class as they fill the backlog of applications they’ve been facing for some time.

Of course, while I would love to jump right into a transport-category jet and find my way into the flight levels, I know this is purely a fact of living in the aviation industry and part of having chosen this career for myself.

The question is, how to make my time worthwhile as I’m waiting for my call. Some solutions are fairly straightforward: I will continue flying and build time at my current job to stay proficient, both flying-wise and teaching-wise. This includes the occasional rental for instrument and night currency, as well as leisure flights with family and friends.

I have also found it necessary to set new goals for myself while I keep teaching. No longer having the hard 1500 number as a goal leaves a gaping hole in my motivation. I found it necessary to reach for something else to keep my fire lit. My current goals are two: to reach 2,000 total time (manageable given how long I may be waiting for airline training) and reaching the required cross-country time to hit unrestricted ATP minimums.

The latter goal will require a more focused effort, but it’s a good challenge to keep me on my toes and guide me to stay engaged with new scenarios, new airports, and unique situations that I might not always attain staying local at my home airport.

I also have additional ratings in the back of my mind, particularly seeking out new categories and classes on my certificates. As my current company works closely with gliders in addition to airplanes, a more long-term goal is to see about adding gliders to my instructor certificate after having added pilot privileges last fall.

Lately, I have heard a lot of people who are exasperated at being stuck in instructing jobs waiting on the airlines to call back. I understand the sentiment, as I’m in the same spot. But there’s only so much that exasperation can get me. Now, the best way to move forward while I wait, is to make myself as experienced and marketable as possible. I am lucky to have a teaching job as it is, and I am grateful for the opportunities it’s affording me.

I’m equally lucky to have experienced mentors who can help me through the situation. Ultimately, I need to think about the long game—not only about making it to this first training class but into each situation beyond it. The better I’m set up now, the easier time I’ll have getting and holding down positions in the future.

While I’m still relatively new to the industry, I have learned how important maintaining motivation can be. The hiring wave came and went before I was even ATP eligible, and I was hired within six months of my 23rd birthday. I am lucky to have decades of career potential ahead of me, so this is my first true lesson in managing my time working in the industry no matter the conditions.

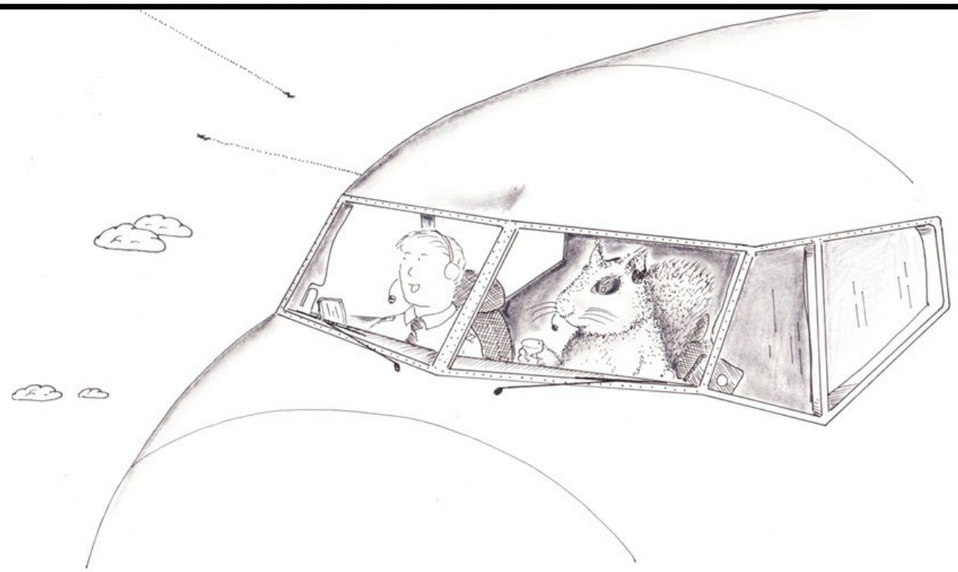


About the Author

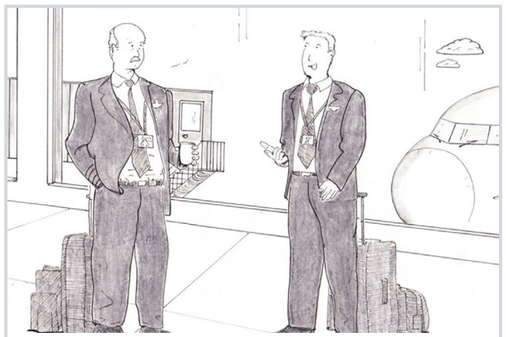
John McDermott’s passion for aviation began in a Michigan bookstore when he found a story about a chance encounter between enemy pilots during World War II. Soon, after watching countless hours of fighter jets and traffic from his home near O’Hare International Airport, he was hooked forever.. Read More...

coffee & pretzels

Greg Kaley



I finally have to ask. How do you go from your normal speaking voice to a silky smooth baritone for your PA's?



[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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Phones on Planes

A proposition actually worse than snakes on planes

Written by: Richard Swindell

In 1999, long before binge-worthy series became available on multiple streaming platforms, the show *The West Wing* premiered on cable TV. In a season one episode, a character onboard an airliner is asked to turn his cell phone off by a member of the cabin crew. The man, posing a question many real-life flyers have asked over the ensuing 25 years about modern aircraft versus cell phone, quips, "I can still flummox this thing with something I bought at Radio Shack?"

The short answer is, of course you cannot.

The clash over cell phone use on commercial aircraft has not only become rooted in the average flyer's experience as a part of the welcome aboard announcement and associated inconvenience, but also in a kind of myth about its origins and its actual consequences.

If a phone, or a cabin full of phones, could simply be turned on (or accidentally left on), and the subsequent electromagnetic interference was sufficient to unhinge the aircraft's navigation and communication systems, the result would have been the end of commercial air transportation. Clearly, this has not been the case. Not only are modern aircraft systems adequately shielded to prevent electromagnetic interference, but robust scientific experimentation has also concluded that personal electronic device (PED) interference is neither possible nor a threat to the flight.

In December 2024, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) indicated they were reviewing Part 22 of the commission's rules on mobile phone usage aboard aircraft. But wait, what does the FCC have to do with this? Everything actually—because it was the FCC to begin with that instituted the ban on mobile phone usage while airborne. Contrary to popular belief, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) does not actually prohibit the use of cell phones on planes. In fact, the FAA's Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 91.21 basically says that if the operator of an aircraft is going to allow the use of PEDs (including cell phones) while airborne, then the device(s) may not interfere with electronic systems, including communications and navigation.

In 1991, eight years before *The West Wing* commenced airing weekly episodes, cell phones were a rarity, and even more so to actually have access to one while on a plane, unless you were on a private jet. At that time, the FCC was concerned about fast-moving aircraft at altitude impinging on limited radio-spectrum availability and channel reuse, which is basically the way cell phones connect to base stations as they pass by (or over it as this case would be) always searching for the strongest signal. The potential airborne result was interference with cellular services

BACK TO CONTENTS

on the ground, coupled with the inability to accurately bill those users for cellular network usage. So, there we go—like many things in life, follow the money trail. This had less to do with concerns over what the phones might do to the plane, and more with how it might interfere with service volume, billing and profitability.

Over the years, as PEDs became ubiquitous, the airlines had to address the practical use of phones on planes. Because the FAA does require airlines to provide a safety briefing to passengers before each flight, and (spoiler alert) because cell phones are often a distraction, the airlines have been competing for passengers' required attention with an ever-increasing desire by many onboard to be heads down in their socials. This has morphed into a safety issue for the airlines that has led us to, ". . . the cabin door is now closed, and all cell phones must be turned off or placed in airplane mode at this time."

In recent years, the airlines have relaxed their position on PED usage at any time while on board including during taxi, takeoff and landing. This has come about because, frankly, the conflict involved just isn't worth it for the cabin crew, and monitoring violators is simply untenable. Thus, the internal debate has shifted to whether to allow cell phones for more than just texting and reading email (i.e., talking) while onboard. If you were immediately repulsed by this notion, you're our kind of reader.

Imagine a five-hour flight from San Francisco to Newark sitting between Bob, the power broker, screaming into his phone about making moves to stay ahead of the competition and next quarter's profit margin, and Aunt Maude, describing in agonizing detail her pat down at the TSA security checkpoint, is a nightmare scenario for countless passengers and crew. Many people value the one place in social life where they can escape their own and everyone else's cell-phone use for a while. Further, the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) has directly called on the FCC and the Department of Transportation to maintain a ban on inflight phone calls in the interest of safety, security, and preventing an increase in conflict events—as well as the assured exponential rise in aggravation of everyone in the cabin—for certain, something truly worse than snakes on planes.*

The authors of the Grey Matter column completely agree with the AFA, and we hope you do too.

*If you missed it, this is a reference to the 2006 action film directed by David Ellis, starring Samuel L. Jackson as an FBI agent on a plane full of deliberately released poisonous snakes, on a Honolulu to Los Angeles flight, intended to kill a witness in a mob-boss' trial.



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...

BACK TO CONTENTS



How ‘Good Enough’ Helps Overcome FOBO (Fear of Better Options)



Written By: Reini Thijssen

Many people struggle with FOBO or the “Fear of Better Options.” This fear causes you to avoid making decisions, always waiting for a potentially better option to come along. While it may seem like a luxury problem, it can still feel intensely stressful—creating doubt, restlessness, and tension that keeps you awake, questioning what to do next. For pilots, this indecision can be incredibly challenging. From choosing a place to live to making career moves, constantly searching for the “perfect” choice can lead to missed opportunities and uncertainty. This article explores FOBO and offers an exercise to practice accepting “good enough” decisions. By learning to make decisions without the anxiety of wondering if something better will come, you can become more confident in your choices and reduce the stress that often accompanies decision-making. We will dive into how understanding motivation can help you make more straightforward, less stressful decisions.

RFOBO vs. FOMO

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is the anxiety of missing an opportunity or experience, often triggered by seeing others’ exciting activities or achievements. On the other hand, FOBO (Fear of Better Options) is the fear of making a decision, worried that a better choice might come along later. While FOMO is about fearing what you are not experiencing, FOBO is about indecision, holding out for a potentially better option. Both lead to stress but stem from different fears of regret and missing out.

FOBO (Fear of Better Options) can impact various aspects of life, especially when people feel overwhelmed by the possibility of better opportunities, leading to indecision. In the context of dating, for instance, people may hesitate to commit to a potential partner because they worry about missing out on someone “better.” This happens frequently on dating apps, where individuals keep swiping through options, wondering if the next match could be more compatible. Even when a connection seems promising, the fear of better options often causes them to hold back.

The same indecision arises when deciding whether to pursue a relationship or keep options open. You might go on several dates with someone who seems great, but you wonder if you should continue exploring other possibilities, unsure whether settling down now means missing out on a more perfect match. Similarly, in serious relationships, people may fear committing to exclusivity or taking the next step, always wondering if someone better might come along.
This indecision is not limited to dating—FOBO can also manifest in career decisions, purchases, or choosing a place to live. People may delay making decisions in anticipation of a better opportunity, leading to missed connections or regret, as they remain stuck in a cycle of “what ifs.”

Good Enough

For small and medium-sized decisions, the most common advice to combat FOBO is to opt for “good enough”—make a decision like a satisficer. The New York Times coined this as the “mostly fine” decision, a choice you are okay with, even if it is not the highest achievable option. (The term is a mash-up, or portmanteau, of “satisfy” and “suffice” wherein one finds the decision satisfyingly sufficient.)

It encourages individuals to let go of the pressure always to make the best choice and to understand that sometimes, a “mostly fine” decision can be just as fulfilling, if not more. Ask yourself what choice needs to be fulfilled to be good enough. Want to pick a movie? Think about what you’re in the mood for—do you want something lighthearted, adventurous, or relaxing? Once you know your criteria, you can choose to meet those needs and stick with them.

Exercise: To practice making good-enough decisions, try this: go to a streaming service, pick the first movie that seems interesting, and commit to watching it without browsing through options endlessly. It might initially feel uncomfortable, but it helps reduce decision fatigue and increases your ability to enjoy the moment. At first, this will feel uncomfortable, but if you stick with it, you will start to see the benefits—mainly less anxiety.

Changing Base? Buying a House?

Making less impactful “good enough” decisions helps build confidence and reduces the anxiety that can creep in with more significant choices. When you practice deciding quickly and comfortably where to eat or what movie to watch, you train your brain to trust your judgment without overthinking. Over time, this practice helps you approach more complicated decisions—like buying a house or changing home base—with less stress.

When it comes to more significant decisions like choosing a location for a house, you can use the same method. First, identify your non-negotiables: what do you need from the location? Is it proximity to the airport for easier commuting? Good schools? A certain lifestyle? Once you have those criteria, narrow your options to places that fit those needs. Do not let the fear of missing out on a "perfect" place paralyze you. Make your decision based on what's good enough and permit yourself to commit without second-guessing. Even if you move and realize it is not exactly perfect, you will learn and adapt in the future, but at least you will have avoided the endless cycle of indecision.

What Is Your Motivation?

When faced with a significant decision, it is helpful to examine your motivation. In psychology, three main types of motivation are distinguished:

1. Autonomous motivation: When you genuinely want to do something because it aligns with your interests or values. The more autonomous your motivation, the better.
2. Controlled motivation: When you do something because you feel you should or because of external pressure rather than personal desire.
3. A-motivation: The absence of motivation or drive to do something, leading to indifference or apathy.

Autonomous motivation also comes in three gradations:

1. Intrinsic motivation: The most autonomous form, driven by a genuine interest or curiosity. For example, doing something because you enjoy it so much that you lose track of time.
2. Value-driven motivation: Doing something because you believe it is essential or aligned with your core values, even if it is not fun or exciting.
3. Goal-driven motivation: Motivated by a clear goal, such as working toward a specific objective (e.g., studying to pursue a particular career or starting a business).

Writing Exercise: Ask Yourself These 6 Questions to Prevent FOBO

The following writing exercise is a good practice to know what truly motivates you and what is less so. Think about the activities you have engaged in over the past few weeks, and answer the following questions:

1. Which activities do you find interesting and truly enjoy doing?
2. Which activities do you find important to do?
3. Which activities help you achieve your personal goals?
4. Which activities help you maintain your self-worth? Think about avoiding guilt or shame or feeling proud.
5. Which activities lead to rewards and/or help you avoid "punishment?"
6. Which activities no longer seem worth doing?

After answering these questions, you should better understand the motivation behind the choices you make or have made. The more autonomous your motivation (such as in questions 1, 2, or 3), the more likely those choices fit.

However, if many of your activities are driven by controlled motivation (questions 4 and 5) or even a-motivation (question 6), it might be time to rethink some of your choices.

Final Thoughts

Making minor or significant decisions becomes easier when you understand the motivation behind your choices. By recognizing whether you are driven by intrinsic interest, values, or external pressure, you can better navigate options and reduce the grip of FOBO. This self-awareness helps answer the essential question: Why would you choose one path over another?

If you struggle with decision-making and FOBO, Emerald Mental Health specializes in helping pilots and aviation professionals with their unique challenges. Emerald Mental Health offers tailored support to manage pressure and stay focused, both in your career and personal life. Seeking support can help clarify your choices. Contact reini@emeraldmentalhealth.com or visit www.emeraldmentalhealth.com for a free consultation.

Resources

McGinnis, P. (2019). The 10% Entrepreneur: Live your startup dream without quitting your day job. Penguin Random House.

Schwartz, B. (2017, September 25). Good enough rules the world. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/opinion/good-enough-perfectionism.html

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Time, Distance, Heading for Fitness

Written By: Eric Ray

Welcome to May! I hope where you live the weather is warming nicely. Where I am located, we just had snow! Again. Because I am still recovering from my previously mentioned health issues (April issue of Aero Crew News Fitness column), I keep coming back to heeding the experts', or even my own, advice to take it slowly. Sometimes when you are getting into fitness or coming back into it, you may want to go too fast, but you must put your plan into perspective. The following applies to dieting too.

Time

I am an advocate of setting both short-term (30-90-180 days) and long-term goals (think years). The time required for a proper fitness routine can be ambiguous. I believe most of us don't have the desire, the need or have sufficient hours to become an elite athlete. But when it comes to exercising daily, a generally accepted target is somewhere between 30 to 45 minutes of exercise. Obviously, this depends on the type of fitness you are doing (weightlifting, cardio, yoga, etc.), but if you can consistently devote 45 minutes to a fitness routine, you are committing enough time. Remember, time is not only about your daily routine, but also the numbers of days, months and years you dedicate to the process.

Another aspect is time under tension. Simply, this means that when you are practicing yoga or strength training, it is in your interest to hold the pose or lift the weight slowly. This allows your body to activate the muscles which permits growth. Moving quickly through an exercise may save you time but doesn't allow your body to absorb what is happening.

Distance

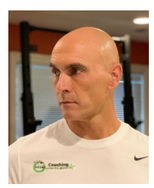
Beyond the normal time dedicated to fitness programs or routines, it is imperative that you try to walk more—get your steps in. This can also take the form of any cardio output (bicycling, swimming, etc.). How many steps should the average person complete daily? The number usually hovers around 10k steps. I am a firm believer that if you are around the 10k mark, or roughly three miles or more, you are probably living more than a sedentary lifestyle. My rationale for including distance or steps in my plan has to do with my job. We all know, aircrews sit stationary for long periods of time. Not only will walking those 10k steps per day help your cardio output but will also help you heart rate and blood flow.

Heading

This aspect means you must be cognizant of what you want and where you are going. It's one thing to force yourself to work out, but you won't sustain the lifestyle change or even proper nutrition without knowing where your motivation lies. Understand that you need to focus on the time you dedicate to working out and maintaining a proper diet. You also need to consider making adjustments when you are growing bored with what you are doing or not seeing results. Change is good, but you must stay focused on the result.

Continue to devote time to fitness with your goals in mind and keep an eye on where you are headed!

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...

PRODUCT REVIEW

Introducing the G2 Meridian 39mm GMT Watch

A classic, attractive timepiece that offers functionality at an affordable price.

Written By: Craig Pieper

I love watches. Not like, I really love them. It's almost become an obsession for me. I have so many, I'll often select one to discover its battery is dead despite feeling like it was just replaced. I recently came across a newer watch company named Vaer based in Venice Beach, California. The company, less than ten years old, has several lines of watches that are assembled in the U.S. Recently, the company started to make dual time zone watches for pilots and avid travelers.



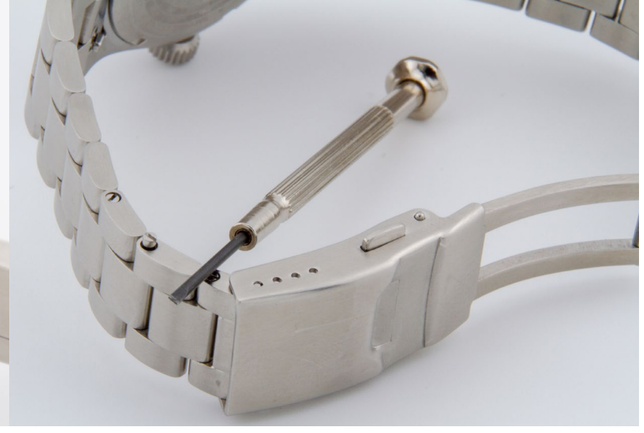
While they offer several styles of watches for different lifestyles, the line of GMT Watches (or pilot watches) was only started a year ago. The G2 Meridian comes in several colors: navy/red, navy/black (or Batman), Gilt (gold), and green. The G2 Meridian Navy/Red – 39mm, was inspired by the 1970s Rolex Milsub and the 1950s GMT Master. Its red/navy bezel was what first caught my eye, but not only is this watch attractive and functional, it is also affordable. Starting at $359, it comes with two easily interchanged straps—the waterproof FKM Ocean Strap (black), and the Single Pass Recon (olive) strap. There are also five options to upgrade the olive strap: the Premium Steel Bracelet ($90), Lined Horween Leather in tan or black ($120), a black FKM Waffle Strap ($30), and the Premium Jubilee Bracelet ($120). I selected the Premium Steel Bracelet.

I think the most outstanding feature of the G2 Meridian is its capability to depths of up to 500 feet (or 15ATMs), which is insane to me. The deepest I ever dove was 120 feet! Beyond that depth would require further certifications.

But wait, there's more; the G5 is capable to depths up to 650 feet (20ATMs)! The crown has a locking screw-down feature that seals the internal watch components from the pressure of the depths. Both company founders are Southern California surfers, so it's no surprise they wanted a watertight watch able to handle extreme elements. Their compelling origin story explains how they tested their designs to ensure they could withstand extreme conditions.

The dual, or triple, time-zone feature also caught my eye. The G2 and G5 series include a red arrow GMT hand, that is to be set to Greenwich Mean Time or Zulu time which means no need for mental math to read the time on the METAR or TAF. Simply use the red arrow as the hour hand (instead of the typical shorter hand). If you want to set a third time zone, simply twist the 120-click, bi-directional





bezel so the hour hand aligns with the local time of the third time zone.
Swapping out the waterproof strap for the metal bracelet was extremely easy. Flipping the watch, on each side you will find two small, spring-loaded levers that retract two tiny pins from the case of the watch. Installing the metal bracelet was much easier than I had initially anticipated though it took a few tries for me to align the pins.

As a watch connoisseur, I have my own watch hammer and pin kit to size metal bracelets, but Vaer uses a screw-type pin requiring either the Vaer Watch Tool or a 1.4mm flat-head screwdriver (aka an eyewear screwdriver). Simply unscrew the pins and remove the appropriate number of links and screw the final pin(s) back in. I did have a screw back out on the first day (pilot error), so make sure that you tighten them properly. You can also finely tune the size adjustments on the clasp. There are four positions along the clasp allowing you to shrink or expand the bracelet by small increments to either fit a little more snuggly or loosely depending on your preference. To change the incremental clasp position, use the pin adjustment tool from your watch kit to push the pin in on each side.

Another great feature of the G2, is the glow-in-the dark “lume” feature. The G2 markers and all three hands have 15 layers of Grade A, BGW9 Super-LumiNova applied to them.

My first impression when I opened the box was that the 39mm was a little small, but after adjusting the bracelet and wearing the watch, it fits great on my wrist—though I would love to see a 44mm version! Lastly, there is a date window at the bottom (at the six o’clock position) which I felt was a little small. But honestly, when I put reading glasses on, it’s perfectly legible. I guess my eyes are reminding me that I’m not in my 30’s anymore.



If you’re looking for a classic timepiece that looks great, has functionality and won’t break the bank, check out the G2 Meridian. It comes in several color options including the newest ones, Batman (aka Navy/Black), Gilt and green. Be sure to check out their latest blog, Journal of April 24, 2025 that announced the release of these new designs.



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...





BACK TO CONTENTS

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SQUALL LINE

Understanding Weather Delays, Flight Delays, and Cancellations



Written by: Ajay Raghavendra

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) maintains a robust operations and performance dataset accessible through the Aviation System Performance Metrics (ASPM). Broadly speaking, flight delays are either categorized as Controllable Delays or Uncontrollable Delays.

Controllable Delay include maintenance issues, crew, and ground handling (e.g., baggage loading, cabin cleaning or fueling). As the name suggests, controllable delay implies that an airline has control and therefore responsible for the delay. Passengers may be entitled to compensations and the airline takes responsibility for any inconveniences such as overnight hotel accommodation for missed connections, or re-booking. On the other hand, uncontrollable delays include weather, air traffic control (ATC) traffic flow, equipment, or procedural delays (e.g., Expect Departure Clearance Time - EDCT). An airline operator is not responsible for an uncontrollable delays and passengers are typically not entitled to compensation and protections for inconveniences that ensue from the schedule disruptions.

In this article, I summarize key findings and insights from the research work that Kaitlyn Jesmonth and I carried out. The work titled "Weather Conditions Most Detrimental to Flight Operations along the East Coast of the United States" was presented at the 101st Annual Meeting of the American Meteorological Society as part of the 21st Conference on Aviation, Range, and Aerospace Meteorology (ARAM) session on the Advances in the use of artificial intelligence and probabilistic predictions in support of ARAM. Statistically, weather is responsible for over 70% of flight delays in the National Airspace System (NAS). Weather delays may be at the departure and/or destination airport, or enroute. The direct financial impact of weather-related delays includes, among others, additional fuel consumed due to ground delays, increase in uplift fuel, holding patters, or diversions. To better understand weather related delays, flight cancellation data from 2015 to 2019 was acquired through U.S. D.O.T. Bureau of Transportation Statistics for JFK New York City, N.Y.) and MCO (Orlando, Fla.). The weather data was obtained from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI). JFK and MCO were chosen for this study to highlight the latitudinal variability in weather and seasons, and differences in the weather type and impact to flight cancellations.

Simple statistical analysis and a new machine-learning method was applied to the dataset and yielded the following results shown in the figures below.

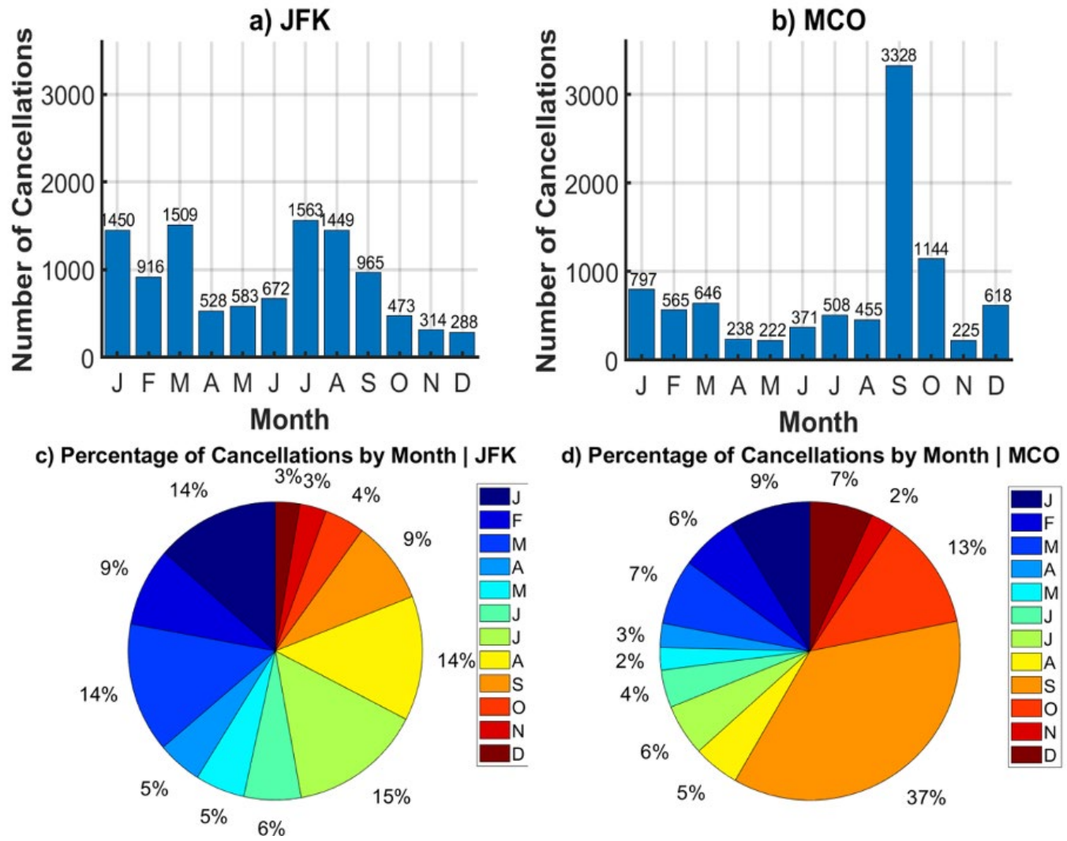


Figure 1: Number of flight cancellations and the percentage breakdown for each month at JFK and MCO. September shows anomalously high flight cancellations at MCO, and we are still exploring this issue. Broadly speaking, flight cancellations spike during the winter and summer seasons.

BACK TO CONTENTS

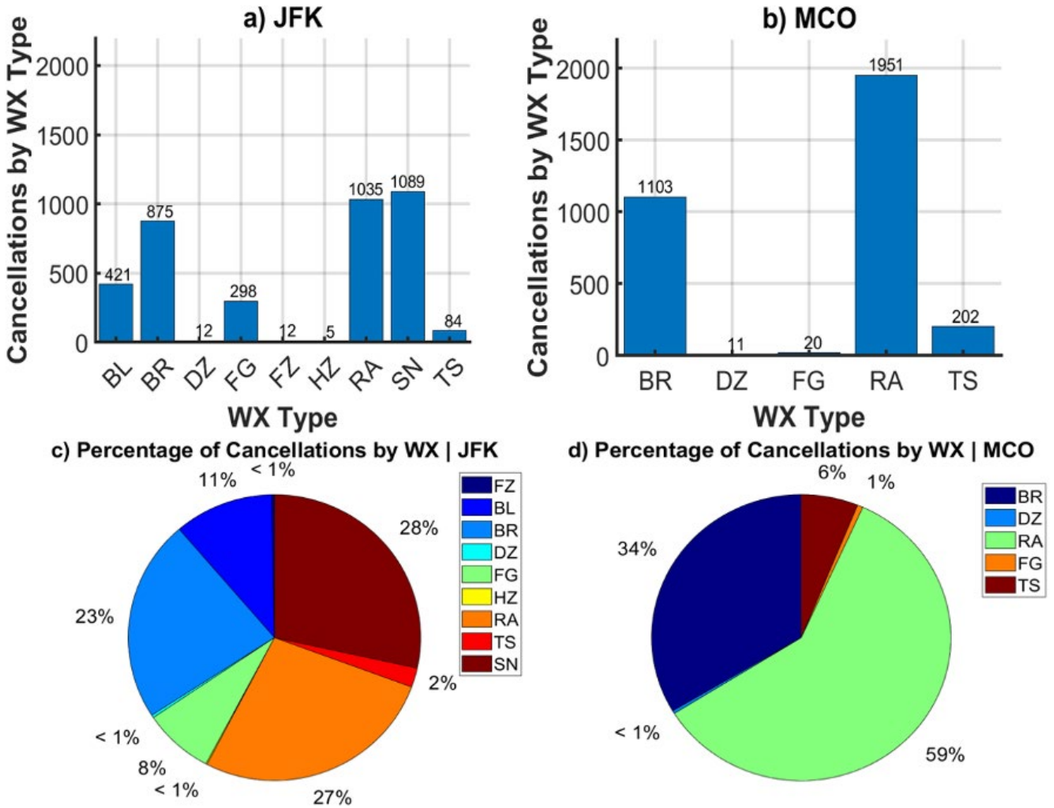


Figure 2: Flight cancellations by weather type and the percentage breakdown for each month at JFK and MCO. Weather type associated with winter such as blowing (BL)-snow (SN) followed by summertime thunderstorms (TS) dominate JFK's flight cancellations. Flight cancellations at MCO are typically associated with thunderstorms, rain and fog.

Legend: BL – Blowing, BR – Mist, DZ – Drizzle, FG – FOG, FZ – Freezing, HZ – Haze, RA – Rain, SN – Snow, and TS – Thunderstorm.

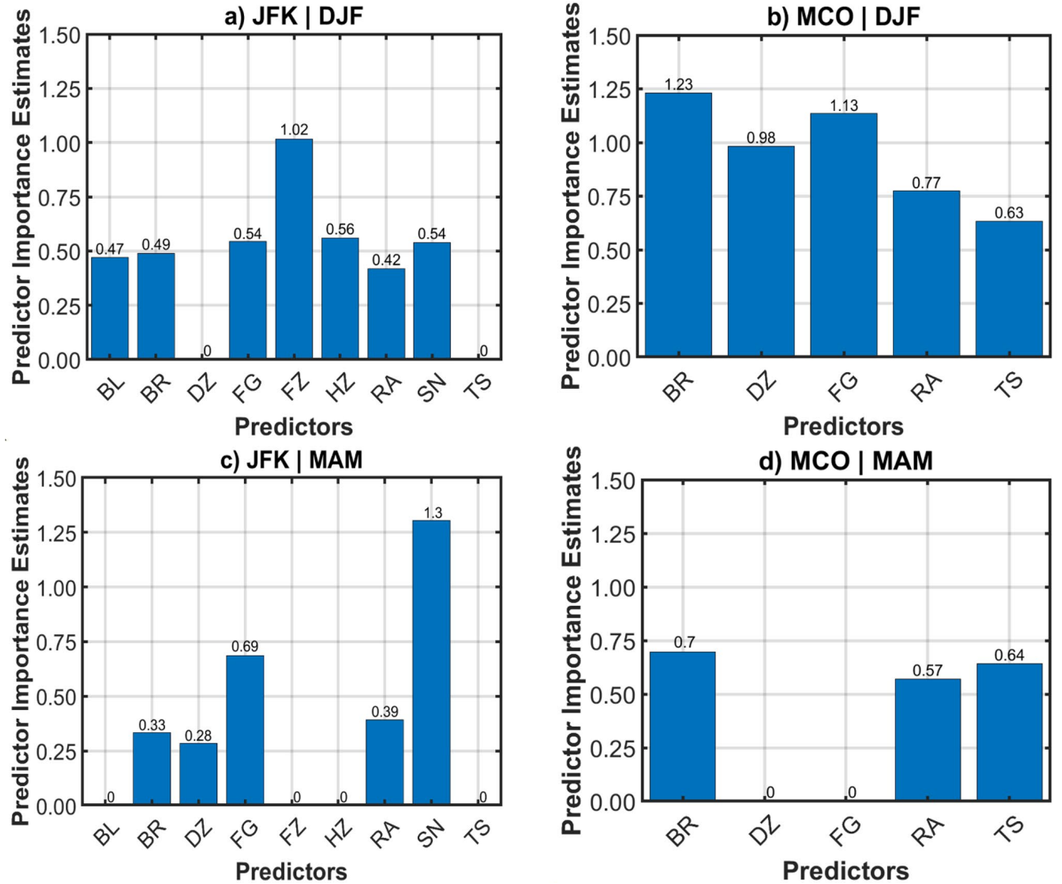


Figure 3: The importance of a weather type that causes a flight cancellation for December-February (DJF) and March-May (MAM) at JFK and MCO.
Legend: BL – Blowing, BR – Mist, DZ – Drizzle, FG – FOG, FZ – Freezing, HZ – Haze, RA – Rain, SN – Snow, and TS – Thunderstorm.

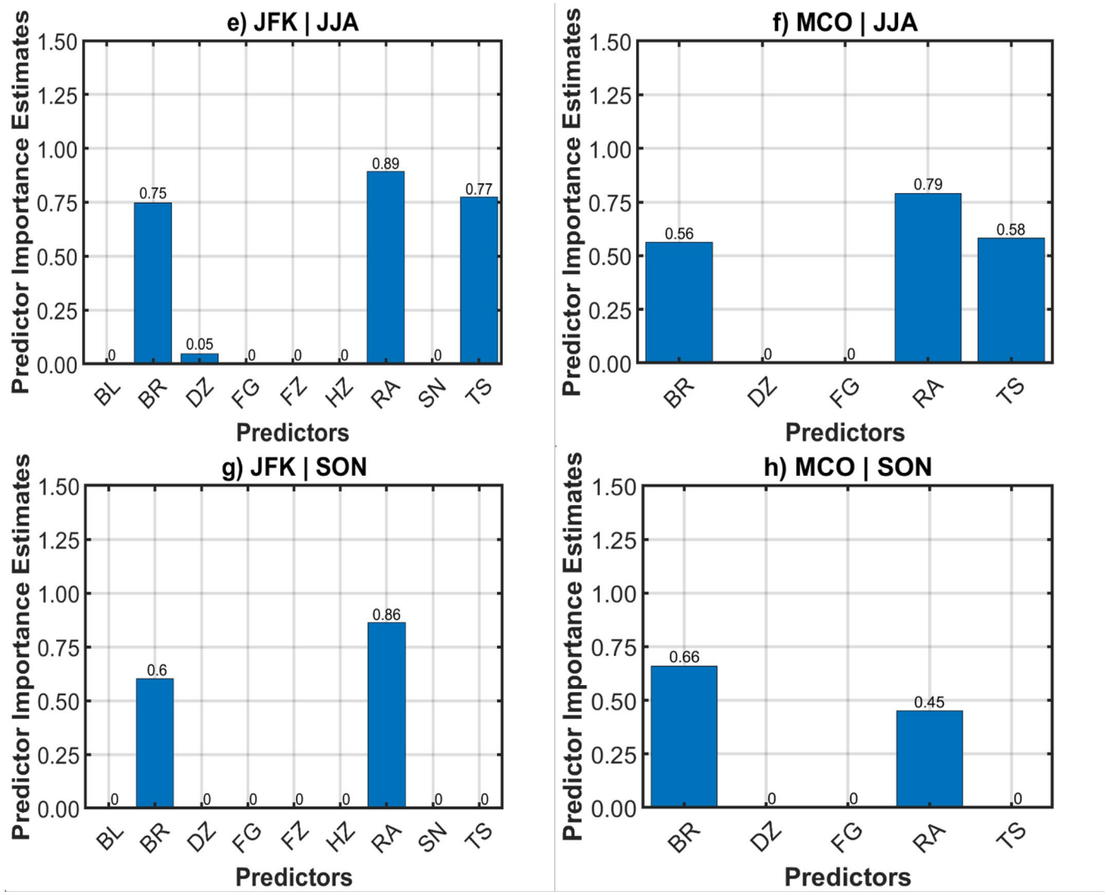


Figure 4: The importance of a weather type that causes a flight cancellation for June-August (JJA) and September-November (SON) at JFK and MCO.

Legend: BL – Blowing, BR – Mist, DZ – Drizzle, FG – FOG, FZ – Freezing, HZ – Haze, RA – Rain, SN – Snow, and TS – Thunderstorm.

In conclusion, the most impactful weather is during the summer and winter months. Thunderstorms play an important role at JFK over summer months, whereas thunderstorms are impactful during most of the year at MCO. Not surprisingly, winter weather is strongly related to flight cancellations at JFK, but this is obviously not this case at MCO.



About the Author

Ajay Raghavendra is a B-737 first officer with a U.S. airline and a rated UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter aviation officer with the U.S. Army (New York National Guard). He holds a Ph.D. in Atmospheric Science from SUNY-Albany and graduated with honors from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Fla. campus) with a B.S. in... Read More...

Reference: *Jesmonth, K. R., and A. Raghavendra, 2021: Weather Conditions Most Detrimental to Flight Operations along the East Coast of the United States. 21st Aviation, Range, and Aerospace Meteorology, Amer. Meteor. Soc., 8.3* https://ams.confex.com/ams/101ANNUAL/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/379861

BACK TO CONTENTS

BUSINESS VECTOR

On Leadership, the Military-Civilian Transition, and the Great Robin Olds

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



This article will be a segue from my usual topics this month as I turn to a discussion about leadership. I don't write about this subject often. Not because I don't have some strong opinions on leadership—I do, but because there are so many books, articles, and social media posts about it that it's easy to become inundated with information. I'm also somewhat jaded by the repeated banal posts about leadership that I read on LinkedIn, the only social media I regularly consume. It seems like anyone and everyone has the inside track on what makes or breaks a good leader and are only too eager to bestow their sage wisdom on us, the ignorant masses.

Before I go on, without being immodest, let me list a few of my credentials so you'll understand I haven't been a mere observer/analyst of leadership; I've also been a practitioner for most of my adult life. I spent over 20 years in the Air Force, mainly at the squadron level, and have held nearly every leadership job there. In the fighter world, I was checked out at the mission-commander level, which means I could lead up to sixty aircraft into battle. Since transitioning to business aviation after I retired from the service in 2001, I've held almost every operational leadership job in the industry on both the Part 91 and Part 135 sides, culminating in the Director of Aviation role for a Fortune 100 energy company.

Okay—enough chest beating. The point with the abbreviated bio is that I've done my fair share of leading and following in the military and civilian arenas. The biggest lesson I've

learned should seem obvious but often isn't emphasized enough. Military and civilian leadership ARE DIFFERENT! On the military side, particularly if you're in a role that could see combat, you have the "unlimited liability" clause, in that you may intentionally lead others into harm's way, and there is a non-zero probability that it could cost you your life. You also don't have the option to refuse. If you're given a lawful order, you must obey it or face court martial. On the civilian side, neither of these conditions is true. While there are undoubtedly hazardous jobs in the civilian sector, none require you to deal with enemy fire as you perform them. And, if you wake up one day and decide not to do what your boss asks you, you can say no and leave the job. It is hard to overstate how much this difference can affect leadership styles.

Then, there is the difference in those who are led. In a typical military combat unit, you have highly motivated personnel who all want to be there, want the unit to succeed, and will go the extra mile to make that happen. In a civilian organization, subordinate attitudes can run the gamut. Some will want to be there and operate at a very high level. Others couldn't care less and will do the minimum required to earn their salaries. Each group requires different leadership skills and styles.

For my first few years after retiring from the Air Force, I worked in various leadership roles for a few different charter/management companies, including one that I started myself. Thanks to my military experience, I thought I knew everything there was to know about leadership. I could not have been more wrong.

It took me about five years to put my military leadership experience into a perspective where it became useful on the civilian side. Perhaps the other biggest thing I realized is a practical restatement of one of the things I said above. In the military world, people have to follow you. In the civilian world, they have to want to follow you. Don't get me wrong, on the military side, it's better if they want to follow you, but the "want" isn't necessary to get the mission done. On the civilian side, the "want" is essential.

So, where am I going with all of this? I can't tell you how many LinkedIn posts I've read written by those who left the military, never held a civilian job, and are only too willing to offer civilians advice on how to lead. My favorites are those who have turned their military experience into a business where they provide that "service." Maybe today's military is a kinder and gentler place than it was when I was in, but it obviously took me a fair amount of time to understand the applicability of my military leadership skills in the context of a civilian leadership position. I'm not sure how those who offer military leadership advice without "walking in the civilian moccasins" have the scope of understanding needed to gain perspective on that advice.

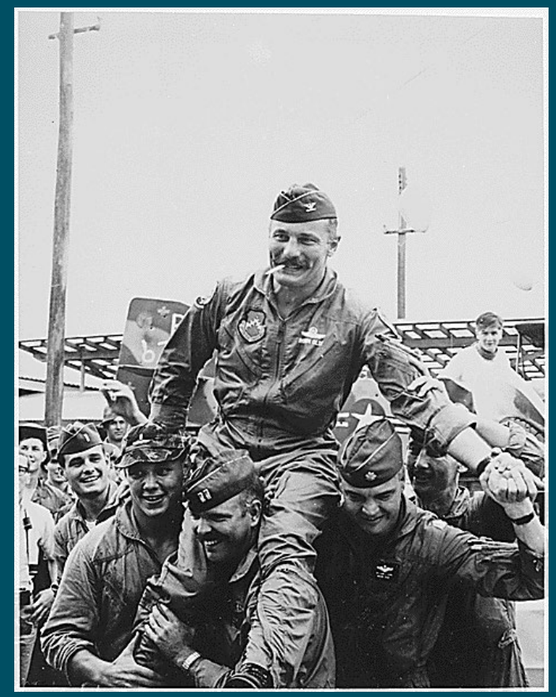
Let me offer some advice of my own to my military brothers and sisters who are making the transition to a civilian job or considering it. It's the same advice I used to give young captains or lieutenants who were leaving the training squadron and going into the operational world. For the first three months after you get to the new organization, eyes open, mouth shut. Watch and listen. Don't be too eager to offer your observations. Learn the organization, learn the leadership, learn the culture, and understand the dynamics of the environment. Only then will you be in a place where you can understand how your leadership experience can be applied there.

Having gone on my semi-rant about military vs. civilian leadership, I have to say a few words here about one of my heroes, the great General Robin Olds. His exploits are legendary, perhaps the most famous being leading Operation Bolo in Vietnam, where his wing imitated the formations and call signs of F-105 fighter-bombers to lure North Vietnamese MiG-21s into the air. The plan worked; the MiGs came up to play, and the F-4 pilots of the famed Wolfpack smacked them down. Olds was perhaps the last great combat leader the Air Force has produced, and his biography, Fighter Pilot, written by his daughter, Christina, is one of the best I've ever read. It is worth your time. Olds was a leader like few others I've encountered in my career because he possessed that rare talent that I mentioned above: you followed him because you wanted to, not because you had to. And at the end of the day, that's the one ability all leaders, military or civilian, should strive for.



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...



Wolfpack pilots of the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing sweep Colonel Robin Olds away from his F-4 Phantom II aircraft following his return from his 100th combat mission over North Vietnam. Olds led the Wolfpack through the past year as it amassed 24 MiG victories, the greatest aerial combat record of an F-4 Wing in the Vietnam war. // U.S. National Archives Catalog



Veteran Airline Pilots: Smartest Way to Use Your VA Loan When Moving

If you or someone in your unit is moving, don't miss this resource

Written By: Spencer Wartman

As a loan originator, there are many occasions where I am working with veteran buyers who are searching to find the right realtor. I discovered VeteranPCS at the end of 2023, and though I am familiar with many realtors across the country whom I trust, there are some areas where I do not have established relationships. VeteranPCS helps fill that void. I know this service helps buyers find sound, trust-worthy realtors. From the lender's perspective, a dependable realtor is invaluable from contract to closing. Since I have worked with VeteranPCS, I have established positive relationships with numerous realtors. As a loan originator, I have come to trust them, and if I were a buyer in search of a realtor, I would have total confidence in VeteranPCS.

I'd like to highlight a program helping veterans on the move who could use this supportive asset with their next permanent change of station (PCS). For veteran and military airline pilots, changing zip codes can be as routine as changing aircraft. Whether you're shifting airline bases, moving closer to family, or buying a second property, real-estate decisions often come with the territory. And if you served in the military, one of the biggest assets you acquired during is your VA home loan. Still, navigating the home buying or selling process—especially with the busy lifestyle we have—can feel overwhelming, even more so if you are unfamiliar with your new domicile or base. That's where **VeteranPCS** steps in as your no-stress, no-cost solution.

What Is VeteranPCS?

VeteranPCS is a veteran-founded platform built to provide PCS real-estate help for military families, veterans, and yes—veteran airline pilots. It connects you with real-estate agents and lenders who are well versed in VA loans, military transitions, and frequent relocations. Every agent in the VeteranPCS network is either a veteran or military spouse, so they understand the lifestyle, lingo, and logistical hurdles you face.

Why Airline Pilots Should Care

As a pilot who served, your housing needs are different—and your time is limited. Maybe you're relocating to be near a new base. Maybe you're finally putting down roots. Either way, VeteranPCS helps you:

- Maximize your **VA loan benefits**
- Work with **reputable, VA loan-experienced realtors and lenders**
- Navigate the market with less stress and more support
- Get **cash back at closing** (up to $4,000 via the Move-In Bonus)

It's a smarter, faster way to move—especially when you're balancing duty hours, bid periods, and family time.

Built for You—And Your Squadron

Even if you're already settled, VeteranPCS is an incredible resource for friends and squadron-mates who are still on active duty and constantly PCSing. If you've got military buddies in your network—especially those juggling deployments, TDYs, or short-notice moves—send them this link. They'll thank you for connecting them with a platform that truly understands military relocation and can help them use their VA loan the right way.

VeteranPCS also gives back—donating 10% of every closing to military-focused nonprofits—so you're not just moving smarter, you're supporting the community in the process.

Bottom Line

If you're a veteran airline pilot or still in uniform, don't leave your VA loan benefits on the table. VeteranPCS offers trusted military relocation services to help you—and your squadron—land exactly where you want to be. Be matched with a top-tier, VA-savvy, real-estate pro today at VeteranPCS.com. Working with a lender who specializes in airline pilot pay, conventional, investment and VA loans is crucial to ensuring you get the best deal for you and your family.

Trident Home Loans (Equal Housing Lender, NMLS 65716) is an airline industry leader for securing the right mortgage for you. Contact Spencer Wartman (NMLS 2109932) at spencer@mythl.com or spencerattrident.com and let him help you secure your future home!

Also, feel free to reach out to Spencer directly if there's a topic you'd like for him to touch on



About the Author

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

Trident Home Loans, NMLS ID 65716, Corporate Office located at 6723 Plantation Rd, Pensacola, FL 32504. Any offers or advertisements for mortgage products on our website or other platforms are subject to conditional approval. The actual terms and conditions of a mortgage loan, including interest rates, loan amounts, and eligibility, are dependent upon several factors, including the borrower's creditworthiness. Trident Home Loans reserves the right to modify or revoke any offer, and final approval is contingent upon the completion of a full application, verification of information provided, and meeting all underwriting requirements. For information regarding our licensing, you can visit our website at www.Tridenthomeloans.com. Trident Home Loans is an Equal Housing Lender. Please note that this disclaimer is provided for informational purposes and may be subject to updates or changes in accordance with regulatory requirements. Borrowers are encouraged to contact Trident Home Loans directly for the most up-to-date and accurate information regarding mortgage products and offerings. This advertisement is not an offer to lend, and all applications are subject to credit approval. Terms and conditions may apply.

MONEY

Man, That Lizard is Loud!

WRITTEN BY: CHARLIE MATTINGLY



Somehow not too long ago, I found myself going down yet another rabbit hole on YouTube. This time I was learning about a water survival technique where SEAL trainees learn to stay afloat with minimal effort while maintaining calm in challenging water conditions, even with their feet bound together and their hands tied together behind their backs.

It was fascinating! In fact, I WILL be trying this in my own backyard pool.

Some of the comments on the video I was watching were just as interesting as the training itself. Here's a short sample:

- "That last couple seconds made my anxiety go through the roof!"
- "It's probably easy if you're relaxed and don't panic"
- "I tried to sink in the pool and realized that by holding my breath I was only causing myself to float but by exhaling I was able to sink. It's crazy how something so simple can be so hard and relies on training your body and mind to be able to do these things consistently while being underwater..."

My favorite comment was, "it's probably easy if you're relaxed and don't panic." Wow. You think so?!?

I heard Steven Furtick tell a story the other day on one of my favorite podcasts, The Ed Mylett Show. His daughter had a goal at age seven to swim from one end of the pool to the other underwater. Of course, she wanted to best her older brothers (who have her by two years) by accomplishing this goal. In preparation for the task, like any good father, Steven Furtick told his daughter about the part of her brain that psychologist call the "lizard brain."

The colloquial term "lizard brain," refers to the brainstem, cerebellum, and basal ganglia, which are responsible for basic survival functions like breathing, balance, and primal instincts, and are often associated with the fight-or-flight response.

After Steven clarified to his daughter that there is not an actual lizard in her brain, he explained that she will probably feel like she is drowning about half-way through the swim test. However, she needs to ignore that feeling. Furthermore, ignore the lizard part of the brain that will tell her things that are not true. And, if she can successfully do those things, she just might make it all the way underwater and beat her two older brothers.

She did, in fact, achieve her goal and she made it across the pool underwater. After reaching the other side of the pool, she popped up out of the water and screamed out, "Man, that lizard is loud!"

As you probably already know, these two examples perfectly illustrate what is required in times of severe market volatility. All the signs, events, so-called experts around us are seemingly screaming to get out, run away, seek out the quick fix to make this pain stop.

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix. There is no information (at this time) to help us get through difficult times in the stock market. The things that work are illustrated in the examples above. **Ignore the lizard!** Stay calm and stick to what we know has worked in the past. I understand that strategy may sound simplistic and even juvenile to some reading this, but the problem is every other strategy is worse!

It reminds me of what Winston Churchill said about democracy. "...Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried..."

Here's the good news: We don't have to know the future to be successful. However, we do need a plan. If you know how the Navy SEAL trainees that came before you were successful at drownproofing, then you can apply the same lessons and strategy. It's all you have. Even though the YouTube comment from Captain Obvious nailed it - drownproofing is probably easy if you don't panic. It certainly must feel more like the first YouTube commenter that said "...last couple seconds made my anxiety go through the roof!"

In addition to developing a plan to be successful in a world full of unknowns, we actually need a little faith to go along with the plan. The kind of faith I'm talking about is the faith that it takes to turn down the volume and ignore the voice of the lizard brain. How do we know we won't drown during the test? How do I know I can swim across the pool underwater and still be okay?

There are no guarantees in life, especially when it comes to finances. There is no guarantee that we'll be here tomorrow. We don't have guarantees but what we do have is data and experience from the past. The statistics and historical data show that most people lose more money in complex timing strategies aimed at perfectly avoiding the downturns in the markets versus the actual downturns themselves. Check out this article and this one too. And click here to visit PersonalFinanceClub.com to play the "Time the Market Game."

I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to study historical market data on almost a daily basis. I also love studying human behavior. So, the faith that I'm talking about is not a blind faith. It's the belief that this, too, shall pass. It's the belief that we are a resilient and creative society. It's the faith that companies like Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, and thousands of other companies like them will find a way to not only survive but thrive for decades to come. Furthermore, I benefit from their remarkable ingenuity, growth, and ability to adapt to diverse economic environments.

This time one month ago, I was writing for the April issue of Aero Crew News. That article was a bit tongue in cheek. Now it feels very serious. The most recent two days in the market were the worst since 2020. In last month's article, I mentioned the importance of ignoring headlines and prognosticators. Now, it feels like the events in the markets are aligning with the headlines. This is the most difficult part of the investing journey, where it gets really hard to turn down the volume on our lizard brains.

I don't know what the economy or stock market will be like by the time this article is published in a few weeks. Everything could be on the upswing, or we could be in a deeper market decline. We're already in correction territory. As of this writing the S&P 500 is down more than ten percent. However, I think this is a great time to revisit investing and finance lessons learned from the past. The kind of lessons our grandparents taught us; save for a rainy day, spend within your means, plan for the future, be generous and grateful!

For those who have a well-thought-out plan and a strong "why" behind your savings and investing strategy, you will be fine. For those who may have been chasing high returns in the "Magnificent 7" and living on the razor's edge of spending and debt, this could be a painful time. But it's never too late to revisit lessons learned and develop a plan for success.

I'll wrap up this article by sharing some of the thoughts I recorded during February, March and April of 2020. During the market and COVID-19 chaos I took notes on what it felt like, what we could be doing to help and

just simple observations in general. It was certainly a fascinating time that can provide lessons learned for any market downturn if we can just remember them.

My Notes and Comments from February, March and April 2020

- "Years of stock market gains and past performance can evaporate in days, even hours…"
- "Southwest Airlines, LUV stock which had outperformed the S&P 500 for almost 15 years…up until this month. Jan/Feb 2020. Now it hasn't even outperformed a government bond fund for 5 years.
- Investors are trying to capitalize on the new normal of using Zoom for business meetings, working from home and even schools. Unfortunately, they picked the wrong Zoom company to invest in:

"*In any case, the rise of Zoom Technologies is making someone money. The defunct company's total market value is more than $16 million, not too shabby for a company that hasn't reported revenue since 2011.*"



What are we learning now? Assuming you know something to be absolutely true could be…faulty planning. We always need to be prepared for multiple outcomes…

- *"It gets better quickly…"*
- *"It gets better in "?" years…"*
- *How do we prepare for both of those simultaneously? Diversification, bonds, cash. Strong PERSONAL balance sheets… just like a business.*

In 2020, it seemed like we all became a lot more introspective…for a minute.

Ask yourself questions:

- What would my life be like if I had unlimited amounts of money?
- What would my life be like if I had very little money?
- What REALLY brings joy, peace, and contentment

Why didn't we sell early on in this crisis and go to cash? As each day progressed, we didn't and still don't know if it's early or not. March 20, 2020… There's no indication that it's "early" in the stock market decline or "late." Many days when thinking about what to do with investments the stock market was up 5% or even 10% in a single day.

I inserted this comment on April 10, 2020: so far, the S&P bottomed on March 23rd and is up about 20% since that day. Everyone is calling the bottom every time the market goes up. Simultaneously everyone is saying it WILL get much worse all the time

- Moving money to cash during a crisis actually creates more fear, stress and potentially regret. (Missed opportunities.)
- The psychology of holding cash is powerful…once you go to cash it's hard to invest in the good times because the market is high, and it's hard to invest once the market goes lower because of fear.
- Now is the time to remember the feeling of wishing you had a stronger personal balance sheet. "Save for a rainy day."

*Hopefully, you found this article interesting and helpful. If you have any questions, contact us at 865-240-2292 or Charlie@leadingedgeplanning.com. Schedule a time to chat… Charlie's cell/text–*865-328-4969

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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…

2025
Aero Crew News
PHOTO CONTEST

RARELY SEEN AIRLINES

Thank you to everyone who participated in our “Rarely Seen Airlines” photo contest! We were truly impressed by the incredible images you captured—your photos brought to light some of the most unique and lesser-known airlines from around the world. Each entry offered a fascinating glimpse into the hidden corners of aviation, and we’re grateful for the passion and effort you put into sharing them. After our public vote, we’re thrilled to announce the winners—congratulations to all!

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Grand Prize Winner

Don’t Nok It ’til You Try It

Austin W.



As a U.S. Army Apache pilot deployed overseas, aviation has always been more than a career—it’s an obsession. While in Phuket, Thailand, I was determined to capture photos of airlines I had never seen before. Enter Nok Air. I meticulously planned my vantage point near the airport, renting a scooter to scout the area. My spot was close to a military checkpoint, so I kept a low profile while snapping photos for hours, waiting for the perfect moment. Just as I was lining up another shot, a military patrol approached. They weren’t thrilled about my presence and insisted I delete my photos and leave. With a mix of quick thinking, Google Translate, and a bit of luck, I explained my passion for aviation photography. Eventually, they let me stay, and I got the shots I came for. Plane spotting is in my DNA—so much so that I even have an ADS-B antenna on my roof. Sometimes, I even manage to drag my wife along for the adventure. But this moment in Phuket, dodging military scrutiny to capture a rare airline, remains one of my most unforgettable aviation encounters.

BACK TO CONTENTS

First Runner-Up

The Polar Express
Jamison M.



I actually shot that photo on the DHL ramp in CVG and combined it with a background photo I captured on a Northern Lights tour north of Anchorage.

Second Runner-Up

Dreamlifting
Jamison M.



Taken in the early AM on the Polar Ramp in Anchorage. I laid the camera on the wet tarmac to get the water effect on the ground. Chris R's needs a period, too.

Third Runner-Up

The best of the west!
Thomas A.



Denver Air Connection over Telluride, CO and that's me in the cockpit.

BACK TO CONTENTS

Honorable Mention

Skies aren't so "friendly"
DYLAN H.

While waiting for a storm to pass before departure, I was able to capture a lightning shot of Southern Airways Express/Mokulele Airlines Cessna Grand Caravan.





Penguin touching down in Antarctica
PHOTO BY CHRIS R.

A DAP Antartica Airlines Avro RJ100 seconds from touchdown at King George Island's gravel runway in Antartica



Kenmore Air Orca Livery

Nathan L.

I was on a layover in Seattle and took the opportunity to fly with Kenmore Air from their Lake Union seaplane terminal. This DHC-3 Otter has a special “Wild Orca” livery. Photo taken from the terminal deck with a Samsung phone.



Clear Prop!

Ramon A.

Florida Air Cargo getting ready to begin his day to dispatch cargo to Bahamas .

BACK TO CONTENTS



Ravn Alaska Dash-8 in Valdez

Brian R.

Taken during a turn in Valdez, the proximity to the beautiful terrain makes this a unique and challenging airport to get into.

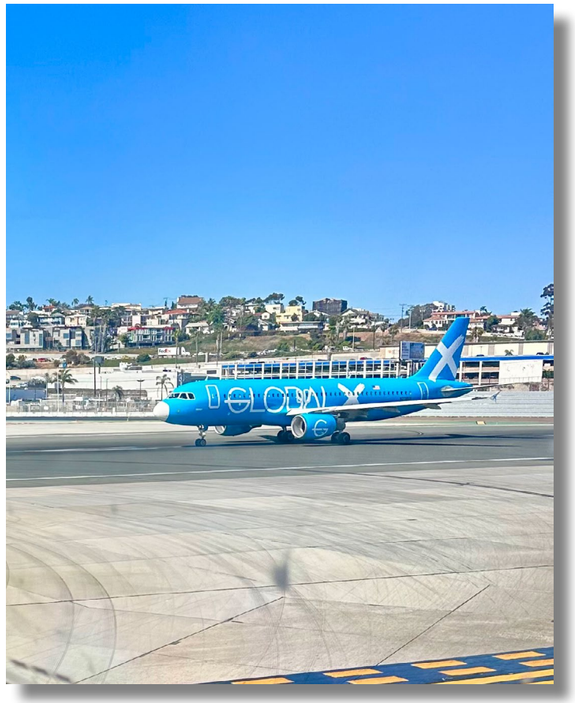


Ravn and Aleutian sharing the ramp on a beautiful December day in Dutch Harbor

Joe D.

This was taken in December 2022, shortly after Aleutian began flying to Dutch. I was just about to head back to Anchorage as FO on the Ravn flight.

Honorable Mention



Papa Smurf the Global X Airbus in Sunny San Diego

Amber R.

I took this photo after just receiving a job from Global X Airlines. It gave me hope and inspiration after being furloughed from my previous airline. What's even better was the shot was taken in my hometown of San Diego, I think it was a sign it was all going to be okay. I get to fly Papa Smurf all the time now!



Air Annobon

Matthew O.

This is a rarity. Try to find this small island in the Atlantic. Owned by Equatorial Guinea, this airline started up to add service to this small island. I was flying for the EG Government at the time, and took this photo in Malabo, E.G. back in 2014. Annobon was largely isolated until around 2010 when EG worked on extending the runway.

Honorable Mention



Air Niugini Fokker 70

Cameron B.

This photo was taken at Hoskins Airport AYHK, New Britain, Papaua New Guinea in February 2020. While working in Papaua New Guinea I came across this Fokker 70 parked on the ramp for the night. It was taken in the late afternoon. The backdrop of the clouds and volcanoes really made the phot for me.



McCall Aviation

Andrea E.

McCall Aviation's Kodiak 100 pilot, Andrea Eldridge, picking up passengers from the Flying B Ranch on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in Idaho



Kenn Borek Air

Kurt S.

Kenn Borek Air is an airline based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. It operates regional passenger and cargo services, plus contract operations in the Arctic and Antarctic. I took this photo in 2017 working out of the South Pole station for the U.S National Science Foundation. The photo was taken on a fuel-cache stop on the way to pickup data from a rashed science balloon. Estimated elevation 8,000'; outside air temperature … I've blocked that part out of my memory. Thanks for the submission opportunity—love the site.

Congratulations to our top 15 and all who showcased their talent in the Aero Crew News 2025 Photo Contest.

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Thank you to all the WAI attendees who took the time to speak to me about Aero Crew News.

-Craig



A warm welcome from Women in Aviation International



Atlas Air - Olivia Godfrey, Kevin O'Reilly, Laurie Ruiz de Castilla, and Lauren Curbelo



Amazon Air



Arab American Aviation Professionals (AAAP) - Yahya, Yakin, Hollie, Latifa, and Matthew



Contour- Brandon Howell, Courtney Stables, and Lily Jaeger



Flight Safety



Flexjet - Jim D., Alan F., Taylor M., Reagan D., Lea P., Kari J., Susan T., Sarrah L., Gheorghe C., Ashley B., Callie B., Susan M., and Courtney C.



David Clark - Roger Clay and Kenny Tines



Envoy - Kipp Swannie, Elizabeth Moorman, Tara Serocki, Mary Murphy, Requel Henry, Dzohara Stroud, Selina Camargo, Kasie Cox, Eve-Ana Ontiveros, Melissa Talmage, Maria Kompothecras, Brittany Gallarneau, Kate Thurmond, and Steven Cates



GlobalX



JetLinx - Kati Bryer, Mia Loxley, and Olivia Snyder

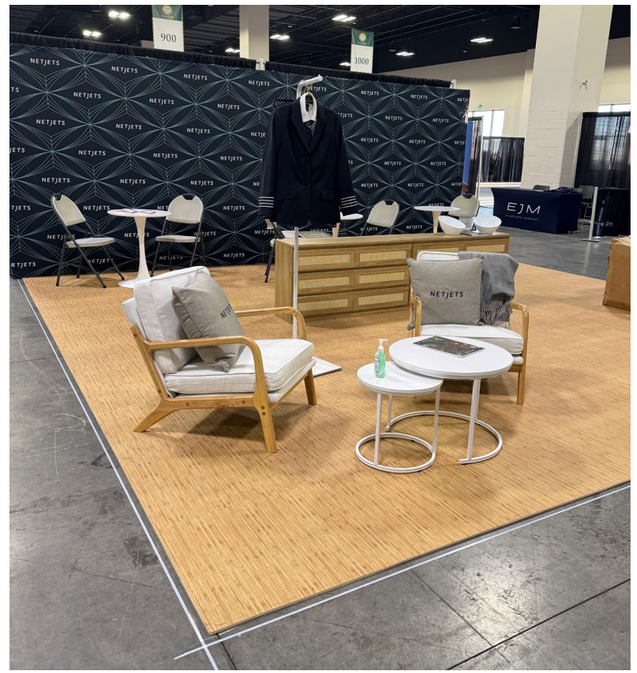
Gulfstream



JetSeam - David Davidoff and JP Gnanam



Metro Aviation, Inc. - Mel Clawson, Joe Abshier, Kat Herold, and Britney Ratcliff



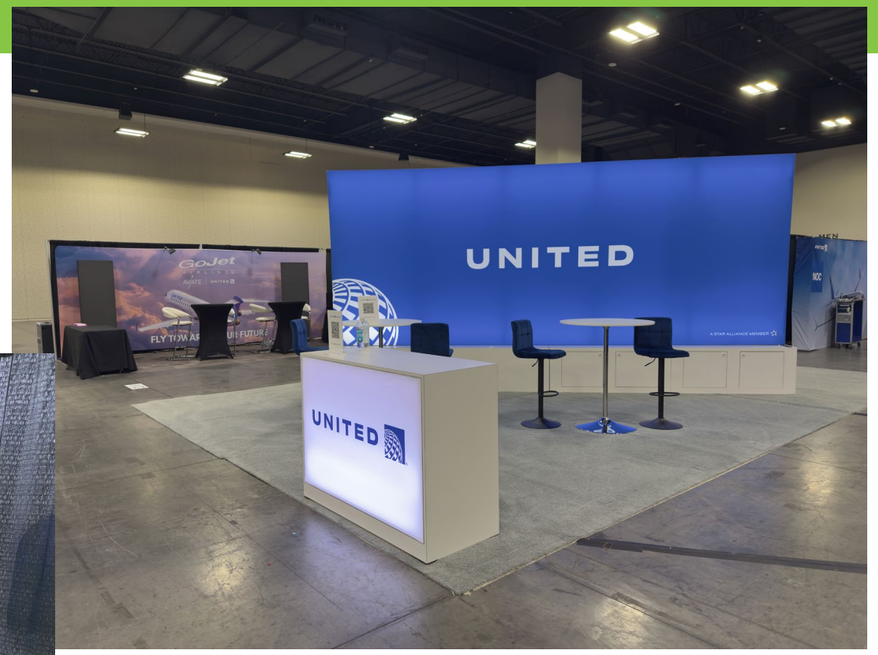
Net Jets



Trident Home Loans -
John Fisher and Ashley Barber



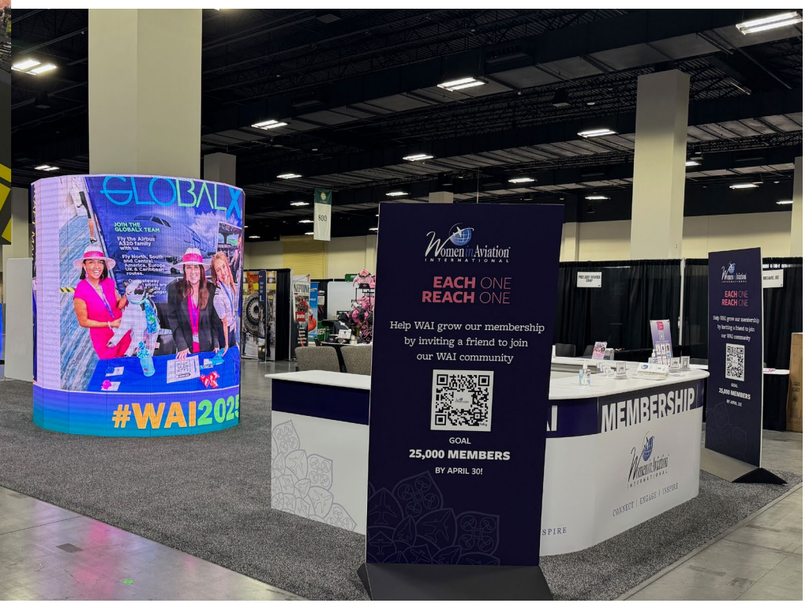
Spirit - Sandi Fagenbaum, Kimberly Maya, Olivia Hopkins, Shantie Madho, and Dana Shapir Alviene



United Airlines



SkyWest



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