

AIR LINE PILOT

OCTOBER 2001

SEPTEMBER 2026



In Memoriam

September 11, 2001

The members and staff of the Air Line Pilots Association wish to express our extreme sorrow for all whose lives tragically ended on September 11 as the result of the terrorists' attacks on our country. You will be missed by all of us, but never forgotten. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to the families, friends, and coworkers of our fallen comrades:



United Airlines Flight 93

Capt. Jason Dahl and F/O LeRoy Homer, Jr.

Flight Attendants Lorraine Bay, Sandra Bradshaw, Wanda Green, CeeCee Lyles, and Deborah Welsh

United Airlines Flight 175

Capt. Victor Saracini and F/O Michael Horrocks

Flight Attendants Robert Fangman, Amy Jarret, Amy King, Kathryn LaBorie, Alfred Marchand, Michael Tarrou, Alicia Titus
Customer Service Agents Marianne MacFarlane, and Jesus Sanchez (off duty)

American Airlines Flight 11

Capt. John Ogonowski and F/O Thomas McGuinness

Flight Attendants Barbara Arestegui, Jeffrey Collman, Sara Low, Karen Martin, Kathleen Nicosia, Betty Ong, Jean Roger, Dianne Snyder, and Madeline "Amy" Sweeney

American Airlines Flight 77

Capt. Charles Burlingame, F/O David Charlebois, and

Capt. Bud Flagg (a retired American pilot who was a passenger)

Flight Attendants Michele Heidenberger (wife of US Airways Capt. Tom Heidenberger), Jennifer Lewis, Kenneth Lewis, and Renee May

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Aviation's Common Cause



There has been no greater test of the aviation community than the terrorist attacks of 9/11. This month, we mark the 25th anniversary of this tragedy, and our commitment remains the same: to never forget.

With each year, that commitment gains renewed importance. For many of us currently flying the line, that day is seared in our memories. I remember standing in the crew room surrounded by more than 100 of my Delta colleagues as the Twin Towers fell. We all felt our industry change in those moments.

Today, we're welcoming a new generation of airline pilots into that same industry—including ALPA members who were born on Sept. 11, 2001 (see page 17). We owe that generation more than just a history lesson. We owe them the significance of that day and a shared commitment to the security measures put into place that honor everyone who was lost (see page 13).

Twenty-five years on, we continue to keep the memory of this tragedy alive through action. Pilots are the last line of defense to prevent our aircraft from being turned into weapons of terror. We fulfill this responsibility through pilots who serve as federal flight deck officers and through our relentless security advocacy shaped by the lessons of that day.

After years of ALPA advocacy, secondary flight deck barriers were mandated on all newly manufactured airliners delivered after Aug. 25, 2025 (see page 15). Although the requirement was to become effective last year, various airlines and aircraft manufacturers have continued to delay implementation, and they continue to request exemptions to circumvent this lifesaving security asset. However, our unrelenting perseverance continues to pay off as we recently learned that the FAA denied another attempt by the Regional Airline Association to avoid the deadline for some regional jets.

With every accident or security incident, we vow to raise standards to prevent future occurrences. Aviation remains the safest form of transportation due to those who speak out when they see a threat or vulnerability—a commitment born from honoring the colleagues we've lost. As we mark ALPA's 95th anniversary this year, our proudest accomplishment isn't any single rule change; it's a union that

keeps our commitment through each generation.

That commitment shows up in tangible fights—like our insistence on security enhancements and demanding that two qualified pilots remain on every airline flight deck, now and in the future. And our commitment shows up in the less visible moments: cultivating the next generation of safety-focused, union-minded pilots. That work occurs throughout the year in the U.S. and Canada, as ALPA pilots volunteer to connect with current and former members and invest in the future of our profession.

This was on full display at the Experimental Aircraft Association's annual AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisc. (see page 20), where thousands of airline pilots were among the 700,000-plus individuals at Wittman Regional Airport. It gave us an opportunity to reinforce, in person, what safeguarding the world's safest aviation system actually requires: continued investment in the infrastructure, technology, and people supporting it (see page 27)—including our key union partners in the sky, air traffic controllers.

Our collaboration with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association to advance system modernization, improve communications during flights, and strengthen workers' rights is critical to both the success of our industry and the workforces we represent (see page 5). Our voices are stronger when we speak as one, and standing with our union siblings across the industry, worldwide, makes that voice impossible to ignore. We all share the bond that carries us through safety-focused victories and heartbreaking tragedy. We look out for one another because the alternative is unacceptable.

During this month of September, I hope you wear your ALPA 9-11 pin, display the sticker you'll find in this issue, and save this edition of the magazine—which reprises the cover we ran in October 2001—as a reminder that we will never forget.

Twenty-five years ago, I stood in a crew room and watched our industry change in real time. This year, some of our newest members turn 25—born into a world that morning had already reshaped, now flying a profession rebuilt around it.

That's what One ALPA means, in a year that holds two significant anniversaries—25 years since that September morning, 95 years since our founding: not a slogan, but a handoff. Every pilot generation before us kept that promise. Now we keep it so that the next generation of ALPA pilots can, too.



Capt. Jason Ambrosi
ALPA President



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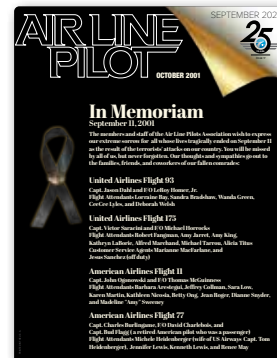
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About the Cover

ALPA honors the flightcrew members, flight attendants, and customer service agents who lost their lives aboard United Flights 93 and 175 and American Flights 11 and 77 on Sept. 11, 2001.

Cover design: William Ford and Dit Rutland



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Safety Through Partnership

By Nick Daniels, President, National Air Traffic Controllers Association

Every summer, the Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture Oshkosh celebrates the innovation, passion, and professionalism that define American aviation [see page 20]. This year's event also showcased something equally important: the partnership between the professionals who operate the safest aviation system in the world [see page 27].

Standing alongside ALPA at Oshkosh, I was reminded that although pilots and air traffic controllers perform different jobs, we share the same mission. Every decision we make is guided by one objective—getting every aircraft safely to its destination.

That shared mission extends well beyond the flight deck and the control room. It's made the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) and ALPA strong partners in advocating for policies that improve the national airspace system by representing the professionals who monitor it and those who operate within it.

Over the past several years, our organizations have worked together on Capitol Hill, with the FAA and the Department of Transportation (DOT), and with other industry stakeholders to ensure that aviation safety remains a top national priority. We've spoken with one voice because the challenges facing our industry—and the solutions—are shared.

One of our highest priorities has been rebuilding the air traffic controller workforce. Staffing shortages affect controllers and pilots in different ways, but the operational impacts are felt across the entire aviation system. Together, NATCA and ALPA have advocated for sustained maximum hiring, improvements to the controller training pipeline, and long-term workforce planning that recognizes the years required to develop a certified professional controller. Committing to our people remains one of the most important investments we can make in aviation safety.

Our partnership has also helped advance several bipartisan legislative initiatives that will make our aviation system even stronger.

Together, we continue to support legislation to provide pilots with better situational-awareness tools [see the August issue], remove conflicts between helicopter and fixed-wing routes around airports, and ensure that the Department of Defense

must meet the same safety standards as the commercial and general aviation communities.

We've also championed the Mental Health in Aviation Act, because air traffic controllers and pilots who seek mental-health care face significant obstacles [see the August issue]. The current system perpetuates a culture of silence and stigma that must be addressed. The Mental Health in Aviation Act and the Aviation Medication Transparency Act would eliminate many of the barriers to mental-health care for both of our unions' members. These bills would help ensure the well-being of our critical professionals and enhance safety for the flying public.

Although the legislation we both advocate for address different issues, they all reflect the same principle: Aviation safety is strongest when policies are informed by the frontline professionals who operate the system every day.

That principle also applies to modernization.

NATCA and ALPA strongly support the DOT and FAA's efforts to modernize our national airspace system. New technologies, including automation and other tools, have tremendous potential to improve efficiency and safety, but only when they're developed with meaningful input from the controllers and pilots who'll use them. Technology should enhance human expertise—not replace it. Decisions involving the safety of human beings must always remain in the hands of highly trained aviation professionals.

The success of our aviation system has always depended on collaboration. Pilots and controllers rely on one another every day, building trust through routine operations and responding together when challenges arise. This partnership is one of the reasons the United States continues to set the global standard for aviation safety.

The conversations we shared at Oshkosh reflected that spirit of collaboration. More importantly, they demonstrated what's possible when NATCA and ALPA work together to advance common goals. By speaking with one voice on staffing, modernization, and commonsense safety legislation, we're helping build an even stronger national airspace system—for aviation professionals and for the millions of people who depend on us every day. 

PILOT GROUP NEWS

CANADA

WestJet Encore MEC Elects New Leaders

● Following the transition from a multicouncil to a single-council structure, the WestJet Encore Master Executive Council (MEC) recently announced its newly elected officers who will lead the pilot group's nearly 500 pilots:

- Capt. Cody Brace, MEC chair;
- F/O Valerie Carrier Hood, MEC vice chair; and
- Capt. Heath Spence, MEC secretary-treasurer.

"It's an honour to serve as MEC chair and to represent our fellow pilots," said Brace. "Our new leadership team is committed to ensuring our pilots' voices are heard and, above all, to making meaningful progress on career progression and recognition issues, improved compensation, and quality-of-life concerns, which remain among the most significant challenges facing our pilot group."

While the pilots are in year three of their five-year contract, the new leaders are committed to ensuring that these critical matters will become part of the pilot group's long-term strategy in preparation for the next round of bargaining.

"We believe there's a real opportunity to advance our long-standing issues," continued Brace. "We're committed to working constructively with all stakeholders to achieve lasting solutions for our pilots while continuing to build a strong brand."

Air Transat Pilots Elect New MEC Officers

● On August 5, the Air Transat Master Executive Council (MEC) elected the following officers for



From left, Air Transat Master Executive Council officers Capt. Federico Lleras, vice chair; Capt. Bibianne Lavallée, chair; and F/O Christopher Pye, secretary-treasurer.

a two-year term that began on August 11:

- Capt. Bibianne Lavallée, MEC chair;
- Capt. Federico Lleras, MEC vice chair; and
- F/O Christopher Pye, MEC secretary-treasurer.

"It's an honour to serve as chair of the Air Transat MEC and represent the pilots of Air Transat," said Lavallée. "I look forward to working alongside my fellow MEC officers and committee chairs as we advocate for our members, build on the progress we've made, and continue strengthening our pilot group throughout the coming term."

The MEC extends its sincere appreciation to Capt. Bradley Small for his four years of leadership as chair and to Capt. Antoine Bréban for his service as secretary-treasurer.

Great North Pilots Ratify First Collective Agreement

● Great North pilots voted on July 16 to ratify a tentative agreement reached with management. The two-year deal provides clearer scheduling rules, enhanced compensation, and improvements aimed at supporting pilot well-being.

"This first collective agree-

ment establishes the professional standards and stability that every pilot deserves, and it reflects the strength and unity of these pilots as they build their future," said Capt. Tim Perry, ALPA Canada president.

The agreement was supported by a strong majority of the pilot group and marks a significant milestone for the airline as it continues to expand operations. The new collective agreement took effect immediately.

"This agreement is the result of constructive dialogue and a shared commitment to safety, fairness, and long-term growth," Perry added. "ALPA is proud to support Great North pilots as they take this important step forward in securing a contract that recognizes their essential role in Canada's aviation system."

Great North is a Canadian charter airline that focuses on providing essential service for federal and provincial government agencies, nongovernment organizations, First Nations, and local community authorities.

U.S.

Sun Country Cites Pilot Shortage While Fighting Multimillion-Dollar Pay Award

● Sun Country is suing ALPA in federal court to void a binding arbitration award that found the company owes premium pay to its instructor pilots—the very same pilots who stayed and took on the added work of training new pilots and first officers becoming captains.

The suit comes as the airline has publicly blamed recent route cuts out of Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport on a pilot staffing shortage, with the company's own outgoing CEO saying that the shortage traces to pilots not wanting to relocate outside Minneapolis, Minn., or become a captain. The Association has countersued, seek-

ing to enforce the award and secure the pay owed to the affected instructor pilots.

"Sun Country can't have it both ways. It can't claim a pilot and captain shortage while simultaneously fighting a multimillion-dollar award compensating the very instructor pilots who stepped up to train new first officers and captains to ease that shortage," said Capt. Sam Larson, the pilot group's Master Executive Council (MEC) chair.

In December 2025, an independent arbitration board ruled that the airline improperly withheld override pay owed to training pilots. The award requires Sun Country to pay affected instructor pilots back pay and continue the contractually required premium going forward. The carrier filed suit against ALPA in March, alleging that the arbitration board exceeded its jurisdiction in issuing the award. The Association's countersuit seeks to enforce the award and ensure that the affected pilots receive the compensation that they're owed.

"Our training pilots continue to assume additional responsibilities to prepare the next generation of Sun Country aviators," Larson remarked. "The arbitration board ruled in their favor, recognizing their entitlement to compensation withheld by Sun Country. Rather than honoring the ruling, management has chosen to fight its own instructor pilots in federal court, even as it cites a shortage of pilots as a reason for reducing service from Minneapolis."

"This case is straightforward: After reviewing the facts and the collective bargaining agreement, the board, led by an experienced and highly regarded arbitrator, ruled in favor of our pilots. Sun Country agreed to this binding dispute resolution process when it signed the agree-

ment. It can't simply walk away from an outcome because management doesn't like it," Larson said.

JetBlue Pilots Respond to Company's Systemwide Scheduling Failures

On July 20, Capt. Wayne Scales, the JetBlue pilot group's Master Executive Council (MEC) chair, responded to the company's continued record of operational failures that resulted in that weekend's canceled flights, crews being out of position, and pilots stranded overnight in airports.

"This weekend, JetBlue canceled a significant portion of its schedule, including reducing its operations at John F. Kennedy International Airport by half. The conditions for customers were often made worse with unnecessary and extensive delays across JetBlue's entire network. In addition to customers scrambling for alternative arrangements, crews were unable to be positioned where they were needed most due to ongoing outages in the company's scheduling system. JetBlue's Crew Scheduling Department was effectively unreachable, with pilots experiencing hours-long hold times. Many pilots and crews were left stranded at the airport as the company failed to even provide overnight accommodations.

"JetBlue pilots continue to provide customers with reliable and safe service but were hobbled by an airline operation that failed them at every turn. JetBlue management claims that it's working to stabilize the airline and build consumer trust only to have these systems collapse week after week, weather incident after weather incident. Customers need to be able to book having confidence in a reliable operation. They deserve far better than what they expe-

rienced over this weekend. JetBlue management must provide necessary scheduling software, hotel accommodations for pilot rest, and resources to staff flights and meet the expectations of our customers."

Airline Industry Update

DOMESTIC

On August 11, Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford unveiled Newark Liberty International Airport's brand-new surface movement radar. Replacing the airport's 30-year-old radar is the latest step taken to modernize operations and improve safety at one of America's busiest airports. Surface Movement Radar Model 4 (SMR-4) will allow air traffic controllers to track aircraft and vehicles on runways and taxiways in all weather and visibili-

ty conditions. Newark's SMR-4 is the fifth to be installed so far nationwide.

The FAA announced on August 6 that it's ordered inspections of hundreds of B-737 MAXs for cracks in the body of the airplane, warning that undetected damage could reduce the aircraft's structural integrity. The new airworthiness directive applies to an estimated 471 U.S.-registered B-737 MAX 8s, MAX 8-200s, and MAX 9s. Cracks were found on some airplanes in a structural reinforcement around the forward service door on the right side of the aircraft, next to the front galley, the FAA said.

Bloomberg reported on July 22 that JetBlue has won Spirit's takeoff and landing slots at New York's LaGuardia Airport, securing key capacity at one of the most tightly controlled airports in the United States. According to court filings and company statements, JetBlue agreed to pay \$58.5 million for the slots,

ALPA SUDOKU

		8		7		3		
2	3			8	9			7
1						8		
7		9	4		3			
		4		6	8		3	
3	6	1				5		
8		5		2				
					1			6

Complete the sudoku puzzle so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 sub-grids that compose the grid contain all the digits from 1 to 9.

The solution to this month's ALPA sudoku can be found on page 11.

Prefer other puzzle types?

Tell us what you think. E-mail

Magazine@alpa.org.

NEW ALPA REPS

As of July 16, ALPA's Election and Ballot Certification Board certified results for the following local councils:

- **CANADIAN NORTH 240**
F/O Victoria Lawrence,
Secretary-Treasurer
- **ENDEAVOR AIR 128**
Capt. Ivory Stauner,
Secretary-Treasurer
- **FLAIR 250**
Capt. Mark Wilcox,
Secretary-Treasurer

edging out a \$57.5 million bid from Frontier in an auction overseen as part of Spirit's bankruptcy process.

INTERNATIONAL

The Associated Press reported that on August 3 WestJet agreed to a tentative agreement with its flight attendants to end a strike that began on August 2. The core dispute centered on compensation for ground duties, which the flight attendants stated were previously unpaid. Canadian Union of Public Employees 8125, which represents the flight attendants, said the agreement will be sent to the membership for a ratification vote.

Per *Canadian Aviation News*, NAV CANADA has become the first air navigation service provider based outside Europe to join the Single European Sky ATM Research 3 Joint Undertaking, the European Union's public-private partnership for modernizing air traffic management. The associate membership formalizes a relationship that's spanned four funded research projects and gives the Canadian air navigation service provider a seat alongside Europe's leading air navigation providers, manufacturers, airlines, and research bodies. NAV CANADA manages more than 18 million square kilometres of airspace, including

the western half of the North Atlantic, one of the busiest oceanic corridors in the world.

● According to *Aviation Week*, after 12 years of negotiations, Cambodia and the United States signed an Open Skies agreement on June 30. This comes as Cambodia continues to invest heavily in its aviation sector. In September 2025, the country opened Phnom Penh Techo International Airport, which has a first-phase capacity of 13 million passengers annually.

Front Lines

Cabin Air Safety Act Reintroduced in Congress

● On August 12, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) reintroduced the bicameral Cabin Air Safety Act, along with cosponsors Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) and Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL). The House and Senate bills build on the cabin air reporting provisions from the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024.

Among key measures in the bills, flight crews would receive

mandatory training to recognize and report smoke and fume events and would have real-time onboard air quality monitors installed in aircraft air supply systems. Additionally, the FAA would have the authority to set cabin air quality standards and maintenance requirements.

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, endorsed the bill, noting that it's time to stop ignoring fume events and give the FAA "the tools, and the mandate, to monitor, investigate, and prevent these events before they put a crew or their passengers at risk."

ALPA Leaders Play Key Role At International Transport Workers Federation Meeting

● Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, and Capt. Gilles Boissonneault, ALPA Canada vice president, took part on July 27–30 in the International Transport Workers' Federation meeting in the Dominican Republic as representatives of the joint U.S., Canada, and Caribbean National Coordinating Committee, alongside other key transportation industry leaders.

Ambrosi played a key role in discussions among the North

American pilot associations, which also included ASPA de Mexico, with a commitment to a model of regional integration that puts workers at the center of North America's trade, economic development, and supply chains.

The meeting also featured a Canadian breakout session in which delegates heard from several guest speakers. Lana Payne, Unifor's national president, spoke extensively about the state of the Canadian economy and the ongoing consultation process and potential changes to Canada's Labour Code.

Coalition Calls for Funding For 'Brand New Air Traffic Control System'

● On July 15, ALPA joined Modern Skies Coalition partners in urging congressional leaders to allocate an additional \$20 billion to close the funding gap for the "Brand New Air Traffic Control System," building on the initial \$12.5 billion reconciliation "down payment."

Their letter highlights early modernization wins, including fiber optic upgrades, electronic flight strips, and digital radio

conversions, while stressing that a unified common automation platform (roughly \$10 billion of the ask) and continued robust facilities, equipment appropriations, and congressional oversight are essential to complete the job and keep the national airspace safe and globally competitive.

Crewmember Access Point Update

● The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) held a briefing on July 16 for aviation security experts from labor, including ALPA, on Crewmember Access Point (CMAP). CMAP has been rolled out at 44 airports as of July 31. The CMAP rollout was helpful in decreasing screening delays during the recent Known Crewmember® (KCM) program outage, which was restored at all affected locations on August 10.

The TSA advises that pilots should retain their KCM program barcode through the end of 2026, when full transition to CMAP is planned to be completed. For now, KCM will remain open alongside CMAP while CMAP is being tested and rolled out.



IN MEMORIAM

**"To fly west, my friend,
is a flight we all must
take for a final check."**

—Author unknown

This is a listing of both active and retired ALPA pilots who've flown west. We publish the names in every issue after receiving verified information provided by the families. The information in one issue of the magazine does not provide a complete report of the total losses for each of the listed years. We salute every member for their service and honor their memories.

2020

S/O Edward A. Mieczkowski
TWA January

F/O Jack E. Bazzeni
US Airways July

2021

F/O John C. Daniel, Jr.
United February

Capt. Victor P. Wolf
TWA September

2024

Capt. Doyse R. Bishop
Delta October

Capt. Charles A. Dike, Jr.
Delta May

Capt. James B. Holder, Jr.
Eastern August

Capt. Douglas G. Olbrich
Delta September

2026

Capt. Robert E. Bartow
United February

Capt. William S. Cole, Jr.
TWA February

F/O Leroy G. Kruid
Midway March

F/O Cameron C. Lyndon-James
Spirit March

Capt. William G. Covault
US Airways April

Capt. Chester B. Allen
Delta May

Capt. John W. Tibbetts
Eastern May

Capt. Alvin R. Eatinger
Delta June

Capt. Joseph A. Hall
US Airways June

Capt. Donald D. Martin
Delta June

Capt. Bruce M. Norman
Eastern June

Capt. Clarence E. Ray, Jr.
Delta June

Capt. David C. Anderson
Delta July

Capt. William C. Becker
Delta July

Capt. Jeff A. Bennett
Northwest July

Capt. Robert S. Berg
Delta July

Capt. William H. Beslin
Northwest July

Capt. David J. Clark
Delta July

Capt. Weldon R. Clayton
Delta July

F/O Kim E. Erickson
Delta July

Capt. Harry Gulkewicz
Piedmont July

Capt. Timothy W. Ketter
Delta July

Capt. Charles J. Kirkham
Delta July

Capt. Phillip L. Medlin
Delta July

Capt. Floyd V. Norris
Delta July

Capt. Marvin C. Schrader
Delta July

Capt. Joseph W. Scott
Atlantic Southeast July

Capt. Douglas W. Smith
Delta July

Capt. Myron C. Swenson
United July

Capt. Page B. Watson
United July

Capt. William H. Watts
Delta July

F/O Timothy T. Webster
United July

Capt. Charles I. Wiedemann
Delta July

Capt. David M. Williams
Northwest July



SUBSCRIBE AND LISTEN TO THE AIR LINE PILOT PODCAST

The *Air Line Pilot Podcast* provides news and information for pilots to stay up to date on what's happening at ALPA and across the industry. Through discussions about labor relations, tips for pilots, and aviation news, the podcast, hosted by Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president, brings together pilot leaders, industry experts, policy makers, and others to keep Association members informed.

Here's a recap of some of ALPA's most popular episodes.

▶ **"ALPA President Talks Safety, Security, and Workers' Rights With Rep. Val Hoyle"**

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, converses with Rep. Val Hoyle (D-OR) during the Association's 13th annual Legislative Summit about the work she's doing on Capitol Hill to advance safety, security, and workers' rights. Hoyle came to Congress after serving as labor commissioner in Oregon and is a true champion for working people, the labor movement, and aviation safety. She serves on the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

▶ **"Discussing Legislating For Safety With Rep. Rob Bresnahan"**

At ALPA's recent Legislative Summit, Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president, talks with Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R-PA) about his efforts in Congress to advance safety, security, and workers' rights. In addition to being a helicopter pilot, Bresnahan serves on the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and is a committed ALPA ally on several aviation safety priorities in Congress.

▶ **"ALPA President Talks Safety And Potential New Laws"**

This episode features Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the Association's president, as the guest in a conversation with *Aviation Week's* Karen Walker on the *Window Seat Podcast*. In a broad discussion that

includes the union's safety priorities and recent advocacy, Ambrosi covers his career as a pilot, ALPA's work to pass COVID-19 payroll support, the importance of pilots at the center of aircraft safety systems, and the ongoing efforts to urge the U.S. House and Senate to enact new law and technologies based on the lessons learned from the fatal midair collision near Washington, D.C., in 2025.

▶ **"How AMAS Helps ALPA Members Stay Healthy and Flying"**

The Association's Aeromedical Office has provided free medical consultations to U.S. ALPA members since 1969. Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president, welcomes Dr. Quay Snyder, president and CEO of the Aviation Medicine Advisory Service (AMAS), ALPA's Aeromedical Office, to explain the role of AMAS in advising pilots on how to stay healthy and compliant with medical certificate requirements. Snyder covers common pilot questions regarding which medications are compatible with flying and how to accurately meet medical reporting requirements.

▶ **"Drones and Commercial Aviation: The Growing Threat And Counter-UAS Solutions"**

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, talks with Col. Bill Edwards, ENSCO's director of counter-unmanned aerial systems (UAS) operations, about the rapidly growing drone threat to commercial aviation and how to counter it. Edwards

discusses the evolution of small UAS driven by global conflicts, the scale of drone detections near U.S. airports, and how the limited number of detection and mitigation authorities have constrained responses. He outlines detection methods (radar, radio frequency, optical, acoustic) and mitigation options suited for domestic use.

▶ **"Mergers, Growth, and Negotiations: Pilot Groups And Canada Update"**

Joined by leaders from several ALPA pilot groups and ALPA Canada, Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the Association's president, discusses key developments within the union. Guests include Capt. Larry Payne (Hawaiian), chair of his pilot group's Master Executive Council (MEC), and Capt. Will McQuillen (Alaska), then the Alaska MEC chair, who provide updates on their ongoing merger. Capt. Brian Smith (Porter) shares insights from the organizing effort at Porter, and Capt. Brad Small (Air Transat), then the Air Transat MEC chair, addresses the pilots' contract negotiation. Capt. Wayne Scales (JetBlue) and Capt. Andy Nelson (Spirit) talk about issues affecting their pilot groups, including contract enforcement and support through Spirit's financial uncertainty. And Capt. Tim Perry, ALPA Canada president, reviews the Association's priorities in Canada.

▶ **"Building One ALPA Through Strategic Collaboration"**

Capt. Ronan O'Donoghue (Alaska), ALPA's Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee chair, joins Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president, to discuss the transformation of the Association's culture. Collaboration, strategic and communication planning, and solidarity among pilot groups all play critical roles in the union's recent successes. Informational pickets and the introduction of new initiatives like "FACTS Teams" and virtual components are just a few examples that highlight ALPA's efforts.

▶ **"Aviation From a Journalist's Perspective: A Conversation with Elan Head"**

How does the aviation industry look from the outside? Capt. Jason

Ambrosi, the Association's president, finds out in this interview with Elan Head, senior editor at *The Air Current*, and a helicopter pilot. The conversation covers industry trends, media perspectives, public misconceptions about pilots, the impact of emerging technologies, and how reporting on aviation can influence understanding and accountability within the industry.

▶ **"Canadian Accident Investigations: Interview With TSB Chair Yoan Marier"**

In aviation, we learn from the past to build a safer future. One of the most effective ways to do this is through accident investigation—identifying contributing factors to reform processes, designs, and policies to prevent similar accidents from happening again.

Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, interviews Transportation Safety Board (TSB) of Canada Chair Yoan Marier about how the board investigates accidents and incidents and develops recommendations in Canada.

▶ **"Managing Conflict and Strengthening Negotiations: An Interview with Naseem Khuri"**

Effectively managing conflict and knowing what works in a negotiation are essential skills for life, but especially for union work. Naseem Khuri, a trainer, consultant, mediator, and facilitator who specializes in negotiation, influence, and conflict management, talks with Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president, about how his best practices can be applied at ALPA. Khuri has worked with Israeli, Palestinian, and other international diplomats and political leaders; U.S. Navy SEALs; state lawmakers; and Fortune 100 companies to facilitate change conversations and strategic planning for influence and negotiations. His advice can help ALPA leaders manage relationships within their pilot groups and learn how to be more effective when working with management.

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MAILBAG

Congratulations on ALPA's 95th Anniversary

Dear Capt. Ambrosi,

On behalf of the Executive Board and the global pilot community represented by the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), it is my honor to extend our warmest congratulations to ALPA on the occasion of your 95th anniversary!

For 95 years, ALPA has been a dedicated advocate for professional pilots, championing safety and protecting the interests of pilots across North America and beyond. This milestone is a testament to the commitment of the generations of ALPA members and volunteers who have shaped the Association's proud history since its founding on July 27, 1931.

As one of the founding member associations of IFALPA, and our largest, ALPA has played an indispensable role in shaping our federation since its inception in 1948. For nearly eight decades, ALPA's engagement has strengthened us and helped advance our shared mission around the world. We are deeply grateful for all that our organizations have accomplished together and for ALPA's enduring collaboration and support.

As you celebrate this significant milestone, we join you in recognizing your distinguished legacy and the countless individuals whose dedication has made ALPA the respected organization it is today. We wish you every success in the years ahead and look forward to continuing our close partnership as we work together to meet the opportunities and challenges to come.

Congratulations once again on your 95th anniversary.



Yours sincerely,
Capt. Ron Hay (Delta)
IFALPA President



INDUSTRY STATS

NORTH AMERICAN TRAVELERS RETHINK THEIR ROUTES

On the whole, North American air travel demand remains resilient despite persistent global pressures from the war in Iran, high jet fuel prices, and geopolitical tensions. Yet resilience doesn't imply that travel patterns have remained unchanged. Using August 2024 as a pre-disruption baseline, August 2026 schedules show 2.3 percent more U.S. domestic flights and 6.4 percent more Canadian domestic flights. Over the same period, across all operating carriers, scheduled international departures from U.S. airports declined by 1.7 percent, while those from Canadian airports increased by only .4 percent. Although airlines in both countries are expanding domestic capacity, the contrast suggests a redistribution of demand across domestic, cross-border, and long-haul international markets.

The U.S. market has remained comparatively stable in large part because domestic travel, which accounts for most U.S. airline activity, has stayed close to its 2024 level. According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. carriers transported 73.1 million domestic passengers and 11.3 million international passengers in March 2026. Relative to the peaks recorded in March 2024, domestic passenger volume decreased by only .1 percent, whereas international volume was lower by 3.1 percent. Scheduled

flights data provides a similar picture: domestic flights represented approximately 90.7 percent of all flights originating in the United States in August 2026. Weakness has been concentrated in international travel, while the much-larger domestic segment has provided a degree of stability to the overall U.S. market.

Canada presents a somewhat different pattern. Domestic and non-U.S. international traffic growth has continued, but the cross-border market has shown signs of noticeable weakness. In May 2026, passenger screenings for domestic flights at Canada's eight major airports increased by 6.4 percent year over year to 2.5 million. Other international traffic, excluding the United States, rose by 2.6 percent to 1.3 million passengers. By contrast, transborder traffic to the United States fell by 2.1 percent to 1.1 million passengers, marking the 16th consecutive month of year-over-year decline. The U.S.-bound share of total screened passengers consequently fell from 26.2 percent in May 2024 to 22.4 percent in May 2026. August 2026 schedules are consistent with this shift: Canadian domestic flights increased by 6.4 percent, while flights from Canada to the United States declined by 4.7 percent relative to 2024 data. Flights from Canada to Mexico, however, increased by 12.6 percent.

Several factors may help explain these changes. Statistics Canada links the rapid shift in Canadian attitudes toward U.S. travel to the change in the U.S. administration and the introduction of "America First" policies in early 2025. According to the agency, the 2026 FIFA World Cup temporarily countered this broader trend by boosting travel

**TABLE 1. SCHEDULED FLIGHTS:
DOMESTIC VERSUS INTERNATIONAL**

Market	August 2024	August 2025	August 2026	2-Year % Change
UNITED STATES DOMESTIC	716,057	725,756	732,801	+2.3%
UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL	76,421	77,648	75,106	-1.7%
CANADA DOMESTIC	60,850	62,045	64,772	+6.4%
CANADA INTERNATIONAL	23,648	23,363	23,739	+4%

Source: OAG scheduled flight data

demand in several host cities. At the same time, the broader market continued to face higher travel costs. According to the U.S. Travel Association, overall travel costs increased by 8.1 percent year over year in June, while fares rose by 26.5 percent. Taken together, shifting policies, higher fares, and the risk of itinerary disruptions may be prompting travelers to place greater value on predictable destinations and flexible travel arrangements.

The U.S. international market reveals a mixed pattern rather than a uniform contraction. Between August 2024 and August 2026, scheduled flights from the United States to Canada declined by 4.7 percent, and flights to Latin America, excluding Mexico, fell by 3.1 percent. Flights to Mexico decreased by 5.9 percent. Yet scheduled service to the Asia-Pacific region increased by 8.4 percent, while service to Europe rose by 1.7 percent. Actual passenger data from the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office point in the same general direction. In May 2026, U.S. international air passenger traffic declined by 1.2 percent year over year, driven in part by decreases of 6.7 percent on U.S.-Mexico routes and .7 percent on U.S.-Canada routes. Traffic between the United States and

Asia, however, increased by 3.9 percent. These results suggest that U.S. travelers aren't abandoning international travel as a whole; instead, they appear to be reducing travel on some traditional short-haul routes while maintaining demand on other international markets.

Canadian travelers show a more pronounced form of substitution. In 2025, visits to the United States by Canadian residents fell by 7.1 million. Over the same period, domestic visits increased by 5 million, and overseas visits rose by 1.3 million, including increases of 13.6 percent for Europe and 16.7 percent for Asia, respectively. Spending shifted in parallel. Expenditures on U.S. trips declined by C\$3.3 billion to C\$18.8 billion, while spending on overseas leisure travel, excluding the United States, increased by C\$3.6 billion to C\$22.8 billion.

Airline schedules reflect this dual shift in travel demand. Data shows that scheduled flights from Canada to the Asia-Pacific region increased by 28.4 percent between August 2024 and August 2026, while flights to Europe rose by 12.8 percent. These increases occurred alongside the growth in Canadian domestic schedules and the decline in short-haul service to the United States. Canadian

**TABLE 2. SCHEDULED INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS BY
DESTINATION REGION AND COUNTRY**

Origin / Destination	August 2024	August 2026	2-Year % Change
U.S. TO AFRICA	558	583	+4.5%
U.S. TO ASIA-PACIFIC	5,735	6,214	+8.4%
U.S. TO EUROPE	18,665	18,975	+1.7%
U.S. TO LATIN AMERICA (EXCLUDING MEXICO)	22,521	21,822	-3.1%
U.S. TO MIDDLE EAST	1,525	1,515	-.7%
U.S. TO CANADA	15,775	15,028	-4.7%
U.S. TO MEXICO	11,642	10,960	-5.9%
CANADA TO AFRICA	238	257	+8%
CANADA TO ASIA-PACIFIC	1,030	1,323	+28.4%
CANADA TO EUROPE	4,136	4,664	+12.8%
CANADA TO LATIN AMERICA (EXCLUDING MEXICO)	1,499	1,408	-6.1%
CANADA TO MIDDLE EAST	186	181	-2.7%
CANADA TO U.S.	15,771	15,032	-4.7%
CANADA TO MEXICO	738	831	+12.6%

Source: OAG scheduled flight data

travelers appear to be reallocating trips both inward, toward domestic destinations, and outward, toward selected longer-haul markets.

These patterns complicate a literal interpretation of "closer to home." For many U.S. travelers, the phrase may describe the use of a large domestic network to select more familiar itineraries with greater flexibility. For Canadian travelers, it may mean either traveling domestically or avoiding cross-border trips to the United States because of political sentiment and policy uncertainty, while concentrating travel budgets on fewer and longer vacations to Europe or Asia. Thus, the central consideration isn't always geographic distance. It may instead be the degree of control travelers have over an itinerary and whether the cost of the trip is consistent with the expected experience.

Demand for air travel in North America hasn't vanished; it's being reshaped across destinations, trip lengths, and budget

allocations. The U.S. domestic market remains relatively stable, selected short-haul international routes have contracted, and demand for Asia-Pacific travel continues to grow. Canada is experiencing faster domestic growth, persistent weakness in the U.S.-bound market, and expansion in service to Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. For airlines, the central challenge isn't simply to restore flight volumes. It's to identify the uncertainties travelers are seeking to avoid and to understand where demand is being redirected.

**SOLUTION TO THIS MONTH'S
ALPA SUDOKU ON PAGE 7**

9	4	8	2	7	5	3	6	1
2	3	6	1	8	9	4	5	7
1	5	7	3	4	6	8	9	2
6	8	3	9	1	2	7	4	5
7	2	9	4	5	3	6	1	8
5	1	4	7	6	8	2	3	9
3	6	1	8	9	7	5	2	4
8	9	5	6	2	4	1	7	3
4	7	2	5	3	1	9	8	6



MARKET WATCH

AIRLINES	PARENT COMPANY	STOCK SYMBOL	7/31/2025†	7/31/2026	% CHG.
Air Borealis, Calm Air, Canadian North, Keewatin Air, PAL Aerospace, PAL Airlines, Perimeter, Wasaya	Exchange Income Corporation ¹	TSX: EIF	\$65.58	\$125.55	91.45% ▲
FedEx Express	FedEx Corporation ²	NYSE: FDX	\$180.09	\$307.40	70.69% ▲
Delta, Endeavor Air	Delta Air Lines ³	NYSE: DAL	\$53.21	\$87.44	64.33% ▲
Frontier	Frontier Group Holdings, Inc.	NASDAQ: ULCC	\$4.38	\$6.75	54.11% ▲
United	United Continental Holdings, Inc.	NASDAQ: UAL	\$88.31	\$121.33	37.39% ▲
JetBlue	JetBlue Airways Corporation	NASDAQ: JBLU	\$4.44	\$6.03	35.81% ▲
Envoy Air, Piedmont, PSA	American Airlines Group, Inc.	NASDAQ: AAL	\$11.49	\$15.27	32.90% ▲
Air Canada	Air Canada	TSX: AC	\$19.30	\$25.37	31.45% ▲
Sun Country	Allegiant Travel Company	NASDAQ: ALGT	\$51.64	\$98.08	89.93% ▲
Mesa	Republic Airways Holdings, Inc.	NASDAQ: RJET [†]	\$20.95	\$20.65	-1.43% ▼
Jazz Aviation	Chorus Aviation ⁴	TSX: CHR	\$21.92	\$24.60	12.23% ▼
WestJet, WestJet Encore	Onex Corporation ⁵	TSX: ONEX	\$112.72	\$107.34	-4.77% ▼
Air Transat	Transat A.T., Inc.	TSX: TRZ	\$2.50	\$2.26	-9.60% ▼
Alaska, Hawaiian	Alaska Air Group, Inc.	NYSE: ALK	\$52.96	\$47.45	-10.40% ▼
Cargojet	Cargojet, Inc. ⁶	TSX: CJT	\$98.93	\$84.49	-14.60% ▼

¹ EIF declared a monthly dividend of \$0.23 per share on July 31, 2026.

² FedEx Express declared a quarterly dividend of \$1.22 per share on June 22, 2026. FedEx Express underwent a 1.241:1 split on June 1, 2026.

³ Delta declared a quarterly dividend of \$0.21 per share on July 9, 2026.

⁴ Chorus Aviation declared a dividend of \$0.11 per share on June 15, 2026.

⁵ Onex declared a quarterly dividend of \$0.10 per share on July 10, 2026.

⁶ Cargojet declared a quarterly dividend of \$0.39 per share on June 19, 2026.

[†] Nov. 25, 2025, is used as the baseline for RJET, because it was the first trading day following the merger.

Note: TSX prices are in C\$; all others are in U.S.\$

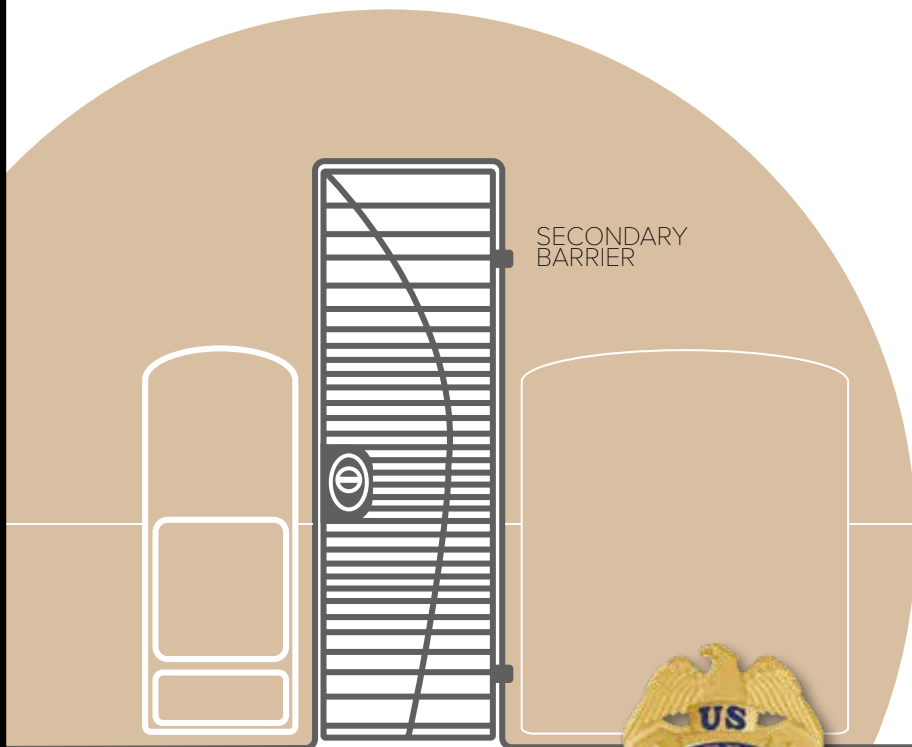
Your Photo Could Make the Cover of Our Annual Photography Issue

Submit your high-resolution digital images from your DSL, etc., to **Communications@alpa.org** by October 5 for possible use in our November–December issue.

Tell us who you are, who you fly for, the names of any pilots in your photos, and what we're looking at.

If you're shooting for a cover shot, turn your camera sideways and take a vertical photo.

! Please remember to adhere to FARs or CARs and company policy—including regulations regarding using personal wireless devices on the flight deck when taking photos.



ALPA WINS

ALPA PLAYS SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN POST-9/11 SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS

By John Perkinson, Senior Staff Writer

The terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, uncovered significant flaws and deficiencies in the U.S. aviation security network—breaches that ALPA would make a priority to highlight and address. The perpetrators involved in these attacks applied strategies that differed greatly from the previous terrorist and hijacking methods that the aviation industry had experienced in the past.

The Association quickly recognized that a new approach was called for, one that applied proactive, risk-based measures rather than the outdated, reactive strategies of the past. Just as important, labor, government, airlines, and other industry stakeholders would need to communicate, work

together, and share information if this new approach to safeguard the aviation system was to succeed.

Capt. Duane Woerth, ALPA's president during the 9/11 terrorist attacks, foreshadowed the Association's engagement in this effort in the October 2001 issue of *Air Line Pilot*. In his "President's Forum" column, he noted, "Our responsibility as airline pilots for the safety of our passengers and other crewmembers requires that we play an important role in the creation of any new security initiative our governments implement."

"We cannot tolerate procedures that create an illusion of security for the traveling public but, in fact, do not make air travel any safer and denigrate the high esteem

Editor's note: In Part 7 of a nine-part series, Air Line Pilot, in celebration of ALPA's 95th anniversary this year, revisits some of the union's successful campaigns, projects, and products that make public air transportation safer and more secure and that improve the working lives of the union's members.

most passengers hold toward their pilots," he stated.

In the months that followed, numerous airport and airline security measures were implemented, including a new common strategy for dealing with those who threaten the integrity of air travel. Gone was the approach of "accommodate, negotiate, and do not escalate," intended to appease political extremists' attempts to secure prisoner releases or political agendas. The mission and motives of the 9/11 terrorists were much more sinister in nature.

Among the recommendations submitted to then Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta from a rapid response team, of which Woerth was a member, were a significant number of proposals that placed a new priority on defending the flight deck at all costs.

ONBOARD INTERVENTION

On 9/11, the FAA's Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) consisted of 33 active air marshals primarily assigned to international flights. FAMS, which was established on March 2, 1962, and later evolved to become the Sky Marshal Program under the FAA and U.S. Customs Service, was woefully understaffed and underfunded to provide any meaningful enforcement or deterrence.

However, following the events of 9/11, FAMS was transferred to the newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Hundreds of federal officers from various law enforcement organizations accepted permanent appointments as federal air marshals, and on Oct. 16, 2005, FAMS was reassigned to DHS's newly formed Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

Just two weeks after the attacks, however, ALPA pressed Congress for what it believed was a more feasible solution—the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program. This approach would improve aviation security by training and deputizing airline pilots to carry firearms and defend the flight deck against hostile threats.

The FFDO program was formally established in 2003 as a division of FAMS, following passage of the Arming Pilots Against

Terrorism Act of 2002. Since its creation, thousands of pilots have volunteered and undergone extensive training to become FFDOs, protecting approximately one million flights per year, for a total of more than 23 million flights since the program was initiated (see the March issue).

As airline pilots volunteering to protect the flight deck, FFDOs receive no compensation from the government for their security responsibilities; however, FAMS are full-time federal law enforcement professionals. The cost to cover a flight with a federal air marshal is between \$3,000 to \$3,500; covering the same segment with an FFDO costs between \$20 and \$25.

As the FFDO program continues to demonstrate its worth, the Association is seeking greater support in the form of increased federal funding. ALPA also continues to advocate for the relocation of the existing initial training facility, the addition of a new recurrent training facility, and enhancements to the training curriculum to provide FFDOs with augmented professional development.

In addition, the Association regularly pursues other needed improvements through an FFDO stakeholder group, which includes representatives from government, airlines, and other related organizations.

In Canada, shortly after 9/11, ALPA successfully convinced the minister of Transport that the country needed a robust air marshal program. Soon after, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police stood up the Canadian Air Carrier Protective Program, with law enforcement officials who function much like federal air marshals.

HARDENED DOORS AND SECONDARY BARRIERS

Defending the flight deck at all costs also means preventing those with nefarious intent from accessing the pilots and aircraft controls during flight. In 2003, the FAA mandated flight deck doors made of bullet-resistant composite materials and heavy-duty locking mechanisms.

While the Association applauded this action, it raised two distinct concerns that regulators failed to address. ALPA highlighted through its “One Level of Safety” campaign the enormous security gap that remained after 9/11 due to regulators not requiring the same intrusion-resistant doors on the flight

decks of all-cargo aircraft.

The Association argued that all-cargo flights frequently carry nonflight crew personnel, including charter riders and animal handlers, who don’t receive the same level of screening as passengers on passenger flights and who can easily access the flight deck during flight. The union continues to press Congress for legislation such as the Cargo Flight Deck Security Act to address this industry double standard (see the August 2023 issue).

In addition, ALPA has called for the installation of secondary barriers to protect the flight deck as hardened flight deck doors and current procedures alone don’t adequately protect the flight deck anytime the door is opened. These lightweight and retractable security gates are inexpensive and easily deployed before opening a flight deck door (see page 15).

After years of delay, the FAA finalized a rule in 2023 requiring secondary barriers on newly manufactured passenger aircraft. This was a significant win for the Association. Airlines were given two years to comply, but some have since stretched this period well past the established deadline. In addition, this regulation doesn’t apply to existing aircraft, leaving many of the nation’s airline flight decks exposed.

Congress passed the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024, creating what Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA’s president, called, “A pathway to require secondary barriers for existing passenger aircraft to close a gap in safety regulations that was a priority after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.”

The Association continues to serve as “the conscience of the airline industry,” ensuring that delays are spotlighted and addressed and that congressional directions are ultimately executed. For instance, the union recently learned that the FAA denied another attempt by the Regional Airline Association to avoid the extended deadline for secondary barrier installation on all newly manufactured airliners delivered after July 31, 2026.

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION VERIFICATION

In the months and years following 9/11, the DHS and the TSA instituted a variety of new screening protocols, consequently generating long lines and wait periods.

ALPA, working in conjunction with airlines and regulators, considered new ways to remove flight crews from these lines and expedite the identification-verification process through risk-based screening programs.

One solution the union helped advance was the Canadian Restricted Area Identity Card (RAIC), a system that includes extensive background checks and identity confirmation using biometric technology. RAIC was fully implemented in Canada by late 2006.

In the United States, the Cockpit Access Security System (CASS), created in 2005, confirmed jumpseat eligibility across airlines. Additionally, the Crew Personnel Advanced Screening System (CrewPASS), introduced in 2008, was conceived by ALPA to verify pilot identities. CrewPASS was an expedited airport screening application that served as a prototype for the Known Crewmember (KCM)[®] program, which was instituted in 2011.

A joint initiative between Airlines for America and ALPA, KCM requires a valid company ID, barcode/credentials, and a backup government-issued photo ID for instances of random verification. This year, the TSA began implementing the Crewmember Access Point (CMAP) to replace KCM. CMAP aims to enhance security and will further streamline the screening process.

PILOT ENGAGEMENT IN SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

These and other measures promoted by the Association during the post-9/11 period, and throughout the history of the airline industry, have helped ensure that aviation remains the safest and most secure form of public transportation. And ALPA will make certain that it has a seat at the table when any future security solutions are discussed.

There are boardroom solutions, motivated by the bottom line, and then there are practical decisions, and aviation safety and security demand the latter. The Association’s Air Safety Organization is the largest nongovernmental safety organization in the world, and its members work at the epicenter of the aviation industry. They’re uniquely positioned to witness and identify its operational requisites and anticipate what’s needed on the horizon. 

ENHANCING FLIGHT DECK SECURITY

ALPA CONTINUES ADVOCACY FOR FLIGHT DECK PROTECTIONS DECADES AFTER 9/11 ATTACKS

By Gavin Francis, Senior Aviation Writer

Positioned between the flight deck door and the passenger cabin, secondary flight deck barriers create a temporary protective enclosure whenever the flight deck door is opened.



Twenty-five years after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, commercial aviation remains one of the safest and most secure forms of transportation in the world. Much of that progress has been driven by the airline industry's commitment to continuously strengthening the layers of protection that safeguard airline operations. Yet, recent incidents involving passengers attempting to gain unauthorized access to the flight deck serve as reminders that the work isn't finished.

For decades, ALPA has advocated for improvements that reduce risks to flight crews and passengers. The Association has worked closely with government agencies, manufacturers, airlines, and industry partners to strengthen aviation security through practical, risk-based solutions. ALPA has participated extensively in FAA Aviation Rulemaking Committees (ARCs) and other advisory groups responsible for developing security recommendations. The implementation of secondary flight deck barriers has been an important focus of those efforts.

"Twenty-five years after September 11, protecting the flight deck remains one of ALPA's highest security priorities," observes Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president. "Secondary flight deck barriers add another critical layer of defense, helping to ensure that pilots can safely perform their duties while protecting everyone on board."

Following the attacks of September 11, reinforced flight deck doors became a cornerstone of aviation security. Hardened flight deck doors dramatically improved protection against unauthorized entry while remaining closed. But aviation security advocates recognized that a vulnerability still existed during the brief periods when the flight deck door was open for routine reasons, like crew changeouts and physiological breaks.

Secondary flight deck barriers were developed to address that vulnerability.

Positioned between the flight deck door and the passenger cabin, these barriers create a temporary protective enclosure whenever the flight deck door is opened, making it significantly more difficult for an unauthorized individual to gain access to the flight deck.

After years of advocacy by the Association and other aviation stakeholders, federal regulations mandated the implementation of secondary flight deck barriers on all newly manufactured transport-category passenger aircraft delivered after Aug. 25, 2025. With the requirement intended to go into effect last year, various airlines and aircraft manufacturers have continued to delay implementation. As a result, the FAA granted them additional time for certification and production, with some new compliance dates now going into 2027 (see the August 2025 issue).

The FAA permitted tailored exemptions for certain aircraft while manufacturers completed certification work. Throughout the process, ALPA has continued to oppose such exemptions and argue that implementation should move forward as quickly as possible. Every newly delivered aircraft equipped with a secondary barrier represents another step toward strengthening aviation security.

Although the unprecedented spike in unruly passenger reports seen during the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, disruptive behavior remains a persistent challenge. The FAA reports that unruly passenger incidents have declined significantly from the 2021 peak, yet the agency continues to investigate many cases each year, and incidents involving threats, assaults, or interference with crewmembers continue to require enforcement action. There were 1,621 unruly passenger reports in 2025; and as of this writing, 981 incidents have been reported so far in 2026.

Recent instances involving disruptive passengers underscore why additional layers of protection remain necessary. In May, United Flight 2005, operating from Chicago, Ill., to Minneapolis, Minn., diverted to Madison, Wisc., after a passenger allegedly made multiple attempts to breach the flight deck before being restrained by law enforcement officers traveling on the aircraft.

In late June, United Express Flight 3989, operating from Indianapolis, Ind., to Houston, Tex., returned to its departure airport after a belligerent passenger allegedly attempted to open a cabin door shortly after takeoff. Other passengers helped restrain the individual before airport police removed the passenger following the aircraft's safe landing.

Just days later, Frontier Flight 3345, operating from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Chicago, diverted to Miami, Fla., after a passenger allegedly attempted to open both an emergency exit door and the flight deck door while also assaulting another passenger. Federal prosecutors later charged the individual with interfering with flightcrew members and related offenses.

And in late June, United Express Flight 3989, operating from Indianapolis, Ind., to Houston, Tex., returned to its departure airport after a belligerent passenger allegedly attempted to open a cabin door shortly after takeoff. Other passengers helped restrain the individual before airport police removed the passenger following the aircraft's safe landing.

Protecting the flight deck ensures that the flight crew can maintain control of the aircraft and safely complete the flight. Any effort to breach the flight deck presents an unacceptable security risk.

F/O Bryan Patchen (Delta), the Association's Air Safety Organization Security Group chair, notes, "Secondary flight deck barriers provide an important layer of protection when the flight deck door is opened. Whether someone attempts to enter the flight deck because of disruptive behavior, a mental-health crisis, or malicious intent, there will always be a need to adequately protect the flight deck so that the crew can safely operate the aircraft."

Beyond advocating for physical security enhancements, ALPA also continues working to improve how aviation security events are documented. The Association has supported efforts to develop more standardized reporting and information-sharing practices for unruly passenger incidents and attempted flight

deck breaches, recognizing that consistent reporting of incidents can help identify trends and strengthen future security measures. ALPA continues raising these issues in ongoing discussions with government and industry partners.

And while the requirement for secondary flight deck barriers on newly manufactured airliners marks an important milestone, thousands of passenger airliners currently in service were delivered before the rule took effect. The Association has long supported extending these protections to aircraft that are already in service and advocated for legislation that would require those existing aircraft to be retrofitted with secondary barriers. ALPA strongly supported the language in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 requiring the FAA administrator to establish an ARC to evaluate retrofitting currently operated aircraft with secondary barriers. The Association also served as a voting member within that FAA ARC and advocated for all Part 121 aircraft to be equipped with secondary barriers.

In addition to supporting secondary barriers for passenger airliners, ALPA continues to press for hardened flight deck doors on cargo aircraft, which in some cases don't have any barrier to the flight deck.

"While the implementation of these protections on newly manufactured aircraft is an important step forward, it's clear that our work on these security issues isn't finished," says Capt. Wendy Morse, the Association's first vice president and national safety coordinator. "ALPA continues to advocate for extending these protections throughout the passenger fleet because every flight crew deserves the same level of security, regardless of the age or the type of the aircraft they fly." 

BORN ON 9/11

By Kevin Cuddihy, Contributing Writer



F/O Dianna Sprague (Endeavor Air) was born at 1:19 a.m. eastern time.



F/O Ben Priebe (Delta) arrived later in the day at 1:26 p.m. central time.



F/O Harry Tibbetts (WestJet) was born at 4:48 p.m. eastern time.

Sept. 11, 2001, is one of the moments in history when you remember exactly where you were when you first heard about or saw footage of the horrific terrorist attacks.

That's especially true for those in the aviation industry, as they watched the very aircraft they devote their careers to be used as weapons of death and destruction. The impact of the attacks forever changed the airline industry.

"I was at the airport in the crew room, surrounded by other pilots," remembers Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president. "There were more than 100 of us staring at the screen in disbelief as we watched it all unfold."

As the years progress, and time and space fill the distance of 25 years gone by, more and more pilots are entering the profession who don't recall where they were on that day. But for three ALPA members in particular, while they don't have a memory of that tragic day, they know exactly where they were.

It's the day they were born.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

F/O Dianna Sprague (Endeavor Air) was born at 1:19 a.m. eastern time, a little more than seven hours before the attacks began. Her father, a former ALPA member, was supposed to fly into New York that day and stay in Manhattan but was able to get the day off to be at his daughter's birth.

Her mom woke up from a nap and turned on the TV just in time to see the Twin Towers hit. Everyone in the hospital was in shock—as was the rest of the nation. But, as was seen throughout the country, people immediately started searching for hope.

"The nurses came into the room one by one," she recalls her parents telling her. "Just to hang out." The delivery doctors joined them. "With all the devastation," Sprague says, "everyone wanted a little joy and happiness—so they all came to see the newborn baby. It's neat to think that through all the darkness, I was a light for many people that day."

F/O Ben Priebe (Delta) arrived later in

the day at 1:26 p.m. central time. "My mom and dad always told me I was a bright spot in their lives on a very dark day for Americans," he remarks.

Then at 4:48 p.m. eastern time, F/O Harry Tibbetts (WestJet) joined the world. And while he was born in Guelph, Ont., the attacks still hit close to home, as he's part of a multigenerational aviation family that continues airline flying to this day.

GROWING UP AND THE PATH TO THE FLIGHT DECK

Sprague remembers first realizing the significance of her date of birth in first grade. In kindergarten, they announced her birthday and then the first part of the day was dedicated to remembering 9/11 and learning about the tragedy. "I don't think the connection hit me until the same thing happened on my birthday the next year," she recalls.

Still, "I think I always knew I wanted to be a pilot, especially growing up in an aviation household," Sprague acknowledges. Around the age of five, her father brought

her onto a B-727. “All I remember is that there were so many switches,” she says. “I thought it was really neat that my office could be the sky.”

After graduating high school, she took lessons at a small Part 61 flight school—with her dad as her instructor. Sprague earned the rest of her ratings while at Ohio University, then graduated and taught at the same Part 61 school to build the required flight hours. “I was lucky enough to get an interview with Endeavor Air, which is the airline I fly for today,” she notes.

Priebe’s parents typically would watch the morning news while getting him ready for school. “Every year on my birthday, I remember seeing images of the World Trade Center burning and how scary that was,” he recalls.

“I think even from a young age, I realized the significance of my birth date and what the day meant to Americans,” Priebe observes. “So many people talked about what they were doing that day, where they were in life, and how they felt about what happened. I was always lucky enough to celebrate my birthday with family and friends, but not without a great deal of respect for the many people who lost their lives on that day.”

Priebe got the flying “bug,” as he terms it, when he was invited to sit up front with the pilot on a flight out of Talkeetna, Alaska, for a glacial landing at the base of Mount Denali. “I was immediately hooked,” he remembers, and started flight training when he returned home to Minnesota.

Priebe did all his flight training at a Part 61 school, then instructed at a Part 141 school while getting his degree at Minnesota State University-Mankato. His commercial aviation career began with Sun Country, where he flew for just under four years before being hired by Delta earlier this year.

“I always thought it was amazing that two strangers could sit in an aircraft and work together so well with standard operating procedures and callouts,” Priebe shares. “From the very beginning of my aviation career, my dream was to be an airline pilot.”

“I was born into an aviation family and grew up around pilots,” Tibbetts says. Both his grandfathers and his father flew for Air Canada. His mother currently flies for the airline while his sister is a WestJet pilot. “So I was familiar with the industry and job as a whole.”

Tibbetts recalls that while growing up neither of his parents wanted to work on the anniversary of 9/11—“and not just because it was my birthday.” His mother still avoids working on that day. “I didn’t really understand the gravity of the day when I was young,” he notes, “but I remember people were sometimes sad.”

His familiarity with aviation helped him decide on a career path. “In high school, I was quite certain what I didn’t want to do—an office job working 9 to 5,” Tibbetts recalls. “I’d been accustomed to my parents’ schedules from an early age, and the days off and travel and constant variety and challenges of the job really appealed to me. But I was also aware of the sacrifices—one parent being home while the other one worked and not always having them both around for certain milestones. I knew all the ups and downs of the industry firsthand.”

Tibbetts obtained his private pilot license in 12th grade, attended an aviation college in Canada, and was hired by Sunwing as a cadet flying the B-737. His hire date was on his 22nd birthday, Sept. 11, 2023. Tibbetts then became a WestJet pilot when Sunwing and WestJet merged in 2025.

TODAY’S GENERATION

These three pilots—plus many of their contemporaries on the flight deck, and many more still to come—have lived their entire lives in a post-9/11 world while working alongside many who vividly remember the attacks.

“Being a third-generation airline pilot—on both my mother’s and father’s side—and both my birthday and date of hire being on September 11 is a pretty incredible story to most people and an unbelievable coincidence,” Tibbetts says.

“I think being born on September 11 is something that will always connect me to others in the aviation industry,” Priebe acknowledges. When other pilots learn of his birth date, they have a story to share. “It gives me so much perspective on the day hearing about it from others.

“During my certified flight instructor checkride,” Priebe remembers, “the examiner looked at the birth date on my medical certificate and immediately told me, ‘That day changed the course of my career.’ I’ve heard countless stories from other pilots about where they were that day, how it affected their career progression, and if they even had a job at all after 9/11.

“It’s important for all pilots to be cognizant of the 9/11 attacks,” Priebe remarks.

“My hope is that professionals of my age continue to have respect for what our peers went through on 9/11 and the years that followed,” he states. “I truly hope that we never forget the hardships, sacrifices, and loss of life that resulted from those attacks.”

“My generation never experienced life before 9/11 and how the world changed afterward,” adds Sprague. “We’ve always had the Transportation Security Administration and security screenings. It’s important to keep in mind that they’re not there to be a hassle or to make travel stressful, but to prevent history from repeating.”

“I’m the only pilot among my close childhood friends, and I don’t think they understand the impact of that day. I probably don’t fully understand it either,” Tibbetts admits. “I’ve only known closed flight deck doors and the heightened security we all experience today. My brothers and sisters, who are older than me, all flew in the jumpseat at work with our parents—but everything changed after 9/11.”

“NEVER FORGET”

According to ALPA data as of August 1, 1,265 Association members were born on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Keeping alive the memory of those who perished, how the attacks affected the airline industry, how the industry responded, and how it continues to pursue security measures remains a top priority for the union.

“‘Never Forget’ isn’t just a slogan or a platitude; it’s a directive ALPA takes seriously,” explains Capt. Wendy Morse, the Association’s first vice president and national safety coordinator. “And it’s becoming increasingly important as pilots join our ranks without any memory of the day—including those who’ve lived their entire lives in the post-9/11 world.”

Priebe concurs. “I think many people born after 9/11 forget the true impact that day had on our country,” he states. But hearing about it from colleagues reinforces the lessons learned. “I flew as a first officer with a captain at Sun Country who departed from John F. Kennedy International Airport on the morning of the attacks,” he recalls. “He couldn’t believe that he was flying with someone who was born on that day.”

Priebe says the pilot told him the experience was, “as if it had happened yesterday, burned into his mind. It was something he truly could never forget.”

“When colleagues learn my birth date,

THE WORK OF REMEMBERING

Twenty-five years after the terrorist attacks in New York; Washington, D.C.; and Shanksville, Pa., leaders of the United pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) sat down with the widows of Capt. Victor Saracini (United Flight 175) and F/O LeRoy Homer, Jr. (United Flight 93).

Ellen Saracini has spent decades advocating for stronger flight deck security, including secondary barriers. Melodie Homer continues to honor her husband's legacy through the LeRoy W. Homer Jr. Foundation, which provides scholarships to aspiring aviation professionals. Together, they reflected on the people who were lost, the lasting impact of 9/11, and the responsibility of ensuring that such a tragedy never happens again.

"It isn't September 11 that's difficult," Homer said. "Every day is hard for us."

For today's youngest United pilots, 9/11 is a historical event rather than a firsthand experience. Some United pilots hadn't been born when the attacks occurred.

"We were experiencing real time, not history," Saracini observed. "They're experiencing history." She hopes today's

pilots understand why some security procedures are practiced every day.

"There's a reason why the flight deck door is different," she remarked. "There's a reason why there are boundaries and regulations that weren't in effect 25 years ago."

Saracini also believes remembering must be intentional.

"When it becomes a symbol, you forget the actual work of remembering."

Despite the unimaginable loss both women have endured, they reflected on hope and the aviation community that's stood beside them.

"ALPA is my family," Homer acknowledged. "ALPA was there from minute one.... People were at my door day one and never went away."

"There's been a continued response from pilots and flight attendants," Saracini added. "We don't feel alone."

That support, Homer said, has allowed her to focus on honoring her husband's legacy through scholarships for future aviators.

"My hope is in the scholarship recipients," she noted. "Several work at United now. They have the same passion



A granite memorial to the four United Airlines pilots lost on 9/11 hangs in the United Flight Office at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

LeRoy had.

"The worst thing can happen to you, and you can choose to move forward and do something positive," she said.

Twenty-five years later, both women continue honoring their husbands by ensuring that future generations remember not only how they died, but how they lived.

That memory also lives through four organizations established in memory of the United pilots lost that day. The Captain Jason Dahl Scholarship Fund, the LeRoy W. Homer Jr. Foundation, the Michael

Horrocks Memorial Foundation, and the Victor Saracini Garden of Reflection 9/11 memorial continue to invest in future aviators, support meaningful causes, and ensure their legacies endure for generations to come.

WE WILL "NEVER FORGET."

To find more information on these organizations, including how to donate, visit justabuck.info.

—Michael Batkins, United Master Executive Council Communications Strategist

"ALPA is my family. ALPA was there from minute one.... People were at my door day one and never went away."

—MELODIE HOMER, WIDOW OF F/O LEROY W. HOMER, JR.



they all remember very clearly where they were on that day and where they got stranded or diverted to," Tibbetts remarks. "Even 25 years later, almost every pilot and flight attendant can recount where they were at that exact moment in time."

"I think 'Never Forget' will always be an important priority for ALPA and the industry," Sprague acknowledges. "September 11 was a tragic day for every American—not just for those in the aviation industry. It's important to always remember and honor those who lost their lives and to continue to protect against something like that ever happening again."

"Every year that we talk about 9/11 and remember the events is a tribute to the lives that were lost and a reminder of their

sacrifice," Tibbetts states.

But that's not all to remember, he says. "In Canada, we also recall the incredible kindness and generosity of the people of Gander who took in stranded passengers after the airspace was closed in the United States." In addition to remembrance ceremonies and moments of silence, "We also try to reflect on the good side of humanity that was so evident in Gander."

"There's a wave of sadness every year that shouldn't be overlooked," Sprague notes, "but I think that 9/11 has become a day when our great nations stand together to remember our history and to be grateful that we continue to have our rights and freedoms. It's become a day to remember the courageous heroes, many

who lost their lives, responding to the attacks and protecting those they could."

For pilots who remember September 11 firsthand, the memories remain vivid. For those who were born afterward, those memories must be imparted.

"It's up to us all to make sure the stories of that day—and the weeks and months and years that followed—are shared and passed on," Morse declares. "Especially as more of us who were flying that day retire, we need to not only pass it on but to make sure those we share it with know that they need to pass it on as well."

That holds true whether you're 25 and just starting out or approaching 65 and retirement. September 11 must always be the day we never forget. 

SHARING A PASSION FOR FLYING



ADVOCATING FOR THE PROFESSION AND INDUSTRY AT THIS YEAR'S EAA AIRVENTURE OSHKOSH

By Gavin Francis, Senior Aviation Writer, and John Perkinson, Senior Staff Writer

Before taking questions from ALPA members gathered in the Association's tent at the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) AirVenture 2026, Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the union's president, paused to recognize the many pilot volunteers who, from July 20–26, introduced thousands of aviation enthusiasts to the airline piloting profession.

"These volunteers have spent their week helping people understand what it

means to be an airline pilot," said Ambrosi, chatting with a contingent of ALPA members during a scheduled Q&A session. "We're all here because we have a passion for aviation. It goes beyond flying airliners every day. It goes to a passion for general aviation and sharing that passion with the next generation."

That sentiment was on full display throughout the 73rd AirVenture, the annual aviation convention and fly-in during

which a record-setting crowd of approximately 734,000 aviation enthusiasts from 98 countries descended upon Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, Wisc. More than 10,000 aircraft packed the airport's busy flight line and fields and filled the skies during the week, creating a unique opportunity for the Association to advocate for aviation safety, promote the airline piloting profession, and connect with members and retirees.

Photo: Experimental Aircraft Association

Left: Synchronized fireworks culminate an evening air show performance during this year's Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture.

BEEHIVE OF ACTIVITY

Located just blocks from Boeing Plaza, ALPA's outdoor exhibit tent once again served as a hub of activity throughout the week. Aspiring airline pilots, flight instructors, aviation students, Association members, retirees, and others contemplating midlife career changes stopped by the tent's meet-and-greet area to ask questions and speak directly with the many U.S. and Canadian passenger and cargo airline pilots who staffed the welcome counter.

These seasoned pilots offered practical guidance on career planning while showcasing professionalism, mentorship, and a commitment to safety and security—all ALPA trademarks. The booth also featured two Jay Velocity Redbird flight simulators, enabling tent visitors to virtually take to the skies.

In addition to the meet-and-greet area, pilot volunteers from the Association's Professional Development Group (PDG) gave daily presentations in the tent's adjoining open-air theater. Each morning, F/O Justin Dahan (FedEx Express), ALPA's Education Committee chair, described his average workday in a presentation titled "A Day in the Life of an Airline Pilot." As part of this discussion, he outlined the routines of flying for a living, from bidding schedules to making the most of layovers.

In "The Life Cycle of Flight Training/How Do I Fund My Training?" presentation, F/O Hunter Chumbley (FedEx Express), the union's Elevate Committee chair, highlighted opportunities to build flight time, available scholarships, and other resources to help aspiring aviators overcome the financial barriers of flying for a living. Among these, Chumbley mentioned the extensive information available on ALPA's clearedtodream.org website.

In a presentation titled "Military Vets to Airline Jets," F/O Tim Kirschbaum (Hawaiian), the Association's Membership Committee chair, and, later in the week, Capt. Anthony Bailey (Delta), the union's Veterans Affairs Subcommittee chair, discussed the challenges and considerations when transitioning from the military to a civilian airline career.

In addition, individually during the week, F/O Mark Lockwood (Delta) and Capt. Glen Gorrie (WestJet), ALPA Leadership Committee members, presented "Pathways to the Airlines," helping attend-



From left, air traffic controller Jesse Strickland, National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) President Nick Daniels, air traffic controller Rachel Gilmore, ALPA president Capt. Jason Ambrosi, and ALPA Education Committee chair F/O Justin Dahan (FedEx Express) participate in a Monday panel discussion at the NATCA booth.

ees better understand the progression from student pilot to the airline flight deck with a host of tips and advice to simplify the process.

The union's presentations consistently drew large and engaged audiences, and the sessions frequently continued well after they were scheduled to end, as attendees remained to ask questions and seek individual career advice from PDG leaders.

In keeping with the Association's goal to reconnect with attending members, retirees, and their families, ALPA provided unity-building dinners each week night. The United Master Executive Council (MEC) sponsored Monday night's dinner. Tuesday's meal was cosponsored by the Air Canada and FedEx Express MECs, and the Delta MEC hosted Wednesday night's supper. ALPA's national officers sponsored the Thursday and Friday evening dinners.

While visitors often came to the union's tent to talk about becoming an airline pi-

lot, many left with a broader appreciation of the Association and the resources and protections it affords. Whether answering questions from those considering an aviation career or discussing ALPA's role in enhancing the profession, the Association's volunteers demonstrated the pilot-to-pilot support and culture that have been a hallmark of the union for nearly a century.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

Beyond its educational programming and member social events, ALPA seized upon the tremendous opportunity EAA AirVenture extends by bringing so many representatives from virtually every segment of the aviation industry together. The Association used this occasion to engage aviation industry and labor partners as well as new and traditional media outlets as a means to promote the Association's priorities.

In particular, ALPA's president and Nick Daniels, president of the National Air Traf-



ALPA Leadership Committee member F/O Mark Lockwood (Delta) presents "Pathways to the Airlines" to a packed audience in the ALPA tent.



Some of this year's nearly 734,000 attendees gather along the Wittman Regional Airport flight line for an afternoon air show.



ALPA president Capt. Jason Ambrosi speaks with Association pilots during a Tuesday members-only Q&A session.



ALPA vice president-administration/secretary F/O Tyler Hawkins, first vice president Capt. Wendy Morse, and president Capt. Jason Ambrosi answer member questions during a Thursday session in the ALPA tent.

fic Controllers Association (NATCA), joined Frank McIntosh, the FAA's Air Traffic Organization chief operating officer, for a Tuesday morning press conference at the EAA Media Center. With many members of the news media present, the three discussed efforts to address America's antiquated air traffic control system, what's being accomplished, and the work that still needs to be done (see page 27).

In addition to the press conference, ALPA leaders also participated in a joint panel discussion with NATCA on Monday afternoon at NATCA's booth across from the Wittman Regional Airport air traffic control tower. Panelists included NATCA controller Jesse Strickland (Houston Center), Daniels, Ambrosi, and Dahan, and the event was moderated by NATCA controller Rachel Gilmore (Indianapolis Center). Afterward, Daniels and Ambrosi took a tour of the Wittman tower.

During the week, Daniels also joined Ambrosi for an hour-long presentation titled "Working Together, Pilots and Air Traffic Controllers" at ALPA's tent. The two union presidents emphasized the demanding work performed by controllers while managing record traffic levels with equipment that's outdated. They stressed the importance of ensuring that those de-

veloping and implementing future technologies remain directly involved in applying them. Ambrosi also encouraged those in attendance to look beyond the radio calls that define most pilots' interactions with air traffic controllers.

While these three events covered a wide range of aviation issues, they also demonstrated the close collaboration among airline pilots, air traffic controllers, and other aviation stakeholders in working to strengthen the nation's aviation system and advance safety as priority one.

OTHER OUTREACH EFFORTS

The Association's leaders also spent ample time communicating ALPA's positions and priorities to those in attendance. Ambrosi talked with news reporters and social media influencers, ensuring they were well informed about the union's key issues and mission.

Twice during the week, ALPA's national officers scheduled members-only Q&A sessions to give pilots the opportunity to ask questions and talk directly with their union leaders. On Tuesday, Ambrosi held a solo session, while on Thursday, he was accompanied by Capt. Wendy Morse, the union's first vice president and national safety coordinator, and F/O Tyler Hawkins,

the Association's vice president-administration/secretary.

These conversations touched upon subjects ranging from aviation safety and contract issues to industry trends, reduced-crew operations, and other challenges facing the profession, further reflecting ALPA's ongoing commitment to transparency and direct engagement with its members.

On four occasions, the union's leaders also participated in interviews with EAA Radio. On Thursday, Ambrosi spoke with "Wireless" Mike Stromberg and Matthew Phluger during the station's *Squawk 1200* program. Once again promoting the need for air traffic control modernization and additional funding, he asserted, "We need to bring the aviation system into the future." Referencing last year's accident involving PSA Flight 5342 with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter near Washington National Airport, he also underscored the NTSB's recommendation for the installation of Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast In technology in all airliners to improve flight crew situational awareness (see the March issue).

Morse talked with the EAA Radio announcers on Wednesday in conjunction with EAA AirVenture's WomenVenture event, addressing pathways to the airline piloting profession. "The best way to learn something is to teach it," she said, explaining that flight instructing not only builds flight time but also develops communication and decision-making skills that serve pilots throughout their careers.

Morse also encouraged visitors who were considering aviation as a second career not to assume that they'd missed this opportunity. She emphasized that the pi-

loting profession remains accessible for those willing to pursue it with dedication and professionalism.

F/O Kaori Paris (United), the Association's PDG chair, during a radio interview the previous day, discussed the challenges of balancing an airline career with family responsibilities. She drew upon her own experience as a mother of two and the spouse of another airline pilot to highlight the issues that can arise. Paris explained that ALPA provides information and resources addressing parental leave, elder-care, mental wellness, family assistance, and other life events that can affect airline pilots throughout their careers.

On Monday, Kirschbaum talked with *Squawk 1200* program announcers, outlining the issues that can occur when transitioning from the military to an airline job. A U.S. Army helicopter pilot for 18 years, he recalled the difficulties he faced and the tremendous cultural differences between the two careers. "Air sense is air sense," he said, adding, "You have peripheral vision. You know what you're doing in that aspect, but really it was the Part 121 structure that was a challenge for me." Memorizing the flows and callouts was particularly demanding.

Kirschbaum also highlighted ALPA's *Guide to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act*, available to members online, which provides valuable insights into the reemployment process when moving into the civilian workplace, ensuring that veterans are aware of the support available to them under the law.

UNIVERSAL ENGAGEMENT

In addition to ALPA's many coordinated activities, thousands of Association mem-



Capt. William "Skip" Stewart (FedEx Express) performs a knife-edge maneuver while his ground crew—from left, **Capt. Kim Fandetti (FedEx Express)**, **Capt. Amy Himic (FedEx Express)**, **F/O Cari Stewart (FedEx Express)**, **F/O Kim Mahoney-Littell (FedEx Express)**, and **F/O Sandy Travnicek (JetBlue)**—cheer him on.



ALPA first vice president Capt. Wendy Morse outlines pathways to the airline piloting profession as part of an interview with EAA Radio.



From left, **F/O Greg Hume-Powell (Air Canada)** and **Capt. Todd Farrell (Air Canada)**, members of the Northern Stars Aeroteam, arrive at Wittman Regional Airport.



During her EAA Radio interview, Professional Development Group chair **F/O Kaori Paris (United)** discusses the challenges of balancing an airline career with family responsibilities.



A Delta A350-900 in livery promoting the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Olympics parks in Boeing Plaza.



Capt. Mike Mainiero (Kalitta Air) and F/O Madeleine "Emmy" Dillon-Mainiero (Kalitta Air) are among the team of pilots who fly the B-25 *Miss Mitchell* during AirVenture 2026.



From left, Austin Comer; his father, Capt. Chris Comer (FedEx Express); Capt. John Gustafson (FedEx Express); and his son, F/O Kyle Gustafson (Endeavor Air), serve as "ramp rats" on Boeing Plaza.

bers were visible across the airport grounds, participating in a variety of other pursuits. Some flew in daily air shows while others staffed educational or display areas. Other ALPA members could be seen giving presentations in the facility's various theater venues or staffing booths for other aviation educational and membership organizations.

The first place you might notice ALPA members, current and retired, was in the Oshkosh skies, where they performed in the daily and evening air shows and participated in both small- and large-scale flybys.

EAA AirVenture regular Capt. William "Skip" Stewart (FedEx Express) (see the September 2018 issue) flew his Pitts S-2S *Prometheus*, giving several spectacular performances during the week. Stewart's routines included a rare, unannounced Wednesday afternoon pairing with Melissa Burns (formerly with Alaska), who piloted a Zivko Edge-540. Together, they performed precision passes and knife-edge maneuvers along the airport flight line, as ground-based flames of fire burst around them.

Capt. Jeff Boerboon (Delta) was among the headliners (see the September 2025 issue) and flew two different aircraft types. On Tuesday afternoon, he piloted an Aura Aero Integral R as part of a demonstration for the International Aerobatic Club. Two days later, he wowed the crowd with his spectacular aerobatic routines flying his Extra 330SC.

The Titan Aerobatic Team remains one of the most recognizable air show performance ensembles in the world, and flying this year's lead position was Capt. Jimmy Fordham (Delta, Ret.). Operating three North American AT-6 Texans, Fordham and the Titans performed challenging nose-to-nose passes and other complex routines throughout the week.

In addition, Capt. Todd Farrell (Air Canada) and F/O Greg Hume-Powell (Air Canada), members of precision aerobatic team the Northern Stars AeroTeam and veterans of the Royal Canadian Air Force, delivered thrilling aerial performances in several Oshkosh air shows.

And performing maneuvers like the four-point roll, F/O Jeff Shetterly (Delta) flew his North American T-6/SNJ-6 Texan, *Radial Rumble*, as part of Saturday evening's program.

However, not all of this year's air show performances focused on flying. On two occasions, the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team from Frederick, Okla., performed static line jumps from nearly 1,500 feet out of the Douglas C-49, *Wild Kat*. Among the Army paratroopers was F/O Stephan McGarry (Kalitta Air) (see page 34). He and his fellow jumpers performed this exercise while wearing nearly 50 pounds of authentic World War II parachuting gear, much like the 1940s counterparts they commemorate.

Helping the Wittman air traffic control facility support its claim as "the world's

busiest control tower” for the week of July 20, the afternoon skies were routinely filled with competing aircraft formations. Often highlighting warbirds from different historic conflicts, these formations sometimes featured specific aircraft types such as the North American B-25 Mitchell.

One such aircraft was the *Miss Mitchell*, which served in the 57th Bomb Wing of the 12th Air Force in North Africa and Italy during World War II and completed more than 130 missions. Crewing this historic aircraft this year were Capt. Andy Bredeson (Sun Country); F/O Tony Bowers (Delta); Capt. Mike Mainiero (Kalitta Air); and his spouse, F/O Madeleine “Emmy” Dillon-Mainiero (Kalitta Air). The *Miss Mitchell* operates as part of the Commemorative Air Force and was also on display for much of the week in the Warbirds section on the north end of the airport grounds.

Numerous ALPA pilots flew historic military aircraft, including Capt. Jeff Linebaugh (FedEx Express, Ret.) and F/O Joe Shetterly (Delta), who took turns piloting the P-51D Mustang, *Gunfighter*, conducting bucket-list flights and performing in air shows. Capt. Stuart Milson (FedEx Express) flew *Gentleman Jim*, another P-51D Mustang, which was named for Capt. James “Bud” Browning who achieved “Ace” status flying for the 363rd Fighter Squadron during the latter portion of World War II. The airplane is owned by the American Honor Foundation located in Ocala, Fla.

AirVenture guests were invited to experience aviation history, with opportunities to ride in a Ford Trimotor, the 1920’s-era airliner, which initially carried two pilots, a stewardess, and eight to nine passengers. Among the pilots who provided rides in the historic aircraft at this year’s Oshkosh were airline veterans Capt. Bill Sleeper (United, Ret.), Capt. Terry O’Brien (United, Ret.), Capt. John Hartke (Alaska, Ret.), and Capt. Steve Craig (United, Ret.).

THE PLAZA

Boeing Plaza, Oshkosh’s primary aircraft display location, featured an ever-changing lineup of interesting and timely exhibits, including several airliners. Among these attractions was a new Delta A350-900, which landed at Wittman Regional Airport Tuesday morning, sporting an Olympic livery promoting the games to be held in Los Angeles, Calif., in 2028.

Delta is the official airline for Team USA, and the A350 previously carried the Olympic flag from Paris, France, to Los Angeles for the official transfer. Covering a signifi-

cant portion of the plaza, the brightly colored aircraft drew a large crowd, which lined up to tour its main-cabin accommodations.

“You think this is a routine landing in Oshkosh but then it really makes a difference once you get off the plane and you see all the people,” said Capt. David Farris (Delta).

The A350 departed later that day, and working in Boeing Plaza were Capt. Chris Comer (FedEx Express); his son Austin Comer; Capt. John Gustafson (FedEx Express); and his son, F/O Kyle Gustafson (Envoy Air). The four served as EAA “ramp rats,” preparing the Delta aircraft for its departure.

Across the plaza, Capt. Bryan Kaufmann (Delta) answered questions about the B-17G bomber, *Aluminum Overcast*. The aircraft proudly carries the colors of the 398th Bomber Group of World War II and is now owned by EAA and serves as the organization’s “flagship.”

In the northwest corner, F/O Chris Reeves (United) touted the merits of the UH-72 Lakota helicopter to the many plaza guests. When not flying the B-737 for his airline, Reeves operates the Lakota for the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

In addition to airplanes and helicopters, this year’s Oshkosh featured the Goodyear blimp Wingfoot One, which arrived later in the week and occasionally moored across from the EAA Aviation Museum. In operation for 12 years, Wingfoot One has provided aerial coverage for a host of prime-time sporting events, including the Daytona 500, the Stanley Cup Finals, and the PGA Championship.

Goodyear Chief Pilot of Airship Operations Michael Dougherty and Chief Pilot of Training and Safety Standards Adam Basaran, both former ExpressJet pilots and ALPA members, periodically flew the semirigid airship for 40-minute stints around the airfield during the latter half of AirVenture week.

Meanwhile, many ALPA pilots could be seen across the airport grounds, serving as EAA volunteers. When F/O Karen Larson (United) wasn’t welcoming visitors to the ALPA booth or acting as a volunteer for the Recreational Aviation Foundation, she and Capt. Roberta Stanford (United) worked as EAA Vintage volunteers, driving golf carts to provide transportation for pilots parked in remote locations.

Capt. Ben Wallander (Delta) also volunteered as a golf cart driver as part of the EAA Carts program. And throughout the week, EAA Radio announcer Capt. Jeff



From left, Goodyear blimp pilots Adam Basaran and Michael Dougherty, both former ExpressJet pilots, aboard Wingfoot One, which has provided aerial coverage for numerous sporting events.



From Left, F/O Justin Yeh (Delta), F/O Sean Wan (United), F/O Jason Woo (FedEx Express), and F/O Naruka Yoshino (Piedmont) work the Professional Asian Pilots Association booth.

Montgomery (United), aka “J-Mont-G,” took his daily, hour-long radio program, *On the Fly*, on location to those he interviewed.

OTHER PURSUITS

Others represented outside interests, in some cases, volunteering at other booths. Capt. Geoff Weck (United, Ret.), who serves as chair and Region 7 director for the Soaring Society of America (SSA),



Left: Capt. Roberta Stanford (United) and F/O Karen Larson (United) serve as EAA Vintage volunteers, providing transportation for pilots parked in remote locations. Right: Former ALPA president Capt. Randy Babbitt takes in the sights at this year's AirVenture.



worked at the nearby SSA booth. He shared the joys of flying sailplanes, talked about what's required to become a licensed glider pilot, and assisted those interested in flying the organization's glider simulator.

Capt. Stacey Jackson (WestJet), who also serves as the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations executive vice president technical & safety standards, highlighted Women in Aviation International from its booth in Hangar B. In another building, F/O Justin Yeh (Delta), F/O Sean Wan (United), F/O Jason Woo (FedEx Express), and F/O Naruka Yoshino (Piedmont) touted the benefits of flying for a living as members of the Professional Asian Pilots Association. In addition, Capt. Antonio Berrios (United) promoted the work of the National Gay Pilots Association.

Capt. Buck Wyndham (United) was on hand to sign copies of his book *Hogs in the Sand*, in the EAA Merchandise Shop. The book recounts Wyndham's service as a U.S. Air Force pilot flying the A-10 Warthog in numerous missions during Operation Desert Storm.

Capt. Laura Savino (United, Ret.) also signed copies of her book *Jet Boss: A Female Pilot on Taking Risks and Flying High*. During her career, she flew the B-737, B-747, B-757, B-767, and B-777, as well as the A319 and A320. Savino also gave a presentation on Friday in the Forums area, describing the events of the March 1977 collision of two B-747s at Tenerife South Airport in the Canary Islands, and outlined what was learned from this tragic event.

In the Airhart Oshkosh 2026 Festival Tent on Monday, Capt. Linda Sollars (Jet-Blue, Ret.) gave a presentation titled "#goingplaces: Amazing Adventures in Small

Planes." She discussed the extraordinary experiences that small general aviation aircraft make possible—from spectacular sites and national parks across the United States to great cityscapes and other destinations that are uniquely accessible by small aircraft. Sollars also mentioned

building her own general aviation aircraft in Johannesburg, South Africa, and flying it more than 9,000 miles to Oshkosh for the 2022 EAA AirVenture (see the September 2024 issue).

These and many other ALPA pilots, through their various affiliations, demonstrated that their passion for aviation extends beyond training and safely flying their passengers and cargo to and from destinations. They are fully engaged in their industry and give back to their communities.

By inspiring future aviators, supporting current members, collaborating with aviation partners, and advocating for the highest standards of safety and professionalism, ALPA ensured that its voice was heard loud and clear during this year's EAA AirVenture. 

PROMOTING ALPA'S PRESENCE

It was no coincidence that ALPA had great attendance at its tent this year. With nearly 1,600 forums, workshops, and presentations taking place at the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) AirVenture 2026, the Association wanted to ensure that AirVenture attendees were fully aware of the union's presence and daily pilot presentations. Long before ALPA pilot and staff volunteers arrived at the Wittman Regional Airport grounds, the Association's Communications Department launched an engagement strategy to encourage Oshkosh participants, particularly the news media and those interested in flying for a living, to visit the union's tent.

A dedicated public webpage (alpa.org/oshkosh) featured details about the location of ALPA's presence, the

union's planned activities for the week, and other resources. To reinforce the Association's programming and location to those within a one-mile radius of Boeing Plaza, the organization delivered social and digital media alert content on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn on their mobile devices.

This effort was a tremendous success; metrics for this year's geofencing effort indicated that ALPA had 311,550 ad views and 3,466 webpage visits from ad viewers.

The Association also used EAA AirVenture Today newspapers, EAA's event presentations and workshops webpages, and the official visitors' guide to promote the union's daily presentations and sponsored the EAA Runway 5K held Saturday morning on the airport tarmac to further promote the Association's visibility.



ALPA Professional Development Group chair F/O Kaori Paris (United) assists a future ALPA member with one of the Association's flight simulators.



Capt. Bill Gackenhimer (Delta), left, and F/O "RJ" Rajan (Delta) prepare to meet visitors at ALPA's tent near Boeing Plaza.



SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE

ALPA, NATCA, AND FAA HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR AIR TRAFFIC MODERNIZATION AT EAA AIRVENTURE

By Gavin Francis, Senior Aviation Writer

With more than 700,000 aviation enthusiasts, industry leaders, policy makers, and members of the aviation media gathered in Oshkosh, Wisc., for the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) AirVenture 2026, the event once again provided one of the most influential forums for discussing the future of aviation. For ALPA, the week also offered an opportunity to reinforce its message that preserving the world's safest aviation system requires continued investment in the people, technology, and infrastructure that support it.

Throughout the week, Capt. Jason Ambrosi, the Association's president, carried

During the Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture 2026, Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, right center; National Air Traffic Controllers Association President Nick Daniels, to Ambrosi's right; and FAA Air Traffic Organization Chief Operating Officer Franklin McIntosh, far right with his back to the camera, discuss during a joint press conference that modernizing the national airspace system is essential to safely accommodate continued growth as managing the demands on airspace becomes increasingly complex.

that message across multiple venues, including a press conference, public forums, interviews, and member Q&A sessions—reinforcing the message that air traffic control modernization and aviation safety are ALPA's highest priorities.

That message was clear during a joint press conference featuring Ambrosi, National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) President Nick Daniels (see page 5), and FAA Air Traffic Organization Chief Operating Officer Franklin McIntosh. Appearing together before aviation journalists, the three leaders presented a unified message that modernizing the national airspace system is essential to safely accommodate continued growth as managing the demands on airspace becomes increasingly complex.

"The Department of Transportation and FAA leadership have been clear that finishing this job, replacing hundreds of aging air traffic control facilities, deploying modern surveillance automation for controllers, and building the traffic management tools our system needs will take an additional \$20 billion," Ambrosi said during the news conference. "Partial funding isn't a shortcut. It leaves controllers and our crews on the ground working with one foot in the old system and one in the new, and that's a dangerous place to leave the people we depend on most."

Daniels underscored the need to address controller staffing issues, noting, "The top five highest [numbers] of aircraft run in a single day have been in 2026, when we're doing it with 75 percent of an essential workforce. We're doing it on six-day work weeks. We're doing it on 10 hours a day."

"Together, we're laying the groundwork for a future-ready airspace system that meets the growing demand for the aviation industry," McIntosh observed. "Crystal-clear communication during a busy session saves controllers and pilots much-needed time to make critical decisions. Ultimately, a better-equipped controller, a better-equipped technician, provides the very best service for all the pilot community."

While each organization brought a different perspective to the conversation, all three emphasized that aviation safety remains their shared mission. Their appearance highlighted the coalition that has emerged behind modernization efforts, bringing together labor organizations, industry groups, manufacturers, and government representatives to advocate for sustained investment in the nation's air traffic control infrastructure.

"This is something that's been necessary for two decades," said Ambrosi, who reinforced the message during an interview with EAA Radio. Referring to funding for aviation modernization made available through legislation signed into law in 2025, he expressed the need to continue support for that effort. "The \$12.5 billion is a great down payment. That's what it is, a down payment."

Ambrosi noted that, although the aviation system remains extraordinarily safe, safety is achieved through the professionalism of pilots and controllers working within an increasingly strained system. Continued investment, he explained, is necessary to provide controllers with modern communications, automation, and decision-support tools while preparing the national airspace system for future demand.

A recurring theme throughout AirVenture was the close partnership between ALPA and NATCA. During a well-attended panel discussion and a one-on-one public conversation, Ambrosi and Daniels highlighted the shared responsibility pilots and controllers have for protecting the traveling public.

"Our goal has been 'Schedule with Safety' for 95 years," Ambrosi stated. "We feel like we're the conscience of the aviation industry."

Daniels described how voluntary safe-

"Although the aviation system remains extraordinarily safe, that safety is achieved through the professionalism of pilots and controllers working within an increasingly strained system. Continued investment is necessary to provide controllers with modern communications, automation, and decision-support tools while preparing the national airspace system for future demand."

—CAPT. JASON AMBROSI, ALPA PRESIDENT

ty reporting and collaboration between labor organizations have transformed aviation safety over the past two decades. Looking ahead, he said, the next challenge is ensuring that controllers have equipment that allows them to spend less time working around technological limitations and more time making operational decisions.

"We're trying to buy moments to make decisions," said Daniels. "Instead of us working around the equipment, the equipment is finally beginning to work for us."

"We hear controllers' voices every day, but we may not always fully appreciate the staffing shortages and demanding schedules they're experiencing," remarked Ambrosi, emphasizing that modernization is ultimately about supporting the people who keep the national airspace system safely operating. "We can't maintain our position as the safest aviation system in the world unless we invest in the future. These folks deserve our support."

Daniels also urged those considering aviation careers to look past the current challenges and recognize the opportunity to help shape the future of the industry. "Our job is to leave it better than we found it," he said, describing both air traffic controllers and airline pilots as stewards of an aviation system that continues to evolve through new technologies, new entrants, and the new generations of aviation professionals.

Throughout the week, Ambrosi also emphasized the importance of legislation aimed at strengthening situational awareness on the flight deck following

the January 2025 midair collision near Washington National Airport (see the March 2025 issue). ALPA continues to support combining provisions of the Senate's Rotorcraft Operations Transparency and Oversight Reform Act and the House's Airspace Location and Enhanced Risk Transparency Act into comprehensive legislation that would implement key NTSB recommendations (see the March issue).

Among the Association's priorities is requiring transport-category aircraft to be equipped with integrated Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast In capability, providing flight crews with earlier awareness of nearby traffic. Ambrosi explained that the technology would complement existing traffic collision avoidance system protections by giving pilots additional time and information to recognize and avoid developing conflicts before they become last-second resolution advisories.

Whether addressing reporters, speaking alongside NATCA and FAA leaders, answering members' questions, or participating in public forums, Ambrosi repeatedly returned to the message that America's aviation system remains the safest in the world because of the dedication of its people, and preserving that record will require sustained commitment to modernization, collaboration, and safety for decades to come.

"The system is safe today because of the professionalism of pilots and controllers," said Ambrosi. "Our responsibility now is to give them the tools, technology, and support they need to keep it that way for the next generation." 



Pilot Scheduling Reps Compare Pairing/Rotation Construction Approaches

By John Perkinson, Senior Staff Writer

Airline pilot scheduling is an involved, complex process that must adhere to carrier operational demands, relevant federal regulations addressing safety margins and pilot fatigue, and, for those fortunate enough to have it, labor contract language. While approaches vary greatly from airline to airline, the final product has a direct impact on operational safety and pilot quality of life.

To better understand how different airlines and pilot groups administer this detailed process, ALPA's Economic & Financial Analysis (E&FA) Department recently conducted a two-day Pairing/Rotation Construction Scheduling Workshop.

More than 45 scheduling volunteers from 16 U.S. and Canadian pilot groups and members of the Allied Pilots Association, the Southwest Airlines Pilots Association, and the Teamsters gathered on July 27–28 at ALPA's McLean, Va., headquarters. Together, they evaluated and compared the creation of these essential building blocks of monthly pilot schedules.

"This is your workshop. You steer the direction and topics to be discussed," said Jeff Nooger,

a former United pilot and an E&FA Department senior scheduling and work rule analyst, who facilitated the event. What followed was an organic, free-flowing conversation in which the pilots reviewed the various processes and vendors they use and the subsequent experiences they've encountered.

Workshop participants compared and contrasted their individual Scheduling Committee structures as well as their level of involvement in pairing construction and the working relationship they've developed with their management counterparts. They also talked about pairing optimizers—software used to assess demands, rules, and priorities and assemble monthly trips.

ALPA Senior Scheduling and Work Rule Analyst Jeff Nooger leads workshop participants in an open discussion about the pairing/rotation construction process.

Several of the workshop attendees explained their processes for gathering information on pairing improvements and provided demonstrations. In one presentation, Capt. Kyle Opp (United) and Capt. Michael Kulbacki (United) outlined features of their pilot group's construction process. United uses local council Scheduling Committee input for this effort. As evidence of the size and scope of this task, Opp pointed out that last November, the airline had 56,612 flight segments (including deadheads) for its B-737 fleet alone—which equated to 12,496 pairing solutions.

Capt. J.J. Sweetser (Delta), F/O Justin Anderson (Delta), and Capt. Gabrielle Jordan (Delta) explained the surveying process their Scheduling Committee conducts to better understand the primary concerns and level of satisfaction within their pilot group. Survey participants are asked, among other tasks, to prioritize and comment on rotation considerations such as trip commutability, the number of days assigned, layover length and location, the inclusion of overnight (or red-eye) flights, and other variables. "Building trips that pilots like solves a lot of problems," Sweetser noted.

Sweetser and Jordan also demonstrated the Boeing Alertness Model, the fatigue model integration feature that their pairing optimizer produces. Both United and Delta use the Jeppesen Crew Pairing solution.

In addition, pilots from JetBlue and Alaska Scheduling Committees, which construct pairing sets themselves or

in conjunction with crew resources, explained how their groups build pairing sets using Jeppesen software. One pilot from Republic and another from Sun Country reviewed their carriers' use of the S3RUS optimization software for constructing pairing sets and demonstrated how their pairing optimizer works.

Later in the workshop, Capt. Doug Marchese (JetBlue), ALPA's Flight Time/Duty Time Committee chair, spoke about the fatigue parameters to consider during the pairing construction period and the fatigue analytics that should be run after the pairings are built. His presentation led to an extended discussion among the attendees about problems encountered and general best practices. As part of the conversation, the pilots considered whether their fatigue programs fall under their Safety or Flight Operations Departments and the resulting ramifications.

Participants reviewed the cost in pairings and run solutions, including cost drivers such as flight credits, assigned deadheads, layover hotels, temporary-duty assignments at other domiciles, and long-haul-duty issues. They also discussed the importance of regularly communicating the status of schedule building with pilots. In addition, attendees observed how collective bargaining can address aspects of the scheduling protocol that need to be resolved.

The Pairing/Rotation Construction Scheduling Workshop is the second of three scheduling workshops that ALPA's E&FA Department is hosting this year. In May, the Association held a Preferential Bidding System Scheduling Workshop, and the third workshop, the Day of Operations/Crew Desk Scheduling Workshop, is planned for September 30–October 1. 



ALPA 101 Training for ‘the Future of This Union’

By Kevin Cuddihy, Contributing Writer

Being a pilot rep can be one of the most difficult jobs in ALPA—but it can also be the most rewarding,” noted F/O Tyler Hawkins, the Association’s vice president-administration/secretary and Leadership Committee chair.

To help newly elected local council reps and officers step into this essential role, the union held its ALPA 101 Rep Training on August 11–12 at the Association’s McLean, Va., headquarters.

“The future of this union is all of you in this room,” said Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA’s president, when welcoming the reps. He thanked them for stepping up for their fellow pilots and contributing to the union’s path forward. “Members like you have been the key to advancing safety and negotiating stronger contracts,” he remarked. “Every new contract, every safety win, every grievance is championed by ALPA members who step up and serve our union.”

A total of 27 reps from 14 pilot groups attended the training, hearing from Leadership Committee members and staff subject-matter experts while networking with their fellow reps

and the staff who will assist them.

Hawkins began the training with the aptly titled session “You’re Elected... What’s Next?” He discussed the various paths pilot volunteers took and their reasons for raising their hand and reviewed important tools of the trade: ALPA’s Constitution & By-Laws and the Administrative Manual.

Hawkins also emphasized the network of support available to every ALPA pilot group, including national officers, executive vice presidents, national committees, the ALPA Canada Board, master executive council officers, and professional staff members and subject-matter experts.

Newly elected local council reps and officers attend ALPA 101 Rep Training at the Association’s McLean, Va., offices.

“By the end of this event,” he said, “we want you to feel equipped as a rep,” stressing that they don’t need to have all the answers but do need to know where to get answers to support and serve their pilots.

Hawkins reviewed the Association’s governance structure with attendees and their roles, emphasizing that local council status reps also serve as members of both their pilot group master executive councils and the Association’s Board of Directors (BOD)—the union’s highest governing body.

Other sessions detailed ALPA’s vast resources. During one session, Balloting and Local Council Services staffers highlighted the integral role of council services coordinators in supporting reps. In another session, Human Resources Department staff gave an overview of the various Association departments.

The Engineering & Air Safety Department provided important information on ALPA’s Accident/Serious Incident Hotline, which can be found on the Association’s “Orange Card,” and the Pilot Peer Support network of volunteers. Pilots also heard about propilot advocacy efforts in the United States and Canada from the Government Affairs Department and the importance of the duty of fair representation from the Legal Department.

The course also included primers on some of the duties ALPA reps will carry out during their term. Attendees participated in an interactive discussion regarding representing their pilots in disciplinary matters; reviewed the steps to plan and run a local council meeting; and heard from a panel of sub-

ject-matter experts from the Legal and Representation Departments regarding relevant labor laws, their role in the negotiations process, and best practices for communicating with their pilots.

A number of other pilot leaders joined remotely for the first in a series of virtual town halls designed to prepare delegates for the upcoming BOD meeting. The presentation detailed the work they’ll undertake in plenary session and delegate committees, such as acting on a broad range of agenda items, including updating ALPA’s strategic plan, and electing all four of the union’s national officers as well as Group A, B, and C executive vice presidents.

Capt. Stewart Bloomfield (Piedmont), Council 35 captain rep and vice chair, has been in the position for approximately five months and took the opportunity to participate in this mid-year training.

“I attended to learn how to be a more effective representative for my pilot group,” he said. “As the saying goes, knowledge is power; so to better assist Piedmont pilots, I felt it was vital that I attend.”

Bloomfield noted that the training will better prepare him for the upcoming BOD meeting and his role in helping to shape the union’s strategic plan. As a former law enforcement officer, he appreciated the guidance on how to properly support pilots in disciplinary events, including the emphasis on interviewing and investigating issues.

“I’m always looking to improve things for our pilots, so having a proper knowledge base is extremely critical,” he observed. “Doing right by the ones who elected me to be their voice is important; I need to ensure that I can find answers and articulate pilot concerns, and this training will definitely help me do that.”



Capt. Michael Guymon (United, Ret.) takes a selfie after his final flight.

Reflections on a Career and the Legacy Left Behind

By Capt. Michael Guymon (United, Ret.)

On May 4, I flew my final flight as a United Airlines B-787 captain. During the flight from Australia's Melbourne Airport to Los Angeles International Airport, I was able to reflect on my nearly 40-year flying career as well as the legacy I'm passing to the next generation of flyers—including my daughter-in-law.

I've had the opportunity to fly some great aircraft. I've felt the raw, snarling power of the P-51 Mustang and the P-40 Warhawk. I've felt the SBD Dauntless and the F-104 Starfighter in my hands. Flying them was a choreographed masterpiece,

a flamenco dance of the heavens—sharp, rhythmic, and demanding.

The sky is alive and beautiful, and nothing is more gorgeous.

Yet, as I come in for my final landing, I know that I retire in minutes and will never again sit in the left seat.

We prepare for our arrival into our home airport, read our checklists, brief our passengers, and begin our descent. We're given clearance to land on Runway 6R. Our approach is normal; I configure the aircraft early and touchdown smoothly.

We taxi off Runway 6R and proceed toward Taxiway Papa, where I see them: two fire trucks standing like silent sentinels adjacent to the concrete. The fire chief's voice crackles over the radio, asking permission to give a water cannon sa-

lute—which I grant.

I taxi slowly, incredibly slowly. I want to savor the hum of the B-787, the smell of the flight deck, and the weight of command that I've carried for decades. We reach the gate, and the moment of truth finally arrives—my final act as a United captain. I hold the brakes with my feet, the physical pressure keeping me tethered to this life. I look at my first officer and whisper, "I really don't want to do this."

The silence of the shutdown is quickly replaced by the noise in Flight Operations, where a party is waiting. There's a cake, laughter, and the bittersweet gravity of goodbyes. I'm deeply grateful.

My daughter-in-law, Sydney Beard, stands there, her eyes wide as she takes in the controlled chaos of the nerve center. She's currently in flight training—a fledgling in the world that I've mastered—and is fascinated by every detail. I look at her and feel a sudden, sharp urge to hand over the weight of it all: my hat, my four stripes, the wings, the badge. She's the future of our family's sky people.

I tell her with a grin that she'll look back on my career as if I were merely flying a kite. By the time she reaches my age, the B-787 will be a relic. She'll be living in the suborbital realm of the upper atmosphere or perhaps crossing the void to other worlds entirely.

I tease her that she'll be the one complaining about a quick turn from Los Angeles, Calif., to Singapore and back, irritated that she has to return home on the same day without time for her favorite dumplings, noodles, or a foot rub.

I've spoiled her, I know! I've shown her the world through the lens of a senior captain: the finest gardens of Singapore, the hidden bistros, the quietest temples. But her world will be one of unimaginable speeds and technologies that aren't even theories on a chalkboard yet. She's the next chapter in aviation. I'm finally closing this one.

I hope that my purpose in life has been fulfilled and that I've left this company in a better position than when I entered it. I'll truly miss the incredible people I've worked with, as they're my family in the clouds. I'm absolutely beyond grateful for the passengers who trusted me with their lives and, in doing so, allowed me to provide a life for my family. 🙏



Guymon's daughter-in-law, currently in flight school, looks to fill his shoes in the future—but settles for his hat and jacket after one of his last flights before retirement.



Guymon and family members pose on the flight deck following his final flight.

Photos courtesy of Capt. Michael Guymon (United, Ret.)



Dr. Quay Snyder, ALPA's aeromedical advisor, speaks to the Executive Board about pilot health.



Aeromedical Advisor Offers Health Advice On ALPA Podcast

By ALPA Staff

During a recent episode of the *Air Line Pilot Podcast*, Capt. Jason Ambrosi, ALPA's president, talked with Dr. Quay Snyder, president and CEO of the Aviation Medicine Advisory Service (AMAS), the union's Aeromedical Office, and the Association's aeromedical advisor. The two discussed how, since 1969, the office has provided one of the most valuable benefits available to ALPA members by helping them stay healthy and maintain their medical certification. What follows is an abbreviated excerpt from that broadcast.

● **AMBROSI:** Tell our listeners a little about AMAS and what you do for ALPA members.

SNYDER: AMAS is a team of 14 physicians and 12 nurses—with a total staff of about 38—whose full-time job is to respond to pilots and assist them with medical certification is-

HEAR MORE

To listen to the entire discussion, go to alpa.org/podcast and select the episode "How AMAS Helps ALPA Members Stay Healthy and Flying."

sues, reporting questions, and to serve as their advocate between the FAA, their aviation medical examiner [AME], and their private physicians. We make sure we do everything we can to keep your members healthy, certified, and flying.

● **AMBROSI:** What's the biggest challenge you face in performing these services?

SNYDER: The challenge really falls into two areas. The first is making sure we're advocating for the pilots in the best manner possible so that they can keep their certificates. Pilots must share this responsibility by making sure they get all appropriate medical records and test results to us.

But what concerns me even more is convincing pilots that taking care of their health is the most important thing they can do. On occasion, we encounter some individuals who are willing to forego medical evaluations or appropriate medical treatments for fear that they might lose their medical certification. In doing so, they're undermining their health and potentially shortening their careers.

● **AMBROSI:** What's the most frequently asked question you get when the phone rings?

SNYDER: Probably the most frequently asked question is: "Can I take this medication and fly?" and the answer isn't always "yes" or "no." The underlying condition is also

an important consideration. A pilot might be asking about a medication the FAA actually approves, even though the underlying condition dictates that the pilot isn't safe to fly.

● **AMBROSI:** You've recently mentioned that mental health remains at the forefront of pilot wellness concerns. The FAA continues to introduce significantly liberalized mental-health policy changes. What are the agency's latest priorities?

SNYDER: Most of the new policies and changes are the result of the 2024 Mental Health and Aviation Medical Clearances Aviation Rulemaking Committee [ARC] recommendations. Capt. Travis Ludwig (United), ALPA's Pilot Assistance Group chair, served as one of the ARC cochairs. The group presented 24 recommendations, which were very specific about the actions that should be taken, and the FAA was charged with implementing them to the best of its ability.

The FAA has done a wonderful job as far as addressing the low-hanging fruit, given the regulatory process and the resources it has. Certainly, the most recent government shutdown complicated the process and delayed the agency's action on some of the issues.

We're getting rid of the barriers, the stigma, and the financial challenges created by the old ways of looking at pilot mental-health issues, and ALPA has played a huge role in that. I'll say that the FAA has been receptive. There are some limitations given the politics, the resources, and the existing regulations, but my feeling is that U.S. Federal Air Surgeon Dr. Susan Northrup and her staff are fully committed to making positive changes.

● **AMBROSI:** That's certainly good to hear. Another aspect of this positive change has been the Mental Health and Aviation Act that ALPA continues to champion. While the bill is still before Congress, what's your impression at this point?

SNYDER: I think it's an important piece of legislation. It's passed through the House of Representatives and sits with the Senate right now, and there seems to be strong support within the Senate for it. ALPA has certainly been a strong proponent, but the legislation's proposed actions exceed those of the ARC recommendations.

The bill also provides resources to the FAA for additional AME training, for promoting the many mental-health changes that have been made to date, and for making clear the medications that pilots can take when they fly.

New medications are being introduced nearly every day, so it continues to be quite a challenge for the FAA to maintain an appropriate list that gives complete guidance to pilots.

● **AMBROSI:** Pilots complain about the time it takes to process medical certifications, especially in the case of special issuances. I know it's a priority for the FAA to expedite this process and improve how the system works, but where are we at this point? What steps can pilots take to try to make the certification process easier and quicker?

SNYDER: For the FAA, this is a shared responsibility with the pilots, and Dr. Northrup has run a very public campaign about preflighting your medical exam. She points out that as aircraft owners and pilots, we go through checklists all the

"We're getting rid of the barriers, the stigma, and the financial challenges created by the old ways of looking at pilot mental-health issues, and ALPA has played a huge role in that."

time before we take our flights. However, many pilots don't apply that same level of diligence before taking physicals, despite the very clear guidance about what's required.

The process is outlined in the *Guide for Aviation Medical Examiners*, and if pilots are fully prepared to address all the conditions they have and the medications they're taking—in other words, all their reporting responsibilities for the physical as well as the appropriate documentation—certification should sail through smoothly.

The FAA has made great strides, and recently Dr. Northrup told us that the turnaround times for deferred medical certificates—those the AME can't issue—is less than 30 days if all required documents are provided. In addition, the FAA put a team together to accelerate the review process. The updated

Guide for Aviation Medical Examiners has subsequently delegated a lot of the decision-making that used to be at the FAA or medical-certification-division level to the AME.

● **AMBROSI:** What do pilots need to know about GLP-1 weight-loss drugs to keep their medical certificates current?

SNYDER: Pilots need to know that most of the GLP-1 medications are authorized by the FAA right now according to a CACI [Conditions AMEs Can Issue] protocol. Pilots also need to be aware that a substantial portion of the weight loss comes from muscle. Consequently, they need to increase their protein intake and engage in high-resistance activity to minimize any muscle loss. Pilots also need to keep in mind that if they start taking the medication, there's a grounding period of two weeks—and possibly longer if they're experiencing adverse side effects.

● **AMBROSI:** If you could share a single recommendation to help pilots stay healthy, what would it be? Do 10,000 steps a day really make a difference? What would you say?

SNYDER: If you're getting 10,000 steps a day, that's a great start; but I'd say, overall, look at the bigger picture—are you

getting enough sleep, do you eat right, and are you routinely exercising?

Don't ignore your health. If you have symptoms or there's anything you're concerned about, immediately seek the help you need, and don't be afraid of losing your medical certificate. If anything, be afraid of compromising the longevity of your quality of life.

● **AMBROSI:** How do pilots pick their AMEs? Many might be inclined to choose the quickest one who gets the pilot in and out, and who doesn't ask too many questions—versus somebody who might be a little more engaged and inquisitive.

SNYDER: That's a very important question because pilots' careers depend upon their ability to hold medical certificates. You wouldn't go to an accountant who only glances at your taxes or an auto mechanic who always shortcuts car repairs. You need to look at your AME the same way. Find one who's knowledgeable and willing to sit down and listen to you—someone who has regular contact with the FAA.

Choose an AME who has a positive reputation and a strong work ethic. An AME with a good knowledge of current FAA policies is worth their weight in gold and is well worth your career. Keep in mind that AMAS can make recommendations. [✈](#)

SEEKING CERTIFICATION GUIDANCE?

U.S. ALPA pilots with general health and medical certification questions are encouraged to contact the Aviation Medicine Advisory Service (AMAS), ALPA's Aeromedical Office, Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., mountain time. Additional information is available on the AMAS website at [AviationMedicine.com](#), including related materials in its medical article database. ALPA members based in Canada should contact the Canadian Aeromedical Support Program at CASP@alpa.org or 800-561-9576, ext. 8312, or visit [canadianpilotassistance.com](#).



Kalitta Air Pilot Jumps into History

By John Perkinson, Senior Staff Writer

Many of us enjoy reading about aviation history, but others like F/O Stephan McGarry (Kalitta Air) have found a special way to relive it. When McGarry isn't transporting cargo to the four corners of the globe, this B-777 pilot serves as a static-line parachutist for the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team (ADT), entertaining aviation enthusiasts at air shows in North America and Europe. "I've been jumping with the team for more than 20 years and have the knees to prove it," he quipped.

McGarry and his fellow parachuters "hit the silk" from a C-49, nicknamed *Wild Kat*, to commemorate the thousands of U.S. soldiers who served in airborne units during this crucial period in world history. Earlier this year, they made three jumps during the Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisc. (see page 20). Each participating ADT member was decked out in the 50 pounds of origi-

nal military gear their predecessors wore. "We make every effort to be as authentic to the period as we can," noted McGarry.

And in each of the AirVenture runs, McGarry and his compatriots leapt from *Wild Kat*, traveling at a speed of approximately 120 mph at about 1,500 feet above Wittman Regional Airport—much to the delight of the thousands watching from just west of the

F/O Stephan McGarry (Kalitta Air) stands in *Wild Kat*, performing jumpmaster duties during a training session in Frederick, Okla.

flight line.

ADT is based in a historic World War II hangar at the former Frederick Army Air Field in Frederick, Okla., and its mission is "to keep the stories of our World War II veterans alive to inspire others." They accomplish this by fostering, promoting, and engaging in research of the war's airborne operations and military history to inform and educate the public.

McGarry first learned about this unique outfit while serving in the U.S. Army. While at Lawton Ft. Sill Regional Airport, he spotted a C-47 parked on the ramp and soon learned that it was part of the ADT. He signed up for the program's training lessons and took his first jump in July 2005.

The nine-day basic parachute course culminates with five successful jumps, and McGarry completed four before the C-47 had a mechanical issue. The ADT previously flew a C-45A, which it used as a backup, and he finished his final qualification jump leaping from that aircraft.

During his two decades with the ADT, McGarry has completed hundreds of performances at a host of locations. As part of this tenure, he was assigned to a group that conducted jumps to commemorate World War II's Operation Market Garden, the largest airborne offensive of its time (September 1944) in what was then the German-occupied Netherlands. This particular campaign was featured in the 1977 epic motion picture *A Bridge Too Far* directed by Richard Attenborough.

McGarry made jumps during the 65th, 75th, and 80th anniversaries of this event. During the 80th anniversary,

he jumped as a member of the Pathfinder Parachute Group, the ADT's British counterpart. On the 75th anniversary of Operation Market Garden, McGarry accidentally landed in an irrigation canal. His jump team was released on a day when there were unexpectedly high winds along the drop zone. McGarry had to be rescued by a group of photographers while in the canal because his parachute kept reinflating, pulling him farther down the waterway.

Although McGarry was soaked from head to toe, a cigar he kept in a resealable baggie stayed dry. After the jump, he removed the cigar and took a smoke, which was captured in a photo taken by the local news media that day.

Of his participation in the performances like those honoring Operation Market Garden, McGarry observed, "The commemoration jumps are always the most memorable for me because I'm jumping on the day, on the very same drop zone these guys were landing on. Given all that they sacrificed and had to endure, and all that they were fighting for, it's humbling to say the least." 🇺🇸



McGarry completes a jump at the 2024 EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisc.



RECENTLY RETIRED



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Every year we say good-bye to many proud pilots who retire from the ranks of airline flying. They have served the profession during some of our industry's most turbulent times. We would like to recognize their service in *Air Line Pilot*.

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2024

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2025

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2026

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DOUBLE TAKE

While these two photos may look the same, they actually **differ in 10 ways**. Can you find them all?



ORIGINAL PHOTO

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