

OCTOBER 2023



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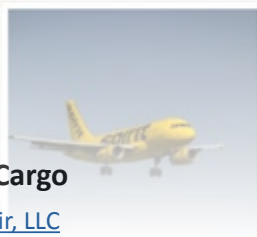
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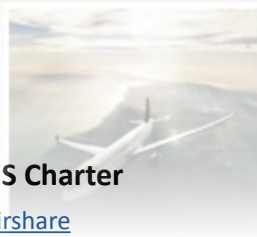
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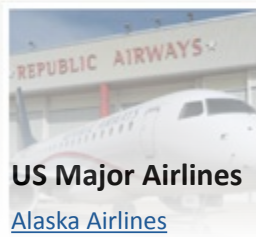
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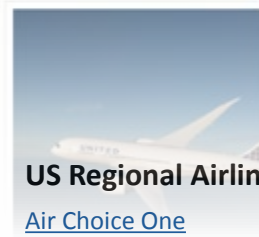
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The Grid (contract comparisons, pay charts, company details, etc.) has moved online. Click on the airlines above to go directly to that airline's information, or go to www.AeroCrewNews.com/go/thegrid.



Dear readers,

I would like to dedicate October's Aero Crew News issue to Nick Meier. Nick was involved in a serious car accident on July 17th and succumbed to his injuries on August 17th. Nick was a captain at Spirit Airlines. You can read more about his life [here](#).

I had the pleasure of meeting Nick several times. We used to fly for the same company before he moved on to fly for Spirit Airlines.

I also spoke with Nick at one of the Aero Crew Solutions job fairs that I worked. At that event, he did his first meet-and-greet with a Spirit Airlines recruiter. I remember talking to him and prepping him just before his one-on-one. I remember he had this ability to talk to anyone about anything. He was very outgoing and an extremely friendly person. In speaking with his mom and his wife over the past two weeks, I came to know Nick a lot better and wanted to share his story in our pages.

Fly Safe,

Craig D. Pieper

Craig D. Pieper

“To fly west, my friend, is a flight we all must take for a final check.” (Author unknown)

About the Publisher ✈



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

September 2023

What you may have missed in September

Feature – NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots demand a fair contract.

Business Vector – 2023 Compensation Survey results are examined.

Fitness – Eat well, not less.

Food Bites – Was in Spokane for suds and an epic sandwich.

Grey Matter – Part 3 of the five-part series on safety continued with FOQA.

Knowledge Base – Coffin corner and Mach tuck are explained.

Money – Learn to avoid the dumb things smart people do with their money.

Perspectives – John has overcome his resistance and reluctance to flight instructing.

SkyLaw – Part 2 of marriage-based immigration looked at proving your relationship.

The Grid – Compared NetJets contract with Delta's.

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airBaltic Serves Nearly Half a Million Passengers in August 2023

During August 2023, the Latvian national airline airBaltic carried 494 400 passengers or by 28% more than during the same period last year. [Read More](#)



SAF Purchases on airBaltic Flights Kick-Start Passenger Engagement

To raise awareness about the growing significance of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) in air traffic and its role in achieving climate neutrality goals, the Latvian national airline airBaltic has been offering passengers the option to contribute to this cause since May 2023. [Read More](#)



airBaltic Announces Top August Destinations from Riga

The Latvian national airline airBaltic has announced that its top destinations from Riga in August were Stockholm, Nice and Oslo. [Read More](#)



airBaltic Receives its 44th Airbus A220-300 Aircraft

The Latvian national airline airBaltic welcomed its 44th Airbus A220-300 jet, registered as YL-ABQ, in Riga. This is the fifth Airbus A220-300 delivery for airBaltic in 2023. [Read More](#)



airBaltic Club Introduces Registration of Children and Young Adults

The Latvian national airline airBaltic announces the introduction of a new option – to register profiles of children and young adults (2–16 years) for the use of airBaltic Club loyalty program. [Read More](#)



Alaska Airlines delivers an industry-leading operation during a busy summer season

Now that fall is right around the corner, we're proud to say Alaska Airlines ran the best operation this summer – and it's all thanks to our 23,000 employees. [Read More](#)



Cougs or Dawgs? Alaska Airlines unveils new aircraft in honor of Washington State University and the University of Washington

This fall we're bringing not one, but two brand new aircraft into our fleet with fresh paint highlighting our commitment to Washington state's largest universities. Alaska also expands support of WSU, becoming the official airline partner of WSU Athletics. [Read More](#)



Alaska Airlines adds new nonstop between San Diego and Atlanta

Our guests in San Diego love the convenience of our nonstop, coast-to-coast flights. [Read More](#)



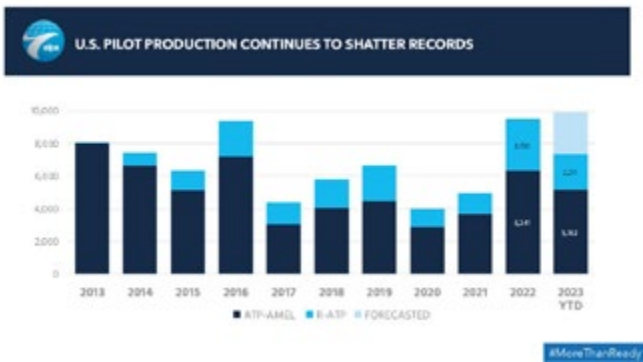
United Airlines Pilots' Union Votes to Send Tentative Agreement to Membership

The United Master Executive Council (MEC) of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) voted to accept a comprehensive tentative agreement (TA) for a new pilot working agreement. [Read More](#)



ALPA's Superior Airmanship Awards Underscores Importance of Two Pilots on the Flight Deck

Today at the Association's 67th Air Safety Forum, the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) honored the pilots of two flights who overcame significant operational challenges during inflight emergencies. [Read More](#)



U.S. Pilot Production Continues to Shatter Records

As special interests in Washington continue their campaign of misinformation about pilot supply, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has released its latest pilot-production data showing that the United States is outperforming last year's record-breaking year with 10,091 new airline pilots certificated in the past 12 months. [Read More](#)



A look inside the new American Airlines catering facility at DFW

American Airlines opened a \$100 million catering facility to serve its hub at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW). [Read More](#)



Delta Sky Way at LAX transformation complete, 18 months ahead of schedule

Delta Air Lines and Los Angeles World Airports have unveiled the final major phase of the \$2.3 billion Delta Sky Way at LAX project, with Terminal 3 at Los Angeles International Airport now directly connected to the Tom Bradley International Terminal via moving airside walkways, officially eliminating the need for busing between terminals. [Read More](#)



What you need to know about Delta's recent SkyMiles Program changes

Delta is simplifying its award-winning SkyMiles Program, with Medallion Qualification Dollars serving as the only qualifier for Medallion Status. [Read More](#)



Summer in Europe: Delta to fly largest-ever trans-Atlantic schedule

Following a record-setting summer across the Atlantic, Delta customers can look forward to even more opportunities to explore sought-after locations across the globe next year. [Read More](#)



easyJet Puts Seats on Sale for Summer 2024

easyJet, Europe's leading airline, has put its summer 2024 schedule on sale today meaning millions of seats across 155,000 easyJet flights between 3 June 2024 and 1 September 2024 including over 83,000 flights to and from the UK, are now available so customers have the opportunity to book early and get the best fares for next summer. [Read More](#)



easyJet Launches Four New Winter Routes From The UK to the ALPS

easyJet, Europe's leading airline, has today announced it will be launching four new winter routes from three UK airports, meaning customers have an even greater choice of destinations to enjoy this winter and can book early to get the best fares. [Read More](#)



Embraer Defense & Security holds C-390 Millennium Day in India

Embraer concluded its C-390 Millennium Day in New Delhi which brought together key private and public entities from the Indian aerospace and defence industry. [Read More](#)



Air Peace Orders Five New Embraer E175s For Fleet Expansion and Renewal

Nigeria based Air Peace, West Africa's largest airline, has placed a firm order for five Embraer E175 aircraft. This strategic decision marks a significant step forward and is in alignment with Air Peace's ongoing strategy of modernising its fleet. [Read More](#)



Embraer and FlightSafety announce new Praetor full-flight simulator in Europe and open new location in the United States

Embraer and FlightSafety International today announced the opening of a new Praetor full-flight simulator in Orlando, Florida. [Read More](#)



Austrian Ministry of Defense selects the C-390 Millennium as its new military transport aircraft

The Austrian Ministry of Defense announced today the decision to select the C-390 Millennium aircraft as its new tactical transport solution. [Read More](#)



Flexjet First in Industry to Launch Starlink by SpaceX – The World’s Most Advanced In-Flight Connectivity Solution

Flexjet, Inc., a global leader in subscription-based private aviation, has collaborated with broadband satellite internet provider, Starlink, to provide its aircraft Owners in-flight Wi-Fi access that for the first time will align with service expectations they would have in their boardroom. [Read More](#)



Frontier Airlines Launches FRONTIER Miles™ Elite Status Offers for 2024 | Frequent Traveler Must-Have of the Year!

Starting today, eligible credit card holders can receive FRONTIER Miles Elite 20K status without being required to fly or hold status with another airline. [Read More](#)



Hawaiian Airlines Begins Ticket Sales for Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

Travelers from the Bay Area and Los Angeles planning a Hawaii vacation can be the first to experience the elegant, island-inspired design and comfort of Hawaiian Airlines new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft starting next spring. [Read More](#)



Hawaiian Airlines to Resume Tokyo Haneda-Kona Service in October

Hawaiian Airlines announced it will restart service between Tokyo's Haneda Airport (HND) and Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport (KOA), operating three flights Oct. 29. through Nov. 4 before restarting regular weekly service on Nov. 22. [Read More](#)



Hawaiian Airlines Begins Ticket Sales for Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

Travelers from the Bay Area and Los Angeles planning a Hawaii vacation can be the first to experience the elegant, island-inspired design and comfort of Hawaiian Airlines new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft starting next spring. [Read More](#)



JetBlue “Welkoms” Amsterdam Service with Flights from New York

JetBlue (Nasdaq: JBLU) has expanded its presence to a third transatlantic destination with new, nonstop service between New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AMS) taking off today. [Read More](#)



JetBlue Adds Amsterdam Service from Boston Starting Today

JetBlue (Nasdaq: JBLU) has expanded its Amsterdam service with new nonstop flights between Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AMS) taking off today, following the successful launch of service from New York's JFK Airport (JFK) on August 29. [Read More](#)



Subject: New! Bonuses up to \$150,000 for CRJ Type Rated Experienced Pilots!

Take your CRJ experience to new heights. We are offering qualified Pilots an industry-leading bonus package up to \$150,000 paid immediately upon employment. Qualified candidates include pilots with at least 500 hours of Part 121 or Part 135 time and must accept an offer by Dec. 31 with a class start date by Jan. 31, 2024. [Read More](#)



Spirit Airlines Lands Milestone Partnership with Liberty University to Expand Pilot Pipeline

The next generation of pilots can now venture from the skies of Virginia to the vast network of Spirit Airlines (NYSE: SAVE). [Read More](#)



United Partners with Sesame Workshop During National Preparedness Month to Reach Children in Need

United Airlines and Sesame Workshop announced a new partnership in anticipation of National Preparedness Month to support children in need around the world. [Read More](#)



United Opens Two New Clubs in Denver, Including Its Largest Club in the World

United announced the opening of its largest United Club at Denver International Airport. [Read More](#)



United Launches Industry-leading Program to Provide Active-duty U.S. Military Pilots Conditional Job Offers

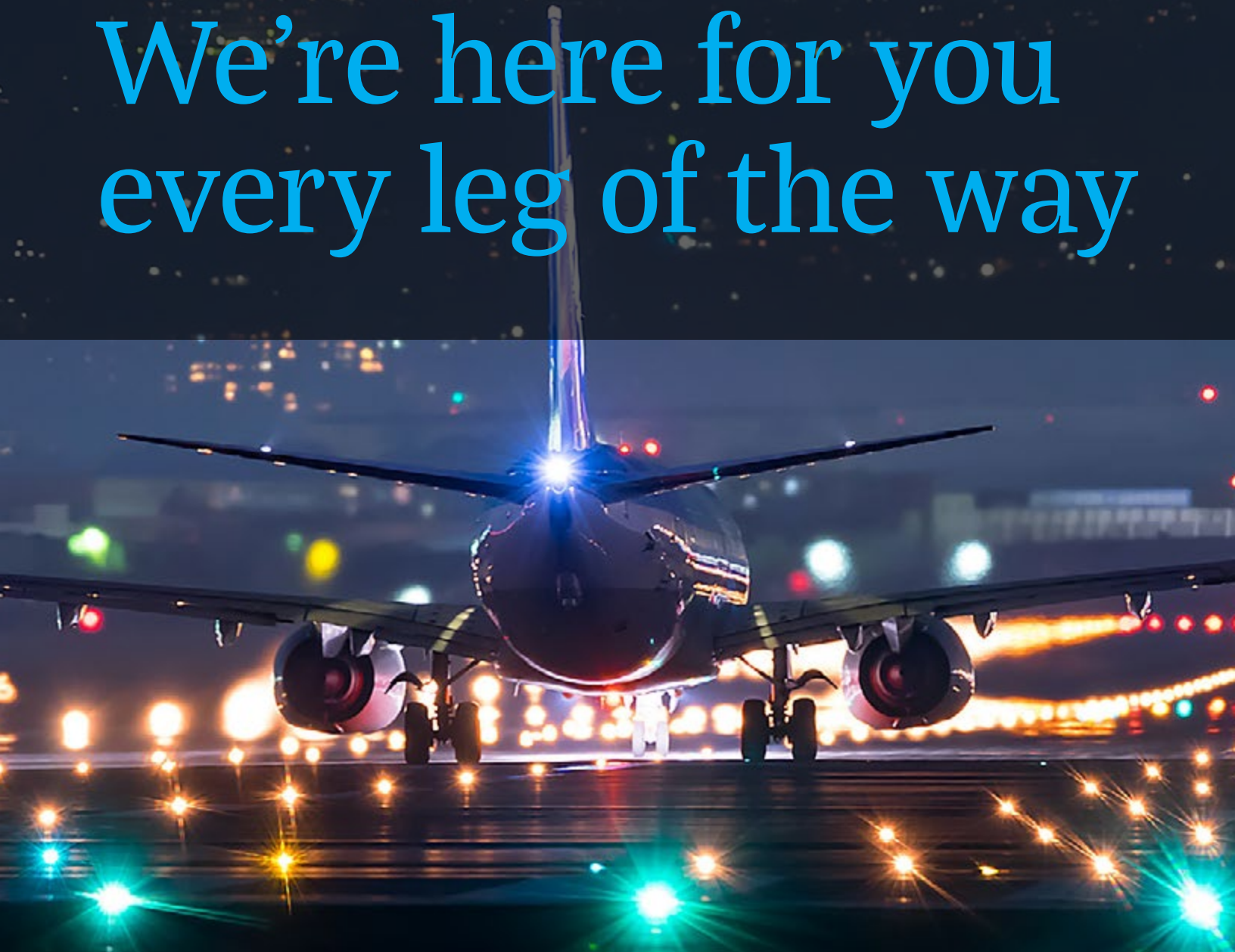
United today announced the launch of the United Military Pilot Program, an industry-leading program giving full-time, active-duty U.S. military pilots access to conditional job offers as a First Officer with the airline. [Read More](#)



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The Benefits of Flying GA

Pros flying non-pro can make for better pros

WRITTEN BY: JOHN MCDERMOTT

I'm somewhat surprised to know that many professional airline pilots stop flying general aviation (GA) after making the big leagues. It's an understandable decision – when flying becomes your job, sometimes you need time off. And while I don't think that pilots should be expected to do nothing but fly, I also believe that flying GA, at least occasionally, perhaps at least enough to stay legally current to carry passengers without the benefit of a flying job, is valuable for all pilots, not just hobbyists who don't move beyond piston engines.

This isn't to say that professional pilots who don't fly GA are bad pilots or inherently lacking. On the contrary, I fully believe that professional pilots in the U.S. are the best, most-well-trained pilots on the planet. I have full trust in every pilot who has managed to make it through airline training programs, either for a Part 121 airline or a Part 135 carrier.

At the same time however, as a pilot who still regularly flies GA, I find incredible value in the experience I gain every day. GA brings unique challenges that keep pilots' skills sharp regardless of their experience level or regular job. Taking on additional responsibility as a single pilot can remind all of challenges they might not face in their daily flying and challenge them to continually improve in unique ways.

GA doesn't just help keep flying skills sharp. There is also a unique interpersonal aspect of flying GA that sets it apart from airline flying. Instead of moving through busy terminals as a crew getting to and from flights, flying GA allows for more relaxed interactions with fuelers, FBO agents, and fellow pilots that is different from the relationships built in airline flying.

Again, that's not to say that professional flying doesn't offer close relationships. But outside of flight crew and company staffers at familiar airports, interactions with contractors at the airport might be rushed as pilots prepare for another busy leg of flying.

Meanwhile, the more relaxed schedules in GA allow pilots to take extra time enjoying each place they go and each person they meet. Being able to chat with line staff at new airports has been a pleasure that I hope I keep enjoying throughout my career.

I mentioned enjoying the places I go as a GA pilot. That's another benefit of flying GA – being able to get into other airports that I otherwise couldn't access flying under Part 121. I find there is something incredibly special about using small, local airports in my area. Commercial airports can be a

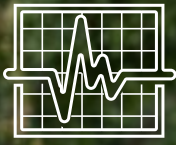
challenge, and while it's always interesting flying through them, I also highly appreciate sneaking into small airports with confined runways, scenic approaches, and unique tests that aren't possible at larger airports. For example, I have gained a lot of experience flying into the Galt Airport in Wonder Lake, Illinois. As a small, uncontrolled airport with a relatively short runway and obstructions at each end of the runway, I was able to refine my landings significantly as a student pilot preparing for my private-pilot checkride. I thoroughly enjoyed flying into Galt Field and still occasionally visit the airport to test myself and my skills, and to gauge whether I need more work on my landings.

Professional pilots are truly experts who come from world-class training programs, and I don't mean to diminish their skills, their experiences, or the relationships they build throughout their careers. Rather, I argue that adding the experiences of flying GA will help enhance and maintain all pilots' experience, both in terms of flight time and what they can more casually enjoy as a pilot. Having more flight time in a wider range of scenarios might make flying even more safe than it already is. And in many ways, pilots who return to their roots as GA pilots may elicit a certain nostalgia that boosts their experiences as pilots.

About the Author



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



Walking for Cardio

WRITTEN BY: ERIC RAY

Well, it's definitely fall, and pumpkin-spice season is in full swing. I don't really get the urge for pumpkin everything, but you know, Halloween and all. Actually, I might skip October and go straight to November and the TRUE holiday season!

One area I would like to discuss is cardio. When it comes to fitness, some level of cardiovascular activity is necessary. It not only helps with heart health, but also with respiratory strength, which in turn makes your body more efficient at using oxygen. This is vitally important to not just the average person, but aircrew members particularly.

I'm often asked what type of cardio I do in my fitness regime. I wish I could tell you that I'm still a hard-core runner or ultra-marathoner or that I even do intense cardio classes, but that couldn't be further from the truth. As it happens, I rely on walking for my cardio needs.

Let me explain. I was an avid runner in my younger days. Driven mostly by the military requirements to be able to run a specific distance over a specified time, I spent years honing my skills as a runner. As I have gotten older and because of various injuries, I've had to give up running and high-impact cardiovascular exercises. It's frustrating to recognize that I could run a marathon in my younger days but that now it hurts to jog lightly down the street. That doesn't mean I have to give up entirely, and neither should you.

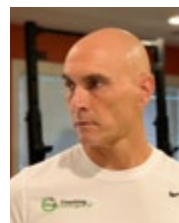
I have adopted a low-impact cardio regime that consists of walking with a weighted vest for an hour or more everyday that I can. Bodybuilders and fitness influencers are leaning towards the benefits of what's known as Low-Intensity Steady State (LISS) cardio.

Simply, walking on a treadmill at a reasonable rate at the highest incline you can get (no less than 10 degrees) helps to stress your lungs, heart and really works your legs. This has resulted in bodybuilders using this technique to shed fat, while not overdoing the cardio and/or risking injury.

While I am a huge believer in fitness and gyms, I also believe anything you do fitness-wise should translate into real-world application. That means I encourage you to use a treadmill, elliptical or rowing machine (can't forget those spin bikes too) that offer low-impact cardio. I have just found there is no limit when it comes to walking for fitness!

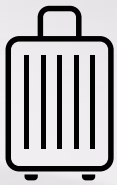
As aircrew members, it's imperative that we take the time to walk and stretch our legs after a flight. This will help us keep the chances of blood clots low, too. Just remember, no matter what your fitness regime looks like, at the very least, walk and attempt to get to 10k steps each and every day.

As always, if you are interested in any specific fitness-related topics reach out to me at Ericray4470@gmail.com. Tune in next month for a new article on challenges!



About the Author

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



BAGGAGE

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Learn to
say NO!

25

Saying No - Why It Is Important and How to Do It

WRITTEN BY: REINI THIJSEN

How do you say no without hurting anyone's feelings? Why is saying no so tricky? Why do you say "Fine," when you feel that you do not have the time, energy, or inclination to do what is asked of you? Many people are raised with the value that you must be nice and accommodate others. However, it turns out that saying no is not as difficult as it might seem. This step-by-step plan helps you turn polite refusals into a pleasant habit.

For many people, saying no to requests is more stressful than saying yes. Whether it is an invitation to a party, a work request, or a question from your partner, every time we say no, there is a potential risk of an unpleasant reaction. Saying yes will lead to fewer feelings of guilt, and the chance of conflict remains low. Therefore, people often choose the short-term benefits of saying yes.

However, by over committing, you may increasingly feel irritable or depressed by denying your priorities. You say yes, but you might have to do something halfway, or accomplish it too late, perhaps due to your time and energy constraints. This can cause you to come across as unreliable since you cannot keep everyone happy and meet their standards all the time. Avoiding saying no can, therefore, lead to psychological complaints, conflicts, and disappointed relationships over the long term. The key is to say no without feeling bad for having done so.

Insights To Help Say No

1. You Cannot Please Everyone

Many people find it important that they are liked and appreciated by others. Therefore, avoiding conflict at all costs and saying yes seems easier. However, that often comes at your own expense. It is unrealistic to think that everyone will always like you. Always saying yes when you would rather say no is not sustainable to garner more

appreciation. In fact, people usually admire people who have clear boundaries and stand up for themselves. Saying yes to one thing automatically means saying no to something else. Time and energy are limited. So, knowing what you are saying no to when you say yes again is essential. When learning to say “no,” remember that you cannot always please everyone. And that you do not have to.

2. You Are Not Selfish for Saying No

Do you feel guilty or selfish when you say no and set boundaries? The fact that you find it challenging to say no and think it might come off as selfish proves that you are not selfish. Realize that when saying no, it is an answer to someone’s question or request and not a rejection of the person. In addition, saying no more often to people who are draining your energy saves you energy and time, and helps you to be there for the important people in your life.

3. What Fears Keeps You from Saying No?

People with difficulty saying no are often very perfectionistic, want to please others or have a great sense of responsibility. Usually, they are also sensitive, making them (more) sensitive to the feelings of others. They are afraid of hurting someone, ruining a relationship, or they fear being rejected or disliked, and therefore, prefer to avoid any confrontation. This form of conflict avoidance is usually a pattern with a deeper cause. Ask yourself what makes you afraid to say no until

you reach the core. By examining your fears of saying no, you can work on that and get better at saying no.

4. Knowing Your Values and Boundaries Helps with Saying No

Saying no is about setting boundaries and knowing what you find important in life, such as values and goals. It is difficult to guard and maintain your boundaries, values, and goals without knowing them. Examine your boundaries and which five values and goals are most important to you. Also, make two lists: one list of things, activities, or people that drain energy. The second list contains things, activities, or people that give you energy. This provides an insight into what/who is important to you and what you would prefer to say no to. The better you know your boundaries, values, and goals, the easier it is to say no if something does not align with them.

5. You Do Not Always Have to Be Available

Today, people expect quick responses, adding extra pressure that might make it harder to say no. By being continuously available, you may also feel that you have to react immediately, leaving less time for other priorities. Therefore, set boundaries about dividing your time and energy concerning digital availability. For example, put your phone away after 8 p.m., check your emails

three times a day instead of leaving your mailbox on all the time, and answer your social media once a day. Not always being available and resting is a crucial form of saying no.

How To Say No

1. Know Yourself

Before you start saying no, knowing what you do want is essential. Try to understand your behavior. Ask yourself what you would like to do differently and experiment with that. Try not to be too assertive by saying no to everything. Make a conscious decision about what you do or do not want.

A good exercise in learning to say no is establishing priorities that are good for your well-being, things you need to stay calm, fit, and satisfied. For example, you only go out up to two nights a week because it could lead to tiredness and moodiness.

Exercise: Block times in your week for things you find necessary, not only work or chores, but also family, relaxing, or sports. Blocking off time in your agenda for your priorities ensures that, at a glance, you can see whether you are available. In addition, if you are available, ask yourself – Do I want this, or am I doing this mainly because I think I should?

2. Be Polite and Assertive

Always say no in a respectful way. You can disagree with someone but still maintain a good relationship with them. We fear that saying no will come across as rude, so we beat around the bush. Instead, you could ask whether the other person wants an explanation, for example, by asking if they want a short or long answer. Usually, people want the short version since the answer remains the same.

Give yourself space to refuse requests and give the others space to be disappointed. However, remember you are not responsible for the other person's feelings. You are not there to meet the needs of the other person. If the other person responds as offended, your message is getting through. You can say, "I understand your disappointment." But the other person's feelings are ultimately not your problem, but theirs.

Reflect: What is the worst that can happen?

You may wonder what your loss is once you respectfully state your boundaries, and the other person does not respect them. Some relationships do not fit your assertive version. The relationship may have worked great because you said yes to everything.

3. Stand by Your Decision

After the rejection, try to focus on this decision's positive effects instead of guilt or regret. Positive results could be that you feel better rested, appreciate the time that has been freed for something else, and most importantly, you stand up for yourself.

19 Ways to Say No

1. Vague but effective: "Thank you for the invite, but I cannot make it."
2. Not personal: "Thank you, but I'm not doing anything besides [...] at the moment."
3. Please try again later: "I'd like to, but I'm not available until December. You can ask me again around that time."
4. I know someone else: "I do not have time right now. I can recommend someone else."
5. Keep trying: "I can't do these dates, but I want to see you. Do you have other options?"
6. Negotiate: "I can't make it this month but would like to do it sometime. Will you call me before you go again?"
7. Gratitude: "Thank you very much for your enthusiasm! Unfortunately, I can't help you at the moment."

8. Think about your partner (if your children bombard you with requests): “Shall we ask if your father/mother/ grandmother can do it?”

9. Small favor: “I can’t come, but I can help you promote it by posting it on my social media/sending an email.”

10. Just no: “Thanks, but I have to let it pass.” (No additional information needed)

11. I am sorry: “I wish I could do it, but I just can’t do it right now.”

12. Someone else decided: “I promised my partner/therapist/trainer I would not take on any new projects. I am working on creating more balance in my life.”

13. My family is the reason: “Thanks for the invitation, but my kid plays soccer that day, and I aim never to miss a game.”

14. Classy: “I appreciate you thinking of me, but I already have something else that day.”

15. Set boundaries: “I’ll tell you what I can do,” and offer what feels comfortable for you.

16. Pause: “I will think about it and get back to you.”

17. Be honest: “The kids are sick, the bathroom is being renovated, and I have a deadline.”

18. Prioritize yourself: “I need to take care of myself right now.” Make clear that it is not personal but that you cannot do what they ask.

19. Say nothing: Not all requests require a response. It may feel rude to ignore a request, but sometimes it’s best for everyone.

Final Thoughts

If you commit to too many appointments or do too much work, you say no to your well-being, quality time with your partner or children, and no to your sleep. Things that are very important to you. The good news is that you can make saying no a more pleasant habit. Something you feel entitled to rather than something you fear. Setting boundaries is not selfish. More balanced people become more open, understanding, and generous to others.

Emerald Mental Health specializes in helping pilots and flight attendants via counseling and mental health coaching. Reach out for a free consultation through email at reini@emeraldmentalhealth.com or visit emeraldmentalhealth.com.



About the Author



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



Searching for Safety in the Airline Industry

Part 4 – Data mining the operation

WRITTEN BY: RICHARD SWINDELL

I hope that the previous data-mining articles cemented the concept of voluntary safety reporting as a function of organizational trust necessary for these programs to be established and be effective. This month's article centers on the pinnacle of data-sharing trust between management and employee groups – the Line Operations Safety Audit (LOSA) or “low-Suh” in aviation parlance. This safety data-generating program requires a (more or less) silent observer be assigned randomly to a flight to monitor the crew for the duration of the flight, recording all crew actions and responses to threats and errors. Now, for this kind of assessment to work, pilots and other aviation professionals need to know that the information gathered is only for enhancing operational safety, and not for disciplining or dismissing people. This is the fundamental philosophy underpinning the functional value of LOSA data.

Outlined in FAA AC120-90, LOSA is an observation-based program focused on frontline activities structured around the Threat and Error Management (TEM) concept. (More on this to follow.) LOSA utilizes trained observers to collect data about pilots and other operational employees' behaviors during normal flights from either a flight-deck jumpseat, or a cabin seat or local ramp tower. At its core, LOSA is a tool for developing countermeasures to operational hazards and mistakes, by looking for threats and procedural deviations. Threats are anything in a flight crew's environment with the potential for eroding safety: other aircraft, weather, terrain, ATC instructions; basically, anything external to crew to which they must respond or avoid. Deviations, on the other hand, are internal crew actions that do not conform to established policy and procedure, otherwise referred to as errors. Yes, as pilots, despite our self-stated infallibility, we do indeed make mistakes (sometimes).

The process and timing of threat and error identification by a flight crew is at the heart of the TEM and linked as well to Crew Resource Management (CRM) techniques. Thus, LOSA observers record:

- Potential threats to safety
- How and when threats are identified and addressed
- Any errors generated by the threats
- How errors are identified and addressed

LOSAs are conducted under strict no-jeopardy conditions, and flight crews are not reported or investigated for witnessed deviations or mistakes. Observers take notes – that is all. They do not debrief the crew, they do not discuss observations, they simply submit their (de-identified) notes to a central database and from there another group analyzes the incoming information (further protecting crew identity) for aggregate trends. Then, mitigation strategies are developed and implemented to reduce identified issues. These may include policy changes, procedural modifications, operational bulletins, or training events.

LOSA provides something that the other two programs do not within the data-mining structure – real time context. The observer is the proverbial fly on the wall recording crew preparations, decisions, and actions that are not as readily or completely available in filed reports or streamed digital data. It is this layered approach (again, provided by the three-party agreement process), that when used in conjunction with other types of safety data, provides as near a complete picture of the operation in real time as possible.

In next month's final article in our safety-data series, we will consider a third data-reporting mechanism, typically available only in the wake of an accident.



About the Author



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



Five Things I Wish I Could Tell My Younger Self

WRITTEN BY CHARLIE MATTINGLY

It's easy to learn from mistakes ... the mistakes of others of course! Unfortunately, it seems like we all must go through some level of trials and tribulations to figure out what's important and meaningful to us in life.

Maybe a few things I've written in this article can shortcut some of the most painful lessons learned. Every once in a while, it's fun to pretend your kids will listen to you when you give them some financial advice. And if there's zero chance of them at least pretending to pay attention, maybe I can think about what I would tell my younger self if I had it to do all over again. Here goes!

1. Start saving something, anything, now!

I got stuck in an exercise rut a few years ago. I was exercising without intention and slowly getting fatter and more out of shape. I knew I had to get out of my comfort zone if I wanted to change course. For me, I chose to join my local CrossFit gym. What I love most about CrossFit is that all I have to do is show up. If I can just muster the energy to show up and be consistent, the changes will start to happen eventually.

Saving and investing can be similar to exercising. Get out of your comfort zone and start saving with intentionality. If you have to, start by saving a small amount. You will eventually begin to experience some victories. Even saving and investing a small amount can create a sense of accomplishment, build momentum and a desire to save more.

Know that there will be seasons in your life that you may not be able to save anything for retirement. For example, you may need to dip into a strike or furlough fund. Additionally, pilots are particularly susceptible to unexpected disability that could cause temporary financial hardship. Prepare for these times now by saving more while you're able to.

Most airline 401ks have a Non-Elective Contribution (NEC) feature. This means the airline will contribute to your 401k even if you choose not to. Warning: only use this as a temporary crutch. If your airline's NEC is your only source of savings, it probably won't be enough for retirement.

Practical tip: Most 401k plans have an option to automatically increase savings. This is a great option as you probably won't notice the increase in savings over time. Consider implementing this with your IRAs and cash savings as well. Check out [How to Save Money Now \(Before You Really Need it\) from NerdWallet](#).

2. Learn To Say No.

"... but I deserve it!" And no — just because you work hard and have overcome a lot of obstacles to be where you are, does not mean you deserve that new car — unless the math says you do. There's nothing wrong with a new car, new boat, tractor, etc. But there can be a real danger of believing we deserve something if the spending plan doesn't support it.

As a financial planner, we understand that most of the time "the math" is only part of the decision-making process. For example, paying off your house early is a huge win for your peace of mind regardless of your mortgage

interest rate (i.e., the math). Some people are happy to forego the advantages of a low-mortgage interest rate to own their home free and clear. The peace of mind from being debt free is hard to put a price tag on.

However, when it comes to spending decisions, it's all about the math. Do the math in your spending plan, and don't lie to yourself about what you can afford. (See point number four below.) I realize I'm stepping on some toes here, but I get a little passionate about this type of mindset because it's the precursor to an attitude of entitlement and nobody wants that!

You must bring future expenses into the present and plan for them. We get a false sense of how much money we really have when we ignore large expenses coming in the future. For example, if your car is paid off and you have 200,000 miles on it (my truck), then you better start saving now for the car you're going to need very soon to replace the old one. Do not wait until the oldy-but-goodie gives out and then act surprised.

Practical tip: [Change your money-mindset with YNAB](#). Invest the time in learning to use some sort of budgeting system. A smart spending plan will set you up for lifelong financial success and will prevent most money problems in marriage as well.

3. Prepare for the Murphys to Move In.

Flying is easy until the you-know-what hits the fan! Pilots get paid for being able to handle the unexpected; dynamic weather, crazy air traffic control, passengers, mechanical problems, etc. The only thing that differentiates a great pilot from an average pilot is being ready for the unexpected, unplanned events. Otherwise, anyone could be a pilot, including AI! That means the biggest differentiator between a great pilot and an average pilot is preparing for those contingencies.

The same is true with your finances. Dave Ramsey says it best about not being prepared for financial contingencies and emergencies, "Murphy will move into your spare bedroom. Plus, he'll bring his three cousins — Broke, Desperate and Stupid — with him."

As I mentioned above, many pilots will experience a disability at some point in their careers. Unfortunately, an even larger number of pilots will (or have already experienced) divorce. As financial planners, we discuss recessions, downturns, and market corrections extensively. However, a divorce will have a much more devastating financial impact than almost any economic or stock market event. (See point number five for the simple solution.)

Learn to live on less than you make. This creates margin in your spending plan. Once there is no margin in your spending plan, there is no room for life to happen. A relatively minor event, such as replacing a heating and air conditioning system, new roof, sickness or injury could cause financial hardship. If (when) these things happen to you and you're not prepared, the only place left to turn is credit cards, 401k loans, etc., all of which are bad options.

We often model a young pilot's financial trajectory. The amount of dollars a young pilot will be able to accumulate during their flying career is mind boggling. In fact, the numbers are hard to comprehend because sometimes we are forecasting forty years into the future. However, the trajectory in real life is never that linear or predictable and is often messier than we could ever imagine.

Life is crazy, an airline career is crazier, be ready for anything!

Practical tip: An airline pilot should have a much larger emergency fund than other professions. Think disability, furlough, strike self-insurance. A large emergency fund doesn't have to be one hundred percent cash. Furthermore, there are good interest rates on savings these days. Use a taxable brokerage account at Schwab, Fidelity,

Vanguard, etc. These accounts allow you to access the funds before you retire without early withdrawal penalties.

4. Stay in your (financial) lane.

President Theodore Roosevelt is credited with the saying, "Comparison is the thief of joy!" This is the most difficult of the five principles. And it's complementary to number two; "Learn to say no," especially if my airline-pilot neighbor has a \$150,000, 2024 Moomba Mojo Wake surf boat (seriously, google it!) and an \$80,000 Ram Power Wagon truck ...

Additionally, how do you know whether you are doing well financially? What's the benchmark? I believe we are curious, and we genuinely want to know if we are going to be okay. And that's a good thing. So instead of comparing yourself to someone else, do the homework and figure out if you're on the right track — according to your values and goals, not someone else's.

I can tell you from the perspective of someone who sees a lot of airline 401k balances, it is impossible to know if someone is "on track" solely by the amount they have invested in a 401k. Unless you do the homework, you won't really know either. For example, two people may have the exact same 401k balance as they approach retirement. One person needs \$15,000 per month to live on in retirement and

the other needs \$10,000 per month. Which of these pilots is on track, relatively speaking?

Practical tip: Accomplish a financial plan. More specifically, retirement income projections. How much will you need to fund a great retirement? How much will you need to never have to worry about running out of money in retirement? There are online calculators, but this is where I believe you should seek out a fiduciary, fee-only financial planner.

5. Treat all aspects of your life as an investment.

This principle is more about mindset than anything else. I believe if you adopt this mindset, your quality of life will far exceed those who have a transactional or scarcity mindset.

Relationships, your time and your health are great examples of investing for great returns other than those found in the stock market. Take care of yourself and invest in your health for the long term.

Understandably, when you're flying it is very difficult to invest heavily in relationships because you know you may never see that first officer or captain again. But what if you made it a goal to invest in the person sitting next to you just a little bit more by offering words of encouragement, professional advice or just being an empathetic listener. Engage above ten thousand feet of course!

Most importantly, what if we invested more in our marriage and children? Staying married is the best financial planning advice anyone can implement. If you think a recession or market correction is bad for your retirement savings, try going through a divorce. Or rather, avoid going through a divorce, if at all possible. The best way to do that is to invest in your marriage now.

Practical tip: What if we spent even twenty percent of the effort on our marriage and children as we did our flying careers? Can you imagine the heartache (and headaches) you would avoid for the rest of your life. Now, that is a great investment!

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



About the Author

Charlie Mattingly earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Tennessee. He then entered the United States Air Force where he served for ten years as an officer and F-16 fighter pilot. [Read More...](#)



IFR Clearances

WRITTEN BY: SERGIO SOVERO

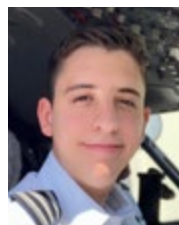
IFR clearances are issued by ATC at both controlled and uncontrolled airports. Depending on the type of ATC services available, pilots may obtain their clearance through clearance delivery or ground control.

Pilots departing uncontrolled airports have several options for obtaining an IFR clearance. A common practice, if VFR conditions allow, is to depart the airport under VFR and obtain a clearance airborne with the corresponding ATC facility for your sector. You must remember not to operate under IFR until proper clearance is received. If meteorological conditions do not allow for a VFR departure, clearance can be obtained via VHF radio through designated frequencies. Such frequencies can be found on the airport Charts Supplement specific page and are designated as either Remote Communication Outlets (RCOs) or Ground Communication Outlets (GCOs). Both are unstaffed, remotely controlled, ground/ground communications facilities. An RCO is for use either on the ground or airborne, while a GCO is for use only while the aircraft is on the ground.

IFR clearances from uncontrolled airports contain clearance-void times. Void times are treated as clearance expiration times. Taking off beyond a clearance-void time results in a departure without proper clearance. It is imperative to notify ATC if one is unable to depart by the provided void time and have it adjusted accordingly.

Equally important, is closing an IFR flight plan. This process happens automatically without pilot intervention at controlled airports. Uncontrolled airports require pilots to cancel IFR on their own, either after landing or with ATC airborne. Failure to close an IFR flight plan may initiate search and rescue operations if the pilot cannot be contacted.

Radio communications are a critical link in the ATC system. Instrument-rated pilots have additional responsibilities when filing an IFR flight plan. ATC expects all operators to comply with all responsibilities to ensure safe aircraft separation within the national airspace system.



About the Author

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



How Much Home Can You Afford with Airline Pay?

Demystifying the pre-qualification letter, your first step towards homeownership

WRITTEN BY: SPENCER WARTMAN

The journey to homeownership is an exciting one, and it all begins with a crucial step – obtaining a pre-qualification letter from a lender. This document serves as your ticket to exploring the real estate market with confidence. Understanding how the letter is produced can empower you as you embark on this adventure.

The Pre-Qualification Letter Unveiled

A pre-qualification letter is a preliminary assessment provided by a lender. It offers an estimate of how much you may be able to borrow for a home loan, based on the information you provide. While it's not a guarantee of loan approval, it's an essential tool that helps you understand your financial standing and set realistic expectations when you are house hunting.

Gathering Your Financial Information

When applying for home-loan pre-qualification, you'll need to provide various financial details that typically include:

1. Personal information: Your name, contact information, and details about your marital status.
2. Income details: Proof of your income, which may include recent pay stubs, W-2 forms, or tax returns if you're self-employed.
3. Debt information: Information about your existing debts, such as car loans, student loans, credit-card balances, and any other financial obligations.
4. Assets: A list of your assets, including bank statements, retirement accounts, and any other savings.
5. Credit history: Your credit score and history, which the lender will use to assess your creditworthiness.

Calculating How Much Home You Can Afford

Once armed with your financial information, the lender uses a few key ratios to estimate how much home you can afford. Criteria include:

1. Debt-to-income ratio (DTI): This ratio compares your monthly debt payments to your gross monthly income. A lower DTI is generally more favorable.
2. Housing -expense ratio: This ratio focuses specifically on your potential housing costs (mortgage, property taxes, insurance, etc.) in relation to your income.
3. Loan-to-value ratio (LTV): This ratio considers the loan amount in relation to the appraised value of the property.
4. Credit score: Your credit score plays a significant role in determining the interest rate for which you'll qualify.

Based on these calculations, the lender determines an estimated loan amount that aligns with your financial situation. This figure forms the basis of your pre-qualification letter and some lenders find using airline pilot contracts difficult to decipher when calculating your income.

Navigating the Complexity of Airline Pilot Pay

For airline pilots, the financial landscape can be uniquely intricate due to the specifics of our pay structure. (Pardon me while I slip in a commercial message.) Trident Home Loans, the company I represent, stands out here. With a deep understanding of airline-pilot pay, Trident's expert team is equipped to help pilots navigate the approval process seamlessly. Many Trident team members are airline pilots themselves, so they understand our contract lingo. Their personalized approach takes into account the various components of pilot pay, such as base salary, credit hours, hourly pay, years of service, and per diems. This expertise ensures accurate calculations and a thorough assessment of your true and correct financial capacity. Whether you're a seasoned pilot or just starting your aviation journey, Trident Home Loans can guide you through the pre-qualification process, helping you confidently explore the world of homeownership.

In conclusion, a pre-qualification letter is the gateway to understanding your homebuying potential. By providing essential financial information and engaging with a knowledgeable lender, you can gain a clearer picture of the type of home you can afford. With specialized understanding of airline pilot

pay, you can have trust as you navigate the pre-qualification process and take your first steps toward owning your dream home or your first home.

Trident Home Loans (NMLS 65716) is a pilot's go-to in the world of home financing. You can Contact [Spencer Wartman \(NMLS 2109932\)](#) today and let me help you secure your future home!

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



About the Author

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



FLYING



The Great Wall of China – One of The Wonders of the World

WRITTEN BY: LIA OCAMPO

If Louis Armstrong says in his famous song, “What a Wonderful World,” I say, “What a beautiful world!” This song inspires me to travel the world. We only live once, so why not make the most of it. Trust me, there is joy and inspiration in traveling – and I don’t mean just moving about the planet. Our world is packed with so many wonders. Don’t wait for a reason to travel. Do it while you are young and healthy. Travel while you can still walk miles and hike a hill, while you can still savor unique local foods, and travel while you can still relish the experiences.

I love creating goals for myself, including travel goals. One of my goals is to visit World Heritage Sites and Wonders of the World. There are various lists and categories of Wonders of the World. Maybe seeing one, two, or a few of them is something you may want to include on your bucket list?

Let's start with this category: the New Seven Wonders of the World: Great Wall of China, Petra in Jordan, Taj Mahal in India, Machu Picchu in Peru, Christ The Redeemer in Brazil, Chichen Itza in Mexico, and the Colosseum in Italy. To how many have you been? If you can choose, which one do you plan to visit first or next? I have three more to visit: Machu Picchu, Petra, and Taj Mahal. The Great Wall of China in 2018 was the last one I explored with my flight-attendant friend, John, and two other friends.



Here are some facts I learned from my trip that you may also find interesting.

- The Great Wall of China is a series of walls and fortifications in Northern China, totaling more than 13,000 miles in length. It is the longest structure on earth humans have ever built.
- The height of the Great Wall was designed to be at least three times the height of a man.
- Besides being an icon of China, it is recognized as one of human history's most impressive architectural achievements.
- It existed more than 2,300 years ago, built in different areas by different dynasties. It was constructed to protect China from its enemies, the northern invaders.
- It was built with wisdom, dedication, blood, sweat, and tears. Approximately 400,000 people died during the construction, and many workers are buried within the wall.
- The workers were soldiers, peasants, and rebels. The materials used were stone, soil, sand, brick delivered by hand, rope, cart, and goat.
- Most parts of the Great Wall are not in great shape, but many popular sections have already been restored and are under protection.
- Records say walking the entire length would take 18 months.



Our day tour cost \$50 per person, that included a visit to a jade factory and tea house, and lunch with pick-up/drop-off in a van from the city. Travel time is over an hour, depending on the traffic. You can visit the Great Wall on your own, but public transportation can be challenging, so renting a car is more efficient.



There are different sections of the Great Wall. Our tour guide took us to Mutianyu, one of the most restored sections of the wall with 23 watchtowers. It takes about two hours to walk this section. Badaling is another restored section closer to Beijing and therefor more crowded.

At this location, there are two options for going up to the Great Wall of China: walking or riding a gondola. Descending, you can take a toboggan slide ride or the gondola. Whichever you prefer, each are adventurous ways to enjoy the spectacular sight. We took the gondola both ways. Walking is entirely

too energy consuming. Taking the gondola is fun as you enjoy the surrounding hills. The slide ride may be your choice if you're a thrill seeker, but it is not advisable for kids.

The best season to visit is during spring or fall. Summertime and holidays are the most crowded. Warning: Don't climb on the windows of the wall, don't wear open-toed shoes, and be careful of trips, slips, or falls.

Visiting the Great Wall of China is undeniably an incredible experience. Indeed, traveling and exploring the Wonders of the World is good for your mind, heart, and soul. I challenge you not to take travel for granted, for it will bring an enrichment to your life. Remember, travel is not just moving about the planet. As flight crew, we have the freedom and opportunity to go nearly wherever we want and experience sights and cultures – to learn and enrich ourselves in so many ways through travel. I have come to believe that to travel is to live.



About the Author

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



To Fly West, My Friend

A tribute to Captain Nick Meier

WRITTEN BY: CRAIG PIEPER

On August 17, 1983, at 11:37am in Dunedin, Florida, Nick Meier was born. Every year thereafter, his mother Laurie, would call Nick to wish him a happy birthday at that exact time. Nick grew up in Palm Harbor, Fla., just north of Dunedin and as far back as his mom can remember, Nick looked up at the sky in awe. At the age of two, she recalls him extending his arms out behind him, leaning forward and exclaiming, “Mom, my yets are out!” Though at that age he couldn’t pronounce the letter ‘j’, he would take off “flying” down the sidewalk. After he came back in for a landing, he would tell his mom that he wanted to be a “pilot.”

At age four, Nick was convinced that he was going to go to the moon. One day his older sister, Lacie and his father returned from running errands. When they arrived home, Nick ran to the car and asked his sister where they had gone. Jokingly, Lacie told him that they had gone to the moon. That started Nick continuously bugging his parents to go to the moon. They showed him pictures of the moon, outer space, and rockets, all of which fueled his natural curiosity for flight. In preschool, Nick drew pictures of himself going to the moon in different spaceships.

As Nick got older, his fascination for the sky, flying and outer space grew. The spark, or as we know it, the aviation bug, grew inside Nick. With his father Chris, he would launch rockets and attend every airshow that came to town.

Nick also had a special place in his heart for animals. Growing up with dogs fueled this love. As a youngster, Nick volunteered at the local pet shop on Saturdays, and they paid him in dog bones, which he then fed to his own dogs. Nick's volunteer spirit continued at [Treasure Coast Wildlife Center](#), a wildlife recovery and rescue shelter for wild animals and reptiles of Florida. There they mended broken bones and wings and released the animals back into their natural environments.

Mom Laurie recalls how conscientious and kind Nick was. When he received his driver's license, he would borrow her GMC Jimmy, arriving home by curfew, a habit that gave her no reason to be concerned about Nick as a young adult. She recalls how Nick would

even wash her car every time he borrowed it, and she thought, "Wow what a great kid." One day however, she had to open the hood to add washer fluid and she saw that the engine was covered with mud! Nick had been taking her truck off-roading, washing it so as not be caught. Laurie could only laugh at this fond memory of her son Nick.

Nick's tenth birthday marked the beginning of his flying career. His mom had arranged an introductory flight in a Cessna. Of course, this was a surprise and Nick's face said it all. His grandparents were able to join him on his first flight.



Nick attended the new Palm Harbor University High and finished with its second graduating class. The school had some very innovative programs, including internships with a company or business reflecting the students' interests. Unfortunately, there were no aviation internships in the mix. This did not stop Nick, however. Nick and his mom approached a flight school at St. Pete/ Clearwater Airport where they agreed to hold an internship for him. It was during this



internship that Nick started on his private-pilot license. During the summer of his internship, a management position became available and they named Nick as the manger.

The summer after Nick graduated from high school, he worked in an aircraft maintenance shop where he studied for his Aircraft and Maintenance Technician (AMT). Nick wanted to know everything about airplanes.

Nick enrolled at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in fall 2002 and finished his flying ratings at Regional Airline Academy where he also taught students to fly. Later, he received his four-year degree from Utah Valley online.

In January 2005, Nick started flying for ExpressJet Airlines as a first officer. He later upgraded to captain. Nick had met the love of



Nick and his dad Chris Meier

his life, Jess, while commuting living in Florida. They started dating in October 2010 and by March 2013 they were married. In October 2014, Nick moved on to fly for Spirit Airlines where he upgraded to captain in October 2017. Nick and Jess have ten-year-old twins, daughter Hadley and son Kaiden. Jess had also been a pilot at ExpressJet Airlines who eventually moved to Spirit Airlines in 2015 and was upgraded to captain in 2019.

Earlier this year, on July 17, Nick was driving to work and was involved in a single-vehicle accident. Witnesses said his car began to slowly veer off the road and hit the pole of a large highway sign. In critical condition, Nick was rushed to the hospital where he underwent multiple surgeries and procedures. They saw slow progress and multiple surgeries were planned. The doctors removed him

from the ventilator and Nick was able to follow commands from the nurses, squeeze Jess's hand and provide one-word answers. His family stayed by his side the entire time. The morning of July 21, Nick was awake and speaking a mix of coherent and nonsense speech. (That day and throughout the time Nick was in the ICU, Jess kept a journal. If you would like to read this, the journal can be found [here](#).) In Jess' journal she wrote some of what Nick had said:

“Is this earth?”

“I'm time traveling because for me it's August 23rd.”



Nick and his wife Jess at ExpressJet Airlines



as a reflex, not on command. When he was stable enough for an MRI, the neurologist determined that Nick had a severe anoxic (lack of oxygen) brain injury. The area affected was considerable and the most they could hope for was a minimally conscious state.

On August 17, one month after the accident and 40 years to the day after Nick was born, at 11:37am, Nick's monitor flat lined. His mom recalls the exact time, because that was the exact time, she called him every year to wish him another happy birthday. ***“Typical Nick, right on time,”*** she shared with me.

“I’m sorry I gave you bourbon earlier.”

“Take me up the hill.”

Later that day, while prepping for surgery, the doctors noticed that his abdomen was distended and his oxygen levels were dropping. They re-intubated him and canceled the planned surgery. Over the next several weeks, Nick's condition was a series of baby steps -- both forward and backward. At times, he was able to open his eyes, more





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

(AUTHOR UNKNOWN)

Jess recalls how amazing their company, Spirit Airlines, was during the whole ordeal. Among other things, other pilots donated sick time to Jess so she could be there by his side. She was comforted by a phone call from Executive Vice President and COO John Bendoraitis of Spirit. Jess was deeply touched by how thoughtful everyone was. One of Jess’s friends, Natalie Pak, started a GoFundMe to support their family during this crisis. They met their goal of \$50,000, but the GoFundMe remains open today and can be found [here](#).

This month, we honor Nick Meier, a Spirit Airlines Captain who flew west his final time. He was a son, a husband, a father, a friend, and an animal lover. Until we meet again.



About the Author



Craig Pieper - Craig Pieper is the Publisher and Founder of Aero Crew News and a second generation airline pilot. [Read More...](#)



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