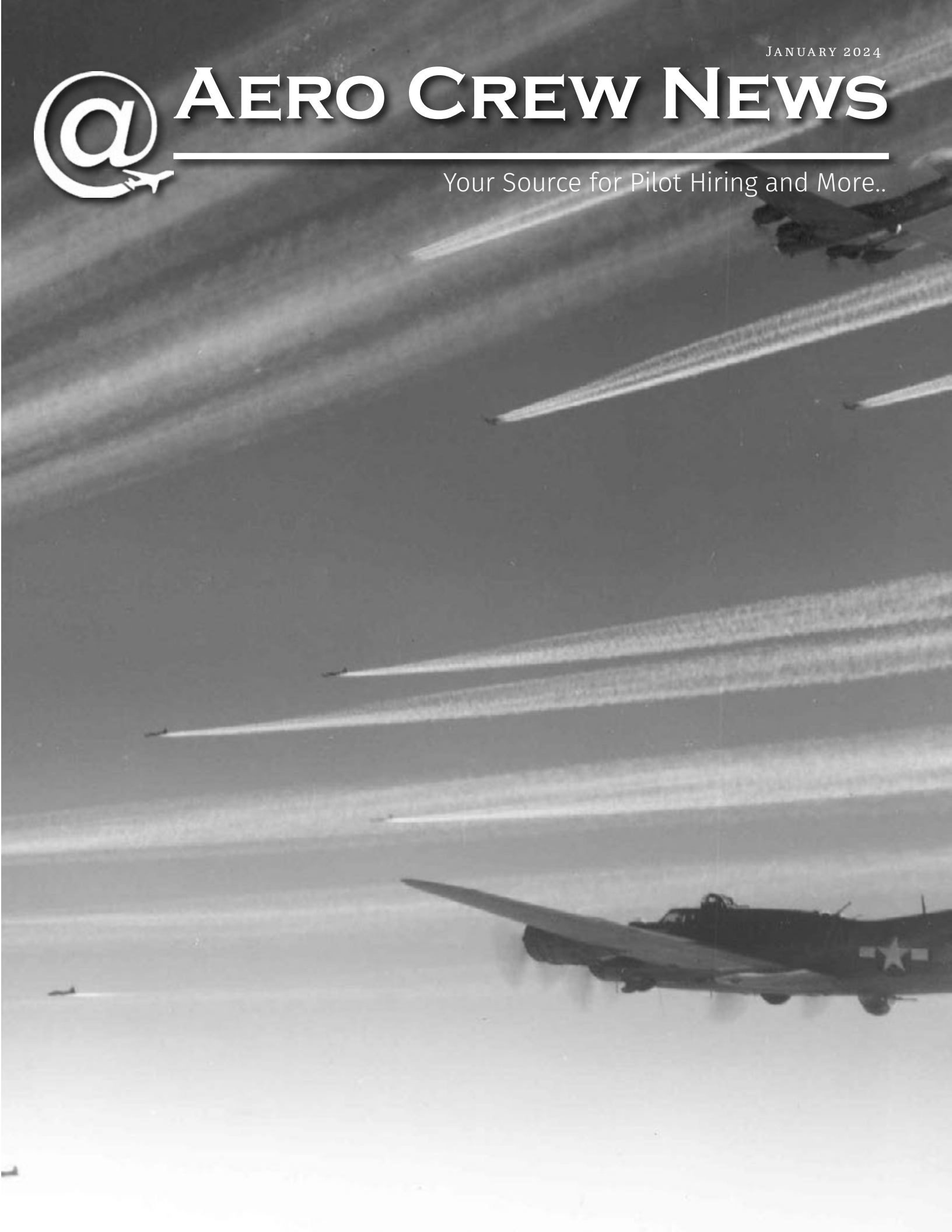


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The Theme for this year is
Vintage Aircraft



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JANUARY 2024

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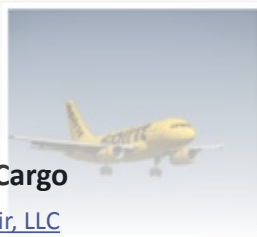
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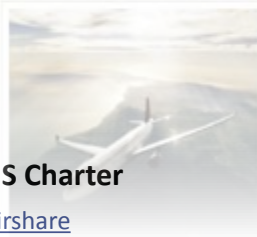
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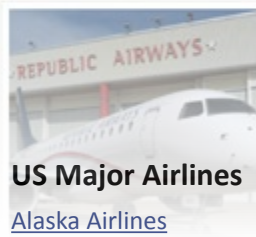
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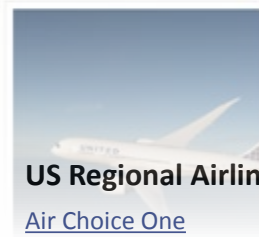
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The Grid (contract comparisons, pay charts, company details, etc.) has moved online. Click on the airlines above to go directly to that airline's information, or go to www.AeroCrewNews.com/go/thegrid.



Dear readers,

Happy New Year from all of us at Aero Crew News! We hope you and your families had a joyous holiday season. In 2024, we look forward to being your number-one source for aviation news and information. Be sure to follow our social-media channels for the latest BREAKING news and aviation stories.

With this issue, the Aero Crew News' 2024 Photo Contest takes off. This year's theme is Vintage Aircraft. I encourage you to submit your treasured shots of nostalgia in the coming weeks. Entries will be accepted until 29 February. You can review the official rules [here](#) and submit your entries through this [link](#).

On a personal note, I would like to share that I have just upgraded to captain at my airline – a milestone I know I share with many of our readers! This has been a personal dream that has been in the making for a very long time. For so many years, I had wished and hoped for this day to come, but it has been poignant. Over the last four years, I have lost both my treasured parents so neither were here to share this with me. Mom was my source for endless encouragement, and Dad, also an airline captain, was my model and my mentor. I'm grateful they were with me when I upgraded to captain at my regional airline, but this is the big trophy – the gold medal, and I would willingly return to my regional airline in exchange for just one more day with them. My point is – life flies by way too fast. As we close another year and start a fresh calendar, cherish your loved ones and make the best of it every day of this and every year.

Fly Safe,

Craig D. Pieper

Craig D. Pieper



About the Publisher

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

December 2023

What you may have missed in December

Feature – How and where, and most importantly, why Christmas Epaulets is a “thing.”

Business Vector – Identify the right data to inform compensation decisions.

Fitness – Overcoming boredom when it settles into your regimen.

Food Bites – The best poke in Waikiki is from a food truck!

Grey Matter – Flight 2059 demonstrated the mental health conundrum within professional aviation.

Love Flying – Edinburgh, Scotland is for castles and Christmas markets.

Money – Cognitive biases can derail investment strategies.

Perspectives – Your professional skills should be applied even when flying recreationally.

SkyLaw – Know your rights as a lawyer’s client.

Squall Lines – It’s that blasted de-icing time again.

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CREDITS

Publisher / Founder
Craig Pieper

Aero Crew Solutions, CEO
Scott Rehn

Editor
Deborah Bandy

Layout Design
Michelle Harvey

Additional Contributors
John McDermott, Eric Ray,
Reini Thijssen, Spencer Wartman,
Sergio Sovero, Christopher M. Broyhill,
Andy Christopher, Andrew Ross,
Victor Soler, Deborah Bandy

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Photographs By
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licensed by Aero Crew News, LLC

Grid Updates Email
GridUpdates@AeroCrewNews.com

Social Media Marketing By
Nate Racine

Social Media Advertising By
Edith Duran

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airBaltic Launches Four New Destinations from Tampere

The Latvian national airline, airBaltic, has announced the launch of its winter season 2023, introducing four new destinations from Tampere. [Read More](#)



airBaltic Announces Top November Destinations from Riga

The Latvian national airline airBaltic has announced that its top destinations from Riga in November were Dubai, Paris and Tenerife. [Read More](#)



Alaska Airlines celebrates 35 years of connecting guests with Mexico

On that historic Tuesday in 1988, Alaska became an international airline when we began nonstop service between San Francisco and Mazatlán. [Read More](#)



Alaska Airlines announces our 30th global airline partner, Porter Airlines

Alaska Airlines is welcoming a new global airline partner: Porter Airlines, a growing Canadian carrier that begins its inaugural nonstop service between Toronto and both Los Angeles and San Francisco in January. [Read More](#)



Hawaiian Airline Pilots Statement Regarding Announced Alaska-Hawaiian Merger

Hawaiian Airlines announced a historic merger agreement with Alaska Airlines. We are hopeful that this new merger agreement will provide benefits to our guests as well as the pilots of both Hawaiian and Alaska Airlines. [Read More](#)



ALPA Urges Changes, Investment in Aviation Worker Mental Health System

As aviation safety experts from across the industry meet today at the Navigating Mental Health in Aviation Summit to discuss the current system for evaluating mental fitness. [Read More](#)



American plans expansion of high-speed Wi-Fi to nearly 500 regional aircraft

American proudly makes high-speed connectivity available on more aircraft than any other domestic airline.

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American Airlines awarded \$22 million from State of Oklahoma for Tulsa maintenance base enhancements

American Airlines was awarded \$22 million today from the State of Oklahoma's Business Expansion Incentive Program.

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Philippine Airlines and American Airlines launch new codeshare partnership

Philippine Airlines and American Airlines have launched a codeshare partnership that introduces the first marketed flights by a Philippine carrier to several U.S. destinations and allows American's customers to travel to the Pearl of the Orient, Manila, and the beautiful beaches of Cebu. [Read More](#)



Delta to fly to Taipei from Seattle hub

Delta, Seattle's largest global airline, will further expand its Asia network next summer with the launch of daily nonstop service from Seattle (SEA) to Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (TPE) starting June 6, 2024, subject to government approval.

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Eve Air Mobility Partners with Flexjet for Urban Air Mobility Simulation

Eve Air Mobility ("Eve") (NYSE: EVEX; EVEXW) has partnered with global private aviation leader Flexjet in a real-time software trial, the first of its kind, which will help pave the way towards the widespread use of electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft.

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JetBlue Donates 2 Million TrueBlue Points to Make-A-Wish® in Celebration of Giving Tuesday

JetBlue (Nasdaq: JBLU) is continuing its longstanding tradition of service by donating 2 million TrueBlue points to Make-A-Wish in celebration of Giving Tuesday and JetBlue For Good month. [Read More](#)



From Runway to Reef: JetBlue Flights Take Off to Belize Today

JetBlue announced it has officially launched service between New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (BZE) in Belize City, Belize, with the first flight arriving in Belize this afternoon. [Read More](#)



JetBlue Expands Mexico Service with Flights from New York to Tulum on Sale Today

JetBlue announced it will serve Tulum, its fourth destination in Mexico. JetBlue's flights to Tulum are on sale starting today. [Read More](#)



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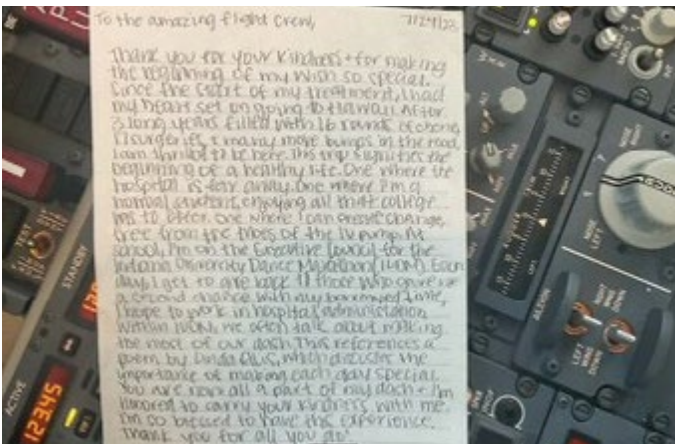
LIFT Academy enrollment soars to new heights

In December 2023, LIFT Academy will welcome its largest class of students in the 5-year history of the program. [Read More](#)



Smartwings is launching scheduled flights between Prague and Athens

Airline company Smartwings is expanding its range of destinations, announcing the third new route for summer 2024. The airline is launching regular flights between Prague and Athens, Greece, on 31 May 2024. [Read More](#)



United Raises Miles for Make-A-Wish This Holiday Season

This giving season, United is encouraging its customers to donate miles to Make-A-Wish America to support efforts to grant life-changing wishes for children who are battling critical illnesses. [Read More](#)



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Using the Past to Change the Future

WRITTEN BY: JOHN MCDERMOTT

I am to begin instructor-development training with a new flight school in the coming weeks. Included in my initiation package was a letter written by the founder of the company that preceded my flight school. The letter is decades old, but nevertheless, the school provides it to all new flight instructors and expects them to come into training having read it.

The point of the letter is not to insist that we follow methods developed before I was born, when ADF approaches were still the norm. Rather, my company believes that the same commitment to safe, quality instruction still applies, and can still ensure productive, meaningful instruction.

I have used past experiences throughout my career to make myself a safer, more proficient pilot. Whether I have learned from my own actions (or inactions) as a student, consulted others for their experiences, or used online resources like the Air Safety Institute, I have always received great benefit from reflection and proactive preparation.

None of this will come as a novel concept for experienced pilots. After all, any halfway decent flight instructor will, to some degree, encourage this reflection in all their students. However, I worry that what is sometimes lost on pilots is how important it is not just to study accidents and understand the proper actions, but also to practice these safety solutions in their regular flying.

Certainly, I am not immune to this issue, and I have, more than once, found myself reflecting on why I did not handle a situation differently. It's not that I didn't understand the risks I was taking in the moment, but it's that I had never applied the lessons I learned reviewing case studies on the ground to my own flying. Without fully understanding the real-life effects of certain risks, like taking a long single-pilot cross country late at night when fatigue is prevalent, I have been forced

to reconcile my decision making in the air, or after the flight, instead of being more conscious beforehand.

There is, of course, only a certain amount of preparation one can actually do before encountering a situation in real life. After all, sterile training environments can only be so realistic when students know what to expect and have a guaranteed safety pilot (their instructors) with them.

The question then becomes how to go a step further from the training environment without putting yourself in an unsafe situation. How can a pilot really appreciate the reality of a situation without taking undue risks?

One practice that I wish I had done more as a student pilot is to use different training tools in conjunction with each other. Take, for example, the risk of a non-IFR pilot flying VFR into IMC. Often, I heard from my instructors about the risks of doing so, and I have reviewed multiple case studies where such an occurrence turned to tragedy. What I should have done more is having been proactive about considering each resource in light of each other. Instead of just listening to my instructor on one day and watching the video together, I could take time to review my notes from a period of ground instruction to remember the risks and then use case studies to see those risks in action.

This practice connects two very important aspects of aviation safety – understanding the risks of a situation and understanding

how humans respond to those risks. Again, studying one or the other in isolation can be powerful but might not always deliver the complete picture that a young pilot, or a pilot new to the situation, may need to fully understand the gravity of a situation. Rather, by studying your notes to remember the risks within a situation and going from there to a case study, you can empathize with the pilots, put yourself in their position, and experience the situation with them. You can consider how you would feel in a similar situation and determine how you might act to prepare yourself for a real-world event.

This exercise must go beyond just sitting back to criticize a pilot. Doing so is fairly simple, even for relatively inexperienced pilots, but it makes it easy for a pilot to disassociate from the situation. Remember that the FAA teaches pilots that there is a name for that – the “macho” hazardous attitude occurs when a pilot says, “It can’t happen to me.”

I do not mean to imply that every pilot inevitably puts themselves in a situation of significant risk to their lives, but we cannot ignore that, every once in a while, the limitations of weather reporting, ATC vectoring, aircraft capabilities (including onboard weather radar), and pilot skill align. Avoiding that macho attitude by taking the time to fully immerse yourself in a case study before you leave the ground may be the trick that allows pilots to recognize subliminal warning signs before it’s too late. Even if a pilot decides to go despite the

odds, understanding the risks involved may be the catalyst that encourages extra safety measures like taking a safety pilot, or more thoroughly investigating alternate options.

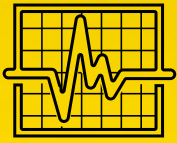
I cannot help but reflect on my duty as a soon-to-be flight instructor to guide my students towards strong, complete decision-making skills. I know that returning to that letter from our predecessor will be a worthwhile endeavor to remember just how important my duty to my students will be. I must certainly take the time to reflect on my own experiences and impart my own wisdom as appropriate.

I certainly have a lot to learn regarding how I will teach, what I will teach, and perhaps most importantly, when I will teach. As the FAA teaches flight instructor candidates, I must also remember that my actions as an instructor will have a great impact on my students’ actions regardless of what I verbally tell them. So, here’s to using past experiences to my advantage throughout my career and here’s to learning even more as an instructor so I can provide the best, safest, highest-quality instruction I can each day I come to work.

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...](#)



When? What? Move!

Strategies for the new year

WRITTEN BY: ERIC RAY



Happy New Year! It's hard to believe another holiday season has come and gone. When it comes to pilots, aircrew members or even frequent travelers, we may find ourselves eating at odd hours or even skipping meals altogether. In the pursuit of a healthier lifestyle, dietary choices make the differences, even down to the timing of food.

Think about when you eat.

Late-night eating can be an issue for travelers, especially crews working long hours. However, research suggests that consuming empty calories close to bedtime can negatively impact sleep quality and overall health. The body's natural circadian rhythm influences metabolic processes, and late-night eating disrupts this delicate balance and is usually a concern for crews. Late-night snacks high in sugar and carbohydrates can lead to a spike in blood-sugar levels, followed by a crash, disrupting your sleep cycle. Additionally, digestion requires energy, and consuming heavy meals before bedtime can divert energy away from the body's natural repair and recovery processes during sleep.

To optimize health, consider establishing a cut-off time for meals, which allows the body ample time to digest before bedtime. This simple adjustment can contribute to better sleep quality and overall well-being. Sometimes, it is better to have something light to keep those hunger pangs at bay and to get quality rest.

Drink water.

Hydration is the cornerstone of good health. Our bodies are composed of approximately 60% water, and maintaining proper hydration is essential for numerous physiological functions. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, impaired cognitive function, and even digestive issues. Not to mention that a lack of adequate hydration can lead to higher blood pressure, increased resting heart rate and even blood pressure-driven headaches.

Make a conscious effort to drink water throughout the day (at least half your body weight in ounces). Consider carrying a reusable water bottle and setting hourly hydration goals. And remember, it's probably more important to drink even more when you fly owed to pressurization issues. Start your day with a glass of water to kickstart your metabolism.

Practice mindful eating.

In today's fast-paced airline world (which is even faster given the increase in the number of people traveling), meals are often rushed or consumed on the go. This hurried approach to eating can lead to overeating and poor digestion. Mindful eating encourages a more deliberate and conscious approach to meals, fostering a

deeper connection with the food we consume. This can often be a task when you are eating airline-prepared food or quick meals made in the airport. Choose wisely and ensure that if you are eating on the go, your meal is protein heavy. Higher protein foods increase satiation and leave you feeling fuller longer.

Include physical activity.

The benefits of regular physical activity extend beyond weight management. Exercise is a powerful tool for reducing the risk of chronic diseases, improving mood, and enhancing overall well-being. Incorporate a mix of aerobic exercises, strength training, and flexibility exercises into your routine for a comprehensive approach. When you are on the go, working multi-day trips or even in your time off, take the time to exercise.

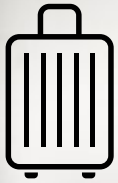
Find activities that you enjoy, making it more likely that you'll stick to your fitness routine. Whether it's brisk walking, cycling, yoga, or weightlifting, aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. When it comes to flying and being in the airplane, try to take a moment to go for a short walk during breaks. (Get off the plane!) Or, when you are headed to that long layover, take the stairs, or avoid the moving walkways.

Ericray4470@gmail.com



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



First Aid for Checkride Anxiety

WRITTEN BY: REINI THIJSSSEN

Whether you are a student pilot working towards your private-pilot certificate or a 4,000-hour ATP going for a captain upgrade, you are expected to be evaluated for your performances in a practical test environment, and you are likely to experience a fear of checkride failure. Everyone facing a flight evaluation experiences some level of nervousness and anxiety. Studies show that a bit of anxiety can enhance your performance. However, for some people, this experience leads to discomfort that inhibits their performance. Do you suffer from this form of performance-related anxiety? You are not alone. Fortunately, you can influence it yourself. Here are seven practical strategies:

Healthy Tension vs. Negative Fear of Failure

It is common to feel nervous and anxious when going into a checkride. Studies show that healthy tension or so-called ‘positive anxiety’ can be helpful. It can help increase motivation to go the extra mile and perform well. However, sometimes the tension gets too high. When you are under pressure and feel judged, you can develop an unrealistic fear of the task. The physical responses are comparable to life-threatening situations:

- Your brain produces chemicals such as adrenaline, and your heart rate increases.
- You start sweating.
- You want to remove yourself from the situation.

The urge to escape inhibits the capacity to think clearly, causes the loss of concentration, and can lead to hyperventilation or even blacking out. This “negative anxiety” is not conducive to carrying out your task.

1. Focus on Learning Instead of Performing

Those who consider the end goal to be the most important tell themselves they are not allowed to make mistakes. People who are afraid of making mistakes deprive themselves of the opportunity to learn, and making mistakes is connected to learning. Those who focus less on the result and more on

the process create more space to learn new things. When preparing for a checkride, do not set performance goals, such as: “I want to do better than my colleague,” but rather learning goals: “I want to be better at ...” or “I want to finish this section by ...” And if something does go wrong during the process, ask yourself the constructive question, “What can I do better next time?”

2. Reduce External Pressure

Even though people often like to share important life events with friends and family, sharing your scheduled checkride might increase the external pressure of having to perform. Instead, consider only discussing the evaluation date with only a few with whom you feel most comfortable. When you pass, feel free to share with everyone you want to know about your accomplishments!

3. Write Worries Down

Right before the checkride, set a timer for ten minutes and write down your thoughts and worries on paper. It seems counterintuitive, but a study found that students with test anxiety scored one point higher when writing about their anxiety for ten minutes prior to an essential exam than their classmates who kept their worries to themselves. Your nerves are trying to tell you something, so ask yourself:

- What makes me nervous?
- Has this happened before?

- What happened then?
- What did I think during that time?
- How did I improve myself after that?

4. Visualizing

Visualize how you want to be in a particular situation, how you want to think, how you want to feel, and how you want to behave. Imagine yourself being in the stressful situation of a checkride. Next, visualize how you want to feel. Imagine it vividly and feel it.

You are now mentally practicing and preparing your body for the actual situation. When you go into the checkride, you create a new scenario where you can feel differently, have different thoughts, and behave differently.

5. Box-Breathing Exercise

Box breathing, or 4x4 breathing, is a simple yet powerful breathing exercise that helps you relax in intense situations. The exercise consists of the following steps:

- Breathe in for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Exhale for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
- Repeat these steps for as long as you want.

By consciously breathing, you take your brain and body out of survival mode, also known as fight-or-flight mode. This shift has many advantages:

- Less production of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol
- Positive effects on your emotions and mental well-being
- Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Helps you focus

6. Reframe

You have successfully performed similar flights and maneuvers various times before, so think of it as just another flight. This event is called a checkride, because you are being evaluated on your skills that other instructors have already endorsed under their own accreditation. Therefore, the examiner assumes that you will be good enough to pass. Another way to think of your checkride is to think of it as a confirmation of your ability to be a safe pilot. After all, a checkride evaluates your ability to fly safely since you would not want to fly if you were not safe. In the unfortunate event of failing the checkride, reflect on it in a constructive way instead of defeating your self-esteem; the examiner found a deficiency in your skills that you now have the ability to work on to become a better and safer pilot. Even the day before a checkride, clearing your mind and relaxing your body is a good idea. Watch a comedy, have coffee with friends, or go for a run. Distracting yourself with something fun helps relax you and improve your sleep.

7. Eat Healthy

Eating healthy is always important, but just before a stressful event, you can add extra self-care for your brain by putting healthy food on the menu. Ingredients that contain vitamins B, E, or K or are rich in Omega 3 help keep your brain in shape. Examples are oily fish (salmon, mackerel, trout), broccoli, pumpkin seeds, oatmeal, blueberries, dark chocolate and nuts.

8. Prioritize Sleep

Though it might seem like a good idea to continue studying the night prior, do not overdo it. Prioritize your sleep. Prepare a brief summary of the main points in advance. Read this over right before you go to sleep. Sleep is not only essential for relaxation, but your brain also continues to learn while sleeping. During REM sleep, your brain moves the learned information from your short-term to your long-term memory. In addition, a good night's sleep also ensures better concentration during the ride itself. If you want to review something before the event, review your summary during breakfast. Adding new information at the last minute can cause confusion. Trust that you already have the necessary data in your brain and have done it all before.

Final Note

Evaluations are always anxiety-inducing, especially when you have spent countless hours, energy, and money to get to this point in your career. Working on increasing self-esteem with a professional can help get you there. When you can decrease performance-related anxiety, you will generally feel more calm and more confident in being the competent pilot you want to be. Emerald Mental Health can support you with that. Contact Emerald Mental Health for a free 15-minute consultation.

Sources: Al Majali, S. (2020). Positive anxiety and its role in motivation and achievements among university students. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(4), 975–986. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13459a>
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About the Author

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



MORTGAGE



Refinancing
a home

Considering Refinancing?

WRITTEN BY: SPENCER WARTMAN

With rates coming down at the end of 2023, for some homeowners, mortgage refinancing may be a financial maneuver to consider. In this article, we'll explore the broader aspects of mortgage refinancing and the general requirements for qualification to see if refinancing might be right for you.

Why Refinance?

Interest Rate Reduction: One of the primary motivators for refinancing is the opportunity to secure a lower interest rate. A reduced rate can result in substantial long-term savings on interest payments.

Monthly Payment Adjustment: Refinancing allows homeowners to adjust their monthly payments. This can involve either lowering payments for immediate relief or increasing payments to pay off the mortgage more quickly.

Accessing Home Equity: Homeowners may tap into their home's equity through a cash-out refinance, obtaining funds for home improvements, debt consolidation, or other financial needs.

Loan Term Modification: Refinancing provides the flexibility to modify the loan term, allowing borrowers to choose between shorter terms for quicker repayment or longer terms for lower monthly payments.

Considerations Before Refinancing

Current Market Conditions: Keep a close eye on prevailing interest rates. Refinancing is most beneficial when rates are lower than the rate on your existing mortgage.

Financial Objectives: Clearly define your financial goals. Whether it's reducing monthly payments, paying off the mortgage faster, or accessing cash for specific purposes, understanding your objectives is crucial.

Costs and Fees: Consider the associated costs of refinancing, including closing costs and fees. It's essential to ensure that the potential savings outweigh these expenses and hold the lender to being transparent with the costs and fees.

Credit Score: A higher credit score generally leads to better interest rates. Review your credit report and take steps to improve your score before applying for a refinance.

Equity Position: Lenders often require a certain level of equity in your home. Understanding your home's current value and equity position is critical for a successful refinance.

Requirements for Refinancing:

Creditworthiness: Lenders assess your credit score to determine your creditworthiness. A good credit score increases the likelihood of obtaining favorable refinancing terms.

Stable Income: Demonstrating a stable income and employment history reassures lenders about your ability to repay the loan. Consistent income is a key qualification factor.

Debt-to-Income Ratio (DTI): Lenders evaluate your debt-to-income ratio to gauge your capacity to manage additional debt. A lower DTI enhances your eligibility for refinancing.

Loan-to-Value Ratio (LTV): The LTV ratio, comparing the loan amount to the home's value, influences eligibility. A lower LTV ratio is generally preferred by lenders.

The decision to refinance involves an evaluation of individual needs, market conditions, and the type of loan. Conventional and VA IRRRL refinancing caters to different audiences, each with its own set of benefits and considerations. Consulting with a mortgage professional can provide personalized insights and guidance tailored to your unique situation. Trident Home Loans (Equal Housing Lender, NMLS 65716) is an airline-industry leader for securing the right mortgage for you. Contact Spencer Wartman (NMLS 2109932) today and let him help you secure your future home!

You can reach out to Spencer directly if there's a specific topic you'd like him to address.

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...](#)



Putting a Price on Quality of Life

And correlating other parameters for compensation

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

At the end of last month's article, I promised to discuss certain parameters that did and did not correlate with compensation levels – and we'll get to those. But, as I was thinking about those parameters, a related topic occurred to me, a topic that is another important item in the retention equation.



In the figure above, we see a depiction of how the retention equation works. You have the three legs of the stool: compensation, organizational culture, and quality of life. If any one of the legs is neglected, the stool topples. All three legs require the support of leadership to stand. The legs are not independent stovepipes, however. If one of the legs doesn't get the support it needs from leadership, other legs can and will be affected.

A quick case in point; I have a client who flies for a well-known business-aviation firm – one whose name you would recognize – and a brand I deeply respect. A few months ago, my client came to me for an analysis of his compensation level vs. the market. I ran the numbers and was shocked at how little he was paid. I provided him with the necessary documentation, and he used it to sit down with his superiors to have a conversation about compensation levels. His superiors weren't interested. In fact, they became angry and shut the conversation down. Since the day that interaction occurred, there has been no subsequent discussion about compensation, and my client is now, of course, entertaining job offers from other potential employers. This is an example of how bad leadership can simultaneously infect both compensation and organizational culture, for by showing disdain for the compensation piece and reacting in an adversarial fashion in this case, the leadership of my client's company revealed that the organization's culture is flawed.

Compensation Parameters – What Correlates and What Doesn't

Very often, I have clients come to me for compensation analysis who are very eager to showcase how much they fly, how hard their personnel work, and how many nights they spend on the road. I enjoy hearing the stories because I love the people who work in our industry, and it's wonderful hearing about the lengths they'll go to in service to their principals. But when the conversation turns to the effect that workload has on compensation levels, I must put my statistician hat on and tactfully tell my clients that the answer is, sadly, there is none.

Here are the parameters that positively correlate with compensation levels:

- Position – generally, the higher up the “food chain” a position is, the higher the comp level.
- Jet Class – usually, the bigger the jet, the bigger the paycheck.
- Location – higher cost of labor in certain areas drives higher compensation. (Note that I didn't say higher cost of living. Cost of labor and cost of living are different indices, although they do tend to correlate more often than not.)
- Part 91 vs Part 135 Operations – generally, pure Part 91 operations pay higher than pure Part 135 ones pay.
- Dual-Ratings – in most cases, a person who either flies or fixes both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft makes more than one who flies or works on fixed-wing aircraft only.
- International Operations – those who operate internationally always make more than those who conduct domestic-only operations. This extends to flight attendants, flight technicians, and even schedulers.

Here are the parameters that do not correlate:

- Flight department size – you'd think the larger the flight department, the higher the compensation level. That is true for some positions but not for all of them, and even when there is a correlation, it is often not consistently positive.
- Years with a company/years in the industry – again, you'd think more experience would correlate with higher compensation, but it doesn't – and the reason is understandable. Hiring managers pay what they need to pay to get the people they want, often with less tenure and even less experience.
- Hours flown/duty days/days on the road – absolutely no correlation at all. It does seem like there should be, but there isn't.

The Commoditization of Quality of Life

The last bullet point above brings us to a topic that has increasingly been a focus for my clients. The question they ask goes something like this; “Do we really have to pay in the 75th percentile if we’re offering our personnel a great quality of life?” What they’re really asking about is whether they can commoditize the quality of life they offer in lieu of higher compensation.

Case in point. I had a client in the western U.S. who ran a flight department for a chain of casinos. He had a schedule where his pilots rotated on-call duty, but the schedule was published well in advance and it provided his personnel with ten hard days off per month, which is well above the four hard days off that is the average for multiple surveys. After some review and analysis, we agreed that he could target the 60th percentile for compensation to show his personnel he was paying above market and make the case that their guaranteed time off was worth the dollar amount between the 60th and 75th percentiles. In short, he commoditized his personnel’s quality of life.

Let’s return to the retention stool above. In the retention research I did in 2017, the number-one reason pilots gave for leaving business aviation for the airlines was quality of life. They wanted to be able to plan their lives. The quality-of-life leg is just as important to the retention equation as the compensation one is, even in the current compensation environment. In fact, in more than one instance I’ve heard about, when pilots were given a choice between higher compensation and hiring another pilot, they chose the latter option in nearly every single case.

So, do compensation levels correlate to how hard people work or conversely to how little time they have off? No. But, assuming an organization can offer a predictable schedule, leadership probably doesn’t need to pay at the top of the scale to retain personnel. In the business aviation industry, a schedule that allows personnel to plan their lives is a rare commodity. Aviation managers should market it as such.



About the Author

Dr. Chris Broyhill is an industry veteran with over 40 years in aviation. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1982, served with distinction for over 20 years in the Air Force and flew multiple aircraft. [Read More...](#)



GREY MATTER



Disaster on the Road – Pt. 1

The texts stopped coming

WRITTEN BY: ANDREW ROSS

I knew something was wrong when the texts stopped coming. Constant messages from my family, which had been coming in consistently every few seconds, had screeched to a halt. I was left with my thoughts and concerns, of which there were many. But time wasn't on my side. The main cabin door was closed, the flight attendants were ready, all checklists were completed, and I was going to Paris. So, I strapped myself in, put my phone in airplane mode, and focused on the task at hand, which was assisting the captain as first officer in taxiing and departing, before I went on break for a few hours. It was a very long taxi.

In the air and back in the bunk, I connected my phone to WIFI and tried to get in touch with anyone in my family who had been on their way to my house. The cause for concern was a warm front that had vacated the area near my home, warmed the ground after early morning storms and rain, and afternoon gusty winds that greatly destabilized the atmosphere and set off a 13-count tornado outbreak across the Chicago area on the evening of July 12th, 2023. Being a true Midwesterner, I figured I may be missing a shingle, or my deck chairs may have blown away, or a tree branch fell. Afterall, reports were of a radar-indicated tornado, but at that moment, no damage was being reported.

The first message to come in was from my partner, who is always up for a practical joke trying to get people to stress out about nothing. Prior to this, he had asked me if he should go check on the house, given the reports of a possible tornado and the fact that the power had surged for just a moment. I advised him to send a good friend of ours over to check on things and call him if things looked bad. What I wasn't being told at the time is that in addition to the reports and the power surge, from the Ring camera, he also could see glass on the ground in the front yard. He had already been on his way to the house as we texted prior to my departure.

After a long year of building our brand-new dream home, we had just moved in a month and half prior. Most of the boxes still needed to be unpacked, and we didn't even have all the blinds on the windows. We had made time

however, to have a little housewarming party two weeks before, and our brief stay had really started to make things feel like home. Surly, karma wouldn't hit this brand-new house with a tornado – right?

Me: Is everything okay????

Codie: Do you really want to know?

Me: ... yes?

Codie: ... Andrew, I'm so sorry, but know I'm taking care of everything.

Me: Haha, okay right, I'm suuuuure something happened.

Codie: I'm serious

Me: Well then send me some pictures...



Me: ... wow... I really wanted you to be messing with me...

Next month, we continue the journey of dealing with disaster while on the road.



About the Author

Andrew Ross is a pilot at a major airline flying the Boeing 787, previously the Boeing 757 and 767 domestically and internationally, and prior to that flew the Embraer 145. [Read More...](#)



SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Safety Management Systems

Written By: Sergio Sovero

The foundation of Safety Management Systems (SMS) is to make an aviation organization safer. Safety adjustments are often derived from data. In the United States, the FAA mandates that air carriers create and adopt an SMS program. For an SMS program to be effective, all participants, from leaders to front-line employees, must prioritize safety and empower all participants to raise safety concerns. Through voluntarily submitted reports, data is collected to improve processes and procedures.

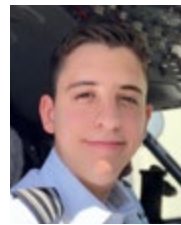
A key component of SMS is participation. All employees must feel empowered and validated to participate through information sharing. One of the defining characteristics of an SMS is its emphasis on risk management. Risk management is comprised of identifying and mitigating threats. Threats are inherent in any flight. While certain threats can be identified (expected), others may be unexpected. SMS attempts to foster risk identification and mitigation to the greatest possible extent, thus reducing unexpected threats. Pilots can better prepare and

react to threats in advance, through tools such as briefings. Whether through data or through the input of employees and others, recognizing that many opportunities exist to stop an accident is the first step in moving from reactive to predictive thinking.

It is a common misconception that SMS only applies to airline operators. Even as a flight instructor at a flight school, you have a role and responsibility to promote safety. Doing the right thing, following procedures and policies, will ensure you operate within a safe environment, each time without fail. Sharing your own experiences, whether through an official reporting system, or informally, can help colleagues in the future.

Many organizations have safety magazines or newsletters published by their flight-safety departments. In an effort to increase awareness of hot safety topics and areas that need special emphasis, pilots should remain up to date with the latest safety-related events.

Be proactive by advocating for safety and improving the national airspace system. Fly safe!



About the Author



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



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Love at First Bite

The New England Lobster Company in the Bay Area

WRITTEN BY: VICTOR SOLER

San Francisco's culinary scene is a treasure trove, and if you're on an overnight or a leisurely layover, head south to the town of Burlingame. There, you will discover a laid-back venue with a warm staff. The spacious indoor seating and inviting picnic tables outside will prove to be the perfect setting for your friends and crew to dive into a seafood menu that is nothing short of dazzling.



The seafood, flown in fresh daily from Maine to the Bay Area, has a story that's equally fresh. Originating as a wholesale distributor in 1987, the owners, feeling a deeper connection with the community, ventured into the food-truck scene with "We're On A Roll." The overwhelming support led to their current brick-and-mortar location in Burlingame.

For me this culinary journey owes much to Captain Jim Perez, who, during a casual conversation, threw me a curveball, "Do you like lobster rolls?" Check airmen have a knack for posing challenging questions when you least expect it. Regrettably, I had to admit, "Not sure, never had one." Like any good mentor, he swiftly acted to resolve this gap in my culinary education.

Enter The New England Lobster Company with the dressed lobster roll accompanied with a cup of lobster and corn chowder, and it was love at first bite! My Southern taste buds were treated to a symphony of flavors. The perfectly toasted bread, with a delightfully crisp outside and a soft, airy inside, serves as a canvas for the masterpiece. Crowned with fresh lobster, the roll is a medley of complexity and seafood freshness that left me wondering, "Why did I wait so long to try this?" The only negative thing I can say about the cup of chowder is, "Why did I not get the bowl?" It is rich and creamy and leaves you yearning for more.



I would be remiss if I did not note their delightful happy hour from 3-6pm, Monday to Friday. Dive into discounted beers, oysters, and other seafood delights that elevate the experience without compromising your wallet. It's a golden window where the richness of the culinary offerings meets the joy of a good deal.

With roots of humble seafood wholesalers turned community icons, The New England Lobster Company offers more than just nutritious meals; they are revelatory in what seafood should be. I am thankful for them having expanded my taste buds into newfound frontiers. Their artistry of fresh ingredients is a culinary mastery. With crisp coastal air mingling with the savory aromas, this location

in Burlingame is more than an eatery; it composes a symphony of flavors orchestrated into an unforgettable dining experience.

So, when in San Francisco, venture a little south to Burlingame. Your taste buds will thank you.

The New England Lobster Company <https://newenglandlobster.net/eatery/>



About the Author

Victor Soler is a retired Army UH-60 helicopter pilot with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Occupational Safety and Health. Currently, Victor is a 767/757 first officer. [Read More...](#)



A formation of Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses during World War II. (U.S. Air Force)

Thanks, Pete!

The career and legacy of Major Ployer “Pete” Hill, USAAC; the “grandfather” of the checklist

WRITTEN BY: DEBORAH BANDY

Every pilot in the world knows the importance of checklists, but only a very few know how they came to be. This is the story of the Army Air Corps’ Chief of the Flying Branch of the Test Pilot Division whose fate led to the development of checklists and whose legacy has continued to serve the county for generations.



Major Ployer P. Hill, U.S. Army Air Corps (1894–1935)

Born six years before the turn of the twentieth century, Ployer P. “Pete” Hill earned his degree in civil engineering in 1916 from Brown University and joined the Aviation Section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps the following year, just as the country entered the First World War. The war ended while he was training to be a bombardment pilot, and while he never saw combat, he had a most illustrious career.

After the war, Pete and his new bride were posted in Germany for two years with the American Army of Occupation. After that assignment they returned to the States to Fort Bliss (Texas) and on to Chanute Field (Illinois) where he trained in aerial photography. His brilliant success as both a pilot and photographer brought Hill the assignment to command the photo section at New York’s Mitchell Field, followed by another photo section command at Nichols Field in the Philippines.

In 1932 he began his duty assignment as test pilot at Wright Field (Ohio). His job was to provide feedback to the contractors and to the Army on the performance and capabilities of the aircraft he test-flew. By 1935, he was promoted to Chief of the Flying Branch of the Materiel Division with the temporary rank of major.

That same year, Boeing was developing its Model XB-299 from specifications provided in U.S. Army No. 98-201 that called for a multi-engine land craft with high performance. The specifications mandated a 250-mph top speed, a 220-mph cruise, a ten-hour endurance, and the requirement to maintain an altitude of 7000 ft. with any one engine out.

When first unveiled to the press, the enormous four-engine aircraft was given the moniker “Flying Fortress.” The name



The Boeing Model 299 (XB-17), prototype four-engine heavy bomber. (U.S. Air Force)

immediately stuck, and Boeing liked it so much, they had it trademarked. In 1935, to compete in a fly-off with other contenders for the Army contract, Boeing's Model 299 was flown from Seattle to Wright Field. It made the trip in just over nine hours with a 232-mph average cruise speed that nearly equaled the P-26's 234-mph top speed. The Army was duly impressed and wanted the Flying Fortress in their arsenal. While it was considerably more expensive than the other two competitors, the performance was exemplary. Development of the aircraft continued.

On October 30, 1935, Pete Hill, his co-pilot, 1st Lt. Donald Putt, two others from the Flying Branch, and Boeing Chief Test Pilot Leslie R. Tower boarded the Flying Fortress for the test flight. Observers on the ground



The wreck of the Boeing Model 299, NX13372, burns after the fatal crash at Wright Field, 30 October 1935. (U.S. Air Force)



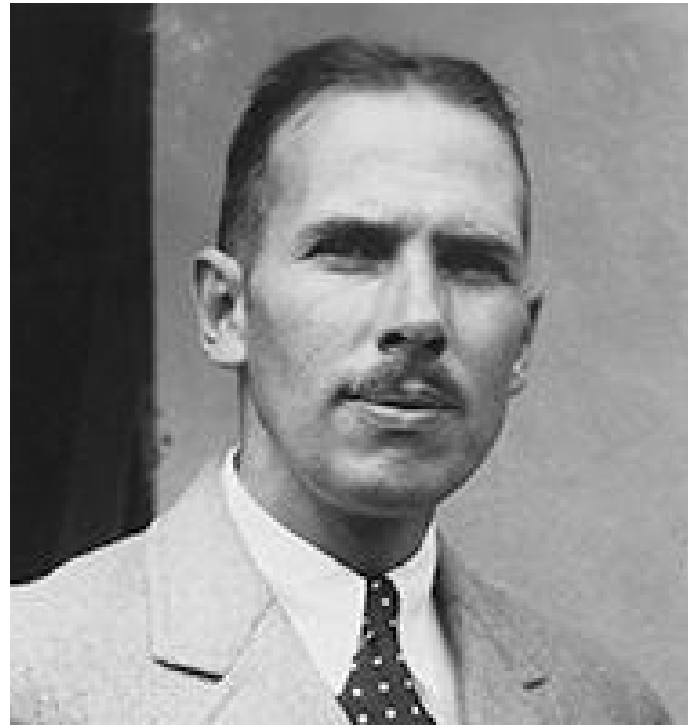
Major Ployer P. Hill, U.S. Army Air Corps (1894–1935)

described the takeoff as normal but with a tail-low attitude. As it gained speed, the nose ascended higher than normal. At about 300 ft., the aircraft stalled, rotated about 180° and fell onto the field with its left wing hitting the ground first and acting as a shock absorber for the fuselage – likely what saved the men at impact. Hill was rescued from behind the controls, but he and Tower both succumbed to their injuries. Tower lived long enough to offer an account of the accident and to blame himself. Though Tower was not at the controls, he was seated behind the two pilots and was a source of knowledge and experience.

Afterward, officers convened at Wright to investigate the crash and determined that the direct cause of the crash was that the elevator/rudder-control lock was engaged. “Pilot error” was not included in the final report, but by implication, that was the

finding. As a result of the crash, the Douglas Aircraft Co. was declared the winner of the contract competition and the Bolo B-18 was born. The company delivered 350 planes, but they were not the long-range bomber the Army wanted. The Army Air Corps still wanted the Boeing Model XB-299 and issued a contract for 13 aircraft with the designation B-17. Ultimately, 12,731 B-17s were built between 1936 and 1945!

Before that tragic crash, pilots depended on rote memory to ensure they had gone through all the necessary preflight procedures and safety checks. That crash heralded the beginning of the system of written checklists that crews carry out before every flight in every aircraft. Pete Hill is remembered as the “grandfather” of the checklist, and we must

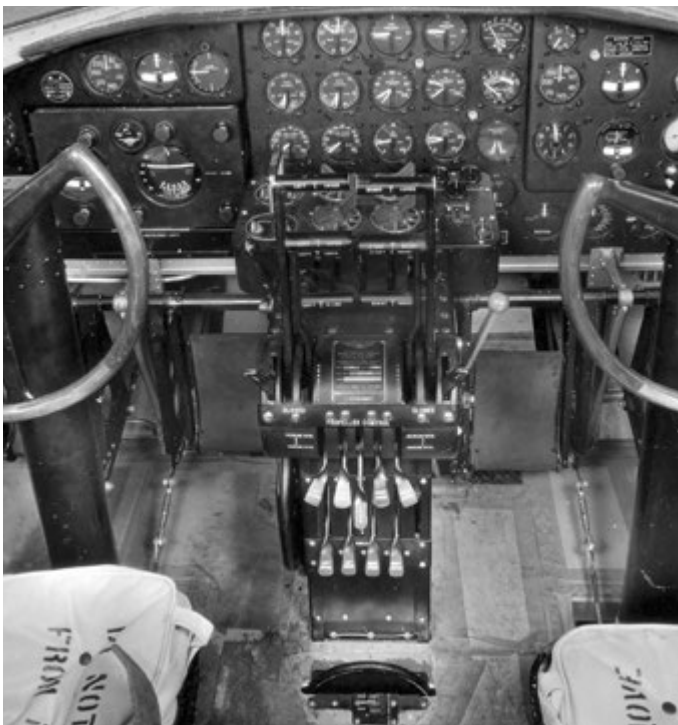


Major P.P. Hill, early 1930s. (Hilltop Times)

thank the memory of him for the advancement upon which we all rely today. The next time you touch the Gust Lock, remember Pete and his enormous contribution to flight safety.

But wait! There’s more to the Pete Hill legacy — a lot more. You see, Pete and his wife Helen had an eleven-year-old son at the time of the crash. Also named Ployer “Pete” Hill, their son volunteered for the Army Air Corp while still a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He was a radar operator on the P-61 Black Widow in the Pacific Theater of World War II, notably Iwo Jima. He retired from the Air Force in 1973 as a Lt. Colonel.

Before his retirement, in 1966, “young” Pete was stationed in Saigon, Viet Nam but came home to enlist his son, Doug Hill, into the Air Force so that he could attend the Air Force Academy Prep School. Subsequently, Doug Hill attended and graduated from the Air



Boeing XB-17 (Model 299) cockpit. (U.S. Air Force photo)



Force Academy in 1972. In flight school, he graduated first in his class and elected to fly the Lockheed C-141 because he “wanted to fly the world.” During his career, he flew six continents only missing Antarctica owed to a maintenance issue that cancelled his mission from Christchurch, New Zealand.

In 1993, Doug Hill’s last C-141 mission took him from McChord AFB, near Tacoma, Washington to Hill AFB in Utah and back. Hill Air Force Base had been named for Doug’s grandfather, the first Ployer “Pete” Hill in 1939, to honor his outstanding career and ultimate sacrifice to our country and to aviation. The second

Ployer “Pete” Hill was aboard the C-141 with his son Doug in command as it flew back to Washington. Pete was heard to say, “I swore him into the Air Force and now I am swearing him out.”

Doug Hill had a post-USAF career at four airlines. As the Airbus Fleet Captain/Chief Pilot with United for almost fourteen years, Doug met scores of pilots, a part of the job he truly loved. After his retirement from United, Doug continued to serve his country as an Aviation Safety Inspector for the FAA.

This month (January 2024), Doug’s daughter will begin her flight training while she works in the New Pilot Office at United Airlines. The fourth generation is aiming aloft, too. Tailwinds to her. As a Hill legacy, she also hopes to fly for United.

Many of us in the aviation world suspect there is something in our DNA that makes us look skyward and marvel at the sight of any aircraft. The Hill Family, starting with Maj. Ployer “Pete” Hill is evidence of it being “in the blood.” Every time we look at a checklist and prepare to leave the “surly bonds of Earth,” may we remember Pete and the gift his life bestowed upon us all. Thank the checklists and thank Pete.



About the Author

Deborah Bandy is the editor of Aero Crew News, among other writing, editing and marketing endeavors. [Read More...](#)



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