

December 2024

## Fly-In

Valkaria (X59) Fly-in/Drive-in breakfast  
Third Saturday each month 8-10am  
Sponsor: Valkaria EAA Chapter 1288

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*



## MAPA General Membership Meeting

**T**he annual general membership meeting was held **Thursday, November 14**, at the **FIT Aviation, KMLB**. Due to schedule glitch we lost our usual meeting room and FIT set us up with meeting necessities in their large maintenance hangar. MAPA President Ray Liles lead the meeting with the treasures' report indicating we are still solvent. Then a summary of meetings that the association participated in during the year, e.g., update on the Sheltair south side T-hangars, proposed south side box hangars, recent news from the airport authority and tenant meetings.

The annual election of officers, directors and nominations from the floor resulted in musical chairs among the Board members. The vote for 2025 was: President Ray Liles, VP Don Cast; Treasurer Bill Werner; Secretary Andy Pedersen and the Directors: Randy Carmichael, Jim Schaub, Kevin Simons and Rob Terry who will continue with as Web Master and Dick Peiffer will continue with the Newsletter.

Our speaker, Charles "Ike" Dye, ATM Melbourne Tower, briefed us on the KMLB plans for major taxiway rehab and runway closures planned for the next year and beyond, it will effect traffic movement and increase the potential for delays. Mr. Dye offered some insight on the KMLB departure and arrival flow, the Tower's interface with Orlando Approach and tidbits about how to improve your use of the NAS. A brief Q and A discussion was very informative.

Our sincere thanks to Mr. Dye for his time and insightful presentation and to FIT Aviation for the alternate meeting quarters and audio/video equipment. →

## BasicMed Expands

### ICYMI

**I**ncluded in the Reauthorization Act of 2024, signed November 12, pilots may now use BasicMed privileges to fly aircraft weighing up to 12,500 pounds and certified to carry up to seven passengers. The previous aircraft weight limitation was 6,000 pounds, with certification for up to six passengers. It excludes transport category helicopters.

Additional, the change allows pilot examiners to conduct flight checks using BasicMed in aircraft that are covered by the BasicMed rule.

In required reports to Congress since 2017, the FAA has concluded that BasicMed has no impact on safety, with no difference found between the safety records of pilots flying under BasicMed compared to pilots flying with third class medical certificates. Questions or comments to General Aviation & Commercial Division (AFS-800) at [9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov](mailto:9-AFS-800-Correspondence@faa.gov) FMI [click here](#). →

## KMLB

### Notes from meetings

**A**irport staff issued an email Friday, November 15 detailing, "...several important airside projects and associated taxiway closures taking place in the coming weeks. These projects are part of ongoing improvements at Melbourne Orlando International Airport. Please review the details below and plan your operations accordingly."

- **Taxiway V Closure (Between Taxiway A and V2)**  
Effective Date: Immediate: Taxiway V closed between Taxiway A and V2 to facilitate electrical work for the new Sheltair T-hangar project. Completion early December 2024.
- **Taxiway K Closure (Between Taxiway G and S1)**  
Scheduled to start: Tuesday, November 19, 2024. Taxiway K closed between Taxiway G and S1. Electrical work.
- **Taxiway B and compass calibration pad closed**  
Scheduled to start during week of 11/18. Work on extending Taxiway B to the south. For compass pad use, please contact Airport Ops at 321-288-1578 to coordinate access with the contractor.
- **Taxiway A Rehabilitation & Closure.** Planned start late January 2025. This is apparently month's long project to rehab the entire taxiway with work from November through April the period when TUI has no scheduled service from the UK.
- **Maintenance/Repairs:** The centerline lights on Runway 9R/27L have been reinstalled after repairs, and the PAPI lights on Runway 9L were successfully repaired. Additionally, the centerlines on the 9R approach were water blasted to enhance visibility for pilots during landings.
- **Critters:** Tenants are reminded to report wildlife dead or alive seen on the airport to the ATCT or Operations.
- **Noise-sensitive areas:** Pilots and operators are reminded to adhere to established traffic patterns to minimize overflights of residential properties in noise-sensitive areas.
- **Ensure Gates close:** Everyone is reminded to ensure gates are fully closed before departing the area.
- **FOD issues:** High winds, especially during hurricane season, increase the risk of FOD. Tenants should be proactive in managing FOD at their facilities. Recent issues include damaged barricades and lights near the Taxiway "M" extension project.
- **Dassault Falcon Jet (DFJ) Project:** The DFJ expansion is progressing well, with construction milestones being met as planned.
- **Taxiway M Extension:** Work is currently underway, aiming to improve access and connectivity for aircraft movement.
- **Terminal Roof Repairs:** Ongoing efforts are focused on repairing and maintaining the terminal roof to ensure structural integrity and safety.
- **Domestic Baggage Claim Repairs:** Planned repairs will be initiated soon to improve passenger service and reliability.
- **NOTAMs: Checking NOTAMs is essential,** listen carefully to the ATIS and pay close attention to taxi clearances. Taxi routes may change daily, the "usual route" may not work that day.

KMLB staff has said if you need any assistance or have questions, please reach out to Airport Ops at 321-288-1578

## Orlando Approach Control Notice to Airmen

SUBJECT: IFR Separation Services for VFR Aircraft Conducting Practice  
Instrument Approaches and Practice Approaches in the Orlando Area

**T**he purpose of the four page notice is to simplify the procedures for controllers and pilots that are requesting practice instrument approaches in the Orlando Approach area. If you have not received the Notice to Airmen from Orlando Approach or the MAPA email blast, transmitting the Notice to Airmen in November, you may request an email copy at [email@mlbpilots.org](mailto:email@mlbpilots.org).

## Portside To Buy Collins Flight Operations System

### Does not impact other ARINC services

**P**ortside, a San Francisco based software solutions company, is acquiring the Flight Operations System (FOS) business from Collins Aerospace. Portside provides software solutions for the aviation industry, including flight ops management software. They have over 1,000 enterprise customers, including 70 regional passenger and cargo airlines.

Many Collins Aerospace employees are expected to join Portside after the acquisition, which is expected to close by year-end. FOS will become part of the Portside portfolio that includes Avianis, Bart, Professional Flight Management, and Takeflight.

According to Portside CEO Alek Vernitsky, "We are committed to working closely with Collins to ensure a seamless transition for both FOS customers and employees. We will continue supporting FOS software and honoring all customer commitments while offering enhanced integration with Portside's complementary aviation solutions, including Baldwin SMS for safety management, Trip Assist for ancillary services, and Owner Portal for aircraft analytics, business intelligence, and owner communication."

As for Collins Aerospace, it explained the planned divestiture of FOS, which was part of its ARINCDirect service, with this statement: "We have finalized an agreement to divest the [FOS] business. We regularly review our portfolio to ensure our business is best positioned to deliver for our customers and employees. We believe this sale will better position FOS to meet customer needs well into the future. This does not impact any other ARINCDirect services and only applies to FOS." → [Aionline](#)

## New Rule: Credit for Flight Time in Public Aircraft

### Some clarifications

**A** new final rule published by the FAA in early October allows pilots conducting public aircraft operations to credit their flight time towards FAA civil regulatory requirements. Additionally, consistent with the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, this final rule will amend the operating rules for experimental aircraft to permit certain flight training, testing, and checking in these aircraft without a letter of deviation authority. The rule is effective Dec. 2, 2024.

FMI you can view the rule at [www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-22009](http://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-22009). →

## For Sale: One Boeing Space Program

### No surprise here

**T**he Wall Street Journal reported on November 1, that Boeing is getting out of the space business—or trying to. Part of a wider move to trim and improve business holdings and operations, the company is looking to offload its space program, including Starliner assuming it can find a suitable buyer.

Boeing has been one of NASA's major contractors since the days of Apollo, when it built the massive first stage of the Saturn V rockets that launched astronauts to the moon.

These days, its major NASA projects include Starliner, the Space Launch System (SLS), and operations for the International Space Station (ISS). According to the Journal, Boeing might retain control of SLS in the event of a sale.

All of Boeing's major projects have faced difficulties in recent years. → [Space.com](#)



## Bloomberg reports Boeing eyeing sale of Jeppesen

### Looking for solutions

**B**loomberg reported that Jeppesen could top Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg's list of non-core assets being sold to shore up the planemaker's balance sheet. Bloomberg, quoting unnamed sources, said the company is looking for \$6 billion for the world's largest provider of aviation charts and air navigation materials to help whittle down its \$58 billion in debt. It paid \$1.5 billion for the company in 2000 and it's been a reliable cash cow ever since. Boeing also owns digital chart provider ForeFlight, which serves [Jeppesen data](#), but there was no mention of ForeFlight in the Bloomberg report. → [Bloomberg](#)

## Embry-Riddle Selected for FAA's Controller Fast-Track Program

### Graduates by-pass the Academy and go directly to an FAA facility

**E**mbry-Riddle is the newest institution to join the FAA's Enhanced Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative program.

The FAA announced the partnership on Wednesday, November 20, noting that the Embry-Riddle joins Tulsa Community College and the University of Oklahoma as the first schools to participate in the initiative, which aims to provide a more direct and efficient path for air traffic controllers.

Embry-Riddle's Air Traffic Management program, which currently enrolls 242 students, is already preparing future controllers with a solid academic foundation. With this new partnership, graduates are offered a direct path to FAA facility training, by-passing the FAA Academy, and contingent on passing the Air Traffic Skills Assessment test and meeting medical and security clearances.

The agency hired 1,800 controllers in 2024 and will hire an additional 2,000 in 2025. → [FAA.gov](https://www.faa.gov)

## DOT OIG to audit FAA STC process

**T**he U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General (OIG) is conducting an audit to check if the FAA is consistently applying its rules for Supplemental Type Certificates (STCs), as required by the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024.

In a Nov. 13 memo, the watchdog noted the audit would be the first in a series regarding STCs, repair stations and technical standards. The FAA issues an STC to authorize a major modification or change to an airframe, engine or propeller that is already certified under a current type certificate.

The OIG emphasized that the FAA has approved more than 1,000 STCs for more than 400 organizations since January 2020. According to the watchdog, the audit will focus on two main goals: Assess whether the FAA has effective controls in place to ensure inspectors consistently identify which aircraft modifications require STCs, and determine whether STC applications are processed uniformly across FAA offices and region. → [AVweb](https://www.avweb.com)

## Spirit files Chapter 11

### Reorganization protection

**S**pirit Airlines has accumulated \$1.6 billion in debt and filed Chapter 11 "Reorganization Bankruptcy". The company will keep on operating while working to solve the debt. They filed Monday, November 18, in New York saying they were on the way to reduce total debt. The Florida-based airline said it had pre-arranged a deal with its bondholders to restructure its debts and raise money to help it operate during the bankruptcy process, which it expects to exit in the first quarter of 2025.

The mergers with Frontier and JetBlue to help get the company out of the financial crisis failed. Now the company expects to emerge from the Chapter 11 process in early 2025, they have asked customers to continue using their travel service and will do their best to offer great service and greater value. → [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com)

## Miracle on the Hudson

### First Officer retires without a water salute

**C**aptain Jeff Skiles has retired from American Airlines after a decades-long flying career. Skiles is best known as the first officer on US Airways Flight 1549, which landed in the Hudson River in 2009.

While Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger retired from US Airways in 2010, Skiles continued flying at US Airways and later American Airlines when the two carriers merged in 2013. Most recently, Skiles was a Boeing 787 Dreamliner captain for American.

Skiles' final flight was Sunday, November 17, coinciding with his 65th birthday the following day. According to various sources, his last flight was American 87 from London Heathrow Airport (EGLL) to Chicago O'Hare International Airport (KORD). However, some reports, say he was not given a water cannon salute.

A water cannon salute is a ceremonial tribute where fire trucks spray water arches over an aircraft or watercraft. Originating in the 19th century to celebrate ship launches and arrivals, the tradition is now used to mark significant aviation events, such as a flight's inaugural or final journey, honor military personnel, or celebrate retirements.

Senior pilots often receive this honor on their last flight, symbolizing a respectful send-off for their career. → [Flying](https://www.flying.com)

## G100UL available at Reid-Hillview

### The county plans to close the airport

**G**eneral Aviation Modifications Inc. (GAMI) is celebrating the availability of its STC-approved G100UL unleaded aviation gasoline at the Reid-Hillview Airport (KRHV) in Santa Clara County, California, with some limited-time financial incentives for aircraft operators. GAMI announced the incentives today. About 125 STCs and 1,000 gallons of fuel sold on promotional day.

The irony is that Santa Clara County Commissioners voted to close the airport in 2031 when their federal grant obligations for the airport end. → [AVweb](#)

## Starfighters Space

### Proposing a small satellite launch vehicle from KSC

**F**orget the launch pad: the Space Coast Company wants to accelerate its rare supersonic F-104s, climb to 45,000 feet, and launch wing-mounted rockets up into low-Earth orbit, [deploying small payloads of pint-sized satellites](#). Starfighters Space, a small company that flies seven vintage [Lockheed F-104 Starfighter](#) jet Mach 2 interceptors at [NASA's Kennedy Space Center](#), is testing the cost-saving concept now. The F-104 was a NASA workhorse for testing and support beginning in the late 1950's.

Rick "Comrade" Svetkoff, founder and CEO of Starfighters Space said, "We could actually launch these nanosats in orbit. The aircraft's capable of speeds in excess of Mach 2 — twice the speed of sound. The military is using every piece of hardware that it has, not to mention the cost factor in trying to get these fighters for any length of time. Whereas, we have aircraft to do this on a regular basis."

Starfighters Space operates the world's only commercial fleet of F-104 supersonic jet aircraft. With a small crew of 10 employees based at KSC, the company offers a unique package of services, ranging from futuristic research-development projects to flight training for pilots and astronauts.

Since 2009, the company has leased a portion of Space Florida's Reusable Launch Vehicle Hangar alongside the former shuttle landing strip and bases the fleet of F-104s there. It's ideal with access to the 15,000-foot restricted-airspace runway. The airport is also used by the astronauts aboard NASA business jets and Northrop T-38 two seat Talon's from NASA's Johnson Space Center, at Houston TX including the recent crews for [SpaceX Polaris Dawn](#) and [NASA Crew-9](#). → [Starfighters](#)

## How Do You Become a Hot Air Balloon Pilot?

### Labor intensive

**E**ver wonder what it takes to become a hot-air balloon pilot? In a recent episode of the FAA's *Air Up There* podcast series, you'll hear from Kim and Adam Magee, founders of The Balloon Training Academy and FAA Safety Team representatives, on how to make that dream a reality. The Magees share how they got started in ballooning, the training process for balloon pilots, and advice for aspiring aeronauts. Tune into the episode here [faa.gov/podcasts/the\\_air\\_up\\_there/how-do-you-become-hot-air-balloon-pilot](https://www.faa.gov/podcasts/the_air_up_there/how-do-you-become-hot-air-balloon-pilot) or go to [faa.gov/podcasts](https://www.faa.gov/podcasts) to see the entire episode list. →

## Striving for a Safer Surface

### Arrival Alert Notices

**T**he FAA and the aviation community are pursuing a goal of zero serious close calls and have fast-tracked three initiatives — Surface Awareness Initiative (SAI), Approach Runway Verification (ARV) and Runway Inursion Devices (RID) — as part of its Surface Safety Portfolio. These technologies are agile, efficient, and cost-effective, and the initiatives represent important improvements made by the FAA to swiftly address close calls on the runway. The recent FAA Safety Briefing article "[Striving for a Safer Surface](https://medium.com/faa/striving-for-a-safer-surface-998e796d4892)" at <https://medium.com/faa/striving-for-a-safer-surface-998e796d4892> outlines the basics behind each technology and also promotes some of the more popular pilot aids available to help improve situational awareness in the airport surface environment.

See the entire Airport Surface Safety issue at [www.faa.gov/safety\\_briefing](https://www.faa.gov/safety_briefing). → [FAA.gov](https://www.faa.gov)



## SATCOM Direct

### Acquired by Gogo Inflight at years end

**G**ogo Inflight COO, Sergio Aguirre, announced the acquisition of SD, Satcom Direct Melbourne, FL during the recent NBAA-BACE. He pushed back on the notion that the merger was spurred by the increasing prevalence of Starlink, saying that conversations about a merger began before Starlink—a subsidiary of Elon Musk's SpaceX—became a player.

Gogo Business Aviation (formerly Aircell) is a division of [Gogo Inflight Internet](#) a provider of in-flight broadband Internet service and other connectivity services for business aircraft. Satcom Direct founded in 1997 by CEO Jim Jensen has grown to become a leading provider of fully integrated, global satellite communications solutions. That meet the unique requirements of business aviation, government, land mobile, and marine customers.

Under the agreement, Satcom Direct will receive \$375 million in cash and five million shares of Gogo stock at closing and up to an additional \$225 million in payments tied to realizing certain performance thresholds over the next four years. The deal is expected to close by year-end. → [Aionline](#)

## Boeing Layoffs

### In total, about 17,000 jobs

**N**o sooner does the strike end and Boeing announces layoffs. IAM voted to accept the 38% pay increase over four years plus a \$12,000 signing bonus. But the 53-day strike took a \$10B toll on the company.

The layoffs are part of Boeing's plan to cut about 10% of its global workforce, or about 17,000 jobs, in an effort to stem the company's financial bleeding as it tries to regain its footing. The company had announced the cuts in October, that will begin on December 20, as necessary, while struggling to recover from safety and financial issues exacerbated by an extended strike.

The laid off workers will receive pay until January 17 to comply with federal law requiring notification of employees at least 60 days prior to any layoffs. → [Boeing](#)

## Pilots Rescue pets left homeless by Helene

### Rescued dog and cats in flooded North Carolina areas

**O**ctober was a very busy month for Pilots to the Rescue (PTTR). The aviation [nonprofit organization's](#) roster of volunteer pilots came to the aid of animals left homeless by Hurricane Helene, flying them to safety in the group's new Kodiak. The rescue was coordinated by the [Bissell Pet Foundation](#), which worked to find space for pets rendered homeless by the storm.

According to a PTTR spokesperson, the organization flew the group's new Kodiak into Asheville Regional Airport (KAVL) where they picked up eight dogs and two cats then headed to Greater Binghamton Airport (KBGM) where the animals were handed over to the Susquehanna SPCA. It's hoped that they will now be able to find their forever homes soon.

The group said it rescued 89 dogs and 22 cats in October, adding that a great many of them have been adopted. Transporting and caring for these displaced animals takes money, and PTTR is always accepting donations. The funds pay for food and medicine for the animals and fuel for the aircraft and ground vehicles doing the transport. → [PTTR](#)

## Allegiant pilots reject 70% pay increase

### Ouch, these pilots are not happy

**M**ore than 97% of Allegiant Airlines' 1,300 pilots have authorized their union to hold a strike vote even though the airline has offered them a 70% pay hike over the next five years. The package includes other bennies, but the union said it isn't enough to bring Allegiant pilots to the levels they need. "Allegiant pilots are some of the most overworked and underpaid in the airline industry," the union said in a statement. The strike cannot be held for at least a month after the strike vote, and the union is still in talks at the National Mediation Board.

A strike could theoretically affect holiday travel plans for thousands of people. Allegiant is based in Las Vegas and operates budget flights throughout the country. Including KMLB. → [AVweb](#)

## Improving conditions for disabled flyers Accommodations for wheelchairs

**T**ravel Weekly announced news that excited the millions of patient ADA air travelers who have flown under a long list of limitations on airline transportation.

Delta Flight Products a subsidiary of Delta Air Lines and Collins Aerospace are seeking approval from FAA for a seat design that would accommodate a wheelchair bound travelers with a modification to existing first class and coach seats. The technical design changes will allow special needs passengers to bring their wheelchairs on board, secure the chair and travel with other customers. Eliminating the wheelchair transfer to baggage and frequent damage.

The wheelchair convertible seat bottom folds against the seatback to make room for the wheelchair. The seat would be available for standard use when not booked by a wheelchair flyer.

Accessible lavatory design would be located at the front of the aircraft, near the boarding door. To provide easy access for wheelchair. The design would allow passengers with disabilities to access the sink from the toilet before transferring back into the wheelchair and also offers other touchless features and lighting designed to support individuals with limited vision.

The magnitude of this impact is shown by this numbers. In 2021, DOT received 1,394 disability-related complaints, marking a 54% increase from 2019. Common issues include damage to wheelchairs and inadequate assistance for passengers with mobility devices. → [Travel weekly](#)

## Embraer executive jets sees record deliveries 2024 was a good year

**E**mbraer Executive Jets logged a record third quarter, delivering 41 aircraft, an increase of more than 45% from third-quarter 2023, according to the company's third quarter financial results released November 8. Revenues for its private jet division—which accounts for one-third of the company's net revenue—rose by 65% year over year (YOY).

The delivery mix for the quarter was fairly evenly split between Embraer's light and super-midsize families, including four Phenom 100EXs, 18 Phenom 300Es, nine Praetor 500s, and 10 Praetor 600s.

Through the first nine months of the year, the OEM has delivered 86 business jets—20 more than through the same period in 2023—and is well on its way toward meeting its forecast range of 125 to 135 aircraft this year.

Parent Embraer reached a backlog of \$22.7 billion, a nine-year high. The business jet segment's backlog stood at \$4.4 billion at the end of the quarter, an increase of 3% YOY but a 4% decrease from the second quarter, which the company attributed to increased delivery tempo and a “seasonally slower period for sales because of summer in the northern hemisphere.”

In the company's services and support division, the backlog reached \$3.5 billion, an increase of more than 25% YOY and up more than 10% quarter over quarter. → [Ainonline](#)



## NBAA cautions members to be alert in NEC during the holidays Calling attention to recent changes in the system

**B**usiness aviation traffic historically increases during the winter holiday season throughout the Northeast Corridor (NEC) enveloping the Mid-Atlantic region and along the East Coast of the U.S. NBAA has advised flight crews to pay close attention to recent changes in this busy airspace during the upcoming season. → [NBAA](#)

## Latest FTFD Video Reviews Line Up and Wait A 9 minute video is worth the time

**A** line up and wait instruction is used by air traffic control (ATC) to inform a pilot to taxi onto the departure runway to line up and wait. It is not authorization for takeoff. So, why do pilots depart when they are instructed to line up and wait? The answer lies in a variety of human factors that can lead pilots to mistakenly depart. This recent [From the Flight Deck](#) video explores some real-life events and discusses the factors that contribute to an unauthorized takeoff roll when a pilot is instructed to line up and wait. See this and past videos here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMxUytwRDIA&list=PL5vHkqHi51DSNpsBC8nb8Q8gFcGVmWhGA>.

## FAA Completes Framework for Air Taxis

### Advanced Air Mobility

**T**he FAA is ready for powered lift, the first completely new category of civil aircraft since helicopters were introduced in the 1940s. Powered lift operations include air taxis, cargo delivery, and a variety of operations within urban and rural areas.

The agency issued a final rule for the qualifications and training that instructors and pilots must have to fly aircraft in this “powered-lift” (e-VTOL) category, which has characteristics of both airplanes and helicopters. The ruling 880-pages long, addresses the operational requirements, including minimum safe altitudes and required visibility. The rule is the final piece in the puzzle for safely introducing these aircraft in the near term. The opportunities for the use of powered lift operations are far-reaching, from transporting passengers in urban areas and short-haul operations such as air ambulance services and cargo operations to potentially serving smaller communities over time.

FMI, read the Medium blog at <https://medium.com/faa/faa-completes-framework-for-air-taxis-to-take-off-8cc2621bcfd8> and visit the advanced air mobility website at <https://www.faa.gov/air-taxis>.

## Don’t Let Disquieting Deviations Become Part of Your Pilot Song

### Spatial awareness

**O**ur national airspace system is safe because it functions like an orchestra — everyone has a part to play, knows the song, and has the sheet music in front of them. But even with all of that coordination, who hasn’t made a mistake? Learn how research and rehearsing can help prevent pilot deviations and make runways safer in “Deviation Dissonance” at <https://medium.com/faa/deviation-dissonance-572fc1a2719c> in the Sep/Oct 2024 issue of *FAA Safety Briefing*. See the entire Airport Surface Safety issue at [www.faa.gov/safety\\_briefing](http://www.faa.gov/safety_briefing).

Produced by the *FAA Safety Briefing* editors: [www.faa.gov/safety\\_briefing](http://www.faa.gov/safety_briefing)

## Thales studies AI for Air Traffic Management

### Nothing can go wrong, go wrong, go wrong

**T**hales is investigating the use of a neural network combined with a certified conflict detection system to help prevent aircraft from flying too close to one another in a given airspace.

The emergence of such a hybrid artificial intelligence (AI) system in air traffic management (ATM) could relieve pressure on air traffic controllers, who would ultimately decide whether to use a proposed resolution advisory. It could also improve avoidance trajectories, for instance, by making them shorter. Such a system might enter service around 2030, after more development and certification work is conducted. → [Aviation Week](#)

## Welcome New Member

Kaitlynn Grant

## Airworthiness Directive

AD that many affect members’ airplanes

The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive **AD 2024-21-02 for Lycoming Engines model engines that have a certain connecting rod assemblies installed**. This AD was prompted by several reports of connecting rod failures, which resulted in uncontained engine failure and in-flight shutdowns (IFSDs). This AD requires repetitive oil inspections for bronze metal particulates and, if found, additional inspections of the connecting rod bushings for damage, proper fit, movement, and wear, and replacement if necessary. As terminating action to the connecting rod bushing inspections, this AD requires replacement of the connecting rod bushings with parts eligible for installation. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 16,000 engines installed on airplanes of U.S. registry.

This AD is effective December 5, 2024. → [FAA.gov](http://FAA.gov)



# Aviation History for December

Click the date for the full event

- [Dec. 1, 1974.](#) TWA Flight 514, a Boeing 727 inbound to Dulles International Airport, crashes into Mount Weather in Bluemont, VA, killing all 85 passengers and 7 crew.
- [Dec. 3, 1990.](#) Northwest Airlines Flight 1482, a DC-9, collides with Northwest Airlines Flight 299, a Boeing 727, when the crew of the DC-9 mistakenly taxis onto the active runway at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport. Seven passengers and one crew-member out of the 54 on board Flight 1482 perish; all on board Flight 299 survive.
- [Dec. 4, 1965.](#) The 1965 Carmel mid-air collision; Eastern Flight 853, a Lockheed Super Constellation, collides with TWA Flight 42, a Boeing 707 over Carmel, New York; Flight 42 makes an emergency landing at John F. Kennedy International Airport; Flight 853 is forced to crash land on Hunt Mountain near Danbury, Connecticut, killing three passengers and one of the pilots on board; no casualties reported on board Flight 42.
- [Dec. 5, 2005.](#) Southwest Flight 1248, a Boeing 737 with 103 people on board, slides off a runway while landing in a snowstorm at Chicago Midway; 11 people on the aircraft are injured. The plane strikes at least three cars in a busy intersection; a six-year-old boy is killed and several people are injured in the cars.
- [Dec. 6, 2022.](#) The last Boeing 747 left the plant for delivery to Atlas Air, pilots intentionally flew a flight path that created a visible "747" shape in the sky using ADS-B tracking data, essentially "writing" the number in the air as a symbolic farewell to the iconic aircraft.
- [Dec. 12, 1985.](#) Arrow Air Flight 1285, a chartered Douglas DC-8, crashes just after take-off from Gander, Canada, killing 256 people, of whom 248 were soldiers in the Army 101st Airborne Division returning from overseas duty in the Sinai desert, Egypt. This remains the greatest peacetime loss of military personnel in US history.
- [Dec. 13, 1994.](#) American Eagle 3379, a Jetstream 31, crashed 5 miles short of the runway in Raleigh-Durham, killing 15 of the 20 on board. The night flight crashed due to an engine failure and not following the engine out procedures.
- [Dec. 14-23, 1986.](#) The Voyager, piloted by Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager, was the first to fly non-stop around the planet without refueling. A distance of 24,987mi. The aircraft is displayed in the NASM Washington, DC.
- [Dec. 15, 1989.](#) KLM Flight 867, a Boeing 747 flying from Amsterdam to Anchorage, Alaska, flies through a volcanic cloud, subsequently losing power from all four engines. The crew is able to restart the engines and land at Anchorage.
- [Dec. 17, 1903.](#) After several unsuccessful attempts, at Kill Devil Hills near Kitty Hawk, NC, [Orville Wright](#) completed the first powered flight of a heavier-than-air aircraft known as the Wright Flyer. The flight lasted just 12 seconds, traveled 120 feet, and reached a top speed of 6.8 mph.
- [Dec. 18, 2003.](#) FedEx Express Flight 647, a McDonnell Douglas MD-10-10, veers off the runway upon landing after a landing gear collapse and catches fire at Memphis International Airport; two crew members and five passengers escape with only minor injuries.
- [Dec. 19, 2005.](#) Chalk's Ocean Airways Flight 101, a Grumman Mallard, loses a wing and crashes off the coast of Miami Beach, Florida, killing all 20 on board.
- [Dec. 21, 1978.](#) Seventeen-year-old Robin Oswald hijacks TWA Flight 541, a McDonnell Douglas DC-9 with 87 people on board, threatening to blow up the airliner if her father is not released from prison. The aircraft makes an emergency landing at Williamson County Regional Airport in Marion, IL, where authorities talk her into surrendering without further incident. Her father, Garrett B. Trapnell, had been imprisoned for a 1972 airliner hijacking and her mother, Barbara Ann Oswald, Trapnell's wife, had been killed when she hijacked a helicopter in May 1978 in order to help him escape from prison.
- [Dec. 25, 2009.](#) Northwest Airlines Flight 253, an Airbus A330-300 is attacked by a man using a small explosive device, causing only a small fire inside the plane, which is extinguished by a flight attendant; the man is subdued by passengers and crew; there are 3 injuries.
- [Dec. 30, 1972.](#) President [Richard Nixon](#) halts aerial bombing of North Vietnam and announces peace talks.
- [Dec. 31, 1972.](#) Baseball player [Roberto Clemente](#) dies when his chartered DC-7 crashes into the ocean off the coast of Isla Verde, Puerto Rico, immediately after takeoff. Clemente was attempting to deliver relief supplies to Managua, Nicaragua, after a massive earthquake on December 23.



## “Say Again”

Dick Peiffer

More years ago than I care to remember, I was working on my seaplane rating flying a Super Cub at Lake Hood in Anchorage, Alaska. I flew early in the morning before going to work at Anchorage Center. Lake Hood has a control tower and I had asked for closed traffic for touch and go's. I was making right traffic and landing to the west through the canal that joins Lake Hood and Lake Spenard. I was alone in the pattern and the only one on the frequency. Each downwind the controller cleared me for a touch and go. Since I was the only one in the pattern and he was not talking to anyone else, I acknowledged with two clicks on the mike. Mike clicks for repetitive replies was common in those days. Particularly in the military.

After about 20 minutes and a number of touch & go's the controller asked, “How, do you hear me?”

I said, “Loud and clear.”

He said, “You haven't acknowledged the cleared for touch and go's.”

I said. “I was giving you two clicks on the mike.”

He said, “Okay, well start clicking harder.”

## Outtakes

**Spirit Airlines announced they will furlough more than 300 pilots** in January 2025, as part of an ongoing cost-cutting initiative and have sold 23 Airbus 320 and 321 aircraft to remain solvent.

**The WSJ reported that Spirit is still in merger talks.** A Federal Judge blocked JetBlue/Spirit merger in January. **In mid-November Spirit** filed for Chapter 11 reorganization bankruptcy. Losing \$158M 2Q, it recently extended a debt refinancing deadline from October 21 to December 23.

**German eVTOL firm Lilium is now insolvent** and could cease operations unless it finds a new investor ASAP.

**General Aviation pilots delivered over 100,000lbs** of relief supplies to residents in flooded areas in North Carolina. [Flying](#)

**FAA Says It Will Keep ATC Meteorologists at the Centers** and continue our long-standing partnership to provide weather services to ensure the safety of the NAS. [AVweb](#)

**Strike ends at Boeing IAM ratified contract** for 38% wage increase over 4 years plus \$12K ratification bonus. [Boeing](#)

**Boeing slashes DEI department in latest staff shake-up.** Announcing that human resources team will focus on talent and employee experience. [Bloomberg](#)

**The DOT has slapped American Airlines with a \$50M fine** after they found the carrier in violation of numerous laws set about to protect passengers with disabilities. [DOT.gov](#)

**FAA bans US flights into Haiti after three carriers were struck by gunfire.** The US Embassy issued a statement the area around Port-au-Prince airport remains unstable. [Aerotime](#)

**The FAA announced it has added over 100 DPEs** to improve the shortage in examiners. [AVweb](#)

**FAA moves to streamline launch approvals for commercial space firms.** Both Congress and SpaceX have criticized FAA for unnecessary delays. SpaceX had 395 a 30% launch increase in 2024 and Falcon 9 is the launch vehicle of choice for both NASA and the Pentagon. [Flying](#)

**iFLY EFB integrates SayWeather to enhance weather reporting for pilots.** [IflyEFB.com](#). [SayWeather.com](#)

**Radiant has introduced Action Camera Mounts** for Cessna, Tri-Pacer and Piper Cub aircraft. [Radiantinstruments.com](#)

**At a recent meeting, AAAE President Todd Hautpli said airports could see a reduction** in environmental and other regulations when Donald Trump takes office. [AviationWeek](#)

**Hartzell Propeller has introduced a “propeller exchange program”.** [Hartzell](#)

**Weather, controller shortages loom for record holiday weekend.** FAA says traffic will be throttled if staffing shortages occur during Thanksgiving travel period. [Flying](#)

## Air Shows 2025

Mar 15-16	Space Coast Warbird Airshow (KTIX)
Apr 1-6	Sun-n-Fun Aerospace Expo (KLAL) [Blue Angels]
May 3-4	Fort Lauderdale Airshow (FLL) [Blue Angels]
May 24-25	Miami Beach Air & Sea Show
July 21-27	EAA Air Venture 2025 Oshkosh (KOSH)



### “There I was”

**T**he Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) publishes monthly their popular safety newsletter “Callback” written by pilots, controllers or aviation personnel and encourages reproduction as lessons learned. To protect anonymity the narratives are cleansed.

This instrument student experienced a system failure that quickly threatened control of the aircraft. The instructor took swift action to recover the aircraft and mitigate the threat.

### A Student Nightmare

■ *During the takeoff and initial climb of an IFR training flight, the aircraft began uncommanded pitch-up and pitch-down movements, then began pitching up. The instrument student attempted to control this by using the electric trim controls on the left side of the control yoke but was unsuccessful. Several seconds later, the red PITCH TRIM FAIL indicator light illuminated, and the aural beep commenced. The aircraft began another uncommanded pitch-up, at which point the instructor took control of the aircraft, reduced thrust substantially, regained level flight, and cycled the Master Switch on and off to attempt to either reset or disable the electric pitch trim. After that, the electric pitch trim became inoperative. Manual trim inputs were effected to stabilize the aircraft.*



*The instructor requested priority handling with Approach and requested clearance to return and land at [the departure airport], which was then slightly behind the aircraft.*

*Aircraft control was regained, and the electric pitch trim was inoperative, but because of the aforementioned runaway trim, the manual pitch was positioned for a nose-high attitude and was difficult to manipulate. Thrust inputs and flaps were primarily used to stabilize the aircraft’s descent with minimal trim inputs for fear of setting off further uncommanded pitch trim changes.*

*The instructor was able to land the aircraft on the runway...without incident or requiring any assistance. The aircraft was taxied to the ramp and parked. → 493*



# Accident Report

Accident reports are provided by the NTSB and offered here as an educational tool, intended to help pilots learn from the misfortunes of others.

## Dark night conditions

On April 25, 2006, about 2111 EDT, a **Beech A24R, N9774L**, impacted the ground following a loss of control and subsequent inflight breakup near Okeechobee, FL. The private pilot and the passenger received fatal injuries and the airplane was destroyed. The airplane was registered to and operated by the pilot. Dark night visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the Part 91 personal flight from Wauchula, FL, to Fort Pierce, FL.

The pilot and passenger were returning from visiting a family member in St. Petersburg, FL. They departed St. Petersburg and stopped for fuel at Wauchula before continuing the flight to St. Lucie County Int'l, Fort Pierce. A family member notified authorities when the flight did not arrive. Local authorities located the airplane wreckage about 2200 on April 27, 2006.

Review of recorded radar data revealed that the airplane departed Wauchula about 2047 and headed east. The easterly heading was maintained until approximately 2111, at which time the airplane turned left to a northerly heading. The last radar hit was recorded at 2111:26 and placed the airplane less than 1 mile from the accident site. The recorded mode C altitude for the airplane's entire flight was "-1,000 feet", indicating invalid data. Estimates of the airplane's altitude were generated by the height finder feature of the radar sites. Between 2110:26 and 2111:26, the airplane's estimated altitude changed from 6,000 feet to 2,400 feet, indicating a descent rate of 3,600 feet per minute.



The pilot, age 55, held a Private Certificate with ASEL rating issued on September 29, 2005. The pilot was not instrument rated. On the application the pilot reported that he had accumulated a total flight time of 72 hours. He held a Class III medical certificate dated May 18, 2005, with the limitation, must have glasses available for near vision.

The flight instructor, who instructed the pilot for his private pilot certificate and provided complex training in the accident airplane, reported that he had flown between 30 to 40 hours with the pilot, including approximately 15 hours in the accident airplane. The instructor estimated that the pilot had flown about 70 to 75 hours in the accident airplane.

Analysis of the weather from KMCO, the Geostationary Operations Environmental Satellite #12 (GOES-12) visible and infrared images surrounding the time of the accident from 2000 – 2200. NWS Weather Surveillance Radar-1988, Doppler located at Melbourne (KMLB), approximately 45 miles east-northeast of the accident site. Satellite infrared images depicted a broken cloud layer over the accident site with cloud tops near 13,000 feet. Weather radar images showed that the accident site bordered an area of VIP Level 2 moderate intensity echoes with echo tops near 13,000 feet. This area of echoes was associated with a decaying cumulonimbus cloud (thunderstorm). The proximity of the echoes to the accident site suggests the potential for moderate intensity convectively induced turbulence. It is likely that the pilot encountered IMC or at least lost all visual reference, became disoriented and lost control of the airplane.

Examination of the wreckage indicated the airplane broke up in flight at a low altitude; the outboard wing panels and the left half of the horizontal stabilator were found about 1,000 feet from the main wreckage. All separations displayed signatures indicative of overload. The right wing panel had collision damage on its trailing edge at a mid-span location. The left wing panel had no visible collision damage. The right half of the stabilator had collision damage on its leading edge and remained partially attached to the fuselage. The left half of the stabilator had no visible collision damage. Control continuity was verified for all flight controls, except for separations to the aileron controls related to separation of the outer wing panels.

The engine sustained heavy impact damage; there were multiple cracks in the crankcase, and the oil sump was fragmented. The rear accessory case was removed, and the internal drive gears were found intact. Bore scope examination of the cylinders revealed no anomalies.

An autopsy of the pilot was conducted by the District 19 Medical Examiner Office, Fort Pierce, FL. The cause of death was reported as multiple injuries due to blunt trauma. Toxicology tests were negative for drugs.

The NTSB determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain aircraft control as a result of spatial disorientation and an inflight break up. Contributing to the accident were the dark night and thunderstorms. → MIA06FA098



## Mystery Airplane

Can you identify this airplane?



First prize is bragging rights  
Email your answer to [email@mlbpilots.org](mailto:email@mlbpilots.org)

Congratulations to **John Twitchell** and **Joanne Mills** who identified the November mystery airplane as the **Vultee BT-13, BT-15 or SNV Valiant**. Vultee Aircraft produced the series variants from 1940 to 1944 that far outnumbered all other aircraft in the basic training category and served almost exclusively as the basic type for all aircrew trained in the U.S. during World War II. The basic trainer represented the second of the three training phases – primary, basic and advanced – which were common to all military training programs. The BT-13 was a docile low-wing monoplane developed as a private venture as the Vultee Model 54.

The Army selected the Vultee Model 54 trainer that came with a 600hp Pratt & Wright engine. The evaluators considered the engine had too much power for training of young students and too complicated because of its retractable landing gear. So the gear was redesigned as fixed, added a two position prop, and a 450hp Pratt & Whitney with some equipped with the Wright Whirlwind engine. It was now the Vultee Model 54A and first flew in March 1939. In August the USAAC selected it for volume production as the BT-13 Valiant and it became the standard type for the basic stage category throughout World War II.



It had a two-seat tandem cockpit with a full set of flight controls for student and instructor pilot, air-to-ground radio, an intercom, and blind-flying instruments. The trainer flew at a maximum speed of 180 mph and had an operational range of 725 mi. Affectionately known by thousands of student pilots as the Vultee Vibrator. The name came from; strong buffeting when approaching a stall, canopy vibrations at high speeds, and prop vibrations at high pitch that caused windows on the ground to rattle during takeoff.

As the basic trainer, nearly all student pilots flew the BT-13 during the basic phase. After primary training in PT-13, PT-17, or PT-19 trainers, the student pilot moved to the more complex BT-13 Valiant for continued flight training. The student had to deal with a more powerful engine and it was faster and heavier than the primary trainer. It required the student to use two way radio communications with the ground and to operate landing flaps and a two-position Hamilton Standard controllable-pitch propeller or, more commonly, a constant-speed propeller.

The Army order for 300 was, at the time, the largest placed for basic trainers and among the largest for any aircraft type; it was followed, however, in 1941 by two larger contracts, one of which alone was for 2,000 aircraft. These contracts were for the BT-13A, with an R-985 engine and dispensed with the landing gear fairings. Production of this, the principal version, eventually totaled 6,407. Also produced were 1,125 BT-13Bs, in which a 24-volt electric system was used. Due to the demand for this aircraft, and others which used the same Pratt & Whitney engine, some were equipped with Wright power plants of similar size and power built in 1941–42. The Wright-equipped aircraft were designated BT-15. The BT-15B had a 24-volt electrical system. One BT-13A was rebuilt by Vidal in 1942 with an all-plastic fuselage and was designated XBT-16.

The Navy adopted the P&W powered aircraft as their main basic trainer, designating it the SNV. The BT-13 production run outnumbered all other Basic Trainer (BT) types produced.

By 1945, the place of the basic trainer in Army programs was taken by advance types, such as the AT-6. The BT-13s and 15s were quickly retired at wars end and production ended.

Post World War II many of these went to museums and others found their way into civilian Warbird ownership. As many as 100 are still registered, of that, likely about half are airworthy. →





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**Ninety-Nines Challenge coins.** The Spaceport Chapter of the Ninety-Nines is selling challenge coins to support their scholarship fund, which helps female pilots to reach their goal of becoming professional pilots.

The Ninety-Nines, Inc. is a non-profit, charitable, 501(c) (3) international organization that represents licensed women pilots from around the world. Ninety-Nine women pilots, including aviation pioneer, Amelia Earhart founded the organization in 1929.

A challenge coin is a small coin or medallion, bearing the organization's insignia or emblem, normally carried by the members, and displayed by friends to show their support.

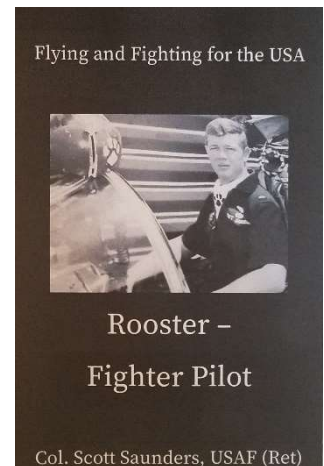
The coin, is shown at right is 1.75 inches in diameter, and cost \$15 each plus \$5 for shipping. All profits from the sale of these coins will be applied to the scholarship fund. You can order your coin(s) at [www.spaceport99s.org/challenge-coin](http://www.spaceport99s.org/challenge-coin) → [Ninety-Nines](http://www.spaceport99s.org)



New book release by Col Scott "Rooster" Saunders, USAF (Ret)

Rooster-Fighter Pilot is a riveting story about a boy who had a dream about flying and lived it out by going to the U.S. Air Force Academy becoming a fighter pilot. He flew combat in Southeast Asia and air-to-air training in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. He still flies today, holding a CFI, CFII, and MEI. He was recently awarded the coveted FAA Wright Brothers Award. He instructs and does Angel Flights, taking patients to their doctors. To check it out, go to [rooster-fighter-pilot](http://rooster-fighter-pilot)

Or click here. <https://store.bookbaby.com/book/rooster-fighter-pilot>



**Fly-in/Drive-in Breakfast: The Valkaria EAA Chapter 1288** puts on an excellent pancake breakfast on the **third Saturday of each month**. It features big portions of blueberry, chocolate chip, or plain pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage patties, bacon and grits. Regular and De-Caf coffee and orange juice. Dining is inside the new terminal building at Valkaria, or if the weather permits, up on the observation deck. All for \$10.00 adults, and \$5.00 children. We usually have several fly-ins from places all around Florida.

Serving is from 8:00am to 10:00am. If unusual circumstances prevent the scheduled breakfast an announcement appears on our website, [eaal288.com](http://eaal288.com). Come and enjoy!

### **The Valiant Air Command has cancelled breakfast until further notice.**

**Fly-in/Drive-in Breakfast: The Valiant Air Command Warbird Museum** at Space Coast Airport hosts a breakfast on the **second Saturday of each month**. The Chef catered breakfast includes pancakes, eggs & omelets your way, sausage, bacon, biscuits and gravy, juice, and coffee. Served 8:00am – 10:00am, donation \$12 per person, under 5yo is \$5. Free museum admission is included with purchases of breakfast. Arrive early last month over 320 were serviced.

The VAC is a 501(c) (3) with all profits going to support the museum and its restorations.

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