

Celebrating ALPA's Everyday Heroes

By John Perkinson, Staff Writer



ALPA pilots make critical decisions every day that ensure the ongoing safety and security of the air transportation system. The highlights of these efforts are acknowledged every year at ALPA's Annual Safety and Security Awards Banquet.

With ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, as emcee, the evening recognizes the best of the profession—those who give their time and energy to improve airline safety and security—and crews that perform with excellence in the cockpit.

Recognizing a safety icon

One of the evening's highest honors, the 2007 Air Safety Award, was presented to Capt.

Terry McVenes (US Airways), ALPA's former Executive Air Safety Chairman, for his hard work and outstanding commitment to air transportation safety. The award was prefaced by a video, highlighting accolades from ALPA pilot safety representatives and staff, as well as government and industry officials, who worked with McVenes and remember his patience, leadership, and ability to build consensus. The Association's Executive Air Safety Chairman, Capt. Rory Kay (United), described his safety predecessor, saying, "He has raised the standard for all ALPA leaders."

"I'm not very comfortable standing here because it's all of you who should be recognized," said McVenes, exhibiting his usual modest demeanor, but also acknowledging the many safety advocates who were present. "Working with the ALPA Safety Committee was an awesome experience."

McVenes thanked his friends, colleagues, and family members for their many years of support, and asked the audience to recommit themselves to make air transportation even safer. He stressed the importance of working together and looking for answers versus blame. "Money and politics should never drive the safety of our industry," he added.

Promoting pilots as the linchpin of airline security

The 2007 Aviation Security Award, ALPA's highest security honor, was presented to Capt. Ed Folsom (United) for his

many years of service as an ALPA security representative and his work to establish the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program, after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Folsom was also recognized for his work with security incident reporting systems and his advocacy for secondary barriers to better protect airliner cockpits. Capt. Bob Hesselbein (Northwest), ALPA's National Security Committee chairman, described the Boeing 767 captain as someone who "symbolizes commitment to the greater security we enjoy today."

In his acceptance speech, Folsom talked about his efforts to "slay those (security) dragons" and acknowledged the many "other volunteers who ensure that our skies stay safe and secure."

Acts of courage, bravery, and teamwork

ALPA presented three sets of Superior Airmanship Awards this year to pilot members who, through their decision-mak-



Capt. Folsom, his wife, Laura, and their three children pose for this photo on the ALPA Air Safety and Security Awards Banquet stage.



Capt. Terry McVenes addresses the audience.



Northwest Capt. Leighton acknowledges the one-year anniversary of the Rome event as, from left to right, Capt. Prater, F/O Sparks, S/O Kritzer, and Capt. Stevens listen.

54TH ANNUAL ALPA AIR SAFETY AND SECURITY WEEK

ing and actions, clearly demonstrate the value of a well-trained, experienced flight crew.

Northwest pilots Capt. Dennis Leighton, First Officer Edward Sparks, and Second Officer David Kritzer were recognized for their outstanding performance in safely landing Flight 908 on August 14, 2007. The B-747-200F cargo aircraft experienced multiple electrical system failures after taking off from Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport in Taipei. The failures resulted from water collected in the airplane from torrential rains in the area.

Northwest Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Dave Stevens, described how the pilots declared an emergency, requesting clearance for an immediate landing. The crew performed a difficult no-gyro vectors approach, while dealing with language difficulties, mountainous terrain,



Cpts. Prater and Moak (applauding) stand on either side of Delta honorees—Capt. Hupperich, F/O Calzolari, and F/O Stafford.

thunderstorms, windshear, and minimal visibility—which resulted in three missed approaches. On the fourth attempt, the pilots landed safely.

Leighton noted that this very evening—August 14—is the one-year anniversary of the incident. He recalled a former flight instructor, many years ago, teaching him how to fly in clouds with only minimal instruments, and how this lesson paid off last year above Taipei.

Superior Airmanship Awards were also presented to a Delta B-767-400ER crew—Capt. Peter Hupperich, First Officer Edward Calzolari, and First Officer Joseph Stafford—for their quick thinking and coordinated action after multiple bird strikes.

Flight 77 on July 7, 2007, shuddered violently shortly after departing from Rome Fiumicino International Airport enroute to Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. The airplane hit several sea-gulls during its takeoff roll, but the engines did not indicate any damage until the airplane was airborne. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, the pilots declared an emergency, rejected initial ATC vectors, and positioned the airplane to return to the airport. Despite the airplane's added fuel weight, Delta MEC chairman, Capt. Lee Moak, described how the pilots “returned their damaged airplane safely to the ground.



American Eagle Capt. Joslyn and F/O De Paola, holding their Superior Airmanship Awards, flanked by Cpts. Prater and Mark, far right.

“Well done. As you have done so many times before—you made the job look easy,” Moak concluded.

Capt. Peter Hupperich noted that a common theme for the evening's three sets of Superior Airmanship Awards was pilots rising to the occasion under extraordinary circumstances. He thanked everyone involved for their support, but particularly acknowledged his crew for “an incredible job in Rome.”

“On behalf of the 77,000 employees of Delta Air Lines and Northwest, I'd like to thank you for this Award,” he said.

Capt. Richard Joslyn and First Officer John De Paola, the flight crew of American Eagle Flight 4539 on June 20, 2007, also received Superior Airmanship Awards for their diligence and teamwork in resolving a landing gear malfunction. The pilots of the Embraer ERJ-135 received conflicting information about their landing gear position as they approached Boston Logan International Airport. Although they heard the nosewheel doors open and observed the customary three green lights, they also received a supplemental landing gear message, indicating that the gear position and landing gear level were not in agreement. During the landing attempt, they realized the aircraft was settling lower than it should with the gear down, so they immediately conducted a go-around and were informed by ATC that sparks had been observed streaming behind the aircraft and debris was on the runway. Joslyn declared an emergency and began troubleshooting.

After a careful review of their circumstances and using all available resources, the crew conducted an abnormal landing gear extension and eventually touched down without further incident. Eagle's MEC chairman, Capt. Herb Mark, recounted the situation, noting that the pilots' skillful efforts resulted in a new procedure at his airline to mitigate future problems.

Joslyn, joking with the audience, said, “It is a great honor getting this Award; I don't think I want to get it again.” He noted that he was in contact with ATC while De Paola flew the airplane. Together, they worked through the problem and safely landed the airplane. “ALPA was there in our corner the whole way,” Joslyn added.

Other recognized ALPA safety and security leaders

Earlier in the evening, Capt. Prater awarded six ALPA Presidential Citations to pilot members who have volunteered their time to make the Association's safety and security programs the gold standard within the airline industry. He said, "These men and woman represent the cream of the crop of ALPA safety and security representatives."

Capt. Mary McMillan (United) was recognized for her work on advancing the understanding of aviation's effect on the environment and for her activism to construct a framework for aviation sustainability.

First Officer Avery Bates (Atlas) was honored for "improving the security of air cargo operations" and his outstanding outreach efforts.

Capt. Brian Townsend (US Airways) was acknowledged for his superior leadership with ALPA's National Airspace System Modernization Committee, and Capt. Greg Bergner (ASTAR) was lauded for his FFDO and air cargo security work.

Capt. Ken Young (ASTAR) received a Presidential Citation for his service to the ALPA Cargo Safety Project Team and his commitment to "One Level of Safety and Security."

Capt. Ellis Nelson (United, Ret.) was applauded for his commitment to the FFDO program and his contributions to protecting airlines against chemical-biological threats.

In addition to these awards, Prater acknowledged the many honored guests who attended the awards banquet, including dignitaries from IFALPA, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the FAA, the NTSB, the Transportation Security



ALPA Presidential Citation honorees include, from left to right, Capt. Mary McMillan, F/O Avery Bates, Capt. Brian Townsend, F/O Greg Bergner, Capt. Ken Young, and Capt. Ellis Nelson.

Administration, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, NAV Canada, Boeing, Airbus, the Air Transport Association, RTCA, and Sennheiser Aerospace. Hesselbein and Kay also recognized the previous Air Safety Award and Aviation Security Award recipients who were present.

ALPA is the airline industry's leading safety and security advocate, and continues to work with government and industry to achieve improvements that protect and secure our airplanes, skies, and airports. 🌐

ALPA Safety Reps Hold 'Town Meeting'

By Jan W. Steenblik, Technical Editor

One of the robust traditions of ALPA's Air Safety and Security Week, held annually in August in Washington, D.C., is the Joint Safety Meeting. ALPA aviation safety representatives gather to hear updates from the chairmen of the five ALPA-wide technical groups and other ALPA safety leaders.

Capt. Victor Cabot (American Eagle), chairman of the ALPA Operations Committee, said that OpsCom (made up of the central air safety chairman of every ALPA pilot group) is dealing with four principal hot-button issues—pilot fatigue, flight-time and duty-time limits and rest requirements, Aviation Safety Action Programs (ASAP), and the NOTAM system.

Capt. Ken Young (ASTAR), ALPA Cargo Safety Project Team leader and member at large of ALPA's President's Committee for Cargo, provided an update on cargo safety (see "Cargo Ops: Five Times the Risk," August). The air cargo industry needs to create "a strong safety culture," Young argued.

"In the last six months, we've had four cargo accidents involving widebody airplanes," he pointed out. "Cargo safety doesn't get much publicity or oversight; it almost seems to be swept under the carpet. We still have a double standard of safety compared to passenger airlines."

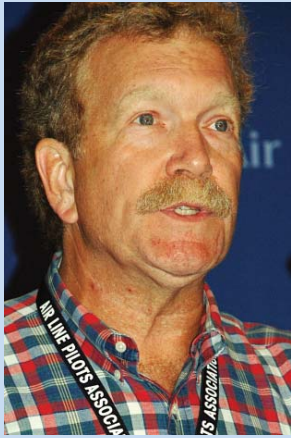
Capt. Ray Gelinas (Air Canada Jazz), chairman of the ALPA Accident Analysis and Prevention (AAP) Group, and his right-hand men reviewed their recent work.

Capt. Mike Bender (FedEx), chairman of the ALPA Accident Investigation Board (AIB), reported that the AIB is involved in several ongoing NTSB accident investigations and is working to get ALPA accident investigation courses accredited by IFALPA so that ALPA accident investigators will be allowed to participate in international accident investigations.

F/O Mark Rogers (United), director of ALPA's Dangerous Goods Program, provided an update on ALPA's efforts to improve the safety of lithium batteries in airline cabins and as cargo (see "Douse those Batteries!" August).

Another dangerous goods issue surfaced in November 2007 when an aluminum cylinder—filled with pressurized, corrosive ethylene glycol—exploded in a warehouse in Dubai after being shipped by air from England. In November, ALPA will try to get an international mandate through ICAO to require that relief valves be installed on all gas cylinders.

F/O Rick Salivia (Continental), director of ALPA's Accident Survival Programs, reported on the Association's multifaceted



JAN W. STEENBLIK

Capt. Mike Bender (FedEx)

involvement in improving aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF). He also described three ongoing challenges—automatic accident alerting systems, accessibility of onboard emergency equipment, and government/industry efforts to amend standards for airplane oxygen systems to accommodate higher service ceilings and new technologies.

F/O Brit Etzold (Northwest), director of ALPA's Safety Information Analysis Program, discussed the status, progress, and challenges of Aviation Safety Action Programs (ASAP) and the sweeping Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing System (ASIAS), which is bringing together de-identified aviation safety data from several sources in one gigantic database. ALPA is heavily involved in directing the course of both of these vitally important safety information programs.

Capt. Bob Perkins (Air Canada Jazz), chairman of the ALPA Airport and Ground Environment (AGE) Group, reported on three ongoing AGE activities—preventing runway incursions, improving runway friction measurements, and the ALPA Airport Liaison Representative (ALR) program.

Regarding runway friction, ALPA has been participating in the FAA's Takeoff and Landing Performance Assessment Aviation Rulemaking Committee. Perkins has been active in the airports group looking at some of the FAR Part 139 (airport certification) criteria that need to be changed.

ALPA currently has ALRs at 153 of the 253 U.S. and Canadian airports served by ALPA members. The Association has assigned 14 new ALRs to 11 airports since April.

Capt. Larry Newman (Delta), chairman of the ALPA Air Traffic Services Group, gave an overview of his group's six main current projects:

- The United States is the only country using the ATC clearance, "Taxi into position and hold," rather than, "Line up and wait." Newman said Capt. Tim Flaherty (Northwest) "stepped up to the plate and took this on," and the FAA is now going to change the phraseology.
- In ICAO standard phraseology, a clearance to "taxi to" a runway for takeoff does *not* include clearance to cross any active runways, as in the United States; this is an issue for U.S. pilots flying overseas. The FAA is now considering changing the meaning of "taxi to" to comply with the ICAO standard.
- For wake separation, closely spaced parallel runways are those with centerlines less than 2,500 feet apart. St. Louis (STL) has a waiver for 1,200-foot centerline separation, and the FAA wants to expand this waiver to other U.S. airports.

The FAA is promoting RNAV/RNP for radar separation, which could further reduce runway separation requirements without high infrastructure investment, but many hurdles

remain. The best chance for obtaining new runways is to build them between existing runways, which requires new (i.e., closer) separation standards.

- Intersecting runways and flight paths remain an ALPA concern, and the FAA is preparing to conduct a safety risk assessment. At Las Vegas, controllers are using a new "Go-Around Spacing Tool" that automatically builds a gap for a go-around.
- The FAA's Air Traffic Organization (ATO) is developing an internal safety management system (SMS); however, the ATO is substituting "expert opinion" for risk modeling.
- The 1981 PATCO strike led to a huge FAA hiring bubble for controllers; many are now retiring. A number of "new hire" controllers are moving directly into major U.S. ATC facilities, "with predictable results," Newman said.

Capt. Mary Ann Schaffer (United), who chairs the ALPA President's Task Force on Aviation Sustainability and the Environment, noted that the task force began with a focus



JAN W. STEENBLIK

Capt. Linda Orlady (United)

on environmental issues—because "aviation is the scapegoat for carbon emissions, especially in Europe"—but earlier this year shifted to the 2008 energy crisis. She outlined ALPA's proactive response to this dire situation, which has had a devastating effect on airlines (see "ALPA Beats the [Oil] Drum for Energy Reform," page 33).

Schaffer emphasized that the ALPA task force is "standing up for safety first" and "bringing a unique operational perspective on a wide range of initiatives."

Capt. Linda Orlady (United), director of ALPA's Safety Management System (SMS) Program, declared that the ALPA program has "gotten off to a good start." She outlined ongoing SMS activities on several important fronts.

Airport operators already have their own FAA advisory circular on SMS, Orlady pointed out; a trial program for airline implementation is already under way. The FAA's Air Traffic Organization (ATO) is developing an SMS, as is the Joint Program Development Office (JPDO), a consortium of six U.S. government departments created to oversee development of the Next-Generation Air Transportation System (NGATS).

"A big part of what we need to do is to educate [others]," Orlady said. "Especially with the ALRs [ALPA Airport Liaison Representatives] and the Regional Safety Coordinators, we have a real opportunity to do some good work."

Challenges for the future include the timing and depth of employee participation in SMS; shrinking resources and priority changes; and development of the SMS FAR (the length of the process to develop a final rule, and the number of different entities involved).

Capt. Bill de Groh (American Eagle), chairman of the ALPA

Airport and ALR Awards

Capt. Bob Perkins (Air Canada Jazz), chairman of ALPA's Airport and Ground Environment (AGE) Group, presented the ALPA Outstanding ALR (Airport Liaison Representative) Award to three exceptional ALRs during this year's ALPA Air Safety and Security Week:

- F/O Tim Albert (United) has been the ALR for Palm Springs, Calif. (PSP) for 3 years—and a member of the 19-person Palm Springs Airport Commission, made up of people from cities around Palm Springs. "He has built a good relationship with the airport manager and operations personnel," Perkins noted, "and has made great strides in getting incursion prevention strategies put in place at Palm Springs."
- F/O Michael Brown (United), the ALR at Sacramento, Calif. (SMF), "has done exceptional work improving an information link between the airport and ALPA, keeping us updated on construction projects," Perkins said. "He has also had great success in voicing pilots' safety concerns with officials at SMF, including enhancing signage and markings."
- Capt. Stuart Cory (Continental), the ALR for Cleveland Hopkins (CLE), received a good transition briefing from prior CLE ALR George Henning, "but he still found he had a lot to learn about what goes on behind the scenes at airports—like



Capt. Bob Perkins (Air Canada Jazz), left, presented the ALPA Outstanding ALR Award to three exceptional ALRs, including F/O Michael Brown (United), the ALR at Sacramento, Calif. (SMF).

construction, displaced thresholds, and ATC," Perkins noted.

The ALPA Pilot-Friendly Airport Award was given to Boston Logan International Airport. BOS has posted an impressively long list of improvements in recent years, including upgrading airport signs and markings to new FAA standards two years ahead of schedule; using the Runway Safety Action Team (RSAT) concept to reduce runway incursions and improve safety for vehicles and aircraft; and holding monthly Airport Safety Alliance meetings for ramp safety issues. [▶](#)

Aircraft Design and Operations (ADO) Group, discussed the ADO Group's six programs:

- Aircraft Certification has about 10 active projects; primary are ETOPS, electronic flight bags, personal electronic devices (PEDs) in airliner cabins, and inflight fire and smoke.
- Aircraft Development and Evaluation includes 5 projects, principal among them ALPA input regarding the B-787.
- Aircraft Performance deals with 3 projects—aircraft runway performance, B-747-8 wake vortex, and A380 wake vortex.
- MMEL Program focuses on MMEL/maintenance reliability and needs more pilot volunteers.
- All-Weather Flying deals with three projects—synthetic vision, international harmonization of regulations regarding all-weather operations, and the FAA's Performance-Based Operations Aviation Rulemaking Committee (PARC).
- RNAV/RNP covers a broad array of current and future navigation and ATC procedures and proposals.

Capt. Chuck Hogeman (United), chairman of ALPA's Human Factors and Training Group, warned, "We have a lot of work to do" because "current airline industry distractions are finding their way into the cockpit." In September, he said, the HFT Group will put a resolution before the ALPA Executive Board proposing an ALPA policy on multi-crew pilot license (MPL).

Capt. Shawn Pruchnicki (Comair), director of the ALPA Human Factors Working Group, discussed four major areas of activity for his group:

- The HFWG helped write the human factors portion of ALPA's submission to the NTSB regarding a landing overrun accident in Traverse City, Mich. The HFWG also is actively involved in developing ALPA's Petition for Reconsideration of

findings and probable cause in the Comair Flight 5191 takeoff accident at Lexington, Ky.

- HFWG is almost finished writing an ALPA position paper on automation and flight path control, and is writing another paper on a biomathematical model for understanding the human factors component in accident causation.
- ALPA also is involved in the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) G-10 Committee regarding human factors aspects of introducing new weather products into the cockpit.
- An airworthiness directive that led to a procedural change on a certain airplane type has resulted in 14 attempted no-flap takeoffs; ALPA is investigating.

Capt. Glen Finch (Air Canada Jazz), director of the ALPA Pilot Training Working Group, noted, "Training is one of the few areas that straddles both the representation side of ALPA and the safety side—so this year's Training Council meeting focused on the representation side."

On another subject, Finch warned, "We continue to see low-experience pilots coming into training—we want to find strategies to mitigate that."

Capt. Bryan Burks (Alaska), he said, has been working with the Royal Aeronautical Society for about 2 years on developing standards for flight simulators. The Society is expected to issue a report soon.

Finch said the PTWG is working on changes to high-altitude training (a result of the NTSB investigation of the Pinnacle Flight 3701 accident) and expects to release its work soon.

Please visit www.alpa.org/Forum2008 for in-depth coverage of Air Safety and Security Week, including AvSec 2008. [▶](#)