

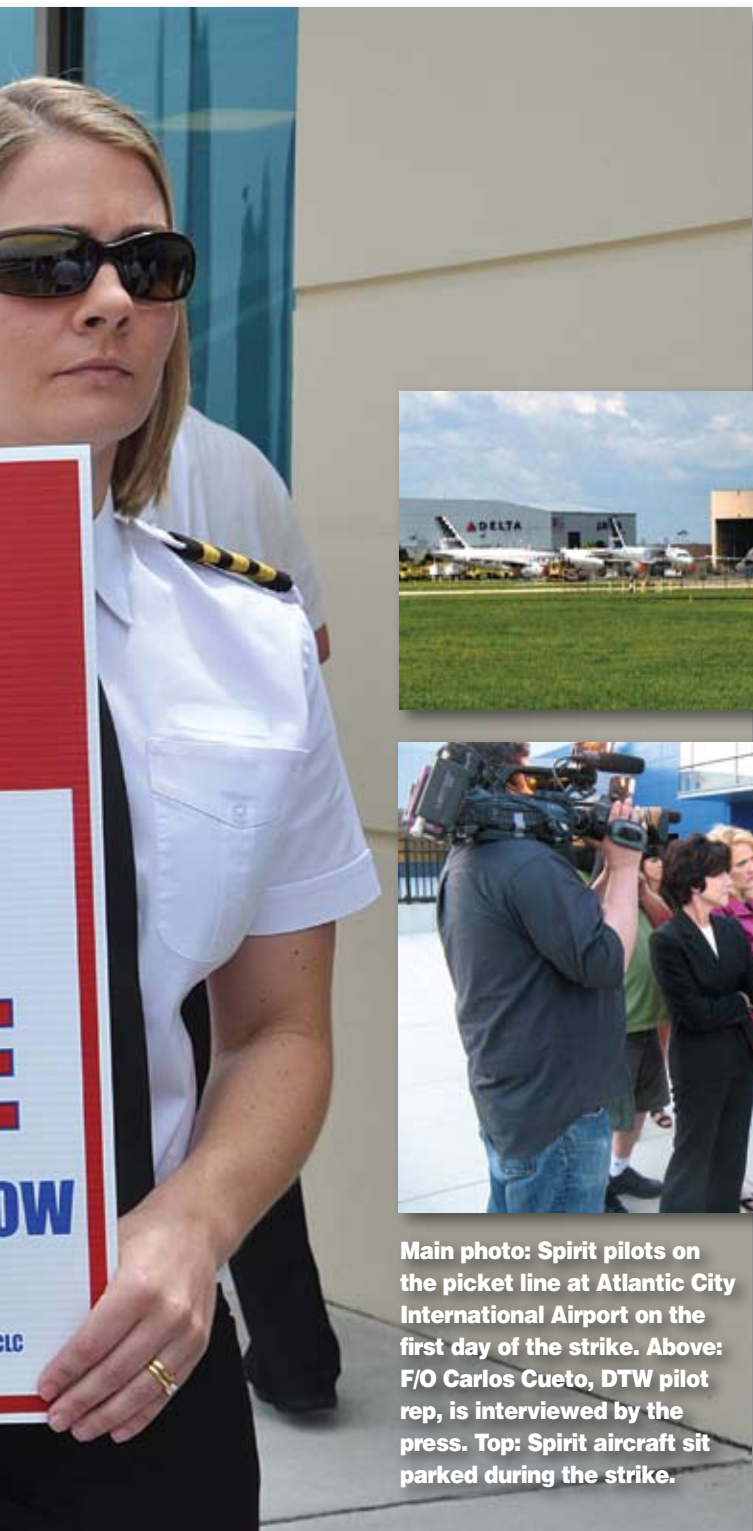
SPIRIT S

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PHOTOS BY ALPA PUBLIC RELATIONS STAFF

STRIKES



Main photo: Spirit pilots on the picket line at Atlantic City International Airport on the first day of the strike. Above: F/O Carlos Cueto, DTW pilot rep, is interviewed by the press. Top: Spirit aircraft sit parked during the strike.

June 12, 2010, 5:01 a.m.: Dawn breaks. After twice extending the strike deadline, management's final-hour offer attempts to pit the Spirit pilot group against itself and that's the last straw. Following 4 years of fruitless negotiations, Spirit pilots make their stand, calling for a lawful strike that would span 5 days. What follows is the chain of events that convinced a recalcitrant management to change its tune.

Solidarity

Spirit pilots, no longer flying the line, reported for strike duty, taking up posts on the picket line, in the call center, or



at computers, tracking down their fellow pilots to spread the news and operating procedures. Strike centers buzzed with activity in preparation for daily demonstrations, news media interviews, and constant Pilot-to-Pilot® communications that permeated



the 450-strong Spirit pilot community to the core and transcended pilot group lines throughout ALPA and across the industry.

F/O Mark Bailey, DTW strike center coordinator, recognized the untold number of pilots nationwide, both union and non-union, who made it clear to their managements that they would honor Spirit's picket lines and not fly struck work. "There were a lot of guys we never met who were not ALPA members, who may not have had any union representation at all, who stood behind us,"

Bailey said. "They weren't carrying a picket sign, but they were there, too."

From the sultry streets and sidewalks of Fort Lauderdale and Atlantic City to a fenced-in area quickly dubbed the "Dog Pen" in Detroit, hundreds walked picket lines that snaked beside busy roadways and empty Spirit gates. Numbers grew exponentially as the strike progressed, as Spirit pilots and their families, other ALPA pilots, flight attendants, and various workers from the labor movement braved the heat to send managements around the nation a

SPIRIT STRIKES

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Above: Saturday night, Day 1—Spirit pilots and supporters gather in Detroit as the strike begins to show their solidarity. Below: A huge group of picketers in Fort Lauderdale on Day 3 of the strike. Right: Pilots in Florida get briefed at the end of the strike.



clear message: this is our stand, and we will not fall. In fact, during the Spirit strike, *not one ALPA-represented pilot at Spirit crossed the picket line to fly*. And aside from a single charter flight, management was unable to convince any other airline to do any flying for Spirit during the strike.

Scare tactics

Faced with such staunch industrywide solidarity, Spirit management resorted to typical scare tactics in a failed attempt to divide and conquer. Attempting to sway the pilots' resolve, President and CEO Ben Baldanza sent a series of e-mails throughout the strike. The first message detailed management's version of the last-ditch-effort proposed contract, peppered with phrases to instill doubt, such as "IS YOUR CAREER BEING SACRIFICED FOR THE BENEFIT OF LARGER ALPA CARRIERS?" and "**Do not be bullied by a national agenda to help AirTran, Jazz, Pinnacle, Trans States, Continental/United, and others.**" (Emphasis as shown in the original message.)

When that didn't work, Baldanza sent a "Message from Ben," with answers to a series of invented "frequently asked questions," one of which included "Why do you think



there's an ALPA national agenda influencing these negotiations?" By Day 4 of the Spirit strike, management decided to furlough its flight attendants, an action that somewhat backfired as they showed up at the Spirit picket lines in droves to support the pilots' determination to secure a fair and equitable contract.

Success

On June 15, at the request of the National Mediation Board, the parties headed back to the negotiating table in Fort Lauderdale and reached a tentative agreement just one day later. "We're pleased to have a tentative agreement that acknowledges the sacrifices that each of us has made to ensure the success of Spirit Airlines," said Capt. Sean Creed, the Spirit pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. "This agreement provides increases in pay and retirement benefits, protects our work rules, and ensures our job security at Spirit. After 5 days on the picket line, this agreement also gets this pilot group and this airline back where it belongs—in the air."

As this issue of *Air Line Pilot* goes to press, Spirit MEC leaders are still preparing their pilots for a major decision. This time, it's by holding road shows in domiciles throughout their network so that every Spirit pilot can cast an educated vote on the contract ratification ballot. 🗳️

Visit www.alpa.org/spiritstrike for complete strike coverage and to view pictures and videos and read day-by-day strike stories and letters of support.