

NATCA 33rd ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



Things That Shaped NATCA

On June 19, 1987, the Federal Labor Relations Authority certified NATCA as the exclusive bargaining representative of FAA Air Traffic Controllers. The following key events, as well as many others, have helped grow our Union, steel its will, demonstrated dedicated representation of NATCA members, and strengthened NATCA's solidarity, resolve, and character.

1986

NATCA's Birth Takes Shape at Founding Convention, Chicago

On Sept. 23-24, 1986, 72 delegates attend NATCA's founding convention at the Chicago-O'Hare Ramada Hotel, including provisional representatives from each of NATCA's nine regions. John Thornton, the founding father of NATCA, announces that NATCA has collected more than 4,200 signatures calling for an election on whether to form a union. However, the group decided to wait in order to get more signatures before filing them with the FLRA to help ensure a "big win."

1987



Controllers Vote 'Yes'

On June 11, 1987, with 84 percent of controllers voting, seven out of every 10 of them chose NATCA. It was a show of support - with President Reagan still in office - viewed as stunning to most observers. The news was announced before a packed room of journalists.

1989

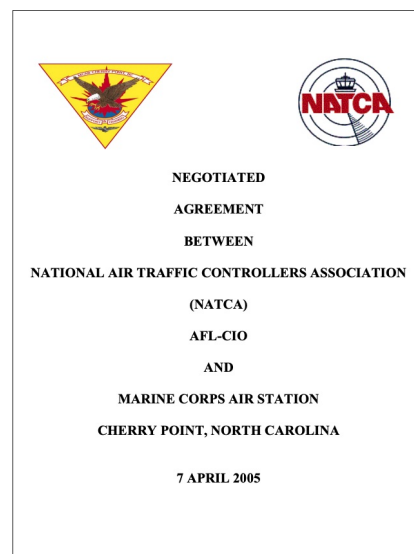
The First Contract

Beginning in November 1988, NATCA and the FAA sat down to discuss a collective bargaining agreement (CBA). It was the first time a union representing air traffic controllers and the FAA had conducted talks since the strike in 1981. The final agreement was a CBA for 1989 to 1993, and contained provisions from the 1978 PATCO contract such as mandatory breaks after two hours on position, immunity for controllers who reported operational errors, and release time for union representatives to work on NTSB investigations. They also gained the right to conduct mid-term bargaining and workplace articles related to prime time leave. NATCA also successfully bargained regional representatives 50 percent official time off to conduct union representational duties.

1990

First DoD Facility Represented

On Sept. 6, 1990, NATCA was certified as the exclusive bargaining representative of the civilian controllers at Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station in North Carolina. The 30 new BUEs became the first non-FAA controllers to be represented by NATCA. It was the beginning of a long record of successful organizing efforts. NATCA now represents five DoD facilities and 111 federal contract towers in addition to 16 FAA bargaining units.



1992

NATCA Takes Monumental Step With Pay Reclassification

A truly momentous accomplishment for NATCA – a six-year-long effort to design, ratify, and implement a 10-tier pay reclassification system that began in 1992 and expanded the existing five-tier system. It changed pay from the GS scale to one based on traffic volume and complexity.

1993

NATCA's First Lobby Week

NATCA's first national legislative week began on Sept. 20, 1993. At the time, more than 250 members participated in the inaugural "Lobby Week." The Union launched the program to raise legislative awareness and provide an opportunity for members to meet their congressional representatives. A year earlier, at the San Antonio Convention, delegates voiced the need for grassroots legislative involvement.



1994

NCF Leads Spirit of Generosity

Former Southwest RVP Darrell Meachum and his wife Cathy, an honorary lifetime member, began the NATCA Charitable Foundation (NCF) as a way of pooling the efforts of many NATCA locals that run charity fundraisers and bring recognition to the profession. Now in its 26th year, NCF remains a 100% volunteer organization made up of members, friends, and family. Last year, NCF donated \$250,000 to more than 140 charities and continues to bring NATCA regions and locals together in the spirit of generosity.

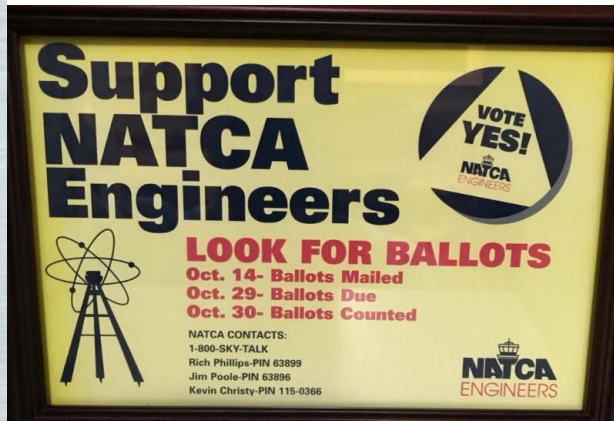
1996

Chapter 71: Fight for Survival

In November 1995, Congress passed an appropriations bill that required the FAA to implement a new personnel system, and exempted the FAA from Title 5 United States Code to allow the Agency to legally negotiate pay. However, removing Title 5 coverage also eliminated Chapter 71, which grants federal workers the right to union representation and collective bargaining. Without Chapter 71, NATCA and other unions representing FAA employees would lose their right to collectively bargain. In the end, after a



lengthy fight, in March 1996, NATCA, with the assistance of other FAA unions, succeeded in restoring Chapter 71 language on the continuing resolution that also provided aid for Bosnia and Midwest flood relief.



1997

Engineers Join NATCA

FAA engineers (E&A) officially joined the NATCA Family with FLRA certification. With 1,400 BUEs, E&A is the largest component of Region X. It was one of the Union's greatest organizing success stories and the start of a large-scale expansion of NATCA's growth and strengthening into an even more powerful union.

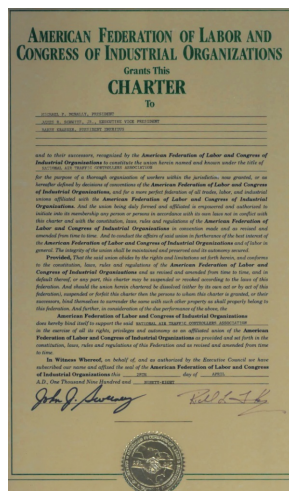
1997

NATCA Expands With FCTs

The FAA began contracting out towers in the early 1990s. NATCA fought it in court for many years. But the Union knew these controllers still needed a voice and the right to collectively bargain with their private employers. The NLRB certified NATCA as the exclusive bargaining representative for its first Federal Contract Tower, Central Wisconsin Tower (CWA), Mosinee, Wis., in early 1997. NATCA currently represents 111 of the 256 FCTs.



NATCA's 111th and newest FCT is Macon, Ga. (MCN).



1998

AFL-CIO Accepts NATCA

On March 20, 1998, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, impressed by what NATCA had achieved in its first decade, voted unanimously to accept NATCA as a direct affiliate after the Union broke away from the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association. NATCA President Paul Rinaldi has served as a Vice President on the AFL-CIO's Executive Council since 2013.

1998

NATCA Negotiates Pay for the First Time

NATCA and the FAA sign an unprecedented five-year collective bargaining agreement - the Green Book - after negotiating for nearly a year. Members ratified it by a 92 percent margin. It was the first time a controllers union negotiated pay with its employer. (Pictured: NATCA President Mike McNally, and FAA Administrator Jane Garvey.)



2000

NATCA Finds a Stable Home

On Feb. 28, 2000, NATCA moved into its newly purchased office building at 1325 Massachusetts Ave., NW, in Washington, D.C.. It's named The Krasner Building in honor of Barry Krasner who early on envisioned the Union owning a building to enable it to grow and succeed. Delegates at the 1994 Biennial Convention in Tampa took the step needed to start the process by agreeing to transfer MEBA dues to a building fund.

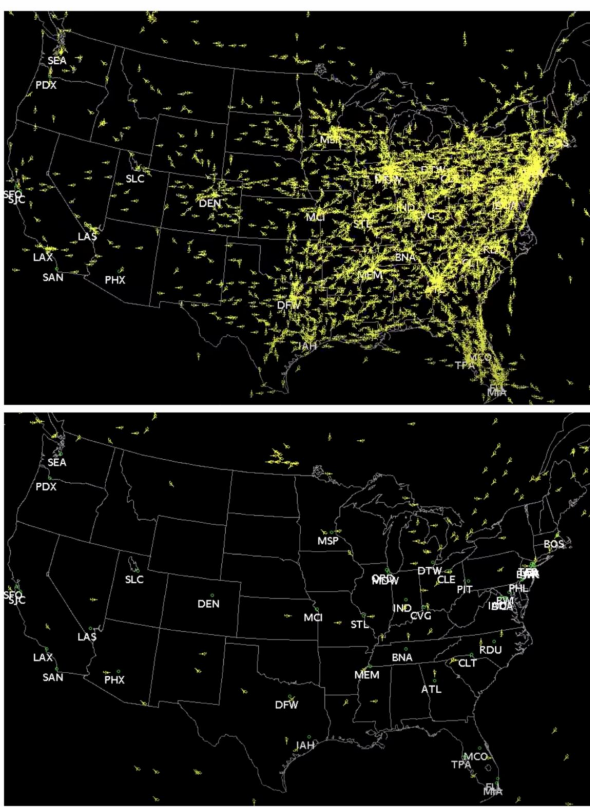
2000

Region X Is Created

NATCA was certified as the exclusive bargaining representative for several BUs in 2000, including TMC and AOS, the first two that year to join NATCA. It was a year that saw the largest expansion of the NATCA Family of BUs and resulted in the formation of a 10th region - Region X - to put them all together. In 2017, NATCA and the FAA agreed to extend both the Multi-Unit CBA - the Light Blue Book - and the Consolidated CBA - the Purple Book - to July 1, 2021. The agreements cover more than 5,000 BUEs, one quarter of NATCA's represented total.



2001



Answering the Nation's Call to Clear the Skies on 9/11

When terrorists attacked the United States with hijacked aircraft on 9/11 and the order went out to land every aircraft at the nearest airport, controllers guided 700 aircraft to land in the first four minutes, 2,800 in the first hour, and over 4,500 within the first three hours. Over a million passengers landed without incident. "The landing of those aircraft stands as the single greatest feat in all of ATC history," NATCA President Emeritus John Carr said. In the days and weeks that followed 9/11, a team of NATCA representatives, led by Executive Vice President Ruth Stilwell, staffed the Emergency Operations Center at the FAA, rotating through 24-hour shifts much of the time.

2003

NATCA Works to Keep 69 of its Represented Towers

In December, 2003, the president signed a four-year FAA Reauthorization called the Vision 100 Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act. The bill was passed during a contentious period with the Bush administration over air traffic control privatization. House Republicans were set on contracting out 69 FAA towers. In order to prevent such a provision from being in the final bill, NATCA worked with members of Congress to hold up the bill until Republicans agreed to guarantee a moratorium on privatization. Thus when the final bill was signed, it was accompanied by a one year moratorium against privatization, a major victory that would ensure the 69 towers the FAA had targeted for privatization, would remain FAA facilities.

2003

Extension of the Green Book CBA for Two Years

NATCA and the FAA agreed to extend the Green Book CBA for two years, avoiding the distraction of a labor clash during a rough period for the air transportation system. It was a positive development for NATCA in the first term of a Republican administration that had already tried to contract out a significant number of FAA facilities, as detailed above. There had also been some talk, including in Congress, of wanting to seek givebacks from the Union.

2005



FAA Tries, Fails to Fire 'NY11'; NATCA Never Backed Down

In July 2005, the FAA fired 11 controllers at New York TRACON for neglecting to check one box on its 8500-8 medical form. It was a union-busting attempt that failed five months later when the "NY11" were offered their jobs back with full back pay. NATCA President John Carr escorted the controllers back to their facility, a huge victory for the Union.

2008

Undivided, Undefeated

NATCA was two years into fighting against the FAA's White Book - imposed work and pay rules - when the convention body met in Miami. That's when Paul Rinaldi, then Executive Vice President, began the rallying cry: "Our Collective Spirit is Their Enemy!" We were confident we would outlast that dark time by staying united, undivided, and undefeated. And we did.



2009

The Red Book Ends Lost Years

On Sept. 25, 2009, NATCA President Patrick Forrey and FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt signed the 2009 Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Red Book, signifying an end to the worst period of labor relations between NATCA and the FAA in our Union's history. The return to the bargaining table was set in motion by the action of President Obama in the first 100 days of his first term.

2009

Taking CFS to New Heights

Under new Safety Committee Chair Steve Hansen and as NATCA collaborated with the FAA to move from a punitive culture to a safety culture, NATCA greatly expanded the scope and size of its annual Communicating For Safety (CFS) event starting in 2009, growing it into the aviation industry's leading conference focusing on safety, technology, and building relationships. It's the only conference of its kind to focus specifically on the air traffic needs of all members of the aviation community who are affected by the National Airspace System (NAS).



2010

ATSAP Fully Implemented

On March 27, 2008, NATCA and the FAA signed an agreement to create the Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP), designed to foster a voluntary, cooperative, non-punitive environment for the open reporting of safety of flight concerns by FAA controllers. By September 2010, ATSAP has been fully implemented and transformed the safety culture of the aviation system. ATSAP-X followed a few years later, along with ASAP for federal contract towers and a VSRP for Aircraft Certification.

2011

At Last, Era of Imposed Work and Pay Rules Comes to an End

In 2005, a year before the FAA imposed the White Book, the Agency first imposed work rules on many of NATCA's Region X bargaining units. But by 2010, with the parties engaged in the start of a collaborative relationship, NATCA began negotiations for a fairly negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) on behalf of all of these units. The ensuing work at the negotiating table resulted in a new CBA, signed on April 7, 2011. It was called the Light Blue book or the Multi-Unit CBA and covers all of NATCA's non-ATO bargaining units. At last, the era of imposed work and pay rules was over and each of the FAA bargaining units represented by NATCA were covered by a fairly negotiated CBA.

2011

Collaboration Progress Begins to Be Measured

“If our ultimate goal is realized, if this collaborative process we are building with the FAA, brick by brick, becomes fully institutionalized as the permanent culture at the Agency, we may well look back on Wednesday, Sept. 21 (2011) as a key benchmark in how we measured our progress and affirmed our commitment.” It was on that day that NATCA President Paul Rinaldi joined then-FAA Administrator Randy Babbitt onstage for a discussion on “Best Practices in Labor Management Relations” at the Department of Transportation’s first semi-annual Aviation Workforce Management Conference.



2011

Professional Standards

After nearly two years building a professional standards program, the first submission was made in 2011, kicking off one of the Union's most successful recent initiatives. It has drawn praise from the NTSB, which has lauded NATCA's dedication to excellence. The additions of Turn Off Tune In, Fully Charged, RESPECT, Partnership for Safety, and ATSAP form the Foundations of Professionalism, solidifying the core pillars of safety and professionalism in NATCA.

2012

Safety & Tech Successes

With safety the guiding principle, NATCA has made great strides in the last decade to achieve pre-decisional involvement with the FAA on a vast array of safety and technology programs and procedures. One example of turning failure into success is ERAM (En Route Automation Modernization). Before NATCA became involved, ERAM was over-budget and plagued with problems. But the Obama Administration wisely recognized that real stakeholder involvement was an element essential to ensuring effective air traffic control modernization.



Long Fight Restores Title 49; Fair Collective Bargaining Process

On Feb. 14, 2012, President Obama signed H.R. 658 the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, the final step in making the FAA Reauthorization a law. It ended a five-year-long effort for an FAA bill and more than seven years of NATCA trying to amend Title 49 and establish fair collective bargaining process for all of our members. Sec. 601, which addresses the personnel management system, was the critical provision which ensures that FAA bargaining units will never again have work and pay rules imposed upon them by their employer.



2013

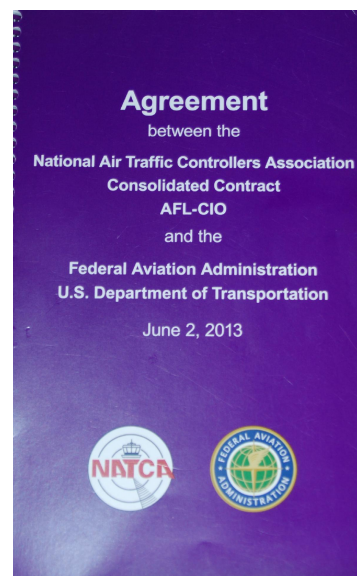
Fighting Sequestration

In the spring of 2013, a new and horribly destructive word was introduced into our vocabulary: sequestration. It's a tool designed to reduce federal expenditures via across-the-board spending cuts. But when used by Congress in 2013, the effects were felt immediately and dramatically in the National Airspace System with forced furloughs of controllers, reducing staffing on most shifts, and increasing delays and air travel misery. NATCA unleashed a massive legislative and public relations campaign to stop it. Congress quickly acted to exempt controllers from these automatic cuts.

2013

Consolidated CBA is Signed

A milestone in NATCA's history of strong labor relations work was reached on June 2, 2013, when the Union and the FAA signed the Consolidated Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) covering the Engineers and Architects (E&A), Staff Specialists (SSS), and Aviation System Specialists (ATSS) bargaining units. We soon added the Flight Procedures units. All non-operational ATO bargaining units are covered by what we call the Purple Book.



2016



Slate Book Makes History

The Slate Book, covering the ATC, FSS, TMU, and NOTAM bargaining units, went into effect, becoming the first collective bargaining agreement (CBA) to establish an article solely about collaboration. Interest-based bargaining was a leap of faith, but there was trust in collaboration on both sides. The result was a big step forward in the parties' relationship. "In this case, we worked our way through a term agreement for over 14,000 employees without requiring the outside assistance for arbitration or even mediation," Chief Negotiator Dean Iacopelli said. The NATCA membership ratified the contract with the highest percentage of any CBA in the Union's history: 98.32 percent.

2018

Rinaldi & Gilbert Win 4th Term

In 2018, both President Paul Rinaldi and Executive Vice President Trish Gilbert won re-election to serve the membership for an unprecedented fourth term. Nobody else has served more than two terms in either office. That is not, however, the first time they have made history. Although NATCA's top two positions are elected separately, in 2009 they campaigned for their respective positions as a team, which had never been done. Since taking office in 2009 Rinaldi and Gilbert have continued to work as a team, along with the NATCA National Executive Board, elevating NATCA to new levels of success.



2019

Speaking Out to End Shutdown

On Jan. 16, 2019, two weeks into the government shutdown, Executive Vice President Trish Gilbert announced on CNN, for the first time, that the National Airspace System was less safe than when the shutdown began. "Right now, you're putting this incredible strain on the system which is unacceptable and unreasonable," she said. The urgency of ending the shutdown was

raised.



2020

Collaboration Results in Flexible Schedule During Pandemic

Just two weeks after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and the rapid reduction of air traffic volume, NATCA and the FAA agreed to a national flexible schedule initiative to help ensure the health of our members. It was the result of a monumental collaborative effort with the Agency and tireless work from our NATCAvists across the country. Schedule negotiations and bidding usually take months using a process we've known and followed for years, but this was accomplished in a few days. "It was a genuine collaborative effort with the FAA to address the safety and health of the ATCS workforce," said Eastern RVP Rich Santa, who was the NEB lead on the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Flexible Schedules. "I'm so proud and impressed with our FacReps who worked to implement these new schedules in such a short period of time."

