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**NATCA Salutes Our Veterans**



**HONORING ALL WHO SERVED**

**VETERANS DAY — NOVEMBER 11**



To all our NATCA veterans, thank you for your service to our country. Our Union honors your sacrifice while keeping our nation safe and protecting our liberty.

Veterans Day was originally known as Armistice Day. Celebrated annually on Nov. 11, it commemorated the end of World War I in 1919. It became a legal federal holiday in 1938. After the end of World War II in 1945, Veterans Day was expanded to pay tribute to all Americans, whether living or dead, who have served our country honorably during war or peacetime.



There are approximately 19.5 million living veterans in the United States and approximately two million - or nine percent - of those veterans are women. California, Florida, and Texas each have over one million veterans living in their states, but the states with the highest percentages of veterans include Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Wyoming, and Virginia. In NATCA alone, there are at least 4,800 members that have served in the military, with 360 of them being women.

To celebrate Veterans Day, we asked several NATCA brothers and sisters about their military service. A sampling of responses is below. Our full Veterans Day feature, including these members' complete answers to our questions, can be found on our website, [at this link](#).

## Why did you join the military?



a long history in the military, dating all the way back to the War of Independence. My mother and sister are in the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R) with my great, great, great, great, great grandfather as the qualifying service member from the 2nd Battalion of Westmoreland County Militia. Our family has served in every major campaign since: Civil War, World War (WW) 1, WW2, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Desert Shield, and the Iraq-Afghanistan wars. My wife

Wendy, a retired controller from ZID, served in the U.S. Air Force (USAF), and each of our five children served and are serving: Matthew is currently active duty Army; Sami was in the Indiana Army National Guard; Austin was in the Army; and Toria and Ben currently serve in the Indiana National Guard.

**Mike Weekley, Columbus (Ohio) ATCT (CMH)** - I joined the military because of 9/11, and I wanted to serve my country.



**Lisa Cunningham, Kansas City ATCT (MCI)** - I joined because my parents couldn't afford to send me to college, and I didn't want to go into debt when I wasn't 100% sure about what I wanted to do with my life.

**Alana Zautner, Engineer/Northwest Mountain (ENM)** - I joined to find some direction and structure in my life, serve my country, and of course for the educational benefits (GI Bill).



## Why did you pick the branch of military that you did?



**Mick Devine, New England Regional Vice President (NNE RVP)** - Because there is only one branch!

**Jacob Neu, Minneapolis Center (ZMP)** - It allowed me to choose the job I wanted (15Q, Air Traffic Control).





**Donald White, Oakland Center (ZOA)** - My uncle was my role model growing up. He was an air traffic controller in the USAF, so naturally I followed in his footsteps. He was instrumental in ensuring that I came into the Air Force with a guaranteed air traffic slot.

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## How did you get through your boot camp training experience?

**John Murdock, Philadelphia ATCT (PHL)** - Boot camp was great, when it was over! There were a few things that I focused on getting through training: A lot of people before me completed it, so it's not impossible. Taking it one day at a time, I made it a goal that I wanted to complete it. And most importantly mail call: There was nothing better than receiving letters in the mail.



**Rachael Plantz, Albuquerque ATCT (ABQ)** - Boot camp was taken moment by moment. My goal was always to get to the next meal, mail time, or sleep until somehow, I got to the end. Getting my name on the uniform was a pretty huge accomplishment, as it showed tangible progress.

**Lisa Cunningham, Kansas City ATCT (MCI)** - I actually thrived in the "controlled environment." I also had a lot of support from my mom and a deep love and trust in God to carry me through.



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## How did your service and experiences affect your life?

**Jaime Honeycutt, Minneapolis Center (ZMP)** - Serving my country was an honor and something I carry with me every day. It was the best decision I ever made. I feel it gave me opportunities that I probably wouldn't have even thought of in



college. I was 18 when I left, so I grew up very quickly and had to learn responsibility in many different ways. I also learned about leadership and how it can impact a facility negatively or positively. Air traffic control in the FAA is a job that you rely on others for support or assistance in order for you to succeed. Being in the military was where I learned that first. I look back fondly on my time in the military and cherish the friendships I was able to make.

**John Murdock, Philadelphia ATCT (PHL)** - I think the question is how did it not affect my life? The Coast Guard taught me so many important skills to better myself. Communication, leadership, accountability, and humility are some of the skills the Coast Guard has instilled in me. The Coast Guard also taught me that setting goals is important. Even if those goals take years and decades to achieve, set them.



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## Why did you decide on a career in aviation with the FAA after leaving the military?



**Jennifer Malloy, Cleveland Center (ZOB)** - I joined thinking I was going to continue studying advertising and design. I quickly fell in love with the air traffic control operation, the fast pace, decision making, and orderly flow. I loved and still love working planes. I can't explain the feeling of when you're in a tower and you feel those fighter jets shaking the ground under your feet. Now in a radar facility, arrival rushes are my favorite.

**Joel Ortiz, Western Pacific Regional Vice President (NWP RVP)** - After boot camp, I was fortunate enough to be placed in air traffic control as my military occupational specialty, and I left for Pensacola, Fla., to begin my training.



**Samantha Navarro, Seattle Tacoma ATCT (SEA)** - When I left the military, I knew I wanted to continue working with airplanes. It was the low tide for hiring within the FAA at that point, but after almost two years, I got the call for Seattle ATCT. I am thankful everyday to be in a position that helps others get to their loved ones, to get to work, to get home because they have an ill family member, or they are finally returning home after a long absence. To know that I have some role in getting them home, makes me happy. Cheesy, I know.

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## Can you describe the military camaraderie? Do you find any similarities with membership in our

# Union?

**Holly Denny, Jacksonville ATCT (JAX)** - Military camaraderie to me is “enduring the suck” together, and it's fun because of the group that you are with. It's a true shared understanding and common interest of the “end game.” I see similar characteristics with work and during stressful moments within the TRACON.



**Amanda Rochester, Houston TRACON (I90)** - It really is a special bond you form with each other after going through the “suck.” When you join, you're forced away from your family and friends. A foreign and stressful environment tends to make you cling to each other. They become not only your friends but your family! I don't think anything will compare to the Marine Corps camaraderie, but our Union has a very similar feel. NATCA treats its members like family. I've seen

first hand that when disaster strikes, they are the first ones there. We look out for one another just like in the military!

**Fabian Sanchez, Central Florida TRACON (F11)** - Military camaraderie is like no other. It is easy to develop a strong connection with your peers since everyone is experiencing similar successes and struggles. This is very similar to the relationships that we develop within our facility, Union, and profession.



[Click here](#) to continue reading the full feature.

## NATCA Member Achieves Most Senior Enlisted Rank in U.S. Coast Guard



Philadelphia ATCT (PHL) member John Murdock has achieved the U.S. Coast Guard's most senior enlisted rank of Master Chief Boatswain's Mate (E9).

Murdock originally joined the Coast Guard for two reasons: the first was the intent of becoming a helicopter pilot. "Unfortunately, or fortunately, that didn't work out," he says. "I've actually never flown in a Coast Guard helicopter. It's all boats all the time." The second reason he joined the Coast Guard was because of its mission. "The Coast Guard's domestic mission really appealed to me. I wanted to be heavily involved in search and rescue and law enforcement operations. I

wanted to participate in the mission by being a pilot."



Regardless, Murdock has served in the Coast Guard for 21 years, and continues to serve as a drilling reservist.

On Sept. 1, 2020, Murdock was advanced to Master Chief. "I couldn't be more excited and humbled to be selected a Master Chief," he said. "This accomplishment might be one of the things I'm most proud of. It is the pinnacle of an enlisted members career in the military. For context by law, only one percent of the force can be an E9, and there are only 65 E9's total in the Coast Guard Reserve."



## 16th Annual Archie League Medal of Safety Awards Winners' Spotlight

### Great Lakes Region: Brittany Jones and Bob Obma, Indianapolis Center (ZID)



During any normal shift in Area 2 of Indianapolis Center (ZID) on a mid-March Saturday afternoon, assisting the pilot of a Cessna 172 Skyhawk who encountered icing conditions would have required the same knowledge, calm professionalism, detailed checklist of tasks, and supreme focus that experienced ZID NATCA members Brittany Jones and Bob Obma bring to work.

But on this particular Saturday afternoon shift, on March 21, 2020, it was the first in which three areas at ZID were closed after positive COVID-19 tests. With

uncertainty swirling as the nation began its descent into the throes of the pandemic, the challenges involved with handling an emergency situation - like this Skyhawk - increased.

“Quite possibly the craziest week of my life that I can remember,” said Obma, who had just been recertified three days prior to this shift after being off the boards for multiple years with a medical issue. “You’re walking down the hallway, and you pass these areas with yellow police tape marking them off. All the lights are turned on but there’s no controllers. You could still see some random data blocks on the scopes. It just felt really strange.”

Traffic levels were still high. The closure of much of ZID’s airspace forced controllers to work on the fly and join together to come up with plans and make them work. There were re-routes around closed airspace, aircraft in Area 2 that are usually not worked in that lower altitude airspace (23,000 feet and below), and other situations that were not planned for.

“Everyone was already on high alert,” Obma said. “Their energy was already revved up.”

Dennis Tyner was piloting the Skyhawk. He departed Prestonsburg, Ky., heading for Lexington, Ky. He encountered icing conditions and requested a lower altitude from Obma. Unfortunately, because of the mountainous terrain, Obma was only able to get him down to 3,100 feet, which was not enough to get the ice off the aircraft. As an experienced pilot himself, Obma knew what Tyner was experiencing in trying to fly the aircraft. Obma declared an emergency for him before starting work to vector him around higher terrain and setting him up for an approach at an alternate airport in Morehead, Ky. Jones joined Obma as his D-side controller.

“My first instinct was to sit down next to him and get a briefing from him and get an idea of what was going on, and just help as much as I can,” said Jones, who is a second-generation controller whose father worked at Houston TRACON (I90), and has been at ZID for all of her six years on the job “Not only is the pilot’s workload huge at this point, but Bob’s workload is dramatically increasing at this point as well.”

Jones knew that Morehead-Rowan County Airport was right next to Lexington ATCT (LEX) approach control airspace. She called them for information including wind and weather conditions to determine the best approach for Tyner to fly into the uncontrolled airport. She amended the flight plan with the new destination and pulled up the approach for Obma to read to Tyner. She also provided the phone number for the airport to their supervisor so that he could call and ask the airport manager to make sure the lights were turned on to their brightest setting to assist Tyner in obtaining a visual with the ground safely.

“That aircraft would not have had a good outcome without her,” Obma said of Jones. “I was already having a busy sector. Without Brittany, there’s no way I could have looked up approach plates, done all these other things, talked



to facilities and maintained focus on looking at the pilot's airspeed and making sure the altitude was good. Her sitting down was the game changer in that situation.”

Obama said the situation required Tyner to quickly get on the ground due to the amount of ice on the aircraft. Tyner couldn't descend and burn off the ice due to the minimum vectoring altitude, and couldn't climb either. Time was critical. But while it was only about 10-15 minutes until Tyner landed safely, Jones said “it felt like forever.”



“It felt so much longer because we were just waiting for him to get the airport in sight and let us know he was safe,” she said. “We were just holding our breath, thinking, ‘come on.’”

Tyner called the Area 2 supervisor, Aaron Stone, after he successfully landed to express his gratitude. Stone said he could hear loud crashing noises in the background. Tyner told him, with a chuckle, that was the sound of the ice falling from his aircraft onto the apron.

Jones said the episode highlighted a truly unforgettable shift.

“It’s one thing to come into the building and see people in hazmat suits cleaning everything. That’s surreal enough,” she said. “Then, to come in and be helping to basically save someone’s life and be sure they get on the ground safely in these adverse weather conditions, yeah, I would say it was definitely one of my most memorable days.”

This flight assist marks the third time Indianapolis Center members have represented the Great Lakes Region (NGL) in the 16-year history of the Archie League Medal of Safety Awards, all in the last three years. [Nicholas J. Ferro and Charles Terry](#) won the award in 2019, and [Daniel Rak](#) won in 2018.

## Great Lakes Region Archie League Winners Podcast



Hear Jones and Obama tell their story, and discuss their efforts to guide the Cessna pilot to a safe landing, in the latest episode of the NATCA Podcast. [Click here](#) to listen.

NATCA plans to recognize all of the winners at the 18th Biennial Convention in Houston on the evening of Wednesday, May 26, 2021. The flying

public doesn't always get to thank aviation safety professionals for the work you do daily, performing with 100 percent accuracy, 100 percent of the time. We at NATCA thank all of you for the work you do, keeping millions of passengers safe daily.



## Unum: The Insurance That Prepares You for the Unexpected



“There are so many things that can disqualify you from working immediately. I would encourage everyone to sign up now while you’re young and healthy to be prepared for those unexpected disqualifications.”

– Kim Sheldon (MSN)



Having insurance grants peace of mind when the unexpected happens. The NATCA group long-term disability (LTD) program from Unum is the insurance that provides protection and peace of mind in the event you lose your medical or are disabled. Madison ATCT (MSN) member Kim Sheldon encourages all NATCA members to sign up for Unum during this open enrollment season:

“I enrolled for Unum disability insurance 13 years ago, after I was diagnosed with Meniere's

Disease. It causes hearing loss and vertigo. There are so many things that can disqualify you from working immediately. I would encourage everyone to sign up now while you’re young and healthy to be prepared for those unexpected disqualifications! It can be something simpler than you might think.

“I lost my medical a few times over the years for this condition, but was able to get it back each time. Now 13 years later, I have been disqualified for several months and have no way of knowing when or if I might get my medical back. After my 90-day waiting period for Unum expired, I started collecting the difference between what I earned as a controller and the money I make on admin duty. It has been really helpful with two kids in college.

“I have not had any issues with filing my claim or collecting my claim, and everyone with Unum has been knowledgeable and helpful at a time when you need to be taking care of your health and still need to pay the bills.”

Visit [natcadisability.com](http://natcadisability.com) for more information and to enroll.

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This is the package  
NATCA delivers to  
you. Will you  
protect it?



**OPEN ENROLLMENT NOW | [NATCADISABILITY.COM](https://natcadisability.com)**

## Unum Prize Drawing Winners at ZKC and MRI

Each week, NATCA holds a prize drawing from the members who have signed up for the Unum LTD insurance. This week, we would like to congratulate Kansas City Center (ZKC) member Robert Cimino and Merrill Field ATCT (MRI) member Frederick Snyder.

Congratulations Robert and Frederick. Thank you for supporting and participating in this important NATCA benefit. Members not enrolled should [sign up today](#) to participate and be entered into upcoming drawings.

## San Juan Member Works with The Sato Project to Aid Rescued Dogs

San Juan CERAP (ZSU) member Nate Osgood has only lived in Puerto Rico for two years, but has already enveloped himself in a cause worthy of being broadcast. The Sato Project is a rescue mission, dedicated to saving abused and abandoned dogs in Puerto Rico.

"We found out about The Sato Project when we were moving down to Puerto Rico," said Osgood. "Our dog has some health issues that made flying in the cargo hold of an airliner somewhat risky, and we discovered a Wings of Rescue flight, which partners with the Sato Project, that was going from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to San Juan, and would take her for free. When I got to the airport to pick Mia up, I met a few of the people from The Sato Project and helped them load dog food and empty crates into their trucks.







"(My wife) Shannon and I wanted to give back to The Sato Project as thanks for getting our dog here, so we volunteered at their Spay-a-Thon in Fajardo in February 2019. That's a free spay and neuter clinic they host to fix between 800-1,000 pets in a week, in an assembly line-style operation. The turnout is awesome."

But that's not all Nate and Shannon have done. On the contrary, that was only the beginning. They fostered a puppy from The Sato Project for three months, in the midst of the ongoing pandemic, and Nate has helped stage and load planes in February, August, and October of this year.

"Typically, we start around 11 p.m. by sorting and labeling all the dogs that are in The Sato Project's possession," he said. "We then load all the dogs that are being fostered onto the plane. There are usually two stops on the flight, so we need to make sure that the animals that are getting taken off at Fort Lauderdale, going to the Humane Society of Broward County, are loaded on last. We usually finish the staging, sorting, and zip tying crates shut by 1 a.m., and wait for the crew of the aircraft to show up around 2. We load them all up and Berry Aviation, a charter airline, is calling for their clearance by 3-3:30 a.m. They make a stop in Fort Lauderdale to drop some dogs off, and then continue up to Morristown Airport in New Jersey to drop off the rest. Lately, they have had all the dogs going to New York/New Jersey area adopted before they get there, so the new families can pick them up pretty much right off the plane."





The flights also have animals from other rescues, says Osgood, but the majority of the animals come from the rescue work The Sato Project does at Dead Dog Beach, usually a last resting place for dogs, and lately, from shelters in the earthquake zone on the south side of the island.

For more information about The Sato Project, please [click here](#).

## NATCA Academy Virtual Learning

The NATCA Academy Virtual Learning program continues through November. We hope that you will take this opportunity to learn more about your Union, your rights, and how you can become more active in the areas that interest you.

[Full Academy Virtual Learning schedule and class descriptions here](#)

Below is the schedule of upcoming classes in the next few days. Register [today](#).

# NATCA ACADEMY VIRTUAL LEARNING



Sign up at  
portal.  
natca.org



THU  
NOV 12

1:00 pm EST  
You Do Not Need a Title to be a Leader/Role Model  
(90 min)

SUN  
NOV 15

5:00 pm EST  
NATCA 101  
(120 min)

MON  
NOV 16

1:00 pm EST  
PFS Webinar (60 min)  
3:00 pm EST  
Online Drug and Alcohol Basics (120 min)

TUE  
NOV 17

10:30 am EST  
Conducting a Local Meeting  
(60 min)

WED  
NOV 18

1:00 pm EST  
Asbestos in Our Building (60 min)

## NATCA Academy Virtual Series: OSHA

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, NATCA has had to change how it trains its members. Virtual courses are currently replacing in-person classes and events. While some courses are familiar and popular favorites, the pandemic has brought with it the ability for NATCA to offer new and popular courses to many more members. NATCA's Chrissy Padgett explains how our Union wants to share these courses with you.

### **What have been the positive aspects of transitioning the NATCA Academy to virtual learning? What have been some of the challenges?**

**Padgett:** The positive aspects of transitioning these courses to virtual learning is that we're able to reach a much broader audience. Members that were previously limited by travel restrictions or had issues getting off the schedule to attend the training in person can now join online from their home.

Some of the challenges of virtual learning have been the personal interaction or lack thereof. We knew that would be a hurdle going in so we try to do everything we can to keep the interaction and engagement that has made all of our in-person classes so successful. I know the virtual classes that I've been a part of, whether it was as an instructor or a participant, have really made an effort to maintain that personal interaction, even staying on for discussions until the last participant logs off.

### **Why is it important for NATCA members to participate in these courses?**

**Padgett:** It's so important for NATCA members to participate in virtual learning because this is such a unique opportunity where pretty much every aspect of



NATCA is being offered as an online class. All members should be taking advantage of this chance to learn more about our Union and what interests them.

### **What is the benefit members gain from taking these courses?**

**Padgett:** The benefits that members gain from taking these courses is learning more about what NATCA is doing on their behalf and on behalf of their profession and how they can get involved. Members can also gain a better understanding of the roles that they play in their Union and ways they can help improve our Union.

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## **Asbestos in Our Facilities**

This week we will focus on the Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) Committee's webinar, Asbestos in Our Building, with Los Angeles Center (ZLA) member and OSHA Committee Chair Karena Marinas.

### **How was the material for this course conceived? Who contributed to developing the course?**

**Karena Marinas:** Our OSHA Committee representatives meet monthly and chat almost daily about what we are doing, hearing, and seeing in our respective regions. We use these experiences to formulate and schedule our online training opportunities. This helps us address the issues that are most timely and relevant for the membership. In addition, we rely heavily on NATCA's Certified Industrial Hygienist, Geoff Bacci, to develop content for our online training opportunities whenever his impressive experience applies to a topic, as is the case for asbestos awareness.



### **If members only take away one thing from this course, what would you want them to remember?**

**Marinas:** Our committee can't say it enough: Get your Regional OSHA Representative involved in your pre-construction activities. We will help you determine whether the work plan is safe, adheres to applicable orders, regulations and our CBAs, and we will get Geoff Bacci involved to review plans and testing.

### **For members who enjoyed learning the content of this course, what course would you recommend they delve into next?**

**Marinas:** This is a great question! All of our courses are created with all levels of interest and experience in mind and we cover different topics throughout the year, so you can participate in any and every course, and get something new and relevant from them.

We have many OSHA reps who have taken the same course two or more times because they learn new things or strengthen their knowledge each time. Not to mention, we always save time at the end for members to ask any questions they might have pertaining to work safety and health, regardless of the course topic.

### **Anything else you wish to add?**

**Marinas:** The NATCA OSHA Committee works to ensure all members are trained, up to date, and have a strong knowledge base and skill set for OSHA issues. Please reach out to us early and often. We want to be involved in ensuring our NATCA members have safe and healthy workplaces.



A basic understanding of our Union is the foundation for personal involvement.

★ This is the first step toward creating a **STRONGER UNION** and a **BETTER FUTURE** for you and your family!



This interactive course is taught via Microsoft Teams

Questions? Contact your Regional Reloaded Rep  
Or Chrissy Padgett at [CPADGETT@NATCA.NET](mailto:CPADGETT@NATCA.NET)



Have you taken NATCA 101 yet? It's a popular class you won't want to miss! Learn about NATCA history, benefits, and current challenges by signing up for your virtual NATCA 101 course at [portal.natca.org](http://portal.natca.org). For all things NATCA Reloaded, follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

## Union Members Feature: APWU

We continue to highlight our union sisters and brothers who are also essential workers during the COVID-19 national emergency. Today, we thank the members of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), AFL-CIO.



APWU represents more than 200,000 USPS employees and retirees, and nearly 2,000 private-sector mail workers. This month, the efforts of postal workers have been in the spotlight as they continue to serve on the front lines of the pandemic and make sure the democratic process is carried out so that ballots are processed, arrive on time, and are counted.

[Click here](#) to read more about postal workers' proud role in our democracy.

Normally, this section is reserved for articles about aviation labor in the news, but our members also have family members and friends that are being affected by furloughs in the aviation sector. See below for a first-hand account a flight attendant shares about COVID-19 impacts on the airline community.



My name is Krystal Donaldson. I am 37 years old and married to Dallas/Fort Worth TRACON (D10) FacRep Terry Donaldson with a 16-year-old high school junior at home. I am the youngest of four sisters and a native Texan. I was raised in the Houston Metroplex, but transplanted to the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) Metroplex after high school. I attended and graduated, with honors, from the University of Texas at Dallas with a Bachelor of Science Degree.

I began my career as a Flight Attendant with American Eagle Airlines in 2009, based out of Chicago. I was awarded a transfer to DFW several years later and transitioned to American Airlines

(Main Line Carrier) in the summer of 2013. Following the US Airways merger in 2015, I became more actively involved as a member of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA). As an activist, I have helped spread information, raise awareness on contract negotiations, and pending votes as our two companies became one. With the current state of aviation, furloughs, cutbacks, and the impacts of COVID-19, I have continued to be active with APFA. I have assisted with rallies, pickets, social media campaigns, and other grass roots efforts to disseminate information and encourage activism with legislative activities and solidarity events. I love my career as an aviation professional and cannot imagine doing anything else.

Many of my brothers and sisters have been adversely impacted by the furloughs and the impacts of COVID-19 on our aviation community. The vast majority of my close friends, co-workers, and fellow activists have been furloughed, saving only a few who made the first round of cuts. Many of them have lost entire household incomes (pilots, flight attendants, dispatchers, and other joint aviation households), with no expectation of when or if a recall might come. This loss of income also comes with the loss of insurance, benefits, and the many securities that some take for granted daily.

I cannot express the level of frustration, anxiety, and anticipation-filled emotions that now rule every day. Watching the mail in hopes of receiving a letter of recall from American or a news story spreading hope of paycheck protection programs, has become a roller coaster of ups and downs not only for me, but for our entire family of aviation brothers and sisters. As a 100% union household, we understand the need for solidarity, activism, and strength in numbers. All of us in aviation, must continue to fight and support action from our leaders in government and industry to bridge the gap that 2020 has caused for many industries and occupations. While aviation is very close to home for me, it is not the only industry affected so massively or sorely.

As union brothers and sisters, we must continue to take care of each other. We have to check on each other and show our solidarity and unity when it is needed the most. In the darkest of times, our demons and tormentors become even



harder to contain. We have seen suicide and mental illness take its toll on our aviation families. Check on your neighbors. Make sure your pilots, flight attendants, dispatchers, rampers, agents, and other members of our community are surviving. Some of us are not OK.

I am deeply humbled and always impressed at the level of solidarity and activism that NATCA brings to the aviation community and our families. It is exciting to be a part of such a robust organization as a family member and the welcome arms that have always been extended at events and functions. I have always been treated like a member of NATCA, even though I am only an associate member by marriage. Your solidarity and family of Union brothers and sisters is one to be proud of!

Thank you NATCA for always standing with us and for remembering us when times are tough.

## Retirement Webinars Scheduled Through December

Upcoming retirement seminars have been merged and reformatted to be webinars due to the COVID-19 national emergency. They are open to any member nationwide. The upcoming webinars are as follows:



- **November 19:** 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. EDT
- **December 7:** 2 p.m. - 8 p.m. EDT
- **December 29:** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. CDT

**IMPORTANT:** If you had previously signed up for these seminars and are unable to attend virtually, please consider canceling your reservation as space is limited for virtual classes as well.

To register for both the seminars and the webinars: use the NATCA Portal, [portal.natca.org](http://portal.natca.org). Click on the “events” tab in the main menu at the top of the screen.

For questions or any problems with registration, please contact Lisa Head at the National Office: 202-628-5451 or [lhead@natcadc.org](mailto:lhead@natcadc.org).

## Operation Traffic Counts Across the U.S.

# Aviation System Performance Metrics (ASPM)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2020

ASPM77 Airport Ops

**-44.2%**

**30,568** CURRENT OPS  
**54,762** SEASONAL AVG

Core Airport Ops

**-50.0%**

**17,597** CURRENT OPS  
**35,212** SEASONAL AVG



Center Ops

**-43.9%**

var from baseline

**65,913** CURRENT OPS

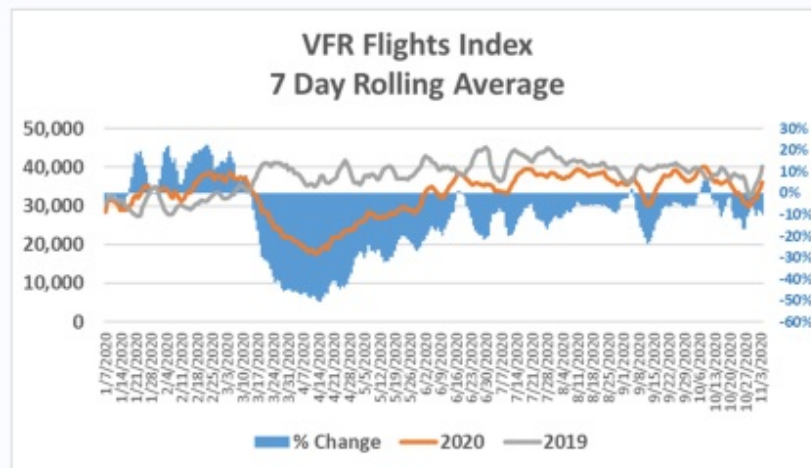
Top 7 TRACONs

**-37.1%**

var from baseline

**19,193** CURRENT OPS

SOURCE: Federal Aviation Administration



3

Federal Aviation  
Administration

## NATCA & FAA MOU Concerning New Voluntary Leave Bank Program

On Thursday, Nov. 5, 2020, NATCA and the FAA signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) concerning the creation, implementation, and administration of a new Voluntary Leave Bank (VLB) Program.

The VLB Program offers an additional leave benefit for interested NATCA bargaining unit employees (BUEs) who may be experiencing a medical emergency or seeking bonding leave after a birth, adoption, or placement. BUEs who become VLB members are eligible to apply to become VLB recipients if they experience a qualifying event.

To become and remain a VLB member, interested BUEs must fill out an application and contribute at least the minimum required leave contribution each year. The minimum leave contribution that a donor can make to the VLB Program is based on the respective BUE's normal leave accrual rate per pay period at the time of the contribution (e.g, 4, 6, or 8 hours). Please also note that the maximum annual leave donation that can be made by a donor is no more than one-half of the amount of annual leave the BUE would accrue during a leave year. A BUE with "use or lose" annual leave may donate the lesser of one-half of the annual leave they would accrue in a leave year or the number of hours remaining in the leave year for which they are scheduled to work and receive pay.

The following are the highlights of the VLB MOU:

- BUEs make a request to become a leave recipient electronically via the CASTLE program or, if making the request via CASTLE is impractical, by submitting a written application to the Agency using the [NATCA VLB Recipient Application Form](#), which is attached to the VLB MOU as Appendix 1.
- If a BUE is not capable of making an application on their own behalf, the BUE may choose to have a personal representative of their choosing, their immediate supervisor or a management designee, submit the application.



The management designee shall be located at the facility/office to which the BUE is assigned.

- All BUEs will be provided access to CASTLE and will receive training on duty time regarding how to use the CASTLE program.
- BUEs submit documentation via a direct upload to the CASTLE system. The Agency shall provide BUEs with access to a computer with a scanner, privacy, internet access, and FAA intranet access to submit the documentation.
- BUEs will not be required to access their FAA email accounts to enroll or participate in the VLB.
- Donated leave may be used consecutively or intermittently for any period of approved absence.

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## Required Supporting Information

To support a request for VLB Leave, the BUE will be required to provide supporting information, as is described below:

- If the BUE is experiencing a medical emergency, a description of the nature, severity, and anticipated duration of the medical emergency will be required. If it is a recurring one, a description of the approximate frequency of the medical emergency will be required.
- If the BUE is seeking bonding leave following a birth, adoption, or placement, documented proof of the birth, adoption or placement may be required.

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## Agency's Estimated VLB Program Timeline

The Agency projects the following timeline for VLB enrollment and for opening applications:

- Jan. 3, 2021 - Jan. 30, 2021: Open enrollment for VLB membership
- Jan. 31, 2021 - March 13, 2021: Processing VLB applications
- March 14, 2021 - March 27, 2021: Deduction of the leave contribution necessary for VLB membership
- April 2, 2021: VLB is open for applications to become a VLB recipient

If you have questions about the VLB MOU, please contact your regional leadership at the email below, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

- [Alaska \(NAL\)](#)
- [Central \(NCE\)](#)
- [Eastern \(NEA\)](#)
- [Great Lakes \(NGL\)](#)
- [New England \(NNE\)](#)

- [Northwest Mountain \(NNM\)](#)
- [Southern \(NSO\)](#)
- [Southwest \(NSW\)](#)
- [Western Pacific \(NWP\)](#)
- [Region X \(NRX\)](#)



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## Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) MOU

On May 8, NATCA and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding Human Resource Policy Manual (HRPM) Policy Bulletin 115, Paid Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). Policy Bulletin 115 and the MOU specifically address the FAA's implementation of FFCRA, which was signed into law on March 18. FFCRA provides expanded paid leave options for NATCA bargaining unit employees (BUEs) who have been affected by COVID-19. FFCRA provides two forms of paid leave: Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which can be utilized for the employee's own health needs or to care for family members.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave quick reference guide [here](#).

Expanded FMLA Leave quick reference guide [here](#).

FFCRA Frequently Asked Questions can be viewed [here](#).

Download the full MOU [here](#).

Download only the FFCRA leave request form attachment [here](#).

Comparison of the Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Expanded FMLA Leave [here](#).

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