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MEDAL OF SAFETY AWARDS

SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

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WELCOME



Nick Daniels
NATCA President

It is a great privilege to recognize the outstanding recipients of the 21st annual Archie League Medal of Safety Awards and the ninth annual Region X Commitment to Safety Awards. These honors represent the highest level of achievement in our profession, and tonight we celebrate the remarkable NATCA members whose actions exemplify what it means to protect the National Airspace System. Their skill, dedication, and calm under pressure reflect the very best of who we are.



Mick Devine
NATCA Executive
Vice President

Safety is paramount for NATCA and our members. In addition to being a strong and thriving labor union, NATCA is an aviation safety organization. Maintaining the highest levels of safety and professionalism are some of the core tenets to NATCA membership. Tonight's award recipients embody those principles, exemplifying our Union's commitment to safety.

The Archie League and Region X awards are given on a yearly basis to NATCA members who react instinctively to unforeseen situations. Tonight's winners responded to difficult situations with exceptional skill and professionalism, a hallmark of our profession.

For the entire National Executive Board, Mick and I would like to congratulate each award winner, and all of the members who were nominated by our Union brothers and sisters. You should all be extremely proud of your accomplishments.

In Solidarity,



Nick Daniels
NATCA President



Mick Devine
NATCA Executive Vice President



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SELECTION COMMITTEE

This evening's Archie League Medal of Safety and Region X Commitment to Safety award recipients were first nominated by their fellow NATCA members—Union brothers and sisters who witnessed their exceptional work and believed it deserved recognition. That peer-driven nomination process reflects the deep respect and solidarity within our Union. The National Safety Committee (NSC), led by Chair John Murdock (Philadelphia ATCT, PHL), gathered supporting materials and conducted the initial review. From there, a panel of NATCA members carefully evaluated each nomination and recommended recipients from each region. NATCA President Nick Daniels made the final selections, ensuring that each honoree reflects the highest standards of our profession.

In 2025, the selection panel included Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP) Committee member Al Arcese (Engineer New England Region, ENE); National Training Representative Jamaal Haltom (Las Vegas ATCT, LAS); Western Service Area Safety Representative Sam Navarro (Seattle-Tacoma ATCT, SEA); NSC and ATSAP Committee member Cher Oxenburg (Atlanta Center, ZTL); and Southwest Regional Safety Representative Aaron Pickett (Albuquerque Center, ZAB). NSC Chair John Murdock presided over the selection committee.



John Murdock



Jamaal Haltom



Al Arcese



Sam Navarro



Cher Oxenburg



Aaron Pickett



ALASKAN REGION

Written by Amanda Clinefelter (Anchorage ATCT, ANC)

On April 5, 2025, Anthony Quintana was working the local control position for both Anchorage ATCT (ANC) and Lake Hood ATCT (LHD), a co-located facility whose positions are often combined during periods of low traffic. Anthony, a veteran controller, has been with the FAA for 17 years, starting his federal air traffic career at Denver ATCT (DEN). Anthony previously served in the military as a controller and has been at ANC for the last eight years.

At approximately 8:30 a.m., N9130D, a Piper aircraft, called inbound for landing on the gravel strip at Lake Hood Airport. When Anthony cleared N9130D to land, he was simultaneously scanning the strip and issuing other landing and departure clearances to traffic at Anchorage International Airport. Due to its location and distance from the tower, LHD strip is only visible with binoculars.

As soon as the aircraft was cleared to land, it became apparent there was a moose on the gravel strip, and Anthony promptly relayed this critical information to the pilot. Anthony told N9130D to cancel the landing clearance and “hold over the

runway for right now... there’s a moose, like, right next to the strip”, and diverted N9130D while contacting airport operations for assistance. Wildlife operations personnel were summoned to contend with the moose. Anthony offered to guide N9130D into Anchorage International and provided step-by-step guidance and taxi instructions to get the pilot back to LHD.

Anthony’s additional service to the pilot was exemplary and his quick actions and thorough scan prevented a hazardous situation from turning disastrous. Anchorage is no stranger to frequent wildlife visits. Anthony’s experience helped him to recognize the situation early and take action to find an alternate solution for the pilot.

Anthony’s colleague who nominated him said, “Anthony did an excellent job scanning during an unusual situation. His quick action and observation of the hazard display his diligence and professionalism as an air traffic controller.”



Anthony Quintana
Anchorage ATCT
ANC

***Congratulations to the 2025 Alaskan Region
Archie League Medal of Safety Award Winner,
Anthony Quintana!***

CENTRAL REGION

Written by Bryan Martini (Sioux Gateway ATCT, SUX)



Devin Turner
Cedar Rapids ATCT
CID



Nathaniel Mencke
Cedar Rapids ATCT
CID

Every day is a training day, and November 3, 2024, was no exception. Devin Turner was training Nathaniel Mencke on the R3 radar position at Cedar Rapids ATCT (CID). While Turner's expertise was crucial during the event, the role of trainee Mencke was equally vital. That afternoon, N1351C, a Cessna 177B Cardinal enroute from Oklahoma City, entered the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, airspace at 5,000 feet in preparation for the RNAV Runway 25 approach into Iowa City Municipal Airport. Weather conditions across eastern Iowa were poor, with low ceilings and widespread instrument meteorological conditions plaguing the area. The experienced pilot, with more than 2,500 flight hours, requested vectors for a straight-in approach.

As N1351C was cleared for the approach, Turner and Mencke noticed the pilot was struggling to intercept the final approach course. Mencke issued vectors to intercept, but without success. When asked if they were established on the approach, the pilot said they were "wobbling around," indicating to Turner and Mencke that there may be

more to the situation other than strong southerly winds. Mencke asked the pilot if she would like to be vectored around for another attempt. She agreed and was issued a new heading and altitude assignment. The pilot expressed concern about antennas in the area, but Turner keyed up and assured the pilot that with her altitude assignment, she would remain above the minimum vectoring altitude (MVA). The pilot responded with "5-1-Charlie, uh, I'm trying to get some instruments here." What followed was a terrifying series of spiraling descents over the course of several minutes as the pilot battled spatial disorientation inside the clouds.

N1351C began rapidly turning and descending. Seeing this, Turner urgently issued a climb to 3,200 feet, but was met with no response. With the aircraft still turning and descending, Mencke instructed the pilot to "level your wings and climb," followed by a low altitude alert. Again, there was no response from the pilot. The aircraft continued a spiraling descent to 1,800 feet before it finally started to climb. Passing through



CENTRAL REGION

3,000 feet, Turner asked if the pilot had regained control of the aircraft. “5-1-Charlie, uh, not sure yet.” N1351C began to spiral again.

Fortunately, the pilot’s voice returned, but this time frantic, “I have the ground in sight—.” The aircraft had broken out of the clouds just 300 feet above the terrain. On-the-Job Training Instruction (OJTI) was terminated and Turner immediately shifted focus to keeping the pilot clear of obstacles, issuing westbound headings and ensuring the pilot maintained wings-level flight.

With the pilot back in control of their aircraft, Turner calmly continued to guide the shaken pilot, asking about fuel and offering options for recovery. Thankfully, the aircraft was able to land safely at Iowa City Airport. It was later learned that the aircraft’s autopilot contributed to the pilot’s loss of spatial orientation.

After the incident, N1351C pilot Minetta Gardinier wrote a letter thanking Turner, Mencke, and the rest of the team at CID. “The air traffic control voice in the cabin was constantly encouraging and reassuring,” she said. “I have no doubts that the actions of the ATC team at CID saved my life on November 3, 2024.”

Throughout the harrowing ordeal, Devin demonstrated the very essence of professionalism while simultaneously providing on-the-job training. Despite the high stress

situation, Devin maintained clear, calm communication and expertly guided both the pilot and trainee through the unfolding event. Devin’s composed demeanor ensured a safe outcome and provided a valuable learning experience to a future CPC.

Nathaniel’s ability to recognize the severity of the pilot’s situation and react decisively, even as the emergency intensified, also was remarkable. Now a CPC, Nathaniel’s performance in this critical moment stands as a testament to his readiness for the challenges of air traffic control. The experience reinforced the importance of preparing trainees for high-stress situations, where quick thinking, clear communication, and teamwork are crucial. Nathaniel’s calm response to the unfolding emergency proved that the foundational training skills were essential in guiding the pilot toward a safe resolution.

***Congratulations to the 2025 Central
Region Archie League Medal of Safety
Award Winners, Devin Turner and
Nathaniel Mencke!***

EASTERN REGION

Written by Jaymi Steinberg (Washington Center, ZDC)



James Barth
New York TRACON
N90

It was a clear morning in Upstate New York on February 10, 2025. N928PG, a single-engine Pilatus PC12, departed White Plains, N.Y. headed northwest for Flying Cloud Airport in Minnesota. The aircraft had reached its cruising altitude of 30,000 feet in New York Center (ZNY)'s airspace when it experienced a complete engine failure. The pilot requested assistance to land at New York Stewart International Airport. This is where James Barth at New York TRACON (N90) became involved. He knew the aircraft would need a great breadth of coordination to get between ZNY, Boston Center (ZBW), N90, surrounding towered fields, and finally, Stewart.

Barth realized that, in addition to the standard coordination of emergency services and acquiring field weather information, the clear conditions in the area meant many Visual Flight Rules (VFR) aircraft were operating in the vicinity. He quickly coordinated with adjacent facilities to have air traffic control alert the potentially affected

aircraft to allow the Pilatus a smooth transition to the field. He coordinated the relative position of the aircraft, that they would be coming in from a higher than standard altitude, and an alternate runway to facilitate their landing based on their direction. Due to quick thinking and many coordination calls, Barth helped facilitate N928PG making a safe landing at Stewart. After the event, James said to New York TRACON Facility Representative Joe Segretto: "I just worked a PC12 from ZNY in the flight levels with no engine into Stewart, and the pilot was absolutely amazing."

As Barth reflected on the experience, he cited the strong training he had had throughout his time at Washington Center (ZDC) and N90 as critical elements to making the choices he did that day. "Every day is always a training day because you're constantly learning, up until the day you retire," said Barth who also serves as the N90 Training Representative. Barth also cited his experience as a private pilot, helping him



EASTERN REGION

to understand what the aviator was going through at the moment.

James would like to thank his trainers including, but not limited to, Bob Funari (ZDC), Jim Ahlers (ZDC), and Mike Browning (ZDC). He would also like to thank Operations Supervisor Joe Gilbert for quickly springing into action to assist.

Nominator and colleague Mike Shanahan (N90) said, “Barth addressed all aspects of the aircraft emergency without missing a beat. His ability to remain calm under pressure, provide clear and decisive guidance, and maintain the highest standards of excellence demonstrates his unwavering dedication to the aviation community.”

Segretto concluded, “[James] is the epitome of a safety professional and a dedicated air traffic controller. Not only is he one of the best air traffic controllers I’ve had the honor of working alongside for the past 16 years at N90, I’m also proud to say he’s one of my truest friends and one of the best coworkers anyone could ask for.”

*Congratulations to the 2025 Eastern
Region Archie League Medal of Safety
Award Winner, James Barth!*



GREAT LAKES REGION

Written by Sarah Simek (Grand Forks ATCT, GFK)



Robert Hatley
Chicago Center
ZAU

On Feb. 14, 2025, Chicago Center (ZAU) controller Trenton Henison was training developmental controller Robert Hatley on managing the airspace covering southeast Illinois and southwest Indiana. As part of their routine operations, they were working a familiar aircraft, a Piper Seneca (N8443L), which was conducting regular air sampling maneuvers in their sector. Initially, everything seemed standard. However, the situation quickly began to shift in an unexpected and concerning direction.



Trenton Henison
Chicago Center
ZAU

While observing the flight, Trenton and Robert noticed the aircraft starting to climb above its assigned altitude. In addition to the altitude deviation, the aircraft's flight path appeared erratic and its behavior in the air was unusual. Robert began trying to re-establish communication with the pilot. He made multiple attempts on several frequencies and general broadcasts but received no response. The radio silence was highly irregular and prompted immediate concern.

As the minutes passed, N8443L's ground speed and altitude continued to fluctuate inconsistently, a sign the pilot might be experiencing difficulties. Although the controllers were unable to communicate directly with the aircraft, Trenton and Robert took swift and deliberate action. Working together, they coordinated with surrounding air traffic control facilities and adjacent sectors to create a protective block of airspace around the Piper Seneca. Their goal was to maintain a safe buffer to avoid potential conflicts, safeguarding both N8443L and other aircraft operating nearby.

For the next 10 minutes, despite repeated efforts, there was still no radio contact. Finally, Trenton managed to make contact with the aircraft, but the pilot's transmissions were garbled and confused. It quickly became clear that the pilot was disoriented, and Trenton recognized the possible symptoms of hypoxia — an oxygen deficiency that can impair judgment and motor skills.



GREAT LAKES REGION

Without hesitation, Trenton advised the pilot to immediately descend to a lower altitude and to use supplemental oxygen if available. He also recommended diverting to the nearest suitable airport, which was Terre Haute Regional Airport, Hulman Field (HUF) Taking full command of the situation, Trenton declared an emergency on behalf of the pilot, and began guiding the aircraft step-by-step through the descent. His calm, clear instructions were critical in helping the pilot regain control and safely navigate toward the airport. With careful coordination and constant monitoring, the aircraft was successfully brought down for a safe landing at Champaign-Urbana Airport, ending the emergency without injury or incident.

Throughout the incident, Trenton and Robert demonstrated exceptional situational awareness, resource management, and teamwork under pressure. They used every available tool and communication channel to ensure a positive outcome to the best of their ability. Their composed, decisive actions not only ensured the safety of the disoriented pilot but also preserved the safety and integrity of the surrounding airspace. Their performance on that day reflects the highest standards of professionalism and dedication to safety in the field of air traffic control.

*Congratulations to the 2025 Great Lakes
Region Archie League Medal of Safety
Award Winners, Robert Hatley and
Trenton Henison!*

NEW ENGLAND REGION

Written by Shannon Lyman (Boston Logan ATCT, BOS)



Joshua Costello
Bangor ATCT
BGR

The evening of April 20, 2025, was cloudy, and Joshua Costello and Bryan Loquet were working a midnight shift at Bangor ATCT (BGR) in Bangor, Maine.

Around 11 p.m., the pilot of N7471W, a Piper Cherokee, checked onto Bangor Approach's frequency. They were operating under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and receiving flight following to Belfast Airport (BST) which is 25 miles southwest of Bangor.



Bryan Loquet
Bangor ATCT
BGR

About 15 minutes after cancelling their flight following, the pilot of N7471W returned to the frequency and informed BGR that they were unable to get into BST as the airport was "completely socked in with fog," the pilot said. The pilot inquired about the weather at BGR and Costello relayed the weather for BGR and surrounding airports, none of which had favorable conditions.

The pilot then requested vectors into BGR for a low approach. Costello asked if the pilot was Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) capable and qualified. They were not. Costello immediately understood

the severity of the situation and recalled Loquet back from break to assist.

Off frequency, they coordinated with other facilities, trying to find an airport with acceptable weather for this VFR pilot to land, but when given the options, the pilot said they would rather "try BGR because it's a bigger runway." Costello asked the pilot for his fuel remaining and was told 1 hour, 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, Costello and Loquet had other aircraft to handle. One was an arrival into BGR who reported the tops of the clouds at 1,800 feet and the airport in sight at 600 feet. Another was a LifeFlight of Maine requesting to depart a nearby hospital, who, after having a conversation with tower about the situation at hand, opted to stay nearby.

Before the first approach attempt, Costello asked N7471W if they had ever flown an Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach, to which the pilot responded, "Two practice ones." Costello then explained what an Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR) approach was



NEW ENGLAND REGION

and that if the pilot's first attempt did not work, he would guide him in on an ASR approach. Thankfully, BGR has a published ASR approach and Costello has previous experience providing ASR approaches during his time as a Navy controller.

When the pilot went through final on the first attempt, Costello successfully got the pilot back onto the localizer and provided final approach fix altitude information. This approach was unsuccessful, and the pilot expressed that they would like to try again.

The pilot informed Costello, "This is my last try. My tank is saying 'E.'" On the second ASR approach, Costello informed the pilot his position, altitude, and necessary control instructions to keep him on an appropriate flight path to the runway, along with supportive comments to the pilot.

Two miles from the runway, the pilot reported, "One tank is empty, it just shut off." Costello issued a few more instructions to the pilot to keep him on track. When the aircraft was a half mile from the runway, the pilot reported the runway in sight and was cleared to land. N7471W landed without incident.

Both Costello and Loquet credit their ability to handle this situation successfully to the mentorship of controllers at BGR and their past experience, as BGR frequently handles emergencies.

Congratulations to the 2025 New England Region Archie League Medal of Safety Award Winners, Joshua Costello and Bryan Loquet!

NORTHWEST MOUNTAIN REGION

Written by Jessica Rakovitis (Great Falls ATCT, GTF)



Jonathan Rossell
Denver Center
ZDV

In a profession where seconds matter and lives depend on clear-headed decision-making, Denver Center (ZDV) air traffic controller Jonathan Rossell exemplified extraordinary composure, teamwork, and resourcefulness in a situation involving a disoriented pilot navigating mountainous terrain and worsening weather conditions.

The incident began on June 29, 2024, when a small aircraft, N484FS, departed Sturgis Airport (49B) in South Dakota, flying Visual Flight Rules (VFR) with flight following westbound toward Sheridan, Wyo. (SHR). Shortly after departure, the aircraft was handed off to Denver Center. Due to low altitude, radar contact with the aircraft was lost, and communications quickly revealed troubling signs. The pilot was disoriented, unsure of his location, and facing deteriorating weather. A language barrier compounded the issue.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Jonathan and his fellow ZDV controllers decided to split sectors to provide better service to N484FS and other low

altitude aircraft. Realizing the pilot was navigating in the wrong direction — flying east instead of west toward his intended destination — Jonathan used his expertise to begin guiding the pilot back on course.

Complicating the rescue was the aircraft's altitude, which kept it below radar coverage. Jonathan asked the pilot to climb in hopes of re-establishing radar contact, and when asked if he was Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) qualified, the pilot responded uncertainly and admitted the weather was bad — a strong indication that he was entering instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) without the training or experience to manage them.

Jonathan coordinated an emergency landing at the nearest airport, Hulett Municipal Airport (W43). He then reached out to other aircraft in the vicinity for assistance. A nearby jet, EJA371, answered the call. With guidance from Jonathan, the crew of EJA371 descended to minimum safe altitude, adjusted their traffic collision



NORTHWEST MOUNTAIN REGION

avoidance system (TCAS), and conducted a search that ultimately located N484FS. They relayed crucial headings that guided the pilot toward W43.

Thanks to Jonathan's calm and clear communication, the pilot was able to visually acquire W43 and land safely. Understanding the pilot was overwhelmed, he refrained from further non-essential communications, focusing solely on ensuring a successful landing. Jonathan's coordination with a fellow controller, his supervisor, and the crew of EJA371, brought a dangerous situation to a safe conclusion.

When asked what receiving an Archie League Award meant to him, Jonathan said, "It's pretty cool. It's nice to be recognized by your peers. It's probably the coolest award that you don't want to win – because typically there's some stressful incident that goes along with it."

Jonathan Rossell's actions saved a life that day. "We always talk about the Swiss cheese model — and how multiple failures end up leading to a bad incident. But I think this was a situation where there was only one layer of protection each time, and we got the right result every time." His quick thinking and teamwork are a testament to what the Archie League Award represents — heroism in the skies and dedication on the ground.

Congratulations to the 2025 Northwest Mountain Region Archie League Medal of Safety Award Winner, Jonathan Rossell!

SOUTHERN REGION

Written by Eric Goldman (Pensacola ATCT, PNS)



Christiaan Cambridge
Miami ATCT
MIA

In the high-pressure world of air traffic control, the ability to remain composed during life-threatening emergencies is what separates good controllers from great ones. Christiaan “Q” Cambridge, an air traffic controller at Miami ATCT (MIA), exemplified that calm professionalism in November 2024 when he guided a pilot with an engine failure to safety over the unforgiving terrain of the Florida Everglades.

What began as a quiet evening shift quickly escalated when Christiaan heard a faint, distressed voice on frequency. While the pilot’s exact words were unclear to him, the urgency and emotion were unmistakable. The aircraft was experiencing severe engine trouble over the Everglades — an area known not just for its remoteness, but also for the lack of emergency landing options and challenging search and rescue logistics.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Christiaan immediately began vectoring the aircraft toward U.S. Highway 27 — the closest identifiable landmark and one of the few potential landing options.

Despite the unfolding crisis, Christiaan maintained a calm, reassuring tone throughout the exchange. His mindset was clear: “He’s relying on me to be the calm voice of reason.”

Christiaan’s actions extended far beyond issuing vectors. Anticipating the possibility of a forced landing in the swampy terrain, he coordinated intercept vectors for nearby aircraft in real time. “If this guy goes down,” he reasoned, “we need to know where he is. Every minute counts in the Everglades.”

Thanks to Christiaan’s quick thinking and coordination, three aircraft — a Citation jet, a Cessna 172, and a Coast Guard CASA CN-235 — were able to maintain visual contact with the distressed plane, assist in relaying its location to emergency personnel, and serve as air traffic control’s eyes in the sky, providing real-time visuals of the situation on the ground — something radar alone couldn’t offer.

The pilot ultimately made a successful emergency landing and was treated by first responders on the ground. The news



SOUTHERN REGION

brought Christiaan a deep sense of relief and closure: “I just wanted to know that he was okay.”

This was not the first time Christiaan had encountered such a harrowing scenario. A similar event years prior — where a fellow Miami controller perished after an emergency landing — remained etched in his memory and served as a guiding force throughout this situation. “It would have broken my heart if something like that happened again,” Christiaan said.

When asked what advice Christiaan would give to other controllers facing similar emergencies, his message was simple and powerful: “You are the voice of calm. That may be exactly what the pilot needs. Ask your fellow controllers for help — you’re not in it alone. Stay calm and focused on delivering the safest outcome possible.”

Christiaan’s story is a testament to the professionalism, teamwork, and dedication that define the air traffic control community. His actions not only saved a life, They set the standard for how calm leadership can turn potential tragedy into a story of survival.

*Congratulations to the 2025 Southern
Region Archie League Medal of Safety
Award Winner, Christiaan Cambridge!*

SOUTHWEST REGION

Written by Anita Johnson (Albuquerque ATCT, ABQ)



Jade Hetes
Albuquerque Center
ZAB

It was a March Monday morning at Albuquerque Center (ZAB). Traffic was ramping up, but it wasn't too busy yet. It was the kind of shift that can feel deceptively routine, but in aviation, things can change in an instant. N15713 established contact with sector 45 at ZAB and requested flight following to Belen Regional Airport (BRG). Jade Hetes was working the radar position. She identified N15713 and advised the pilot to maintain visual flight rules (VFR).

Five minutes later, everything changed.

A distress call came through: "MAYDAY." The pilot reported a rough-running engine, high oil pressure, and additional symptoms that were unintelligible over the radio. Without hesitation, Jade asked for the pilot's intentions. N15713 was showing at 9,100 feet. The pilot responded: they would be landing in a field. Jade immediately began troubleshooting with the pilot. She suggested Winslow-Lindbergh Regional Airport which was 15 miles away, or a return to Flagstaff (FLG). Jade asked if the pilot could turn left, but radar contact

was lost. Jade asked for an altitude report and N15713 reported in a left turn and an altitude of 8,100 feet. Jade issued an advisory: minimum instrument flight rules (IFR) altitude in the area was 8,000 feet. And there was still no radar contact.

A few moments later, Jade asked again for N15713's heading. The pilot replied: "Northbound." Radar contact was re-established at 7,700 feet. Jade offered: "Direct Flagstaff," but the pilot responded she wouldn't make it. Jade kept going. She advised that Interstate 40 was roughly three miles south. The pilot decided to attempt landing on the highway. Jade then sought clarity on the nature of the emergency. "What had failed?" The pilot replied "Oil pressure. Oil on the windscreen."

Jade updated the pilot on position and distance to I-40. The pilot didn't think she would make it. Jade responded that she still had the aircraft on radar. A couple of minutes later, N15713 advised she could not make the highway and was going to land in a field. Jade had worked every angle to give N15713 a chance



SOUTHWEST REGION

to land the plane safely, even getting assistance from a nearby aircraft. Moments later, N15713 reported she had landed safely in a field, approximately two miles north of I-40. Jade provided the pilot with Albuquerque Center's watch desk number and shortly after, the pilot called in reporting no injuries.

When asked how she felt during the incident, Jade said "In the moment, I was nervous, but I was able to lock in pretty fast. I knew the pilot needed quick, informative answers, so I focused on staying calm and finding the information that might help. I knew there wasn't much I could do outside of offering her the knowledge I did have of the terrain and the geography. After she landed safely, I felt so relieved and honestly, proud of the pilot."

Jade brought it all together: experience, composure, situational awareness, decisive action, and a steady hand in a moment that could've gone any number of ways. Because of her professionalism and care, a pilot walked away safe and without injury.

We are proud to recognize Jade Hetes as the Southwest Region's 2025 Archie League Award winner. She represents the best of who we are, and she reminds us: Better Never Rests.

Congratulations to the 2025 Southwest Region Archie League Medal of Safety Award Winner, Jade Hetes!

WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

Written by Ariana Seimas (Fresno ATCT, FAT)



Joseph Seimas
Fresno ATCT
FAT

On the late morning of Aug. 21, 2024 while working local control, Joseph “YO” Seimas was relayed information from the Friant area radar controller about an emergency F-15 inbound — Noble42, an F-15 from the California Air National Guard’s 144th Fighter Wing: “Noble42 hydraulic issue with intentions of engaging the arresting cable, minimum fuel, and ordinance onboard the aircraft.” Noble42 then entered from the north for the downwind and was intending for a normal arrested rollout for Runway 29 right at FAT. A safety device stretched across the runway that military jets can hook onto to stop quickly in an emergency, BAK-14 east cable, which the local California Air National Guard 144th Fighter Wing uses for safety operations, was raised and ready for an arrested landing. Joseph then noticed that Noble42 had not slowed down and the high speed of the aircraft appeared to have broken the cable. Unknown to anyone at this time, the arresting hook on the F-15 was completely sheared and broken and was in pieces on the runway, an arrested landing would not be possible.

Noble42 was airborne again, the pilot requested airborne assistance for an inspection by another F-15. Not having any military aircraft in the air, Joseph reached out to Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore for help. Since Joseph had been stationed at NAS Lemoore for six years prior to joining the FAA, he knew the airbase would be open and likely have dozens F-18s or F-35s that could assist. Joseph explained the situation to NAS Lemoore approach, and they began looking for available aircraft to assist. Meanwhile, Joseph asked the pilot to make a low pass over the taxiway for a controller visual inspection, and then attempt to catch the BAK-14 west cable on Runway 11L from the opposite direction.

After the ground controller cleared the taxiway, Noble42 did a low-and-slow pass by the tower for a closer look, and everything appeared good for landing. Seimas explained that in the event of another go around the pilot’s other option would be to NAS Lemoore, 30 miles south. With Noble42 low on fuel, the pilot was aware of the situation



WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

and additional options. Noble42 attempted another arrested landing on the opposite direction Runway 11 left, but missed the arresting cable. Luckily, there were two FA-18s inbound and ready to assist. Noble42 requested vectors to NAS Lemoore. Seimas vectored the pilot south and gave instructions to Navy fighters to intercept for escort to NAS Lemoore.

Once Seimas handed the aircraft to NAS Lemoore, he realized that NAS Lemoore had a single runway. This emergency would shut the airport down. Seimas knew he had to clear the runway at FAT since it was the primary divert if NAS Lemoore was unavailable.

Ground personnel at FAT were on the runway clearing debris when they made a shocking discovery: Noble42's tailhook had broken off. Ground personnel contacted the controllers to inform them. Joseph was able to quickly relay this information to NAS Lemoore

approach at a crucial moment. As a result of this quick communication, Noble42 was able to land safely at NAS Lemoore using a flared rollout on their longer runway.

Captain Nathan Agner, who was piloting the F-15 that day, later wrote a letter thanking Seimas for his work. "Joseph Seimas' exceptional decision-making, situational awareness, and communication under pressure were instrumental in the safe recovery of Noble 42," Agner said. "His leadership in managing this complex situation prevented a potential disaster and deserves the highest recognition. I wholeheartedly recommend Joseph Seimas for this well-deserved award in acknowledgment of his extraordinary performance."

Congratulations to the 2025 Western Pacific Region Archie League Medal of Safety Award Winner, Joseph Seimas!



REGION X

Written by Lisen Minetti (Engineer Aeronautical Center, EAC)



Christopher Caravaglio
Engineer/Southern Region, ESO



Janette Ramos Chandler
Engineer/Southern Region, ESO



Alexis Guthrie
Engineer/Southern Region, ESO



Shay Jones
Engineer/Southern Region, ESO

NATCA congratulates the 2025 recipients of the Region X Commitment to Safety Award, the Eastern Center Drug Abatement Team comprised of Team Lead Inspector Christopher Caravaglio and team members Jose Ricardo Ortiz, Shay Jones, Freidy Lazala, Shanise Ross, Janette Ramos Chandler, Alexis Guthrie, and Guillermo Mela.

The Region X Commitment to Safety Award is given annually to Region X members who have shown a profound dedication to ensuring the safety of the National Airspace System (NAS). The award is peer-nominated, and any Region X member in good standing can be nominated for work done in their role as an aviation safety professional. The Drug Abatement team is tasked with safeguarding the NAS through ensuring that industry partners who implement drug and alcohol programs are in compliance with Department of Transportation (DOT) and FAA regulations. The

Drug Abatement team works in partnership with the aviation industry to ensure the safety of the flying public through compliance and education.

Earlier this year, the Eastern Center Drug Abatement Team was instrumental in identifying and correcting serious compliance gaps within the drug and alcohol testing program of one of the largest air carriers in the world, which operates 4,000-5,400 flights daily, carrying over 515,000-530,000 passengers across six continents. The scale of these operations makes it essential that every individual performing safety-sensitive duties — whether piloting aircraft, performing maintenance, or handling dispatch — meets the highest standards of fitness for duty. During a thorough inspection, the team uncovered significant vulnerabilities in the carrier's compliance infrastructure including delayed reporting of violations, deficiencies in post-accident testing protocols, failure to follow



REGION X



Freidy Lazala

Engineer/Southern Region, ESO



Guillermo Mela

Engineer/Southern Region, ESO



Jose Ricardo Ortiz

Engineer/Southern Region, ESO



Shanise Ross

Engineer/Southern Region, ESO

the return to duty protocols for individuals who have tested positive, and not subjecting some safety-sensitive employees to random testing. Any one of these issues, if left unaddressed, could have allowed individuals with substance abuse problems to operate or maintain aircraft posing a direct threat to the flying public.

Through decisive action, the Eastern Center Drug Abatement Team led a corrective enforcement strategy that resulted in comprehensive remediation of the carrier's testing program. The team's efforts not only closed the gap at this particular airline, but also prompted revisions to FAA guidance, raising the bar for how large-scale carriers manage drug and alcohol compliance. By holding a major air carrier accountable at the highest levels, the team ensured that no individual under the influence of drugs or alcohol would be allowed to fly aircraft or repair aircraft that millions of passengers depend on daily.

Freidy Lazala said: "The Eastern Center Drug Abatement Team exemplifies the mission and values of Region X and the FAA. Their work reflects a rare combination of technical excellence, courage, and moral clarity. Their steadfast commitment to upholding the integrity of the FAA's drug and alcohol programs has protected countless lives by ensuring that substance-impaired individuals are prevented from performing duties where a single mistake could result in catastrophe."

When reflecting on winning this award, one theme stood out: teamwork. "It was a great feeling to know that I'm around a great team, a great group of team members, and look forward to continuing what we do," Jeanette said. Shanise echoed Jeanette's sentiments, "For me, it was a shock knowing that we won the award. I'm very appreciative of it. And to get [the award] with my teammates, made it even better."



REGION X

Guillermo Mela said “There are some very good inspectors and some of the smartest people that I’ve seen work in [drug abatement]. These people know their stuff. It is humbling to receive something like this.”

With 13 years at the FAA, Jose Ricardo Ortiz has worked with his share of drug abatement inspectors and agrees that the relationship between the team members is what makes this team stand out. “The team works together. We are always talking, teaching each other, learning from each other, discussing every item that we come across. I have to say that the Eastern Center is the best center. Without a doubt, I’m happy to be there, and proud of them by all means.”

“Region X is extremely proud of our Drug Abatement Inspectors, and the dedication they show every day to the safety of the NAS. Working a regularly rigorous schedule of a week of on-site inspections followed by a week of office work to complete all required

reporting, these aviation safety professionals enforce compliance policies that keep both industry and the flying public safe,” Region X Regional Vice President Mark Rausch said. “We all look forward to celebrating their accomplishments this year at CFS.”

*Congratulations to the 2025 Region X
Commitment to Safety Award Winners,
Christopher Caravaglio, Janette Ramos
Chandler, Alexis Guthrie, Shay Jones,
Freidy Lazala, Guillermo Mela,
Jose Ricardo Ortiz, and Shanise Ross!*



HONORABLE MENTIONS

Alaskan Region

Seint Mac Kenn
Flight Services Station Fairbanks Local (FS2)

Central Region

Kevin Lacson and Ryan Sitton
Springfield ATCT (SGF)

Eastern Region

Nathan Quinn
New York Center (ZNY)

Great Lakes Region

Jason Maurer
Rockford ATCT (RFD)

New England Region

James Knowlton
Boston TRACON (A90)

Northwest Mountain Region

Teresa Pavljuk
Salt Lake City ATCT (SLC)

Southern Region

Samonta Jones
Orlando ATCT (MCO)

Southwest Region

Derrick Green and Kimberley Shattuck
Dallas/Fort Worth TRACON (D10)

Western Pacific Region

Vergil Arceo and Richard Lindsey (retired)
Los Angeles ATCT (LAX)



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