

THE WATCH

**MARCH IS WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH**

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THE BOOK NOOK

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**MASTERING EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE**

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Dr. Jean Kanokogi

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PWC

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PWC Purpose: The purpose of Professional Women Controllers, Inc. (PWC) is to encourage women to enter the air traffic control profession; assist in professional and personal development; maintain accountability, responsibility, and professionalism; and promote a better understanding, cooperation and coordination among individuals toward the continual improvement of aviation safety.

PWC Vision: PWC's vision is to achieve a balanced workforce that reflects the demographics of society and creates a safe environment where all air traffic professionals have passion for their career, can excel, and feel a sense of community at work.

PWC Mission: PWC is a resource that provides support, training, encouragement, and camaraderie for all air traffic professionals. PWC advocates balancing work and family life, recruiting and retaining excellent employees, developing people, enjoying work, and maintaining a positive sense of community.

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Getty Images



View from the Tower

By Jenn Dempster, Professional Women Controllers (PWC) President

PWC, we are in for some very exciting times. As you all know, March is Women's History Month with this year's theme being "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion." PWC has been proudly working with the Federal Women's Program along with other partners to help highlight women who have inspired us all. I encourage you all to check out <https://my.faa.gov/focus/broadcast/womens-history-month-2024>.

Once we finish up with Women's History Month, PWC slides right into our 2024 National Training Conference. This year's agenda is packed with opportunities to find out where you want to be in five years or what options you have available to you down the road. I encourage everyone attending to take full advantage of the resources available and talk with all our speakers. PWC's goal this year and next is to bring as much "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" in both job and personal growth opportunities. For all who are attending the conference this year, do not forget we are accepting items for the raffle table. If you want to mail something ahead of the Conference, I will be driving to Louisville and can bring it with me. Contact me for the mailing address at pwinc.president@gmail.com. Don't forget, that PWC is looking for location nominations for our 2026 National Training Conference.

Election season is upon us and will close after the first day of the 2024 National Training Conference. If you did not receive an e-mail to vote, and you are a voting member, please reach out to Tawni Pettigrove at pwcmembershipdirector@gmail.com to verify your membership.

PWC is looking for a few good individuals to help in our organization. We are looking for a new PWC WATCH Team, PWC Social Media Team, and PWC Career and Education Team. PWC is also looking for local assistance in the Denver area with the planning of the 2025 PWC National Training Conference. If you are interested but have questions about the commitment or requirements to these requests, please reach out to me at the e-mail mentioned above and I would be more than happy to let you know.

As we approach the dreaded SWAP (Severe Weather Avoidance Plan) season of our jobs, take this time to enjoy these last couple of months before schedules become hectic, the weather is unpredictable, and the kids are out for the summer. Take care PWC and I hope to see many of you in Louisville!

Jenn

EDITOR'S NOTE



¡Bienvenidos! Welcome!

I do not believe I am alone when I say I need more time in a day! Whether that time be for getting projects done, cleaning the house, socializing, taking kids to the park, sleeping or staring into the abyss is irrelevant. With that said, sometimes we must step away to allow for growth. We are looking for people to take over the WATCH as the Managing Editor and Co-Editor(s). If you are interested in becoming a part of The WATCH team please reach out to pwinc.watch@gmail.com. Laura and I have been a part of the WATCH for about two years and have learned so much and have made great connections in our tenure. We both feel like it is now time to pass the baton into fresh hands and give this great opportunity to someone new. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions!

I recently saw a few fun days to jot down in your calendar with the first being May 24th to celebrate Aviation Maintenance Technician Day. As we know well, pilots are often thought of first when discussing aviation, but there are so many people behind the scenes who make any one flight happen. Another fun day is May 26th; National Paper Airplane Day. Though more lighthearted, this simple toy symbolizes creativity, imagination, freedom and dreams.

Alicia Barry Whitman
WATCH MANAGING EDITOR



IN THIS ISSUE

There are many facets to aviation and the Federal Aviation Administration. In this issue we learn about various offices in the FAA and different interests our membership have within aviation. Also, time is rapidly approaching for our PWC 2024 Conference in Louisville, KY. Be sure to sign up soon!

An advertisement for SmarterFeds Retirement Training. The background is a photograph of a horse race in progress, with several horses and jockeys running on a track. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, there is a large red "S" logo followed by "SMARTER FEDS" in red and white. Below that, it says "RETIREMENT TRAINING" in white. Underneath, it says "SMARTER TRAINING • BETTER RESULTS" in white. At the bottom of the image area, it says "CREATE A RETIREMENT THAT WINS THE RACE" in white. Below the image area, there is a red banner with white text that says "CALL TODAY - WE WILL SHOW YOU HOW". Below the banner, there is a white box containing the text "CONNECT WITH A BENEFITS SPECIALIST" and the phone number "877-309-5133" with a right-pointing arrow. Below the phone number, it says "GET YOUR BENEFITS REPORT USING THE QR CODE" and there is a QR code. To the right of the QR code is a small image of a "SMARTER FEDS" report. Below the white box, there is another red banner with white text that says "REGISTER FOR AN UPCOMING WORKSHOP AT SMARTERFEDS.COM" with a right-pointing arrow. Below the banner, there is another QR code.



WATCH TEAM OPENINGS

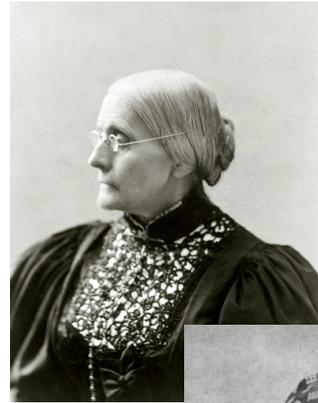
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MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



**“...THERE ARE
SO MANY
STRIDES
WOMEN HAVE
MADE TOWARD
EQUALITY IN
SOCIETY.”**

By Veneca Coulanges, PWC Southern Regional Director

Today, in the United States we recognize March as Women's History Month. In 1980, this month long celebration spanned the course of seven days, the week of March 8th, to include International Women's Day. This week was formally known as Women's History Week. However, in 1986 the National Women's History Project petitioned congress and prevailed to have the entire month of March recognized as Women's History Month. Ever since we have taken the month of March to appreciate the contributions and accomplishments of women.

There are so many different categories women have excelled in; and there are so many strides women have made toward equality in society. To highlight a specific area, each year the National Women's History Project chooses a special focus for the month. This year in 2024, it focuses on Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The lifelong fight and accomplishments of women like Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman and Helen Keller are in the forefront of our minds this month.

Take a moment during this Women's History Month to reflect and to recognize how the efforts and bravery of current and past generations continues to pave the way for women today. Celebrate those in your community by attending local events, and support female-founded businesses. And don't forget to honor the women who make a difference in your life: your mother, grandmother, sister, mentor and so on.



TOP LEFT: Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), in 1890s. (Photo by Universal History Archive/Shutterstock)

TOP RIGHT: Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), American Abolitionist, Portrait, circa 1885. (Photo by Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group via Getty Images)

BOTTOM: View of members of the National League of Women Voters, seated around a table, holding signs that read 'VOTE', September 1924. (Photo by PhotoQuest/Getty Images)

NEW ARRIVALS



Welcome to the PWC family!

PWC membership benefits can be found at pwcinc.org/membership

Please reach out to Tawni Pettigrove, PWC Membership Director at pwcmembershipdirector@gmail.com with any questions regarding membership.

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THE BOOK NOOK

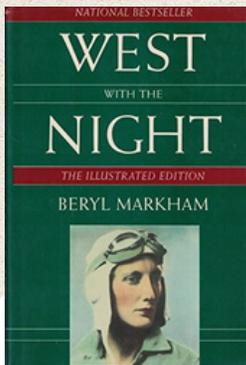
...thoughtful suggestions.

By Sandy Holcomb, PWC Western Pacific Regional Director

What book are you reading next?

I was inspired to put this short reading list together after the January Professional Women Controllers (PWC) Board of Directors meeting that was graciously hosted at Denver TRACON. I noticed Denver TRACON had a small area with lending books, as most our facilities do. On the cafeteria table I caught a glimpse of one of my favorite books, *West with the Night*. I realized that several of my fellow Board members were not familiar with this great story so thought I would share it with you too.

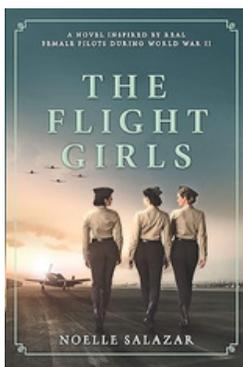
I understand that we are busy with little to no time to read anything other than the 7110.65, but I encourage you to check out these inspiring aviation books. After all, these books are work-related! From my personal experience, I have benefited greatly by taking a few minutes to read about something outside of myself for a mini-mind vacation.



West with the Night by Beryl Markham

"Beryl Markham's *West with the Night* provides fascinating lessons in history, geography, plant and animal wildlife, and courageous living. The title *West with the Night* refers to Markham's 1936 feat of flying solo from England across the Atlantic to North America; she was the first person to do this. The 3,600-mile flight was from East to West, and most of the 21 hours and 25 minutes of the trip were in darkness, against the wind, and over unbroken ocean. It

was an extraordinary achievement in an era when there were few pilots with such daring and even more impressive being a woman. Though this record-setting flight is exciting, most of the book is about Markham's years in Africa where her English father had bought an isolated and remote farm in British East Africa (later Kenya). [1]" A truly remarkable read!



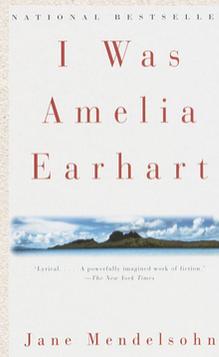
The Flight Girls by Noelle Salazar

The Flight Girls is a historical fiction novel, inspired by the real-life heroines of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II. The book follows the story of Audrey Coltrane, a female pilot who joins the WASP program and faces various challenges and dangers in the war, as well as a romantic involvement with a soldier. If you are interested in learning more about the WASP women and their role in World War II, you will enjoy reading this book.



Wally Funk's Race for Space: The Extraordinary Story of a Female Aviation Pioneer by Sue Nelson

Her mission was to become one of the first women astronauts. But a combination of politics and prejudice meant the program was abruptly cancelled. Neither Wally nor the other pilots in this program ever made it into space. In this book, approaching 80 years old, Wally is joined by fellow space enthusiast Sue Nelson as she races to make her giant leap before it is too late (spoiler - she makes it!). This is an awesome read!



I Was Amelia Earhart by Jane Mendelsohn

A sweet little book that uses your imagination to enjoy. It is written from Amelia's (fictional) perspective, the book tells the story of Earhart's final flight and what could have transpired after her crash on a remote island. It is fascinating to read what the author imagines to be Earhart's experience and what had transpired after her disappearance. The relationship between Earhart and navigator, the drunken Noonan, is vital to Earhart's tale and evolves as Earhart accepts her

castaway status. I really enjoyed this story and a glimpse into what might have been.

All of these books can be found on Amazon or as I prefer, to hunt for in second-hand bookstores.

In case these books were not enough to entice you to read, note that reading has been scientifically proven to make you feel:

- More relaxed
- Happier
- Smarter
- In a pleasurable trance-like state, similar to meditation
- Health benefits of deep relaxation and inner calm
- Better sleep
- Lower stress levels
- Higher self-esteem
- Better aviatrix (Okay, I added this one, maybe not scientifically proven, but you'll have more interesting things to chat about)

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Navigating Retirement Risks Understanding Sequence of Returns and Inflation for Women in Retirement

By John F. Ripley, Certified Financial Fiduciary® (CFF), CLTC®, FRCSM, ChFEBCSM Investment Advisor Representative at Smarter Retirement Solutions

Federal Employee retirement planning is a multifaceted endeavor, especially for women, who often face unique challenges managing their multiple roles in life. Aviation professionals who prepare to retire within the next ten to fifteen years must navigate various risks, including the sequence of returns and uncertain inflation. Understanding and addressing these risks is crucial for ensuring a financially stable future.

The term Sequence of Returns Risk seems like an Ivy League word used mainly by high-level economists. The sequence of returns risk is a fancy way of understanding Wall Street's positive and negative mathematical impacts and the overall investment climate to be favorable or problematic correlated to your retirement timeline. For instance, people who retired in 2009 thought they were retiring right in the middle of the Global Financial Crisis. It turns out that they were actually retiring into America's longest-running Bull Market. The result was they could spend money and enjoy retirement without substantial damage to their portfolio balance. In fact, many investors could spend money and still end the year with a larger TSP, IRA, or 401(k) balance.

Compare that experience to a person who retired in 1999 with an identical FERS annuity payment and TSP balance; their experience was dramatically different. In their first ten years of retirement, they lost twenty to fifty percent of their home's market value and watched their TSP and other investments lose twenty to sixty percent of the account value. Economists call this The Lost Decade, as in many cases, a person with a \$100,000 retirement portfolio in 1999 had to wait until sometime after 2012 to see their account balance restored to \$100,000. Here's the unnerving part: they would have been unable to take even one dollar from that portfolio during that ten to twelve year period for the recovery to materialize. How many people do you know that plan to retire and wait ten to twelve years before they start using their retirement funds? I guess that the answer is "very few."

Since women have longer life expectancies than men, unstable returns during the withdrawal period of retirement (shortly after retirement until death) can wreak havoc on a woman's overall monthly spending capacity even more than their male counterparts, who don't need their money to last as long. Many federal retirees rely on their TSP to fill the gap between their FERS Annuity, FERS Special Retirement Supplement, Social Security, and monthly spending needs. Suppose the market experiences a downturn shortly after retirement. In that case, people who take the same amount from TSP on a monthly, quarterly, or even annual basis might significantly deplete their retirement savings sooner than they ever imagined. As a reminder, the TSP Pro Rata Rule requires that withdrawals from TSP be directly proportional to the underlying allocations. For instance, if you have 30% in the G Fund, 50% in the C Fund, and 20% in the S Fund, when you need \$10,000 from TSP, you must sell \$5,000 worth of C Fund Shares, \$2,000 worth of S Fund Shares and \$3,000 worth of G Fund shares. What happens if both the C Fund and S Fund are down sharply during the month you need the funds? You have no choice but to sell more shares to generate the required cash, as the underlying share value is compromised. The shares that you sold are now no longer yours and will never be able to recover; hence, a negative Sequence of Returns was very damaging to your overall portfolio.

Most Americans are happy that inflation in 2024 seems much better than it was in 2023, right? Let's explore that idea in light of the Sequence of Inflation Risk. The sequence of inflation refers to the specific timing

and rate at which inflation occurs during retirement. This phenomenon can have varying impacts on retirees depending on when prices rise compared to the transition from their full earning capacity to their reduced retirement income.

Inflation erodes the purchasing power of retirement savings over time. To truly understand the current inflation number (The CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average for January 2024 Unadjusted) of 3.1%, we need to realize that this is 3.1% higher than January 2023. Remember, January of 2023 was 5.8% higher than January of 2022. The January 2022 CPI-U was 8.6% higher than in January 2021. You can see the challenge. The prices of goods and services are generally increasing. Some specific categories have declined, but the overall basket of goods continues to get more expensive. For example, Americans who bought \$10,000 worth of goods and services in 2000 now must spend \$11,955.49 for the identical items. This notable increase in consumer costs is a concerning trend for all of us. While working, people can often adjust their discretionary spending and mitigate the effects of inflation. In addition, pay raises, part-time jobs, or joint income can help. In retirement, the margins are much thinner, and the ability to absorb a nearly twenty percent increase in living costs in just four years is quite challenging. To endure a decade of this kind of pressure is almost impossible.

A final thought on the impact of inflation is the significant impact on current healthcare costs and the future challenge of long-term care affordability. FEHB premiums increased by 7.2% in 2023 and 7.7% in 2024. If this trend continues, federal retirees must consider ways to reduce their retirement budget line items for non-essential items to allow room for expanded healthcare needs.

So, what are some ideas and solutions to mitigate the impact of the Sequence of Returns and Sequence of Inflation Risks for women? Women should explore investment and long-term care strategies that offer inflation protection options. Working with a financial professional who understands these mathematical realities is crucial. A solid Retirement Income Plan must incorporate current healthcare and future long-term care estimates to ensure that each season of life has the proper allocations of capital. Each season of life also includes today and not just someday. We are passionate about helping people make memories and not just money. In fact, I am so passionate about the idea I trademarked it: "We help you make memories and not just money!"

Consider this: do you know people who passed away with more money than life experiences? You can make sure that is not your reality. Develop a plan that provides financial clarity, giving you the emotional permission to spend money sooner rather than later while your body and mind will cooperate. I am also confident that you know someone who ended the race of life with fewer resources than they needed, and their dignity was compromised. That does not have to be your experience. With proper planning and a financial advisory firm that genuinely cares about every season of life, you can maximize each component of your substantial benefits package and reach your full retirement potential.

John F. Ripley is an Investment Advisor Representative and leads the team at Smarter Retirement Solutions. He can be reached at 877-309-3364 or John@SmarterRetirementSolutions.com.



What is AOV?

By Theresa Parker, PWC Northwest Mountain Regional Director



While working as an air traffic controller, I occasionally heard about “AOV,” the acronym for the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service. I never gave it much thought though, until I was looking into different organizations in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to continue growing my career. I was intrigued by what AOV did, providing independent oversight of the Air Traffic Organization (ATO). I applied and was selected to work in AOV as an Air Traffic Safety Inspector (ATSI).

AOV was officially established in May of 2004 and, since inception, has played a crucial role in ensuring the safety and efficiency of air traffic control operations. The requirement to have formal safety management procedures comes from an amendment that was adopted from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on November 1, 2001. ATISs in AOV have the privilege of contributing to this important mission by conducting inspections, audits, evaluations, and monitoring to uphold the highest standards of safety in the aviation industry. AOV plays a vital role in ensuring the ATO has a strong Safety Management System (SMS).

When most people think of AOV, they immediately think of credentialing. All air traffic controller, technician, and aeronautical information specialist certificates originate within AOV. The Credentialing branch ensures that personnel providing safety-related services meet all training and certification requirements before issuing credentials. Last year, 23,269 credentials were managed by AOV.

AOV also participates on the event review committees for voluntary safety reporting programs, which gathers, analyzes, and disseminates information from the front line as part of a healthy safety culture. Other AOV activities include collaborating with FAA’s Flight Standards Service, fielding a runway safety action team, and observing Safety Risk Management panels and quality control. AOV also conducts surveillance of the ATO by approving, accepting, or concurring with changes to the national airspace system. Additionally, AOV develops tools to identify potential safety trends and evaluates future systems safety cases.

The organization has 12 branches. Branch missions range from oversight of aeronautical information, reviewing high risk hazards, monitoring of the ATO to compliance issues, and continued daily operational safety reviews. Four branches provide oversight of operations and are located in Atlanta, GA; Fort Worth, TX; and Des Moines, WA. The others provide oversight of safety standards and support credentialing, international activities, and human resources from Washington, DC. The organization is led by Executive Director Nick Fuller (AOV-1), who reports directly to both the FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker and Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety David Boulter (AVS-1). There are roughly 130 people in AOV, compared to the thousands employed by the ATO.

AOV Mission: To provide independent, risk-based, data-driven safety oversight of air navigation services.

AOV Vision: To be the global leader in safety oversight of air navigation services.

Why is AOV an important part of the FAA?

In an aviation environment characterized by increasing complexity and continuously changing systems, such as greater numbers of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) and space launches, there is no guarantee that what is being done today will keep the skies safe tomorrow. AOV is part of the safety management system of the FAA. When a safety management system is in place and the key components, safety assurance, safety promotion, safety policy, and safety risk management, are effective, risk can be mitigated. The FAA has always been a global leader and must continue working hard to maintain this distinction.

In the short time I have been in AOV, I can honestly say it's a rewarding experience to be a part of an organization so dedicated to maintaining the high safety standards of the national airspace system.

AOV’s duties are described in FAA Order 1100.161A, with a revision coming in Spring 2024. The “one-sixty-one” as referred to by those in the organization is the governing order, outlining the roles and responsibilities of the organization and giving AOV the authority to provide safety oversight of the ATO.

Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service.” Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service | Federal Aviation Administration, 2020.
www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aov

The 1997 National Civil Aviation Review Commission NCARC recommended that the air traffic service provider in the FAA be subject to the safety policies of a separate part of the FAA to provide independent safety oversight. On November 1st, 2001, the international Civil Aviation Organization adopted an amendment requiring states to implement formal safety management procedures for their air traffic service systems by November 2003.
www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/Order_1100.161_CHG_1.pdf

AOV accomplishes oversight by:

- Validating the Air Traffic Organization safety related processes used for introduction of new separation standards, and modification of existing separation standards.
- Approving new standards, waivers, extension and modification of existing waivers.
- Analyzing and authorizing controls used by the Air Traffic Organization to mitigate hazards; and,
- Participating in operational review and analysis of information pertaining to the Air Traffic Organization employees, operations and programs.
- Developing and amending regulations and guidance for regulatory oversight and credentialing functions.
- Participating in the development and harmonization of air traffic control international standards.
- Provides regulatory oversight of the ATO Safety Management System.

Many of these tasks are carried out through:

- Auditing
- Monitoring
- Investigations
- Inspections
- Cooperation with other FAA safety services

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NATCA Members Inspire the Next Generation of Female Aviation Professionals Through Community Events

By Jessica Reed, NATCA Public Affairs Administrator

In 2023, NATCA members participated in Girls in Aviation Day (GIAD) events across the country. At these events, our members have the opportunity to speak with attendees aged 8-18 about their careers as aviation safety professionals, playing a pivotal role in inspiring the next generation of female aviation professionals. This work is particularly important because only 20.6% of air traffic controllers are women globally, according to the International Civil Aviation Organization.

On Nov. 11, 2023, San Juan ATCT (SJU) member Michelle Dobao and Isla Grande Contract Tower (SIG) FacRep Carlos Barreto, along with Diego Melendez, Michelle's 12-year-old son represented NATCA at the Girls in Aviation Day event at Luis Muñoz Marín Airport in San Juan, P.R. They talked about the role of aviation safety professions to many of the 400 attending students, aged 10-17, at the event.

On Nov. 18, 2023, Jessica Mayer (Phoenix TRACON, P50), Julie Zoubul (Scottsdale ATCT, SDL), Brandon Esquer (Phoenix TRACON, P50), Matthew Schorman (Phoenix TRACON, P50), and Katelyn Evans (Mesa Gateway FCT, IWA) represented NATCA at Arizona's second-ever Girls in Aviation Day event. 350 attendees came together at Mesa Falcon Field Airport for the chance to learn more about the field of aviation and participate in interactive games and activities.

Thanks to all who participated in these community events. We look forward to continuing our work in 2024.



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APRIL 10-13, 2024

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UFA Inc. Joins Forces with DOD SkillBridge Program, Pioneering New Opportunities for Transitioning Service Members



The **DoD SkillBridge** program is a transformative initiative designed to bridge the gap between military service and civilian employment by providing service members with invaluable hands-on training, apprenticeships, and internships during the final 180 days of their military service. The service members who participate in this program continue to receive their military compensation and benefits, while the sponsoring organization provides valuable civilian training and work experience prior to their official transition. In the 3rd quarter of 2023, this program provided 1,310 veterans opportunities to gain new skills, experiences, and grow their network at 446 different industry organizations. Recognizing the unique talents, leadership, and technical expertise possessed by veterans, private industry has partnered with the Department of Defense to support this important program by offering tailored training and career development opportunities in a variety of specialties.

"UFA is honored to expand our support for the DoD SkillBridge program as part of our ongoing commitment to veterans' empowerment and success," said David Wolff, CEO of UFA. "Through this initiative, we aim to provide transitioning service members with unparalleled access to industry-leading training, mentorship, and career pathways in air traffic control and simulation technology."

UFA, Inc., a small U.S. Business and global leader in air traffic control and airfield simulation solutions, reaffirms its commitment to veterans through its newly obtained 'Approved Organization' status with the Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge program. This initiative underscores UFA's dedication to empowering transitioning service members with the tools, skills, and opportunities needed for successful careers in the civilian workforce. These service members participating in the SkillBridge program are provided multiple valuable benefits:



HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE:

SkillBridge provides service members with the opportunity to gain practical, real-world experience in the aviation industry. By working with civilian employers, service members can apply the skills and knowledge they acquired during their military service to civilian roles, enhancing their expertise and employability.



INDUSTRY EXPOSURE:

SkillBridge allows service members to explore different industries and career paths before transitioning out of the military. This exposure helps them make informed decisions about their post-military careers and identify areas where they can leverage their skills and interests most effectively.



NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:

Through SkillBridge, service members have the chance to build valuable connections with professionals in their chosen field. Networking with civilian employers, mentors, and colleagues can open doors to job opportunities, mentorship, and ongoing support during the transition process and beyond.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

SkillBridge programs often include structured training, mentorship, and professional development opportunities designed to enhance service members' skills and prepare them for success in civilian roles. These programs may cover technical skills, soft skills, industry-specific knowledge, and certifications relevant to their chosen career path.



SMOOTH TRANSITION:

By participating in SkillBridge, service members can begin their transition to civilian life while still receiving military pay and benefits. This phased approach helps ease the financial burden of transition and provides a smoother transition process, allowing service members to focus on acquiring skills and preparing for civilian employment.



UFA's expanded participation in the DoD SkillBridge program will offer transitioning service members immersive and comprehensive experience in the field of aviation technology, program management, and software development. Participants will have the opportunity to work closely with UFA's team of seasoned professionals, gaining practical insights and hands-on experience in air traffic and airport simulation and training technology with system specialist and project management roles.

"Speaking as a veteran myself, we at UFA recognize the immense value that veterans bring to the workforce, and we are committed to empowering them with the skills and resources needed to thrive in civilian careers," said Amy Parish, Vice President of North America Programs. "Through our expanded participation in the DoD SkillBridge program, we aim to equip transitioning service members with the knowledge, experience, and confidence to excel in the competitive aviation industry."

In addition to its expanded participation in the DoD SkillBridge program, UFA has implemented a range of initiatives to support veterans' transition into civilian careers, including:

Specialized Training Programs: UFA offers specialized training programs tailored to veterans' unique skills and experiences, providing them with the necessary qualifications to pursue careers in program management, air traffic and airport simulation systems, and related fields.

Mentorship and Career Development: UFA pairs transitioning service members with experienced veteran mentors already employed by the company, who provide guidance, support, and career advice throughout their transition process and beyond. UFA currently employs veterans from the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Army, and Marine Corps with more than 150 years of military experience.

Employment Opportunities: UFA prioritizes hiring veterans, offering competitive salaries, benefits, and advancement opportunities to support their long-term career growth and success.

By leveraging its expertise in aviation technology and its commitment to veterans' empowerment, UFA is poised to make a meaningful impact on the lives of transitioning service members and their families.

"We believe that by supporting our veterans, we not only honor their service and sacrifice, but we also strengthen our workforce and our community as a whole," said Wolff. "At UFA, we are proud to stand with our veterans and to provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed in their civilian careers."

UFA encourages other companies in the aviation industry and beyond to join in supporting the DoD SkillBridge program to create additional opportunities for veterans to thrive in the civilian workforce.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dale Drake is a 24-year United States Air Force veteran with extensive experience in developing and leading teams in air traffic management, training, and operations from the tactical to strategic levels of command. With a diverse background and experiences leading teams of Airmen during his assignments in Europe, the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and across the United States Dale has a passion for serving others. He currently works with UFA Inc., as a Senior Program Manager for Air Traffic and Airfield Operations with a focus on modernizing the capabilities of the DoD.



MASTERING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:

8 Practical Strategies to Communicate with a Difficult Supervisor

By Dr. Jean Kanokogi



Effective communication lies at the heart of a harmonious and productive work environment. This is particularly crucial in any work, where collaboration, trust, and clear understanding are essential for successful outcomes. However, at times, air traffic controllers may find themselves dealing with difficult supervisors who present challenges to effective communication. In such situations, the application of emotional intelligence can be a powerful tool to navigate these complexities and foster a positive working relationship.



1

DEVELOP SELF AWARENESS

The first step towards effective communication is developing self-awareness. Understand your own emotions, triggers, and communication style. By recognizing your emotional state and potential biases, you can approach conversations with greater empathy and self-control.



2

CULTIVATE EMPATHY

Empathy is a cornerstone of emotional intelligence. Seek to understand your supervisor's perspective, challenges, and motivations. Put yourself in their shoes, considering the demands and pressures they face. This mindset shift can help you approach discussions with compassion and patience.



3

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is a fundamental skill in effective communication. Give your supervisor your full attention, maintain eye contact, and demonstrate genuine interest. Listen not only to the words spoken but also to the underlying emotions and concerns. Reflect on what is being said before formulating a response.



4

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE

Timing and environment can significantly impact the success of a conversation. Find an appropriate time and place to discuss concerns or issues with your supervisor. Avoid confrontations in public or during busy times. Select a calm and private setting that promotes open dialogue.



5

USE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

When providing feedback or addressing concerns, use a constructive approach. Focus on specific behaviors or actions, rather than criticizing the person. Be respectful and tactful in your delivery, using "I" statements to express how their behavior affects you or the team. This helps prevent defensiveness and encourages receptiveness to your message.



6

CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

Miscommunication often arises due to unclear expectations. Seek clarity from your supervisor about their expectations, goals, and priorities. When assigned a task or project, ensure you have a clear understanding of what is required, deadlines, and any specific guidelines. This helps avoid misunderstandings and reduces the potential for conflicts.



7

MANAGE EMOTIONS

Dealing with a difficult supervisor can be emotionally challenging. Practice emotional self-regulation by staying calm and composed, even in stressful situations. Avoid responding impulsively or letting frustration dictate your actions. Take a deep breath, count to ten, or take a short break to gather your thoughts and approach the conversation rationally.

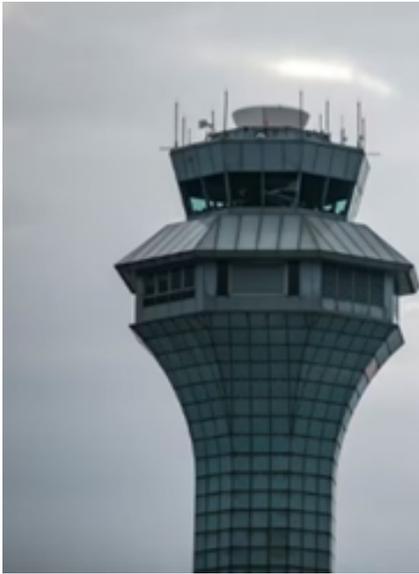


8

SEEK SOLUTIONS

Approach conversations with a problem-solving mindset. Instead of focusing solely on the issues, propose potential solutions or alternatives. Collaborate with your supervisor to find common ground and reach mutually beneficial outcomes.

Navigating challenging relationships with difficult supervisors requires a combination of emotional intelligence, patience, and effective communication skills. By developing self-awareness, practicing empathy, active listening, and utilizing constructive feedback, air traffic controllers can foster positive working relationships, even in demanding environments.



UNDERSTAFFED + OVERWORKED = FATIGUE & INCIDENTS. PROTECT YOURSELF.

By FEDS Protection

As federal air traffic controllers, Professional Women Controllers (PWC) members continue to be sentinels of the sky, guiding pilots, their planes, and millions of passengers each day safely to their destinations. This service is constantly subject to changes in policy, politically charged agendas, and scrutiny from the public. For years, federal air traffic controllers have persevered through persistent understaffing and fatigue. At many facilities, controllers are working mandatory overtime and six-day work weeks to cover staffing shortages.

Over the last several years, aviation safety systems have reported increasing numbers of near collisions and other safety incidents that cannot be ignored. In January 2024, FAA leaders tasked a three-member panel to examine how the risks of chronic fatigue among air traffic controllers can be addressed using the latest science on sleep needs and scheduling.

A group representing major airlines has also urged the current administration to address the ongoing issue of air traffic controller shortages. Currently, the FAA has 1,000 fewer traffic controllers than it did in 2012 and only about 40% of the FAA's facilities meet the agency's 85% controller staffing threshold, according to agency data. This chronic understaffing has forced the FAA to slow down air traffic at various points over the past year to prevent incidents.

By no fault of air traffic controllers, understaffing may create an environment where mistakes are made, leading to allegations of wrongdoing. If this happens, it is important that you have the tools to protect yourself - FEDS Protection can help. When mistakes are made, agency officials will look for somewhere to place blame. Air traffic controllers are vulnerable to allegations that may lead to investigations, disciplinary actions, and even lawsuits. Regardless of years of service, ability, or blame, federal air traffic controllers can find themselves needing to hire and pay for outside legal counsel to defend and dispute these matters, even if the underlying allegation is ultimately baseless.

If an allegation is made against you, it is a necessity, not luxury, to have knowledgeable and effective counsel advocating on your behalf. Your agency attorney is not your attorney. It is the job of the agency attorney to defend the agency - not you. As a federal air traffic controller, you need to have counsel that has specific experience representing federal employees with your professional vulnerabilities. A FEDS Protection professional liability insurance (PLI) policy can help.

For administrative matters, your FEDS policy will pay for legal defense - up to \$200,000 per incident - to defend you in agency investigative or disciplinary actions arising from actions taken in the scope of your employment at the agency level and the MSPB. FEDS Protection also provides \$1 million, \$2 million, or \$3 million in coverage for civil suits resulting from actions taken in the scope of your federal employment, as well as \$100,000 in coverage for criminal investigations arising from actions taken in the scope of your employment.

To learn more about how a FEDS PLI policy can protect you and your career, visit www.fedsprotection.com or call (866) 955-FEDS, M-F 8:30am-6pm to speak directly to a representative. Professional Women Controllers members can use the code "PWC" for a discount on your FEDS Protection PLI Policy.





The leading source of information and education on federal employee benefits.

Planning Ahead to Win Retirement

By Dennis Edmonds, ChFEBCSM, CEO, Federal Benefits Information Center

Retirement marks a significant milestone in one's life, symbolizing the culmination of decades of hard work and dedication. However, the path to a successful retirement is not paved with good intentions alone; it requires meticulous planning, the guidance of professionals, and the effective use of planning tools. In this article, we will delve into the importance of planning ahead, engaging professionals, and utilizing tools like the Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary (CABS Report) to ensure a secure and fulfilling retirement.

The Power of Planning Ahead

The adage "failing to plan is planning to fail" resonates profoundly when it comes to retirement. Planning ahead provides individuals with the opportunity to define their financial goals, assess their current financial standing, and chart a course for the future. By establishing a comprehensive retirement plan, individuals can anticipate potential challenges and take proactive measures to mitigate risks.

One key aspect of planning ahead is setting realistic retirement goals. This involves estimating future living expenses, factoring in inflation, and considering healthcare costs. A well-thought-out plan considers various income streams, such as your FERS annuity (pension), Social Security benefits, Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), and personal savings. By having a clear vision of their financial landscape, individuals can make informed decisions that contribute to a financially secure retirement.

Engaging Professionals for Expert Guidance

Navigating the complex terrain of retirement planning requires expertise, and this is where financial professionals come into play. Federal Benefits Educators and retirement advisors possess the knowledge and experience to guide individuals through the intricacies of retirement planning. Due to the complexities of federal benefits, the Federal Benefits Educator can analyze your finances and benefits, recommend strategies, and tailor plans to align with specific retirement goals.

Utilizing the Comprehensive Annual benefits Summary (CABS Report)

In addition to engaging professionals, the effective use of this planning tool further enhances the retirement planning process. The Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary provides federal employees with a consolidated view of their benefits, including retirement accounts, health insurance, family benefits overview and a projection as to where you are headed. This tool can aid in understanding the full spectrum of available benefits and how they contribute to the overall retirement strategy.

The Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary serves as a roadmap, helping individuals track their progress towards retirement goals. Each federal employee is entitled to receive their report annually, up to and through retirement. It facilitates informed decision-making by offering a comprehensive overview of contributions, performance, what ifs, and potential gaps in coverage. This level of transparency empowers individuals to adjust as needed and ensures that they are leveraging all available resources for a successful retirement.





Flexibility, Adaptability, and Long-Term Success

Retirement planning is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Life is dynamic, and circumstances can change. Engaging federal benefits educators and utilizing planning tools provide retirees with the flexibility to adapt their plans in response to life events. Regular reviews with financial professionals, combined with the insights gained from tools like the Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary, ensure that retirement plans remain aligned with evolving goals and circumstances.

Conclusion

In conclusion, planning ahead, engaging federal benefits educators, and utilizing tools like the Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary are indispensable components of a successful retirement strategy. The foresight gained through early planning, the expertise of financial professionals, and the transparency offered by planning tools collectively empower individuals to navigate the complexities of retirement with confidence. As individuals embark on the journey toward retirement, embracing these principles and tools can make all the difference in transforming retirement dreams into a tangible and prosperous reality.

Engage a Federal Benefits Educator and request your 2024 Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary (CABS Report) by visiting the Federal Benefits Information Center.

About the Author: Dennis Edmonds, ChFEBCSM, is the founder and CEO of the Federal Benefits Information Center. FBIC is the leading provider of information and education on federal employee benefits. Our goal is to assist Federal Employee in securing their financial future. That financial empowerment begins with education! Our educators will design your own personal federal benefits roadmap using our proprietary CABS Report (Comprehensive Annual Benefits Summary). Learn how to receive your complimentary CABS report by visiting www.FederalBenefitsInfo.com.



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