THE CONTROLLER

OCTOBER 2024

JOURNAL OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- IFATCA 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- FOCUS ON GEORGIA
- PASSING THE TORCH @ ICAO
- FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

IFATCA

IFATCA 2024 REGIONAL MEETINGS

THE CONTROLLER

OCTOBER 2024
VOLUME 63 ISSUE 1 – ISSN 0010-8073

Top of the cover shows the attendees at IFATCA's Constitutional Conference in Amsterdam, 1961. The bottom shows delates, directors and officials at the 2024 Annual Conference of IFATCA in Singapore.

IN THIS ISSUE

PUBLISHER
IFATCA, International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations
360, St Jacques · Suite 2002
Montreal, Quebec · H2Y 1P5 · CANADA

Phone: +1514 866 7040
Fax: +1514 866 7612
Email: **office@ifatca.org**

EDITORIAL TEAM
Nicola Ní Riada, Philip Marien, Renz Busleco, Trish Gilbert, Brittney Armbrust, Olivia May, Umi Muthiah Syahirah

Email: **editor@ifatca.org**

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Philippe Domogala

VISIT THE IFATCA WEB SITE

www.ifatca.org

TOWARDS A TRULY GLOBAL FEDERATION

BY HELENA SJÖSTRÖM FALK, IFATCA PRESIDENT & CEO

As I near the halfway point of my first year as President of IFATCA, I want to take a moment to reflect on the journey so far and also to share my vision for the future. It is a tremendous honor to serve as your President, and I am incredibly grateful for the trust you have placed in me. This role is both a privilege and a responsibility, and I am committed to leading IFATCA with a focus on progress, recognition, and unity.

I also want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Singapore Air Traffic Controllers´ Association and the Singapore CAAS for their excellent hosting of Conference 2024. The Conference was a tremendous success and had the largest representation of member associations ever. We are now well underway with preparations for Conference 2025 in the UAE and I together with the Executive Board am very much looking forward to going there in the first week of April 2025.

One of my primary goals is to make IFATCA the gold standard in ATC worldwide. We are already recognized as a key organization in the field, but I believe we can take that recognition even further. To achieve this, we must continually raise the bar in our work for flight safety and professionalism. We also need to work harder on recognition. Our goal is not just to meet the challenges of modern aviation, but to lead the way in developing cutting-edge solutions and best practices. With increasing pressure on ATC, one of the most difficult being staff shortages, we need to make our voice heard even more.

Achieving this requires us to work smarter, not just harder. This means being involved in innovation and also finding more efficient ways to work while maintaining the highest levels of safety and service. We need to look for smarter solutions that improve our effectiveness as air traffic controllers and as a Federation.

In addition to innovation, I also think we should renew and strengthen our connections with international labor organizations. Air traffic control is a profession that relies heavily on collaboration, and our ability to work closely with trade unions and other labor groups that are not member associations of IFATCA is essential to maintaining fair working conditions and advocating for the interests of our members. An increased exchange of ideas will not only benefit our members but will also enhance the reputation and influence of IFATCA on a global scale.

I want IFATCA to be a truly global federation — one that represents the diverse and interconnected world of air traffic control. We are an international organization, and it is vital that we reflect the global nature of our industry. This means fostering inclusivity, ensuring that all regions and members are represented, and building bridges between different cultures and approaches to air traffic management. By doing so, we will strengthen our global influence and make IFATCA an even more powerful voice in aviation.

In the months ahead, the Executive Board and I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you. Together, we can build on IFATCA's strong foundation and lead the organization toward an even brighter future. So, to all our members: Thank you for your ongoing support, your hard work and your commitment.

One Sky – One Voice!

helena.sjostrom@ifatca.org

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

BY NICOLA NI RIADA, IFATCA COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Welcome to the September 2024 edition of the Controller magazine!

With our very successful annual meeting in Singapore (Kudos and Xie Xie to the Singaporean OC again), we are very much looking to the future.

Look out for the EDI article that looks backwards to our near past to look forward, the CODA article on the Joint Cognitive Human-Machine System, a very future-focused team! There is a piece on Volunteerism which we hope will inspire you to get involved with IFATCA. In this edition of the magazine, you will also see features on Mental Well-Being and the English Language, as well as collaborative pieces from IPAAC and ICAEA, respectively. We believe collaboration is the key to innovation and progress, especially in both these areas!

Some of the highlights for this year's issue include insider articles from huge airshows Oshkosh and Aero 24 (harnessing the inner aviation-geek!), showcasing the incredible work our air traffic controllers do at the shows as well as insight from the CANSO ATM world the largest and most influential airspace and near-space management event in the world, where IFATCA had two speakers on prominent panels. There are separate pieces on disaster relief from ASP and AMA, showing how different but also the same we are at the regional level.

A million thanks to our contributors for their input! As always, if you want to submit an article or have ideas, don't hesitate to email us! And if you are not already following us on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn, please do so! Are you receiving the IFATCA monthly circular (our newsletter!)- if not, sign up today!

See you all at the regional meetings this autumn! Look out for the communications presentations, and say hello to your regional communication team members there!

Best regards,

The IFATCA Editorial Team

nicola.niriada@ifatca.org

IFATCA CONFERENCE 2024

SINGAPORE, 15 TO 19 APRIL 2024

BY NICOLA NÌ RÌADA, IFATCA COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Following several cancellations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it was finally possible for IFATCA Directors, Officials and Delegates to travel to the city state of Singapore. With almost 100 associations present in Singapore, the event demonstrated unity and commitment to the air traffic controller profession. The conference overall was a resounding success thanks to the team of the ATCA Singapore Organising Committee, the Member Association delegates and the countless volunteers that volunteer their time throughout the year on behalf oiur Federation.

Prior to the formal start of the conference itself, several meetings focussed on topics that affect the Federation and control staff. The informal regional meeting reviewed issues that affect each of the four IFATCA regions. These showed that staff shortages continue to be a main concern throughout the ATM industry, with little to no relief to be expected in the short to medium term.

High-level Panel

A first highlight of the Annual Conference was the High-Level Panel. This discussion echoed the theme of the annual conference: "Invest in People: the future of ATM". Human capital is crucial for shaping the future of Air Traffic Management (ATM) and supporting the growth of the industry. IFATCA invited speakers from various regions to steer the dialogue with our members on how they think the future of aviation will evolve. Looking at the human element of the ATM system as the paramount force in ensuring the safety of air traffic management operations, despite AI advancements and automation application and in the context of continuing worldwide shortage of Air Traffic controllers. The panel featured Han KokJuan, Director General, CAA Singapore; Crystal Kim, Technical Officer, ATM Section, ICAO; Franklin Mcintosh, Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Operations, Air Traffic Organization, FAA; and Stathis Malakis, Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority, representing IFATCA. Moderators were Jean-François Lepage, IFATCA Liaison Officer to ICAO ANC and Cheryl Chen, IFATCA's EVP EVP Asia Pacific Region.

Mental Wellbeing Panel

A second panel discussion was held on ATCO Mental Wellbeing. This also concluded that human beings are the essence of the aviation industry and that mental wellbeing is not just a personal matter – it's a critical aspect of ensuring the safety and efficiency of our skies. The discussion from the panellists resulted in the following take aways:

There is a need for industry to focus on mental health and well-being of ATCOs.
A focus on being/staying healthy and learning by previous experiences of coping well with stressors is best.
An industry shift to trusting ATCOs with the help of peer support and mental health professionals with an aviation understanding is critical to create a culture where ATCOs are comfortable to report and seek support when they

are not in a good mental space to be performing safety-critical work.

On the second day, prior to the openinb plenary, the IFATCA2030+ taskforce ran a really successful workshop that focussed on five topics: Practical Outcomes, Policy, Communication, Volunteerism and the future is now. More details are in a separate article in this issue.

Opening Plenary

The opening plenary confirmed what was already apparent: attendance was high, with 79 member associations present. Including the fifteen proxies, it gave 94 Member Associations (out of 104 in good standing), a voice. These delegates were welcomed by outgoing IFATCA President and CEO, Duncan Auld, Chair of the Singapore Organising Committee, Lim De Wei and Dr. Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment & Ministry of Transport.

Administrative Matters

Committee A is the Federation's "engine room," and it requires maintenance to ensure its smooth and efficient operation. As such, directors in the committee welcomed reports from IFATCA Officers to the conference. The amount of work the team carried out on our behalf was as always considerable. IFATCA Officers demonstrated high professionalism and competence and affirmed the Federation as an important stakeholder in the international aviation community. Particularly encouraging was the request from ICAO to the Chair of the EDI Task Force to participate in discussions regarding equality at the highest level in Montreal. Industry partners BayMac, Frequentis, Thales, L3Harris, FTE Jerez and Entry Point North also attended our meeting, with Baymac giving an excellent presentation.

It was especially encouraging to see the democratic process in action, with participation from all those present despite the many newcomers. The elections of volunteers to contested seats, such as that of EVP AFM this year, reaffirmed people's energy for the Federation and should be commended even if the outcome may have disappointed the candidates that were not successful.

The standing committee Finance (FIC), once again under the leadership of Daniel Nartey (Ghana) and the supervision of the EVPF, Tom McRobert, produced nine work items, ranging from reviewing EB honoraria, classes of air travel, membership subscription rates, and charging mechanisms. The requirement of IFATCA to keep a balanced budget generated significant, constructive debate and will lead to a work item for the following year.

Positions in FIC proved popular, and the three positions available for the forthcoming year were filled quickly: the USA, Dominican Republic, and India will participate, with Kenya, Zambia and Indonesia committing to contribute as corresponding members. The Constitutional and Administrative Committee (CAC), under the efficient and knowledgeable leadership of Rob Mason (Australia) produced nine high-quality work items. These ranged from evaluating the duration of the annual conference to establishing and disestablishing task forces and member association affiliation processes. This last paper prompted debate and will lead to a work study for the forthcoming year. The review of working paper submission dates was a response to last year's concerns from Member Associations.

It was encouraging to see Rob Mason continue in his position for another two years. The constitutional standing committee also proved popular, and Canada, Ghana, and Uganda filled the three positions available for the forthcoming year. Kenya, Trinidad and Tobago, and Algeria will participate as corresponding members.

As a first for Committee A, a task force presented work items for the committee to consider. The theme was to create papers from which projects could be launched. The concept of Regional Committees was created, and guidelines for their management will be made available to the regions. The original paper generated significant discussion, and valuable concerns were raised. As a result of these concerns, a drafting group was formed, and a consensus was achieved after meaningful evaluation. Another paper has brought about a separate task force that will be established to manage the creation and implementation of a new web platform. Guidelines for the organisation of Regional Meetings have also been defined.

Committee A also elected several members of the Executive Board: Ms. Helena Sjöström Falk (Sweden) succeeds Duncan Auld (Australia) as President and CEO. Mr. Jean-François Lepage (Canada) fills Helena's former post of Deputy President.

Mr. Peter van Rooyen (South Africa) continues for another term as Executive Vice-President Professional.

THANK YOU DUNCAN AULD

After 11 years on the Executive Board and 5 years as President and CEO of IFATCA, Duncan Auld stepped down from his role as IFATCA PCX at the conference in Singapore. His objectives of bringing the Federation closer together, championing diversity and inclusion-ensuring that IFATCA truly is a representative body of all air traffic controllers from all across the globe, were achieved.

Duncan remarked that he was happy to hand the presidency over to Helena Sjöström Falk. Knowing that Helena, along with Jean-François and the rest of the Executive Board, will have IFATCA in safe hands.

We want to thank Duncan for his tireless service to IFATCA, his passion for the profession and his outstanding work over many years. Special thanks also go to his home association Civil Air Australia for their support to him.

During the conference, Duncan received the IFATCA Scroll of Honour, the highest award of the Federation.

We wish you well Duncan, and we hope to see you again soon.

After a year in an acting role, Mr. Thomas McRobert (Australia) was confirmed as Executive Vice-President Finance. Mr. Ahmad Abba (Nigeria) replaces Mr. Fateh Bekti (Algeria) as Executive Vice-President Africa Middle East.

Technical & Professional Overlap

The combined B & C committees conducted their business with an impressive 63 Member Associations, 25 proxies, and representatives from ICAO, IFALPA, IFISA, and APLA Singapore in attendance. The attendance of these organisations shows that the outside world appreciates our work and that we are a respected organisation. Industry partners BayMac, Frequentis, Thales, L3Harris, FTE Jerez, and Entry Point North attended our meeting. Frequentis and Thales gave excellent presentations.

The packed agenda kicked off with many reports by the various representatives to ICAO, introduced by Jean-Francois Lepage as Liaison Officer to the ICAO Air Navigation Committee. Paul Neering, Liaison Officer to the European Union, was here for his last conference and presented the work done on a European level on behalf of all IFATCA representatives. Eugenio Diotalevi (Italy) gave a comprehensive overview of the work of the RPAS task force and surveyed the controllers present. He can confidently be called an expert on the matter, as is the case for Katariina Syvays (Finland) regarding remote towers. PLC and TOC presented several work studies connected to these subjects, such as a paper on interactions between RPAS and ATC and a review of the automation policy. Both papers proposed new or amended policies to strengthen our position on the subjects.

We would like to give a special mention to our colleague and subject matter expert, Stathis Malakis (Greece). He shared his views on the Joint Cognitive Human-Machine System, making a subject with a very complicated name easy to understand.

In the professional domain, the Training Task Force, led by JF Lepage and incoming chair Ben Kings, and the Well Being Taskforce, led by Jaco van der Westhuizen (South Africa), made sure their voices were heard and their work was made aware to the conference. Both task forces are relatively new and can profit from more involvement by MAs.

The paper on system-based ATC licensing, initially quite a philosophical concept, was tabled during the meeting because the discussion proved that actual initiatives are happening worldwide. A drafting group was formed, and a provisional policy was accepted in which IFATCA's position was clarified and committed to continue the work.

The Committees then accepted the report of Kimmo Koivula (Finland), the IFATCA representative to the IFALPA ATS Committee. Kimmo has served for many years as a representative to our sister organisation, the pilots we speak to daily but do not often get to engage with fully.

Work in the committee thereafter mainly focused on the complexity of VFR and Special VFR flights regarding workload for ATCOs. New draft policy statements prepared by the Technical and Operations Committee and the Professional and Legal Committee were accepted. A special mention must go to ANACNA, our Italian MA, for conducting an interesting study that was the basis for one of the working papers. Research is the groundwork of all work studies in IFATCA, and we are very happy that, thanks to Jean Francois Lepage, we will have guidelines to prevent plagiarism and copyright infringements for all IFATCA officers.

Technical & Operational Issues

Committee B was exceptionally well attended, with 58 Member Associations holding 27 proxies and representatives from ICAO, L3Harris and IFISA. This might have been the biggest attendance in any Committee B for the last 20 years.

Over a single day, the Committee received reports from IFATCA officials and representatives to ICAO and debated on an impressive number of working papers prepared by the Technical and Operations Committee (TOC). Topics discussed ranged from Trajectory Based Operations to (once again) RPAS and Space Based Surveillance and Communications. The Committee accepted thirteen reports and discussed six working papers drafted by TOC. One was accepted as an information paper. The policy was amended on the following subjects: 5-Letter Waypoint Coding, Multiple Remote TWR Operations (now designated Digital Air Traffic Services or DATS by ICAO), UAS Flight Rules, FF-ICE Flight Plans and Responsibility for Terrain and Obstacle Clearance. The continued work of the IFATCA representatives to ICAO under the outstanding guidance of our outgoing Liaison Officer, Mr Jean-François Lepage, as well as the members of TOC, led by their Chair, Ms Jaymi Steinberg, was once again a testament to the high standard of knowledge and professionalism that makes IFATCA an important and universally respected

player on the global stage of civil aviation.

Having seen the dedicated TOC members successfully defend their papers on stage, 15 member associations indicated their willingness to step into their shoes for 2024/25, but only nine places were available. Sincere thanks go out to the MAs who were unsuccessful on this occasion. TOC once more has member associations from all four IFATCA regions, and I would like to stress that even though the manual does have a procedure to ensure places on TOC for at least one member association from every region, even if they did not get the required number of votes, on this occasion this rule did not have to be invoked.

Fateh Bekhti, Algeria, handing over the role of EVP Africa & Middle East to his successor, Ahmad Abba from Nigeria.

photo: IFATCA Archives

Professional & Legal Matters

Committee C this year was very well attended by delegates and observers, with proceedings relaxed yet professional. It was a pleasure to see a high level of discussion between the delegates on a wide range of topics. Many newcomers were not reluctant to speak up.

With Adam Exley from the UK as chair this year for the first time, PLC once again presented high-quality working papers. A total of six work studies were presented in Committee C, most containing recommendations to add, amend, or delete IFATCA policy. A special mention to those presenting for the first time: Olga Toki (Greece), Kurt Solomon (Jamaica), and Naoto Ishii (Japan).

PLC examined the deactivation of safety nets and introduced new definitions to the technical Professional manual (TPM) as a first step. A review of the policy will follow next year. Our existing policy on Work and Rest schemes was expanded after a good discussion. There is no one-fits-all solution, as every unit has its own specificities. However, the new policy allows for a better balance between individual health and social life and work/safety performance.

It was proposed that the policy on warnings for unsafe airspace/ aerodromes be deleted, as this is the responsibility of states and ANSPs. Added to our Technical & Professional Manual (TPM) was the definition of an ATCO, which was requested and welcomed particularly by states from the African region to raise awareness and the status of our profession. The existing policy on simultaneous training on adjacent positions was expanded to reflect current operations in member states. A comprehensive paper on confusion with leased aircraft markings and callsigns brought a common issue to our attention.

All delegates present were challenged by the largest work study presented at a conference regarding the number of recommendations. PLC conducted a full review of the IFATCA Training Policy, which originated in 2007. 39 draft recommendations were discussed and voted on efficiently. A big thank you to the delegates for being practical and thorough at the same time. And to Jonne van Schaik (The Netherlands), who was on the stage for most of the afternoon, staying sharp as a sniper.

Also worth mentioning is David Perks (Australia), the former chair of the PLC. He was not present at this conference

MJ Bala and Lim De Wei of the Singapore Organising Committee proudly handover the IFATCA flag to Jouhayna AlMheiri, Maitha Alobeidli and Hesham Alteneiji representing the Emirates Aviation Association who will host the 2025 IFATCA Annual Conference.

photo: IFATCA Archives

Delegates from the Asia/Pacific Region

European Region Delegates

Delegates from the Africa/Middle-East Region

Delegates from the Americas Region

but was a special advisor to the PLC in the past year. Liraz Alfassi (Israel) was appointed in this role for next year.

A record seventeen MAs showed interest in joining PLC as elected members for only twelve places. After the election, the USA offered up its position and became a corresponding member in favour of Jamaica as the next MA in line from the region.

All the chairs and co-chairs expressed their sincere thanks to the Organising Committee under Mr. Lim De Wei, to Conference Coordinator Mr. Jez Pigden, to office manager Ms. Tatiana Iavorskaia, and last but certainly not least, to the Delegates of Committees A, B, and C for conducting our business efficiently, swiftly, and respectfully. Irrespective of the number of interventions, each member attending provided invaluable support. You are the Federation!

Final Plenary

The Final Plenary session convened upon completing the tasks undertaken by committees A, B, and C. Directors vote on endorsing committee decisions, officiating new member associations, ratifying executive board member elections, and acknowledging Federation volunteers. During this conference, special recognition was given to Duncan Auld, the outgoing PCX, who was awarded the prestigious IFATCA Scroll of Honour for his exceptional service and leadership.

Additionally, Jules Ogilvie and Paul Neering were honoured with the IFATCA Award of Merit for their significant volunteer contributions. Fateh Bekhti, the outgoing EVP AFM, Alfred Vlasek (Austria), Djamel Abdelmalek (Algeria) and Mark Taylor, former EVP Finance, received the distinguished Executive Board Award. At the same time, Industry Partners L3Harris and Entry Point North were granted Charters of Affiliation as Industry Partners.

In her address to the Directors and Delegates, newly appointed IFATCA President and CEO, Helena Sjöström Falk, remarked: "IFATCA needs to continue to foster an inclusive and collaborative culture of excellence by promoting international cooperation among air traffic controllers, facilitating the exchange of best practices, and setting rigorous standards for safety, efficiency, and professionalism. IFATCA should actively engage with regulatory bodies, industry stakeholders, and academia to ensure our standards are at the forefront of global aviation."

In his acceptance speech, Deputy President Jean-François Lepage said: "We need to make the best use of the resources we have. For this, agility is the key: IFATCA has to be at the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing."

Before the formal closure of the 63rd IFATCA Annual Conference, MJ Bala and Lim De Wei of the Singapore Organising Committee proudly handed over the IFATCA flag to Jouhayna AlMheiri, Maitha Alobeidli and Hesham Alteneiji representing the Emirates Aviation Association, which was confirmed as the host of the 2025 IFATCA Annual Conference. The event will take place from 28 April 2025 until 2 May 2025 in Abu Dhabi. More information will soon be released.

See you in Abu Dhabi!

nicola.niriada@ifatca.org

THE 2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD

From Left to Right

Trish Gilbert (NATCA USA), EVP Americas
Trish served as the Facility Representative, SW Region while working at the Housten Centre. She moved on to become the Chair of NATCA's Legislative Committee before becoming the USA's National Air Traffic Controllers Association's (NATCA) Executive Vice President for 12 years. Trish was elected to the IFATCA Executive Board in 2021 as the EVP Americas.

Ahmad Abba (NATCA Nigeria), EVP Africa & Middle East
Ahmad was actively involved in the IFATCA Africe & Middle East region. First as a member of the Regional Support Group and later as the Regional Vice President West Africa until his election as the EVP AFM in 2024. He has represented IFATCA in various meetings in the AFM region including the AFI Week, APIRG and ICAO/AFCAC Coordination meetings.

Benjamin van der Sanden (VNLG, Netherlands), EVP Technical
Benjamin has been a member of IFATCA's Technical and Operations Committee since 2014. He was elected to be IFATCA's Executive Vice President Technical at the 2023 Annual Conference.

Cheryl Yen-Chun Chen (ROCATCA,Taiwan), EVP Asia Pacific
Cheryl was elected as IFATCA's North Asia Regional Vice President in 2019 and took up the role of IFATCA EVP for Asia/Pacific in 2021. She is also one of the drivers behind IFATCA's Speak English Program.

Tom McRobert (Civil Air, Australia), EVP Finance
Since August 2016, Tom has held the position of President at Civil Air Australia. He is also involved in various charitable organisations that help people in need. Tom was appointed as acting EVP Finance of IFATCA in June 2023 and confirmed in this position at the 2024 Annual Conference.

Helena Sjöström Falk (SATCA, Sweden), President & CEO
Helena served as President of the Swedish Air Traffic Controllers' Association (SATCA) from 2006 to 2017. After chairing Committee A during IFATCA's Annual Conferences, she was elected as Deputy President of IFATCA in 2019. In 2024, she was elected as the Federation's first female President and CEO.

Jean-François Lepage (CATCA, Canada), Deputy President
Jean-François Lepage was appointed as Liaison Officer to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Air Navigation Commission at the 2015 IFATCA Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria. In 2024, Jean-François was elected to serve as the Federation's Deputy President.

Peter van Rooyen (GATCSA, South Africa), EVP Professional
Peter has held various positions in his home association, the Guild of Air Traffic Controllers of South Africa (GATCSA), including that of President. He served on IFATCA's Profesional and Legal Committee between 2008 up and 2018, when he was elected as EVP Professional.

Frédéric Deleau (EGATS, Belgium), EVP Europe
A long time board member of his home association EGATS, Fred has served as the EVP Europe on the IFATCA Executive Board since 2020.

Tatiana Iavorskaia (Montreal, Canada), IFATCA Office Manager*
Tatiana has been the IFATCA Office Manager since 2001. As such, she runs our permanent office in Montréal, Canada.

Nicola Nì Rìada (IATCA,Ireland), Communications Coordinator*
Nicola is the IFATCA liason officer on the IATCA Ireland board. As well as her international work she has a focus on recruitment. She serves as the Federation's Communications Coordinator since 2023.

David Perks (Civil Air, Australia), Liaison Officer to the ICAO ANC*/**
David is a former Member and Chair of IFATCA's Professional and Legal Committee (PLC). In July 2024, he was appointed as IFATCA's Liaison Officer to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission in July 2024.

Read their full biographies on our website, via
About IFATCA --> Executive Board
(or click here)

*** Ex-Officio Board Members**
**** Not in the photo**

IFATCA 2025 - ABU DHABI

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO HOST IFATCA'S NEXT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BY OMAR ABDOULI, CHAIR OF THE IFATCA 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The Emirates Aviation Association (EAA) has been chosen to host the esteemed International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) Annual Conference in 2025. Scheduled to be held in Abu Dhabi, this significant event will draw aviation professionals and air traffic control specialists from across the globe, further reinforcing the UAE's expanding influence in the global aviation industry.

The UAE's aviation industry is a global leader, anchored by major hubs like Dubai and Abu Dhabi and renowned airlines such as Emirates and Etihad. These airlines connect Asia, Europe, and the Americas, positioning the UAE as a key transit point. The industry is focused on sustainability and innovation, exploring alternative fuels, energy-efficient technologies, and futuristic urban air mobility solutions like air taxis. The UAE is actively testing autonomous flying vehicles, aligning with its smart city vision. With advanced air traffic management systems and supportive regulations, the UAE is poised to remain a major force in global aviation.

Abu Dhabi's selection as the host city highlights its strategic importance in the global aviation industry. The UAE boasts world-class aviation infrastructure, featuring cutting-edge airports and a rapidly growing airline sector. Its strong emphasis on innovation, safety, and the future of air traffic management aligns seamlessly with IFATCA's mission, making Abu Dhabi the ideal location for this prestigious event.
The city's central location, world-class facilities, and experience hosting international conferences make it an attractive destination for global aviation stakeholders. The event will also showcase Abu Dhabi's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and modern air traffic management solutions.

Hosting the 2025 IFATCA Annual Conference will not only boost the UAE's aviation profile but also offer a valuable opportunity for the region's aviation sector to engage with global peers. It will foster new collaborations, knowledge sharing, and innovation, which are crucial as the Middle East continues to grow as a hub for international travel and cargo.

The conference will provide the Emirates Aviation Association and the broader region with a platform to showcase their accomplishments in air traffic control, including initiatives to improve safety, integrate advanced technologies, and effectively manage rising air traffic volumes.

The Emirates Aviation Association's hosting of the 2025 IFATCA Annual Conference represents a major milestone for the UAE's aviation sector. As Abu Dhabi gears up to welcome global aviation leaders, the event will serve as a critical platform for shaping the future of air traffic control and aviation safety. This conference will further cement the UAE's position as a leading force in the industry while highlighting its dedication to innovation, safety, and international collaboration.

2030TF@ifatca.org

IFATCA @ ICAO

PASSING THE TORCH

BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS LEPAGE, DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND FORMER LIAISON OFFICER TO THE ICAO ANC

I usually don't like starting my articles with some words about myself, but for what I want to share in this publication, I think it is required. I was nominated to become the new Liaison Officer to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission (LO ICAO ANC) in the beginning of 2015, at the IFATCA annual Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria. I succeeded Dr. Ruth Stilwell, who had been nominated by NATCA (USA) and who fulfilled the role brilliantly for several years. "Big shoes to fill", I was told by some. Others were kind enough to introduce me to certain key players of the Federation. Someone once said to me, "Now I'm introducing you to some people I know, but next year, you will be the one introducing me".

To be absolutely honest with you, dear reader, the learning curve was steep. I had no idea about what I got myself into. The only thing I knew was that there was some pressure on my shoulder to perform, and that there was everything to learn, because I knew nothing. The first few weeks at ICAO were a mix of confusion, frustration, anxiety and the feeling of not being able to do anything by myself. Luckily, I had a good mentor. Probably the best one could imagine. She never promised I would be excellent, or even hinted I would need to one day become excellent, but she kept on repeating, "you will be the best trained LO ICAO ANC we ever had". I interpreted the message as, "I will give you all the tools you need to do the job, but you will decide for yourself what kind of LO ICAO ANC you will become".

Why am I saying all of this? Because it is now my turn to pass on those tools to the next LO ICAO ANC, Mr. David Perks (Civil Air, Australia). I cannot speak for him, but I am sure he feels the same way I felt back then. I am also sure that he will be a much faster learner than me, given his background and experience. My role will be simple: to provide him with the best training a newly appointed LO ICAO ANC could wish for.

My decision to nominate for the position of Deputy President was not taken lightly, to say the least. I have loved every single day I spent at ICAO. I have enjoyed every meeting I attended. I have been thrilled to represent IFATCA at every symposium I was invited to participate. IFATCA has become, over the years, a second family. My role at ICAO was the best position one could ever wish for: it allowed me to remain an operational controller and team supervisor for my employer, Nav Canada, while providing a unique opportunity to see and live the United Nations from the inside. I had the chance to forge a network of contacts that would make anyone envious, I occupied a front row seat within the most prestigious institution dedicated to international civil aviation, and more importantly, I was given an opportunity to shape the future of aviation, the future of OUR profession.

In 2015, Dr. Ruth Stilwell handed over the role of ICAO Liaison Officer to the ICAO ANC to Jean-François Lepage.

photo: IFATCA Archives

Which begs the question: why would someone be foolish enough to give it up? Interesting question indeed. First, there was an opportunity for me to serve our Federation in a different role. With the rest of the ICAO representatives (those I call affectionately my "Rock Stars"), we have achieved great things over the last decade. But it is my view that at this point in time, fresh blood will be beneficial for IFATCA. Second, I always promised myself that I would leave the position at a moment that would be strategically appropriate for the Federation. What is appropriate? Well, timing is the essence for such kind of transition. In the interest of IFATCA, I strongly believe we shall avoid a situation where it could be perceived that I will continue forever. This position should be dynamic, and more than one person should have the chance to experience what the role is like. Fresh blood also means fresh ideas. I do not mean by this that I had exhausted all what I wanted to do at ICAO, on the contrary. I do imply that I am a strong believer of diversity of backgrounds and ideas can only strengthen an organization. And I think

it is now time for this to happen. I wish for someone to take us to the next level at ICAO, the same way I will endeavour to take our Federation to the next level in my new role.

Looking back at the last ten years I spent at ICAO, I am proud of where we are, and I am proud of what we, my ICAO Rock Stars and myself, have achieved. Over the last ten years, IFATCA has even further consolidated its position at ICAO, increasing the number of ANC Panel, Working Group, Study Group and Advisory Group memberships from 10 to 13, co-signing multiple working papers and information papers at ICAO Triennial Assemblies, Air Navigation Conferences and High-Level Safety Conferences, developing or contributing to the development of several dozens of Proposals for Amendments to ICAO Annexes and PANS, co-authored many guidance material documents, inter alia.

IFATCA is more than ever seen as THE reference for Air Traffic Management, Air Traffic Control and Air Traffic Services matters. The Federation is extremely well represented at ICAO. When ATM matters arise, we are invited to comment, to present our perspective, or to provide expertise to bring the controller's perspective. We are invited to speak on expert panels. Our ICAO representatives' point of view is respected and sought after. When IFATCA speaks at ICAO, our voice is heard.

I firmly believe IFATCA is in a strong position at ICAO, stronger than it has ever been. And leaving ICAO while IFATCA is in such a strong position is, to me, reassuring. Furthermore, knowing that David will take over removes a huge burden off my shoulders. With his vast expertise, acquired in Australia and at ICAO, and more recently his tenure as Chair of the Separation and Airspace Safety Panel (SASP), David is the man of the situation.

What he has in mind for the future? I cannot answer for him, but I am extremely curious (I think we all are) to see how he will shape this role for the coming years. I know one thing for sure: the transition from me to him will run smoothly, and the Federation is in good hands. David, I wish you all the best for the years to come, and I do hope you enjoy this journey you are embarking on as much as I did!

jf.lepage@ifatca.org

IFATCA @ ICAO

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

BY DAVID PERKS, IFATCA LIAISON OFFICER TO THE ICAO AIR NAVIGATION COMMISSION

Every article must have a title. Something that will capture the readers' attention, make them pause, and, if so inclined, honour the writer by giving them a few minutes of their time to read what follows. So, if you are reading this, clearly you have an interest in IFATCA at ICAO and what the future holds. However, to avoid disappointment, I must warn you this article will be, at best, an educated guess. Nobody knows precisely what the future holds in the rapidly changing world of aviation.

Most of us can reflect on how much our jobs have changed over the years. As a flight data officer in Sydney, Australia back in the early 1990s, my primary task was to 'strip' flight plans from a printer, hand-write flight progress strips and distribute them to those Gods and Goddesses called 'air traffic controllers'. When I eventually earned that title myself (air traffic controller – I quickly realised I was not a God!), the situational display I used had only two colours, green and black.

The rate of change in our profession continues unabated. Indeed, if anything, it is accelerating. We all know change is as inevitable as it is relentless. For those of us whose primary role is to manage and implement change, this is exciting. As new technologies are introduced, new standards and procedures need to be developed so they can be safely used. As an ATS specialist, implementing change has been my role for over a decade.

Before this, however, I was an operational air traffic controller for 20 years. I've been on the receiving end of changes that have been implemented well, and many not so well. As such, I'd like to think I've come to appreciate an air traffic controllers' unique relationship with change.

The performance of air traffic controllers is scrutinized like few other professions. And rightly so. Every controller appreciates that the consequences of a mistake can be catastrophic. However, what is sometimes lost is the effect this has on the individual controller.

Long before an air traffic controller has issued their first instruction to a pilot, they will have successfully passed a rigorous selection exercise, completed a gruelling period of classroom and simulator training, an intense program of on-the-job training, and a multi-day validation where their every move is scrutinized. The reward for successfully completing this is a relatively well-paid and satisfying career.

However, in the back of their mind, every controller understands that it can all be taken away if their performance doesn't remain at the highest level. Is it any wonder that having worked so hard to achieve what they have, when someone wants to come in a change things by implementing new procedures and

IFATCA Deputy President Jean-François Lepage (left) and David Perks, our new Liaison Officer to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission.

photo: IFATCA Archives

rules, there is a degree of anxiety? It is completely understandable.

So by now you might be asking yourself 'What does this have to do with IFATCA at ICAO and what the future holds?'. And I haven't said anything that most of you don't know already. But, in my view, appreciating the effect that change has on controllers has everything to do with what those of us privileged to be representing you at ICAO do.

My philosophy is that every contribution I make at ICAO, whether it was as the Member and then Chair of the Separation and Airspace Safety Panel, at the 14th Air Navigation Conference in Montreal this year and, into the future, as your representative on the ICAO Air Navigation Commission, it must result in the best possible outcome for controllers and aviation professionals. I can't promise that rules and procedures won't change, and I'm not sure anybody wants that. But my commitment to you is that when they have to change, the views of, and effect on, controllers will have been fully considered.

Of course, I can't be effective on my own. To paraphrase the poet John Lydgate (adapted by Abraham Lincoln), in aviation, there are those that know some things about everything, and those that know everything about some things, but there is nobody who knows everything about everything. That's why I'll continue to rely on the broad network of specialists we are privileged to have volunteering for us at IFATCA.

That starts with our colleagues representing us on the various ICAO panels and working groups, each of them experts within their fields. I'll be relying on their knowledge and advice when considering proposals for amendments to critical ICAO documents, as well as the development of guidance material.

We also have our Technical and Operational Committee (TOC) and Professional and Legal Committee (PLC). Ably led by Chairs Jaymi Steinberg (USA, NATCA) and Adam Exley (UK, GATCO), these committees draw upon the experience of their members from associations around the world. In my experience, these committees are without peer when it comes to the breadth and depth of knowledge they bring to IFATCA. In my view, this is where our future ICAO representatives 'cut their teeth'. And yes, having had the privilege of being a member of, and then chairing, the PLC, I may be a little biased! These committees propose policy that every member association can contribute to at conference. When and if it is endorsed, it will go into our Technical and Professional Manual, a repository of IFATCA policy that is an invaluable reference to those of us who represent IFATCA.

Finally, there is one part of being an effective advocate that is often overlooked, the ability to network. And there's no better segway to talk about my predecessor as the IFATCA Liaison Officer to ICAO, Mr Jean-François Lepage (Canada, CATCA). It goes without saying that JF has accumulated a vast amount of knowledge during his tenure and has put that to very good use.

However, it's his ability to network at all levels, up to and including the President of the ICAO Council, that makes him such an effective advocate. At the Air Navigation Conference this year, I got to witness first-hand the esteem in which JF is held amongst ICAO representatives, employees, State representatives and international organisations. Of course, being highly regarded by your peers is one thing, being able to translate that into effective advocacy is another and JF has excelled at that over the best part of ten years. If I can even begin to measure up to JF in this regard, I'll be satisfied. JF, congratulations on what you have achieved and the best of luck in your new role as Deputy President.

On a final note, I'd like to thank my Member Association, Civil Air, for the support they've shown me over the years, and in particular, Tom McRobert (Australia, Civil Air), previous President of Civil Air and current IFATCA EVP Finance. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my employer, Airservices Australia, and my colleagues back in Australia. My daughters, Hannah and Laura, were 10 and 8 years old when I first began volunteering for Civil Air and IFATCA; they are now 27 and 25. Along with my study commitments over the years, I've spent a lot of time that perhaps I should have been spending with them.

And last but certainly not least, to my IFATCA brothers and sisters, I've been overwhelmed by the support you've shown me since being appointed. With your help, I look forward to continuing the exceptional work done at ICAO by my predecessors JF, Dr Ruth Stilwell (US, NATCA) and Mr Andrew Beadle (Australia, Civil Air).

david.perks@ifatca.org

IFATCA 2030+ TASK FORCE

WHY THE 2030+ TF?

BY JULIAN OGILVIE, CHAIR IFATCA 2030+ TASK FORCE

Why does the 2030+ Task force exist?

It was created in 2022, the post-Covid era, by the Executive Board to revitalise how the Federation works in order to make it fit for and relevant for the next decade. Aviation as a whole was hit hard by the pandemic, and ATM was no different. The challenges faced during this period made us all, but especially the executive board, look at how the federation exists, works and stays relevant and how we continue working to keep the profession safe and visible.

How does the Taskforce plan to shape the federation going forward?

After reaching out to you, the members, through questionnaires, interviews and workshops, the taskforce is compiling the document that will celebrate our strengths and address our weaknesses as a Federation. This will be ready for publication at the Annual Conference 2025!

Who is on the taskforce?

Chaired by Jules Ogilvie (Switzerland), the task force is made up of an equal number of representatives from around the globe, to ensure that every region's voice is heard. We are fortunate to count the Chair of the Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion task force and the Communications Coordinator as part of our group as every decision we make, or guidance we suggest, must include the principles of equity and inclusivity.

Milestones

We believe that the Federation must beat to the same rhythm. As such, one of our first tasks saw us create the IFATCA mission and vision statements. We also published the core values of the Federation, values by which we should all aim to consider when contributing to IFATCA's work. You will see the results of the initial questionnaire published on the IFATCA website.

Small changes and big changes

Did you know that the 2030+ Task Force was the first task force to deliver working papers at an Annual Conference in Singapore this year? We have also created ideas that have been adopted through other Standing Committees. The working papers that we delivered have enabled the start of this revitalisation process by listening to your concerns and suggestions as Member Associations and regions. As a result of this process, an interactive web platform will be created ensuring direct and personalised access for individual Member Associations, regions have more autonomy by electing their own Executive Vice-Presidents at their own regional meetings, regions can create groups that can address their own professional, legal and technical needs in collaboration with the global relevant committees. Annual conferences have changes in format and regional meetings have a framework with which to conduct their activities in a coordinated way. We have also launched working topics into administrative and financial issues.

Thank you to the those who have interacted with us thus far and we look forward to engaging our Member Associations during the Annual Conference in the United Arab Emirates in 2025 to map the future of our federation going forward.

2030TF@ifatca.org

The IFATCA 2030+ Workshop during the Annual Conference 2024 in Singapore.

photo: IFATCA Archives

MANAGING OUR RULESET

ADAPTING THE FEDERATION'S CONSTITUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

BY ROBERT MASON, CHAIR CONSTITUTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE, IFATCA

Since the foundation of IFATCA in 1961, aviation in general, and Air Traffic Control specifically, have seen many changes. From just 12 foundation Member Associations, the Federation has grown to over 130, supporting commercial aviation services from the very beginning of the jet age to a complex international aviation and growing commercial space industry. Our profession sits at the forefront of technological advances. Year on year the pace of change increases and in a risk averse industry we adapt to maintain the same standards of safe and orderly control of air traffic.

The technological revolution does not happen in isolation. Air travel is becoming much more accessible and desirable to a growing middle class in many countries. More people are travelling, and more frequently. IFATCA has maintained its reputation as not only the voice of Air Traffic Control, but also the voice of reason in aviation, advising in multiple forums as we deal with more and more traffic year on year. We have an excellent reputation, for very good reason. IFATCA delivers in so many dimensions we have had to become an incredibly complex and nuanced organisation in response. So, from those first steps 63 years ago, how have we managed our own Federation, whilst ensuring that democratic and transparent processes support the work?

A read through the IFATCA Constitution and Administrative Manual (IAM) is not the first thing that IFATCA members, or even officials might think of when they are becoming interested in the work of the Federation, but it does contain a wealth of information that we all need to understand. Our rule set provides us with demonstrable accountability, not only to our members, but also to the industry we serve, and within the governmental frameworks in which we operate. I have often stated that if the Technical and Professional domains are where member associations seek the advice and assistance of our collective wisdom, then the Financial and Administrative domains are the support mechanisms that allow us to provide it.

The IAM is a collection of our Constitution, bye-laws, and procedures, developed across the years and driven by the needs of our membership. Essentially, what we commit to do as a Federation for our membership, and rules and guidance as to how we achieve that. The IAM is not set in stone and no element of it should be considered as unchangeable. Indeed, as it is for our industry, change is constant, and inevitable. It's far from perfect and needs to evolve constantly to keep pace with accepted practices. For example, until the advent of COVID 19, we did not envisage a need to conduct large formal meetings electronically (Skype, Teams, Zoom etc.), even though we had already been meeting in smaller groups this way for some time. Nor did we support electronic voting for official matters. Every aspect of our rules and procedures should be subject to reconsideration in light of changed circumstances and should offer flexibility within the range of options we are legally allowed to exercise.

IFATCA is by definition a Federation of international scope but our "sèige social" (where we reside as a legal entity – see what I mean about language?) is in Canada and, as such, we need to comply with Canadian law applicable to a registered association. Management of the rule set, on behalf of the membership, is what the Constitution and Administrative Committee (CAC) does. This is a very important distinction for us all. CAC does not exist to serve the Executive Board, although we work closely with them through the Deputy President. The Federation, its Executive Board, the Committees and Task Forces, serve the membership. The rule set has to serve our collective needs, enabling transparency and defensible processes, responding to our changing needs.

This year CAC is examining a range of issues, mostly brought from the floor of Committee A. It includes:

- Provision of Annual Conference Committee minutes 1 hour prior to Final Plenary
- Executive Board Election alignment considering Regional EVP elections
- Regional Meeting Quorum Requirements
- Establish authority of Task Forces and Standing Committees to present WP
- Regional Policy (Task Force 2030+)
- Membership Application process clarification
- Regional Meetings => preparation for Annual Conference
- Conduct of sub-Regional virtual meetings
- MA transfer between regions
- Consider TOC/PLC membership quotas => allocation to regions (min 2 per region)
- Remove Liaison Officer to the European Union (EU)

If you would like to become involved or understand more, please contact cac.chair@ifatca.org and I'll be happy to advise.

cac.chair@ifatca.org

PLC 2024-2025 UPDATE

A LOOK AT THE FOCUS OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL COMMITTEE FOR THE COMING YEAR

BY ADAM EXLEY, CHAIR PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL COMMITTEE, IFATCA

The Professional and Legal committee, while it may sound very daunting is anything but. While the committee is just that, a community of people who are just like yourself, who willingly give up their free time to study and understand the topics that you want to hear about and feel strongly about. These professional topics sit right at the heart of our profession. We look at the impact of future changes in licensing on the Air Traffic Controller. What will the job of an ATCO look like in the future? Will our licence be recognised elsewhere?

We look at the risk of fatigue with changing work environments. What is the impact of the digital tower on the ATCO? What do we now about this ever evolving technology and what do we feel should be our 'red lines'.

These are just some of the types of conversations we have on an almost daily basis. Which as I am sure you agree, as you are reading this column, is very interesting and thought provoking. That is why, in Singapore we had our biggest ever intake of elected and corresponding members on the PLC. Which is fantastic! We need your experience, which you might think is trivial, as it could be the last piece of the puzzle.

While we are tasked with keeping our finger on the pulse, looking at the future, we also have to ensure that our current policies are relevant and up-to-date. This you may think is a relatively easy task but let me tell you this now! It is very difficult! and usually ends up in a long and protracted discussion and a deep dive into the past!

Reviewing and re-wording current policy must be done considerately as often the policy sits on top of a lot of work and study beforehand. It is important to know how we got there and if a change is considered acceptable, then we must ensure it does not have and unintended consequences.

We must also, as an international organisation, ensure that every corner of our federation can find and use our policies. This is something that was high on the list of the 2030 workshop. Our policies must be relevant for me, sat on a busy approach sector in London and for the Air Traffic Controller working a quieter approach sector in South America, for example. Trying to achieve this balance is an important element in our thought process when we make policies for you to vote on at conference. Which is why it is important that the committees have members from different areas of the world and different levels of traffic and difficulty.

So, I have digressed somewhat. PLC are working on topics such as, the return to live operations following simulation, we are looking at the requirement for a licence to work as an Air Traffic Flow Manager, the possible skill degradation of the ATCO in an ever-automated environment and also looking at creating some polices on the environmental challenge that we are currently facing. These are just a few of the working topics we will cover this year and feel free to reach out if you want to know more about what we are doing.

plc.chair@ifatca.org

The 2024-2025 Professional and Legal Committee members during the Annual Conference 2024.

photo: IFATCA Archives

TOC 2024-2025 UPDATE

TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE RUNNING YEAR

BY JAYMI STEINBERG, CHAIR TECHINICAL AND OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE, IFATCA

The Technical and Operations Committee (TOC) serves as one of 4 Standing Committees (SC) of the Federation. The committee reviews and updates the policies in the Technical Professional Manual (TPM), researches topics of interest to the Federation, shares input with the ICAO Panel representatives, and more.

TOC has two primary tasks. The first is to research new developments in the technical and operational domain of aviation, which affect the profession of air traffic control. Secondly, the committee maintains and updates IFATCA's Technical and Professional Manual (TPM). TOC is excited to present its 2024-25 working programme. Firstly, it will investigate existing environmental policies and examine sustainable taxiing. Topics pertaining to the environment were selected because ICAO Long Term Aspirational Goals (LTAG) include them prominently, and there is a growing push in the aviation sector to perform more sustainably. While this is a commendable goal in and of itself, IFATCA must critically examine the effects of these solutions on our core interests, the safety of aviation in general and the profession of air traffic controllers specifically.

As stated before, TOC maintains and updates IFATCA's TPM. There are several segments of the TPM which the committee will review such as ADME 2.6: Responsibility and Functions of Aerodrome Controllers with Regard to Surface Movement, ATS 3.16/ 3.17/ 3.18/ 3.19 Deactivation of Safety Nets, and COM 4.3 Communications Failure.

Similarly, TOC will review the provisional policies ratified by committees B and C at IFATCA's annual conference in Singapore. Simultaneous Remote Tower Operations, as well as Systems Based Licencing - which will include research regarding Low Traffic Licence - will be reviewed and hopefully promoted to full policy in Abu Dhabi.

Further, TOC will examine Tech Harmonisation which has ties with the concept of System Based Licensing. ICAO Panel Representative Lim De Wei will be working alongside TOC colleagues on Trajectory Based Operations (TBO). This year's first meeting will be alongside the IFALPA ATS Committee so topics were selected that would tie in well with the area of interest of the pilot such as: Interval Management, Barometric VNAV, and GNSS Spoofing and Jamming. Several of the topics listed above will be the subject of a combined paper with the Professional and Legal Committee (PLC).

Working Papers have been the bread and butter of the committee, but over the years we hope to diversify some of the output. With the input of the Remote Tower Task Force, TOCis aiming to produce guidance material on Multiple Mode of Operations in Digital Tower environments. TOC also hopes to collaborate with the Training Task Force to take some of the work that we do have and convert it to usable course materials.

In terms of membership, TOC is proud of the broad spectrum of geographical representation and the variety of specialties the members bring to the table. This year there has been an unprecedented number of Member Associations (MAs) submitting their names for elected and corresponding roles. I would like to thank all of the volunteers and their MAs that have contributed.

toc.chair@ifatca.org

The 2024-2025 Technical and Operational Committee members during the Annual Conference 2024.

photo: IFATCA Archives

HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

WHY TALKING ABOUT EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IS STILL VERY RELEVANT

BY SVERRE ISAR ELSBAK, CHAIR IFATCA EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY TASK FORCE

As members of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Task Force, we frequently hear questions like: "Why do we still need Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Air Traffic Management? It's a level playing field, right? There is no more discrimination in application, testing, training or operations. After all, ATCOs are equal in 2024... Aren't they?" To answer these questions, it is perhaps worth looking back over the past decades on how the participation and perception of women in our profession evolved. Thankfully, we have archives like that of The Controller to help us do that.

In the first decade, there seem to be no articles discussing female controllers, but we can turn to photographs. It is striking to see that there is hardly any women present at meetings, conferences or photographs taken in operational environments. While there always have been female controllers in post-World War II operations, they seem to have been 'black swans'.

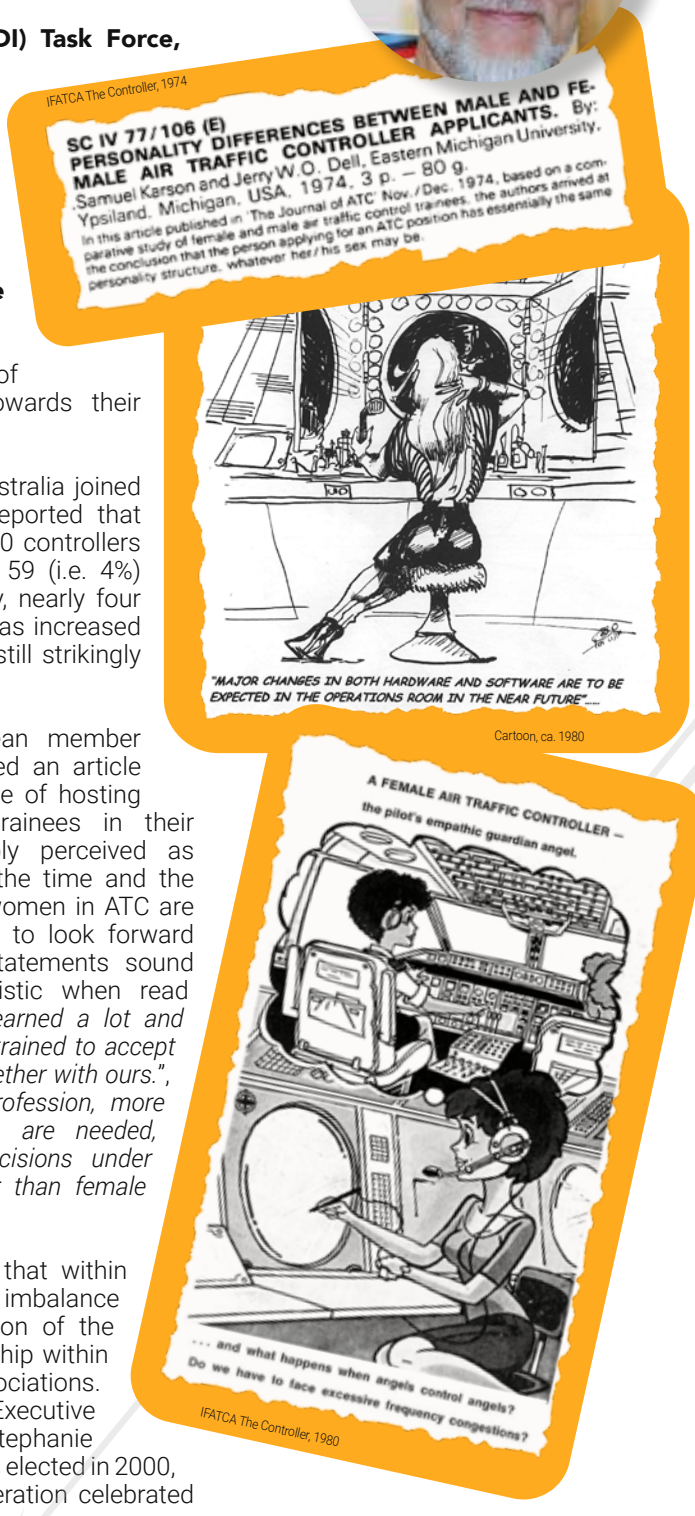
One of the first relevant mentions in The Controller appears to be from a 1974-study by the Eastern Michigan University that concluded: "*Based on a comparative study of female and male air traffic control trainees. the authors arrived at the conclusion that the person applying for an ATC position has essentially the same personality structure. whatever her / his sex may be.*"

Sadly, assertions like this appear to have done little to change the perceptions of what it would be like to work alongside female colleagues. Next to an **article in The Controller from 1980**, "*Female Controllers in an all-male environment*", was a cartoon that suggested that when a female controller talked to a female pilot, it could well result in frequency congestion... Fortunately, the actual article is a bit more balanced. It cites steps taken by the USA and Sweden for example to end gender discrimination in the 1970s and the positive effect this has had on increasing the number of female controllers. It however also talks about the prejudices and unfitting attitudes of male controllers towards their colleagues.

In 1986, Civil Air Australia joined the IFATCA. They reported that of the just over 1300 controllers in the country, just 59 (i.e. 4%) were women. Today, nearly four decades later, this has increased to ... 14%, which is still strikingly low.

In 1987, a European member association published an article about the experience of hosting the first female trainees in their unit. While probably perceived as tongue-in-cheek at the time and the conclusion is that women in ATC are probably something to look forward to, some of the statements sound downright misogynistic when read today: "*the ladies learned a lot and we male controllers trained to accept female decisions together with ours.*", or "*In this tough profession, more male characteristics are needed, like firm logical decisions under time pressure rather than female emotional ones!*"

It is not surprising that within IFATCA, the gender imbalance reflected the situation of the workforce/membership within its Member Associations. The first female Executive Board member, Stephanie Simmonds (UK), was elected in 2000, just before the Federation celebrated its 40th anniversary.



IFATCA The Controller, 1974

SC IV 77/106 (E)
PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER APPLICANTS. By: Samuel Karson and Jerry W.O. Dell, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsiland, Michigan, USA. 1974. 3 p. – 80 g.
In this article published in 'The Journal of ATC' Nov./Dec. 1974, based on a comparative study of female and male air traffic control trainees. the authors arrived at the conclusion that the person applying for an ATC position has essentially the same personality structure. whatever her / his sex may be.

Cartoon, ca. 1980

IFATCA The Controller, 1980

Thoughts from Greg Okeroa, EDI Task Force Member, New Zealand

We can always look back to the past and wonder how or why things were done a certain way. Rightly or wrongly, that was then, this is now and over time things change. We can however learn going forward by asking why things are the way they are and is it still relevant. One of the pleasing things in the EDI sphere is that people are now asking the question, "why", the past is being challenged and past norms are being replaced with new norms. This is what drives me to be a part of this group.

Looking at the current EB photo fills me with an immense sense of pride to see so many women put their hand up to lead this profession, along with leaders are the large number of volunteers who strive to make this profession better for those that follow.

It is also refreshing to see so many younger controllers taking an interest in their profession and looking for ways to improve things going forward and I thank the older generation for giving them the space and opportunity to make this happen.

Above, the plenary session at the 1967 Annual Conference in Geneva. Below, delegates during the 2024 Annual Conference.

photos: IFATCA Archives

At this year's Annual Conference, IFATCA elected Helena Sjöström Falk from Sweden as its President and CEO to guide us to the next chapter, to the Next Frontier. It should come as no surprise, that the first female president of IFATCA is from Sweden, a country that is one of the pioneers of gender equality.

What is more, the current Executive Board currently has no les than five female members. Like our Task Force and Standing Committee members, and other representatives, the EB members are from diverse backgrounds. The hope is that everyone affiliated with IFATCA finds someone in a leadership position that they can relate to. We want the membership to be empowered and inspired to speak up and ultimately, be involved.

This is where the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, as first conceived within IFATCA in 2019, is still very relevant. The task force represents equal access to all opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise feel excluded or marginalized. It is designed to allow our federation's evolution and to embrace individual differences. Our June campaign of every member feeling safe, seen, valued and included underpins the board and Federation's commitment to the EDI ethos.

Our new mission for the next frontier is to spread the word that becoming an air traffic controller is a profession that requires skills. And there are no male gender or female gender skills. Skills are skills. You either have them or you don't.

editf.chair@ifatca.org

CIVIL USE OF DRONES

BOOMING USE OF DRONES HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

BY AHMED SHADY, SENIOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER &
CAIRO ACC SAFETY MANAGER, EGYPT

Technical development has had a significant impact on the development of legal rules in all fields. Technical development and scientific progress have led to work on developing, amending or abolishing many legal rules and creating new legal rules. One of the most prominent areas that has been clearly affected by scientific and technical progress is the field of air law, as the development of air transport has urged countries and international organizations concerned with the field of aviation, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), to work to renew and develop the legal rules that regulate the use of airspace. Air law is not limited to regulating air navigation or aviation only, but also includes the air environment, telecommunications and space, of which air navigation is a part.

The use of airspace at the present time is not limited only to manned aircraft, but drones, which had their beginnings in the military field, have recently begun to be used for civilian purposes in several environmental and logistical sectors, and in the field of agriculture, manufacturing, cinema, transportation, search and rescue, and pipeline monitoring. Oil, gas, electricity and other construction. Today, drones are one of the emerging technologies that have begun to sweep the world. Which had a significant impact in urging countries and international organizations to legalize the placement of this new technology inside and outside international and regional airports by establishing legislation and recommendations that must be followed in the event of using drone applications in civil activities.

Research importance

In light of the progress the world is witnessing in the field of air transport and aircraft, the use of drones has increased and their importance has increased in various fields.

Online retailer Amazon is keen to use drones to deliver items to its customers.

photo: Amazon

There are major countries seeking to use drones (in various fields, especially the military and military fields), which have been using this technology since the last century in world wars and others.

The importance of this research becomes clear in discussing countries' applications and experiences of drones within their airspace, whether for use within cities and provinces or use within airport departments for search and inspection work on runways and detecting areas that are difficult to reach by usual means, in addition to some uses in monitoring birds that often abound nearby. From aircraft runways, in addition to some other uses, for example but not limited to:

- The use of drones in the African country of Ghana, with the use of some altitude restrictions and appropriate range of vision for aerial survey work.
- Transporting medicines and medical equipment, especially in times of epidemics and diseases (Corona pandemic).
- Spraying works for agricultural fields.
- Using drones for regular maintenance of landing and navigational aids, as is the case at Paris Orly airports and Stuttgart Airport, Germany.

In addition to using this new technology in inspections of airport corridors, as well as examination and inspection of aircraft, whether for maintenance or

Drones can be used for regular maintenance of landing and navigational aids

photo: skyguide

security reasons, as at the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam.

But the most important question remains: Why are developed countries seeking to use this technology in all fields?

The answer is that drones are a fast means of transportation equipped with sensitive cameras with a high capacity for photography and aerial surveying, in addition to some relatively low operating costs compared to traditional methods, which require the use of human personnel.

It is worth noting that drones are considered environmentally friendly, as they operate with clean energy, whether electric or nitrogen. In addition to operating throughout the day and night operating hours.

In view of the aforementioned factors, the American company Amazon has used drones in the operations of shipping and transporting letters and parcels in the United States of America over a wide range, in accordance with the applicable rules and laws of the International Federal Civil Aviation Organization.

Drone management and operation systems

In many drone countries, drones are able to fly at low altitudes in airspace separate from regular air traffic without permission or contact with air traffic control. However, in the near future, it is expected that drones will regularly operate in other categories of airspace as they become larger and fly at higher altitudes, and there will likely be an increasing number of unmanned aircraft systems operating in non-military airspace. There has become an urgent need to integrate drone systems into the usual air traffic management systems between drones and other aircraft and air traffic control.

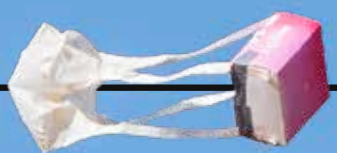
Therefore, private sector companies led a huge revolution in the development and management of these systems, in addition to their integration into the air traffic control system, through the development of radar computers in air traffic control towers to contain special detectors for this new technology, by which the altitudes and locations of these aircraft are clarified, as is the case in some European airports. And Asian (Singapore - Dubai - Germany - Norway).

It is worth noting that some companies working in this field, for example, the French company Thales and the Spanish Indra, have developed some mobile phone applications to contain a special application for operating these aircraft that includes data, registration letters, and call signs for these aircraft. In addition to data on voice or electronic communication with the controller of these aircraft between the ground control center and air traffic control systems.

captinshady04@gmail.com

Zipline International Inc. operates delivery drones in Rwanda, Ghana, Japan, the United States, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya. As of April 2024, its drones have made more than one million commercial deliveries.

photo: Roksenhorn - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, via wikimedia



FOCUS ON GEORGIA

IFATCA VISITS GEORGIAN SERVICE PROVIDER AND MEMBER ASSOCIATION

BY PHILIPPE DOMOGALA, IFATCA INDUSTRY PARTNER COORDINATOR

The Georgian Air Navigation Service Provider, Sakaeronavigatsia, invited IFATCA to celebrate its 31st anniversary. This was an excellent opportunity to renew contacts with the local controllers, who were aiming to re-envigorate their association and become more active in our Federation. Frédéric Deleau, IFATCA's EVP Europe, represented IFATCA and was accompanied by Philippe Domogala, the Industry partner Coordinator.

Georgia is one of the countries of the Caucasus, located between the Black and Caspian Sea. Its lengthy border with Russia to the North is formed by the Caucasus Mountains with peaks above 5000 metres. The country was part of the Soviet Union until 1990, when it returned to an independent state. It has a very rich history as it is at the crossroads of many civilizations, including Persians, Greeks, Romans and Ottoman. It was also on the Silk Road, a centuries-old trading route to and from China and Russia. The earliest archaeological and archaeobotanical evidence for grape wine and viniculture, dating to 6000–5800 BCE was found in Georgia, making them the "inventors" of wine.

Following a Russian invasion in 2008, Georgia had parts of its territory occupied by Russian troops. One such region, Sanchalbo, referred to as South Ossetia by the Russian occupants and separatists, is in the middle of the country. However, it does not have an airport, and its airspace remains under Georgia's control as part of its Flight Information Region (FIR).
Air traffic plays an important role in developing the country. Its entire FIR is controlled by a single ACC, located in the capital Tbilisi. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014, some of the bypass routes between Europe and the Far East led via Georgia, which saw a tremendous traffic increase as a result. They currently have a daily average of 700 to 850 flights, an increase of 120 % from what they had before the closure of Ukrainian airspace. Since 2019, traffic has increased by 30% on an annual basis.

Their Air Navigation Service Provider, Sakaeromnavigastia (Sakaero for short), was created in 1993. It is operated independently from the government and employs 800 people, including 120 controllers. Besides the ACC, there are three main airports: Tbilisi, the capital, Batumi on the Black Sea and Kutaisi, which is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Georgia has two more regional airports that operate under AFIS. Georgia has been a full member of EUROCONTOL since 2014. Like other countries in the region, Georgia is part of EASA's Pan-European Partners (PANEP) initiative and co-operates in the implementation of EU aviation safety rules and comprehensive aviation agreements.

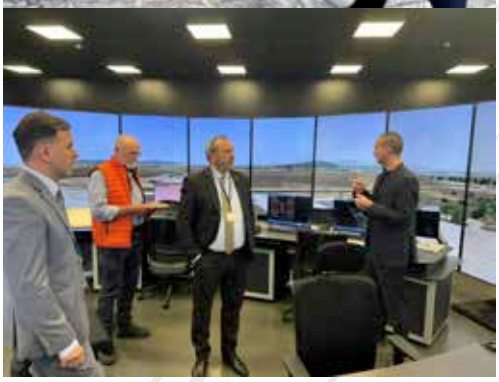
Tbilisi airport has an average of around 100 movements per day, but seasonal peaks reach 155. It has a long main runway equipped with a CAT I ILS. It retains LOC/VOR procedures, as GPS is often unavailable due to jamming or spoofing in the area.

Traffic is complex, with a lot of it concentrated during the night. There are also quite a few military helicopters based at the airport, and there is also some

Top: Frédéric Deleau giving a presentation to Georgian Controllers on IFATCA

Middle The Tbilisi ACC and Control Tower visit organized by Levan KARANADZE Counsellor of the Vice Prime minister and Chairman of the Supervisory Council of Sakaeronavigatsia

Bottom: EVP Europe addressing the Georgian vice prime minister during the gala dinner



Top: Visiting the Tbilisi ACC and approach equipped with modern INDRA equipment.

Bottom: Inside the new 360 degrees simulator

VFR traffic. Georgia's lower airspace is Class G, but a flight plan is mandatory for all VFR traffic. Only two km from the international airport in Tbilisi is a military airfield with a factory that built the Sukhoi SU-25 during the Soviet times, the factory still exists and maintains military aircraft. There are plans to open a new airport in 2028, in Vaziani, less than 10 km from the current airport.

The ACC has two geographic sectors that are often split vertically, meaning four positions. Current staff shortages mean that the sectors are single-manned, with one planer for two sectors. The shift pattern is unusual: two 12-hour days (09:00 to 21:00, next day 21:00 to 09:00) and then four days off. They use VIBE (an IFATCA Industry Partner) to manage the roster. A card system records who is on position and verifies licenses, medicals, whether briefings have been attended, etc. According to the controller, it works well and is a big help. The workforce is not very diverse, with only six female controllers in the Tbilisi tower and one in the ACC. Staff shortage is acute: the ACC currently only has 28 qualified controllers, whereas they should have 50. Tbilisi Tower has 20 ATCOs were 25 are needed. Ten new trainees are planned to join soon but these will barely replace the retirements over the next two to three years. The foreseen traffic increase means that little to no relief is expected.

From the technical side, both Tbilisi tower, approach, and area control centres were recently equipped with brand-new systems from INDRA, another IFATCA Industry Partner. The equipment also includes an ACC Simulator and 360-degree tower simulator with impressive resolution. The simulator is also used to promote the profession and create vocations by organizing visits for schoolchildren.

Georgia is really a beautiful country, and the Caucasus mountains are stunning. The tourism industry is rapidly expanding, attracting an increasing number of people. Modern ski resorts and many historic locations will undoubtedly continue to appeal to many more in the future. Aviation is likely to play an important role and for air traffic control, the main challenge will be to find enough well-motivated people to make it work.

As part of the visit, our EVP Europe, Frédéric Deleau, made a presentation on IFATCA's activities to the controllers and the ANSP's management. This was followed by visits to the Area Control Centre, the tower at Shota Rustaveli Tbilisi International Airport (ICAO: UGTB; IATA: TBS), and their ACC simulator and training facilities.

In the evening, a gala dinner with some 200 guests was honoured by the presence of Mr Levan Davitashvili, First Vice Prime Minister of Georgia and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development. Frédéric Deleau had the opportunity to address the minister and Mr Gocha Mezvrishvili, Director General of the service provider, during the dinner. In all, it was an excellent opportunity to rekindle the relations between IFATCA and one of its European Member Associations.

philippe.domogala@ifatca.org

EXPERIENCING GPS JAMMING

During the flights to and from Tbilisi, I got to experience GPS jamming first-hand when overflying the Black Sea. On the inbound flight on a Boeing 737-800, it lasted about 40 minutes. On the way back, on an older B737-700, it lasted over one hour. On both occasions, the clocks stopped and remained stopped for the rest of the flight. The 737-800 had a recent Inertial Reference System (IRS) that was updated by GPS, which failed. On the older aircraft, the IRS was independent of GPS and remained operational.

Losing GPS degraded the Required Navigation Performance (RNP), but as we were never too far from a VOR/DME ground aid, the aircraft remained within acceptable/required navigation performance.

On the 737-700, the Automatic Dependent Surveillance (ADS) transponder transmissions failed for the remainder of the flight. As both airports had ILS, the loss of the satellite navigation systems was not a factor during the landing. On both flights, the captains had access to Jeppesen tools on their tablets, and with the help of a small multimode GNSS receiver placed on the glare shield, it could still retain accurate positioning.

Because the jamming was anticipated (given the proximity to Ukraine and an area that suffers jamming and even spoofing on a daily basis) and the availability of functioning ground nav aids in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey etc, there was no real issue for either the crews or ATC. It would of course be very different if it were to occur in an oceanic environment, especially those that rely on ADS-B.

The different instrument indications in the B737-800 when the GPS signal is lost/jammed.

GARD - DISASTER READINESS

PREPARING AIRPORTS TO HANDLE EMERGENCY RELIEF LOGISTICS

BY JOHN WAGSTAFF, ASIA/PACIFIC AVIATION EXPERT, IFATCA

Very few of you will know that GARD is the abbreviation for 'Getting Airports Ready for Disaster'. This is a world-wide joint initiative led by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which has been the First Responder to any disaster in the less developed areas of the world since 1965 and DHL, an international package delivery company with a vast logistics network supporting a fleet of aircraft and vehicles operating world-wide.

UNDP and DHL worked together to create a project that could provide advice and support to countries that are vulnerable to natural disasters, e.g. earthquakes, floods or volcanic eruptions, for them to prepare for a sudden influx of aid and assistance at airports that are often in remote locations and have little, if any, means to efficiently manage the incoming aid and humanitarian relief, often including rescue personnel.

Since 2009 over 60 GARD exercises have been successfully completed around the world by small teams of experts assembled by DHL through their International Division - in the Asia-Pacific region the GARD teams have been to seven countries. All the experts voluntarily give their time and each exercise is sponsored by DHL.

VQPR

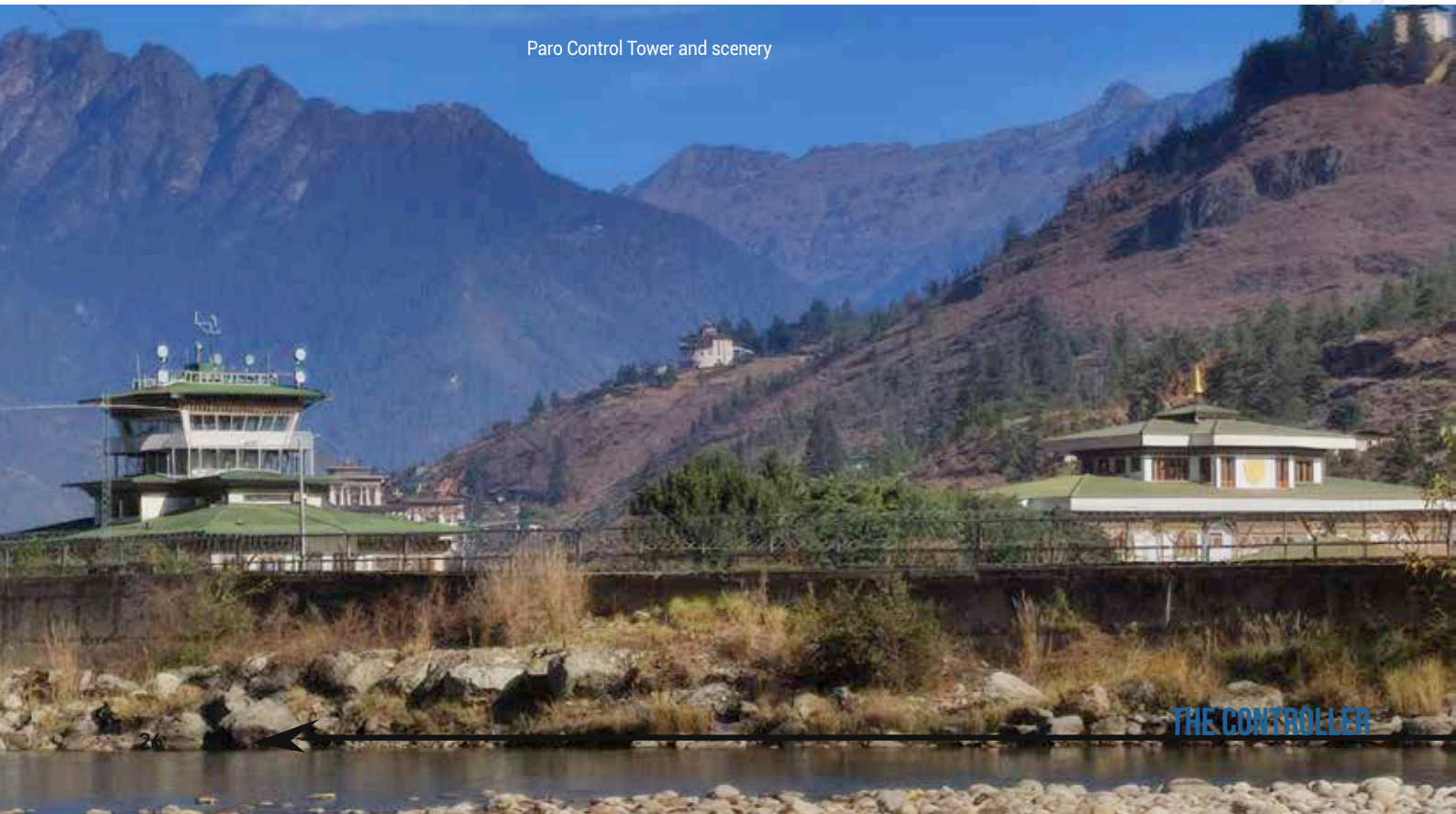
Ask Google what VQPR is and you will see, 'Paro Airport – One of the world's most dangerous airports', and a screenful of videos showing the challenging approaches to a small airport in a valley of the Himalaya foothills.

However, if you look beyond those headlines you will discover that Bhutan is a small developing mountainous country with Nepal and Mount Everest as neighbours to the west, China to the north and India to the south. Unfortunately this puts the country over the major Dhubri-Chungtan fault line which caused the major earthquake in Kathmandu in 2015 and frequent tremors in the remote southwest area of Chin, a causing landslides and disrupting communications.

Despite this, Bhutan has magnificent unspoiled scenery with snow capped peaks, deep forested valleys and numerous spectacular temples and monasteries.

GARD and VQPR

Whilst Bhutan has developed rapidly in recent years, with its topography and vulnerability to natural disasters, the local UN office considered the small airport would struggle to support a major relief operation in the event of a major earthquake in the country. At



Paro Control Tower and scenery

the beginning of 2023 the Government invited UNDP to conduct a GARD exercise at Paro Airport (the only international airport in Bhutan).

The GARD team went to work preparing a plan based on the available published information – a single runway airport with an elevation of 7352' in a valley with terrain up to 13500' immediately west of the runway and terrain up to 12500' even closer to the east of the runway. The MSA is 16000', and daytime operations only - there is no runway or approach lighting. There is parking for 6 A320-size aircraft with an additional stand at a small cargo terminal. The airport normally handles 10 scheduled A320/ATR 42 flights a day, but on a Thursday it is busy, there are 14 flights between sunrise and sunset.

Paro ATC is aerodrome control with a 10 nm CTR up to 14,500'. The two routes to Paro are from the south through the Kolkata FIR, where an approach control service is provided by Hashimara and Gauhati ATC units. They transfer arrivals at FL180 to Paro Tower at the India/Bhutan national boundary, 35 nm to the south of the airport. Paro then descends them to 16000' (8600' AGL) and when visual they are cleared for either the 'scenic' approach to RWY 33 or the more 'interesting' approach via Mr Smith's house to RWY 15. If a flight is not VMC when reaching PRO (VOR/DME) 8 NM south of the airport, they hold and wait for an improvement in the weather, or divert - delays or diversions due to weather are common. RNP AR cloud break procedures with an OCA of 10630' (OCH 3266') are published, but currently only a few Druk Air and Bhutan Airline pilots are authorised to fly them.

GARD, VQPR and IFATCA

The team realised that for this GARD exercise some specialised advice on ATC matters would be required, and through contacts with Airports Council International, who also work with GARD, they asked IFATCA if they could assist with this project. After a few e-mails and phone calls from EVP ASP, at 0500 (local time) on 26th November 2023, I boarded Druk Air flight KB153, an A320, Bangkok to Paro.

The author giving his IFATCA presentation

So began 5 days of workshops, walkabouts, discussions and productive conversations with the GARD team members sharing advice and information with an enthusiastic group of about 30 airport staff, including ATC, MET, Airport Operator, Ground engineers Emergency services, Military and Airport Administration personnel. The participants were divided into four groups to review the different aspects of the exercise: Air and Ground Operations, Cargo Handling, Terminal and Passenger Arrangements and Airport Facilities.

A visit to the control tower on the second day showed the limitations of the current ATC procedures with the Aerodrome Controller providing an 'Approach/FIS' service with operations based on one aircraft inbound or outbound at a time. Later in the day we had a visit to the hangar at the end of the apron and this gave me the opportunity for a close up view of some RWY 15 approaches and landings - 25 years ago I was sitting in Kai Tak tower watching B747s, DC10s and Tristars performing similar aerobatics as they negotiated the RWY 13 IGS approach turn to final approach.

Because the airport operations are so dependent on the weather, a visit to the meteorological office was on the third day's agenda. Although a small unit, they provide a very comprehensive service to ATC and also recognise the significance of their reports and forecasts on ATC and flight operations. The next day I gave a presentation on how Paro ATC could be developed to facilitate not only the GARD objectives of safely and efficiently managing a doubling of flights at the airport to accommodate a major relief operation, but also to manage the increase in scheduled flights that is planned by the local airlines. As well as a revision to operational procedures, new airspace designs and contingency parking

The approach to Runway 15 via Mr Smith's house

Inside the MET Office. Difficult to see but the QNH is 1021 while the QFE is 777!

arrangements, I urged them to also engage with their Indian colleagues in the adjacent units on standard coordination procedures.
Later, I learnt from conversation with Druk Air and Bhutan Airline crews that training for all pilots on the RNP AR procedure should commence in early 2024 which should result in a significant improvement in their on time performance.

During these days the other members of the team were looking at the ground handling facilities, the terminal management arrangements, the cargo processing and transport logistics.

The four groups were then tasked with writing reports on the past days' work and discussions for presentation to the Director of Aviation on the final day. The standard of the presentations and the proposals for contingency arrangements to safely and effectively manage a rapid increase in flights and organize the handling of the cargo were very professional and it demonstrated their full understanding of the purpose of the exercise. They also took the opportunity to suggest some measures that could also provide permanent improvements and upgrades to airport operations. The Director took full notice of all the comments and thanked both the GARD team and the airport participants for the very productive outcome to the exercise.

Finally A few odd facts about Bhutan – it is one of the happiest countries in the world, it is the only carbon neutral country in the world and there are no traffic lights (stop lights to our North American colleagues).

My gratitude to UNDP and DHL for inviting IFATCA to participate in the GARD programme and my sincere thanks to the EB for giving me a once in a lifetime opportunity to represent IFATCA in this GARD exercise at Paro Airport.

Bhutan has only recently realised the tourist potential it holds and is sensibly taking a cautious approach to developing the commercial and financial infrastructure, but proposals for constructing a new international airport in one of the few flat areas of the country are already being discussed, so things will inevitably change. Beat the celebrity travellers in their biz-jets and the LCC tourists – visit Bhutan now.

john.wagstaff@lacle.hk

THE GARD CONCEPT

From this...

...to this

DISASTER STRATEGIES

REGIONAL COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSE

BY TRISH GILBERT, IFATCA EVP AMERICAS

The Americas (AMA) region is focused on enhancing its readiness and communication strategies with Member Associations (MAs) before, during, and after emergencies, disasters, and crises. Whether the challenge is a natural disaster like floods, fires, earthquakes, or volcanic ash, or man-made events such as nuclear incidents, armed conflict, security threats, cyber-attacks, impacts of airborne disease outbreaks, major ATM system failures, fuel shortages, and even threats from space, such as space debris or adverse space weather, our goal is to ensure a coordinated and effective message and, if able due to limited resources, a response.

To strengthen our preparedness and response capabilities, I am pleased to announce that Tom Flanary from the United States, who currently chairs the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) Disaster Response Committee, has agreed to lead this new IFATCA AMA Regional Committee. Tom brings a wealth of experience and leadership in crisis management, and we are confident that his guidance will be invaluable as we build this committee.

We are also proud to introduce the other distinguished members who will be joining Tom on this important committee. Their expertise and commitment will play a vital role in ensuring that our region is equipped to face challenges that may arise.

- Dominican Republic, ADCA: El-Kadur Acosta
- Bahamas, BATCU: Lorenzo Carroll
- St. Lucia,SLATCA: Maritha Gibbs
- Mexico, COCTAM: Ulises Pedraza Gonzalez
- Mexico,COCTAM: Mariana Hernández
- Peru, SUCTA: Alessandra Stephanie Ortega Paima
- Bahamas, BATCU: Arnoldlette Pierre

trish.gilbert@ifatca.org

Marsh Harbour Airport, Bahamas, following devastation by Hurricane Dorian on September 2, 2019

credit: US Coast Guard, via wikimedia

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOMINICAN CONTROLLERS' ASSOCIATION

BY EL-KADUR ACOSTA, DOMINICAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION (ADCA)

April 15th, 2024, marked an important milestone in the life of the Dominican Air Traffic Controllers Association (ADCA), as we celebrated 40 years of existence. Among the many reasons we must feel proud, this is a truly remarkable achievement.

During our first General Assembly earlier this year, the executive board proposed not just one, but several commemorative activities. Consequently, a dedicated task force was established to prepare and execute an agenda with the primary goal of strengthening ADCA's value both within and beyond our scope.

The elected team, composed of 95% female ATCOs, has consistently demonstrated their commitment to ADCA whenever called upon. As a liaison to the board, the Secretary of Organization is present to assist in channeling any requests that require board approval.

As a team, we identified several key areas to highlight ADCA's impact: well-being, social activities, technical matters, professional issues, and corporate image. The synergy of these elements will foster a stronger sense of belonging, resulting in a more robust organization truly worth being part of.

Protocol Activities

It is customary in the Dominican Republic to conduct several protocol activities when an organization commemorates special occasions, and our 40th anniversary celebration is no exception. These activities include presenting a flower arrangement at the gravesite of the country's founders—a monument located near the first city established in the country by Christopher Columbus—and holding a church service to express our gratitude for all that we have achieved through our organization. These actions are traditionally carried out on the day of the organization's special celebration.

Mental Health

One of the activities planned was a mental health workshop, led by members of our newly established CISM team. Recognizing mental health as a paramount concern for well-being, we prioritized this issue in our agenda.

Sports & Leisure

Sports are another key element in promoting health, camaraderie, and well-being. ATCOs are known for organizing numerous activities, both within their organizations and at international gatherings throughout the year, to compete and socialize.

Last year, our colleagues from Panama proposed a friendly softball match between our teams, which we eagerly anticipated. In June 2024, we finally made it happen, fitting perfectly within our 40th-anniversary celebration agenda. The proposal also included an additional match in a different sport—a football game.

The first week of June was filled with excitement and energy, culminating in unforgettable experiences. We are deeply grateful to our Panamanian brothers, who bonded with us so naturally, making it one of the most special moments of the week.

The football match brought together two teams who had previously competed in the Americas ATCO Football Cup in 2023, this time enjoying the camaraderie in Santo Domingo.

ADCA's softball team reunited for the first time in years, bringing together both members and non-affiliates under the same uniform to represent the air traffic controllers of the Dominican Republic. Some non-affiliates expressed how much they enjoyed the atmosphere, creating such a positive vibe that it seems the team will continue to grow in numbers.

A particularly special moment occurred when a member of Team Panama made a secret request: he wanted to propose to his girlfriend just before the first softball game. We arranged for his girlfriend to throw the first pitch, allowing him to kneel and present the ring—a highlight of the entire week.

For us, the week was truly special, culminating in a memorable evening at a bar, sharing great memories.

Looking Ahead in 2024

Several events are planned for the remainder of the year, including Competence-Based Training led by JF Lepage, IFATCA's Deputy President, an RPAS workshop, and the celebration of International Air Traffic Controllers' Day—an event we are taking great care to organize in detail.

elkadur@gmail.com

OSHKOSH: TEAMWORK IS KEY

A GLIMPSE INSIDE THE WORLD'S BUSIEST AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER

BY BRIAN FOX, U.S.A NATCA PHOENIX SKY HARBOR FACULTY REP/OSH LIMITED

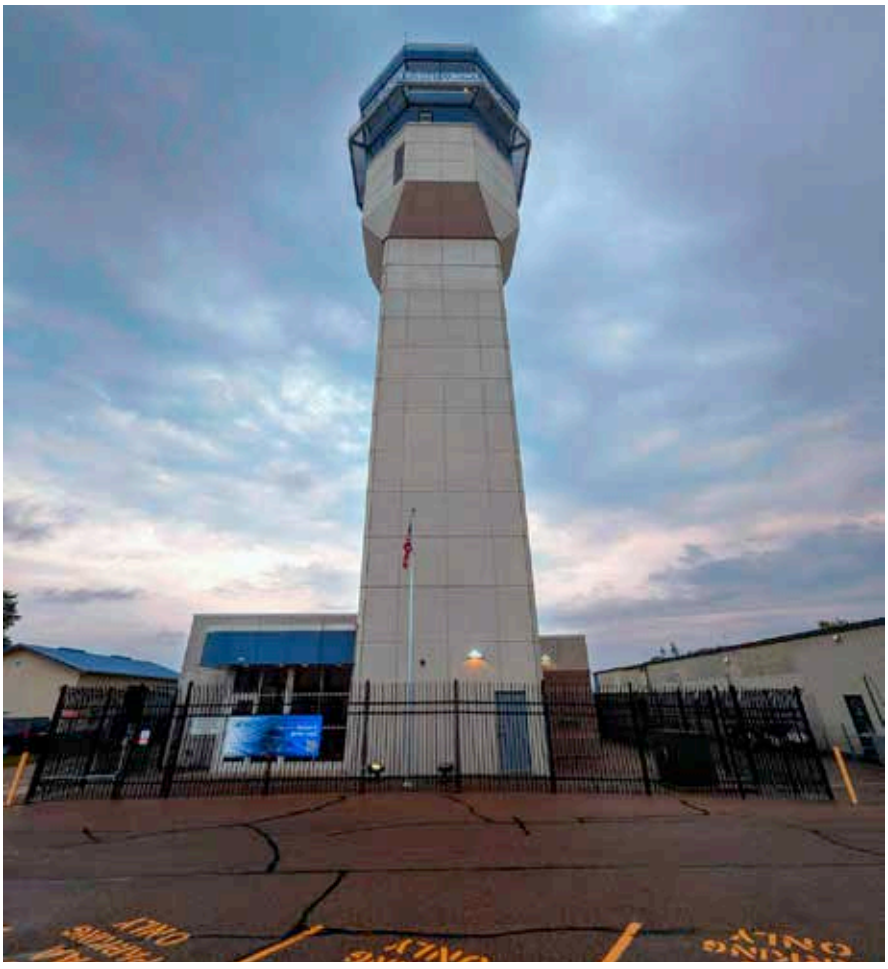
One week a year, a small airport in Wisconsin (USA) hosts the largest general aviation fly-in event in the world. More than 10,000 aircraft and hundreds of thousands of spectators from around the world make the pilgrimage for EAA's Airventure in Oshkosh, WI. Making Oshkosh Tower the busiest air traffic control tower in the world during the event. This unparalleled event and colossal influx of traffic is a recurring success as a direct result of careful, collaborative planning and teamwork.

Oshkosh's Whitman Airport (OSH) typically has 2 converging runways 9/27 and 18/36, however, the increased demand requires several significant modifications. The runway configuration is one of the first major changes made in preparation for the event, pavement that is usually a taxiway is repainted and temporarily converted to become Runway 18L/36R, or "the skinny" for practical clarification. An additional change, which is perhaps the most widely publicized and beloved characteristic of the special airport configuration by both ATC and Pilots alike, is the addition of colored dots or squares on each of the runways. During the event there is a lengthy NOTAM published outlining rules and procedures, including the utilization of the "Dots".

Flying into Oshkosh is challenging, which makes it a bucket list item for many aviators. The NOTAMs establish procedures for aircraft of all types, small general aviation aircraft, demonstration aircraft, high performance aircraft, helicopters, and ultralights. The VFR "Fisk Arrival" is how most aircraft arrive and has several unique characteristics, including a "VFR Approach Control" that uses one-way radio communications, extensive holding, and rapid sequencing utilizing landmarks that can stretch almost 100nm towards the airport. Aircraft on this arrival divide into two categories, aircraft that can maintain 90kts and those which can maintain 135kts. The two categories fly the procedure at constant speed and altitudes about 1000 ft AGL and 1500 ft AGL respectively. As aircraft approach "FISK", ATC will reach out on the radio using a description of the aircraft and instructions, sometimes asking pilots to "Rock your wings to acknowledge", which is a pilot favorite.

Months prior to the airshow a special event bid for controllers is used to fill the approximately 64 controller and several supervisor positions. Factors involved in the selection process include Oshkosh and other special event experience, performance evaluations, regional affiliation, permanent facility staffing, and seniority. Upon reporting to OSH, the controllers are issued a uniform of sorts, in the form of coveted pink shirts for visibility, easy identification, and team solidarity. Throughout the event controllers are often referred to simply as "pink shirts".

The teams consist of 4 controllers; a Lead, Veteran, Limited, and Rookie who work together throughout the event. Leads are collaboratively



selected by the facility representative and management and generally have more than 4 years of experience at Oshkosh. Veterans have 4 or more years at OSH, Limiteds 2-3 years, and Rookies it's their first year. Team camaraderie is very strong and an essential part of success as the teams' functionality is how the whole show is possible. Unlike conventional ATC facilities, OSH has the entire team on one position at a time, the team lead assigns responsibilities and has override capability while one controller is the "communicator", and two others are "Spotters". The communicator's primary function is talking on the radio, sometimes non-stop, and is almost always parroting the rapid-fire words of the three other controllers on the position with them. Each spotter has an area of responsibility and feeds the communicator a description and appropriate instructions for each aircraft approaching their designated airspace. The teams interact seamlessly with each other and the other teams on the adjacent positions using the established operating procedures. This limits needed coordination and allows for the safe and efficient handling of the enormous traffic volume.

At Fisk, ATCs are stationed at a mobile facility and sit on a makeshift patio with an awning, a handheld microphone, binoculars, and sometimes a gallery of spectators or the occasional neighborhood dog. These controllers, utilizing the team method described above, are the gateway to OSH and perform the essential functions of runway assignment, sequencing, spacing, and holding aircraft as they approach the airport. As descriptions can sometimes apply to multiple

aircraft in the vicinity of FISK, these controllers also expertly identify non-compliant aircraft and help to guide them safely back into the sequence. After receiving instructions from Fisk Approach, pilots continue towards the airport on a close in downwind or base and monitor the tower frequency for the runway they were assigned.

As aircraft approach OSH from FISK on base or downwind, the controllers in the tower spot them and provide instructions mixing them with other type aircraft from all arrival procedures, again using multiple spotters, one-way transmissions and aircraft descriptions. Almost all aircraft, except IFR arrivals and high-performance overhead approaches, are instructed to make short approaches with base turns at the numbers then precision landing on one of the colored dots or squares providing sufficient, albeit reduced, same runway spacing in accordance with temporary waivers for the show. Upon landing, aircraft are instructed to turn off the runway as soon as the aircraft is under control giving ATC increased runway availability for arrivals or departures.

Aircraft departing OSH also have prescribed procedures outlined in the NOTAMs and are restricted below arrival traffic minimizing conflicts. For many of the OSH ATCs, working the departures is the most coveted. You are on the flight line, sometimes making memes come true by utilizing orange wands to direct aircraft. For this position 2-3 of the team members are on flatbed trailers positioned at the approach end of the runway in use, using a variety of radios and other equipment. The other 1-2 members of the team are on the ground near the hold bars with specially designed headsets, wands, and signs. The controllers on the trailers listen to the arrival tower frequency and spot arrivals to then sequence departures between. Utilizing a combination of radio and visual signals provided by the controller at the hold bar. Which provides maximum runway utilization and creates an efficient, safe and unforgettable experience for pilots, controllers, and spectators alike.

The demands of Oshkosh tower during the EAA Airventure Fly-In are met with pride, collaboration, teamwork, and skill. It is truly amazing to bear witness to and be a part of. Without the amazing work and countless hours of preparation by so many involved it wouldn't be possible to accomplish this astonishing achievement of converting a small contract tower in Wisconsin into the World's Busiest Air Traffic Control Tower.

@natca.org

VOLCANIC ASH ADVISORIES

THE IMPACT OF VOLCANIC ASH ON AIR TRAFFIC

BY ERIK AVILA, IFATCA REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ICAO MET PANEL

Volcanic ash clouds have devastating impacts on aircrafts and aerodromes. Volcanoes that have been dormant for long periods of time are often not actively monitored and can erupt with little or no warning. Due to this lack of monitoring, a pilot's report of an ash cloud is paramount in alerting air traffic controllers to the situation so appropriate action can be taken to assess and mitigate the situation.

Volcanic ash clouds contain sharp-edged, hard glass particles, and pulverized rocks that can cause serious damage if ingested by aircraft engines. Volcanic ash can result in the complete malfunction or flame out of engines, failure of electrical and/or hydraulic system, and blockage of exterior air sensors that may result in erroneous airspeed indications. In addition, the hazardous sulphur gasses can contaminate the cabin air; thereby, requiring the use of oxygen masks by crew and passengers.

Nine Volcanic Ash Advisory Centers (VAACs) are responsible for issuing Volcanic Ash Advisories for any potential volcanic ash/volcanic activity that may impact aviation. The nine VAACs are in Anchorage, Washington D.C., Montreal, Buenos Aires, Toulouse, London, Tokyo, Darwin, and Wellington. The VAACs actively monitor worldwide available reporting sensors, volcanic observatories, satellite data, and seismic observations for their area of responsibility.

Volcanic ash clouds can travel great distances and have substantial impacts on large portions of air traffic airspace. In April 2010, Eyjafjallajökull erupted in Iceland and resulted in a seven-day shutdown of much of Europe's air traffic. Over 10 million passengers were impacted over the period, and it has been estimated that the total impact on the economy was between €1.5 to €2.5 billion.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Meteorological Panel Work Group on MET Operations (WG- MOG) is working with 9 VAACs to define requirements and update relevant ICAO documents for the new Quantitative Volcanic Ash (QVA) product that is under development.

As the only member of the WG-MOG with air traffic experience, I work with the fellow work group members to help the providers understand the needs from the air traffic perspective and understand how these advisories impact air traffic operations.

QVA will provide high-resolution volcanic ash forecasts every three hours. Additionally, QVA forecasts will provide ash concentration values in 5,000' layers. This new improved resolution will support using airspace above volcanic ash clouds (when applicable), which will improve efficiency and reduce air traffic delays. Currently Volcanic Ash Advisories are issued for volcanic activity but do not contain any concentration values.

The ICAO and World Meteorological Organization have requested that VAACs provide detailed information on volcanic ash clouds to inform users how volcanic ash impacts aviation. Recent improvements in remote sensing and improved science have allowed VAAC forecasters to provide improved detailed volcanic ash forecasts.

erik.avila@natca.org

Eric Avila is the National Weather Representative for USA NATCA. In his position, he collaborates with his Federal Aviation Administration counterparts on numerous NextGen weather programs such as NexGen Weather Processor. Together, they develop weather products that will aid air traffic controllers and air traffic managers in their daily operations. In 2022, Eric was recognized as the Raytheon Controller of the Year.

Prior to his transition to this position, Eric worked at the Houston Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) as an air traffic controller for 9 years. His previous experience includes working as a meteorologist for the National Weather Service for 9 years including 5 years at Houston ARTCC. In 2011, during his time as a meteorologist at Houston ARTCC, he was awarded the NOAA Administrator's award for his work in developing a web based tactical decision aid to visually display the Terminal Aerodrome Forecast. His experience working directly with air traffic management as a meteorologist gives him a unique perspective when helping to design NextGen weather systems.

Eric also represents IFATCA on the ICAO METP as one of seven international organizations that are granted membership to the METP.

The Work Groups meet regularly both virtually and in person to work on updating the ICAO Annex 3 and PANS-MET ahead of the 6th meeting of the METP in March 2025.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) **Meteorological Panel (METP)** consists of twenty-six ICAO Member States and seven international organizations. The METP working groups are preparing amendments for ICAO Annex 3 – Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation and the Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Meteorology (PANS-MET).

The METP is comprised of the following four work groups:
- Work Group on Meteorological (MET) Requirements and Development (WG-MRAD)
- Work Group on MET Information Exchange (WG-MIE)
- Work Group on MET Operations (WG- MOG)
- Work Group on MET Cost Recovery Governance and Guidance (WG-MCRGG)

EFFECTIVE RADIO COMMUNICATION

AWARENESS OF PRONUNCIATION TRAPS CAN HELP MAKE COMMUNICATION SAFER

BY NEIL BULLOCK, ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONSULTANT.

Twenty years ago, having swapped the tower and approach room for the English classroom, I quickly learned a salutary lesson in communication. "Neil, you must speak slower", said my instructor after my first live teaching session. And this was despite having just finished eight years of French language studies. Communication is more than finding the right words and grammar. Here, we backtrack from the classroom to the tower to look at how we can improve and maintain effective communication on the radio.

I will start by clarifying an often misunderstood word - accent. Accent simply means the complexity of all speech sound elements and listening to a few prescribed accents does little to improve communication. To say, "This is a Korean accent, and this is what you hear every time you communicate with a crew based in Seoul", is not appropriate. The concept is naïve, culturally insensitive and ignores ethnical, social and gender variations. Each person's accent is as different and as diverse as another's.

Paradoxically, better speech production can enhance listening comprehension and be integrated into both ab-initio and recurrent training. One element of both pronunciation and fluency can immediately improve clarity of understanding for the listener: clearer **articulation** (the physical formation of spoken language) and a more appropriate **tempo** (speed of speech delivery).

The following elements also influence pronunciation and fluency:

Intonation or pitch changes – often at the end of an utterance, e.g., "*AFR13E report ready for de-parture↗*" – a rising tone indicating an expected response. A continuously higher tone can indicate emotional stress, such as during an emergency. Intonation carries a lot of meaning and is extremely important in giving instructions.

Rhythm and **Stress** – English is different to other languages in its *rhythm*. It does not require stress on every syllable. This can mean syllables and words often run together in spontaneous spoken language. This changes the sounds produced and received and may differ from those practised when learning the pronunciation of individual words. A typical example is when we say "*take*" and "*off*" individually but "*Tay-cough*" when saying the two words together. Another example from an actual recording is when an ATCO says, "***Deh**(lta)-**kee**(lo)-**char**(lie), **clee**(red)**immed**(iate)-tay-koff*". The bold syllables are clearly audible. Those in brackets are much less so.

Conversely, certain syllables can be emphasised within words or entire words. "*H-DG HOLD position, I say agAIN, HOLD posITIon!*". Such emphasis accentuates meaning and is often simply reactive in emotional or demanding situations. Certain speakers also have difficulties with adapting syllable stress where the word form changes –inca**PAC**itated (adjective)> incapaci**TAT**ion (noun) is one example. Stressing the wrong syllables can be confusing for the listener. Further difficulties can come from syllable stress that changes the meaning of a word "*reJECT*" (verb/action) or "*REject*" (noun/thing) or "*INvalid*" (noun) and "*inVALID*" (adjective).

English also has what we call the reduced vowel 'uh' sound. "*He entered (ent-**uh**-d) the runway without clearance (Klee-r-**uh**-nss)*". This can be especially difficult for speakers of languages that stress each syllable.

Coupled with increased speech rate and poor articulation, any of these factors can make understanding spoken English difficult. Practice and exposure to all such pronunciation factors in training leads to a better awareness and understanding of such difficulties. It can also be fun and leads to safer communication for everybody!

neil.bullock@icaea.aero@

IFATCA'S SPEAK ENGLISH PROGRAMME

INFORMAL CHAT SESSIONS TO BOOST ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The IFATCA Speak English Program (SEP) is a global initiative aimed at helping air traffic controllers and pilots enhance their English-speaking skills in a supportive and friendly environment. The program focuses on making participants feel comfortable, offering a judgment-free space where they can practice speaking English without any pressure. The goal is to build confidence, particularly for those moments when communication goes beyond the standard radio-telephony (R/T) phraseology used in aviation. The sessions are designed to be engaging and enjoyable, with conversations that cover a wide range of topics, including work-related discussions and interesting traffic situations.

Communication is a crucial aspect of air traffic control, and language skills are essential for delivering safe and effective services. Since English is the internationally recognized language for aviation, it is important for all air traffic controllers and pilots to have strong general communication and English language skills. The SEP program is designed to help participants improve their English proficiency, thereby enhancing their overall communication abilities in their professional roles.

The program is led by a diverse group of facilitators from around the world. There are over 60 facilitators involved, and while not all of them are native English speakers, each one has achieved a high level of English proficiency. This diversity allows participants to interact with a wide range of accents and speaking styles, making the learning experience even more enriching. You might even find yourself in a session with members of the IFATCA Executive Board, as at least three of them regularly participate as facilitators! Recently, Milan from Serbia joined the team as the newest facilitator.

Participants in the SEP come from various countries and have different levels of English proficiency, making the sessions a melting pot of global aviation professionals. The program typically runs about 40 sessions per month, with each session hosting 2-3 participants. This small group setting allows for more personalized interaction and a better opportunity for everyone to practice and improve. The sessions are easy-going, interactive, and designed to make learning English a fun experience.

If you are interested in joining the IFATCA Speak English Program, it's simple to get involved. You can contact the program directly by emailing sep@ifatca.org, or you can reach out through your local Member Association. Whether you're looking to refine your English skills or just want to chat with fellow aviation professionals, the SEP offers a great opportunity to do so in a relaxed and supportive environment. Why not give it a try?

sep@ifatca.org

A Speak English session online.

source: IFATCA Archives

HEADING NORTH

BUT TO WHICH ONE?

BY DAN WALKER, IFATCA REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ICAO TRUE NORTH ADVISORY GROUP & JAAKKO RISSANEN, IFATCA TECHNICAL & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Navigation in aviation is normally in reference to the magnetic north. In parts of the Northern Hemisphere, navigation occurs in reference to true north, for example in the Canadian Arctic. This is necessary because as a flight gets closer to the magnetic north pole, compass readings become erratic.

While magnetic is in reference to the magnetic north pole, which is NOT stationary, true north is in reference to the geographic north pole, which is stationary. Magnetic north pole moves? Yes, it moves, and it's moving faster the last few decades.

The movement of the magnetic pole from the Canadian side of the geographic north pole toward the Siberian side is accelerating, moving up to 50-60km/year since 1990, while observations back to the mid 1800s only showed it moving 0-15km/year.

During the IFATCA 2023 Annual Conference, TOC presented a working paper, which describes the origins of the concept to replace the standard reference of magnetic north, with true north. This is an excellent resource on many of the issues for use of magnetic vs true north as a navigational reference in aviation.

Why Replace Magnetic With True?

Since magnetic north and associated lines of declination move over time, and does so unpredictably, it is necessary to update many elements in the aviation system to keep pace with the movement. This means charts & publications (approaches and maps), alignment of ground-based navigation and approach aids, ATCO ATM systems, aircraft avionics, runway alignments and numbers (and in some cases renumbering once the movement is enough to warrant it).

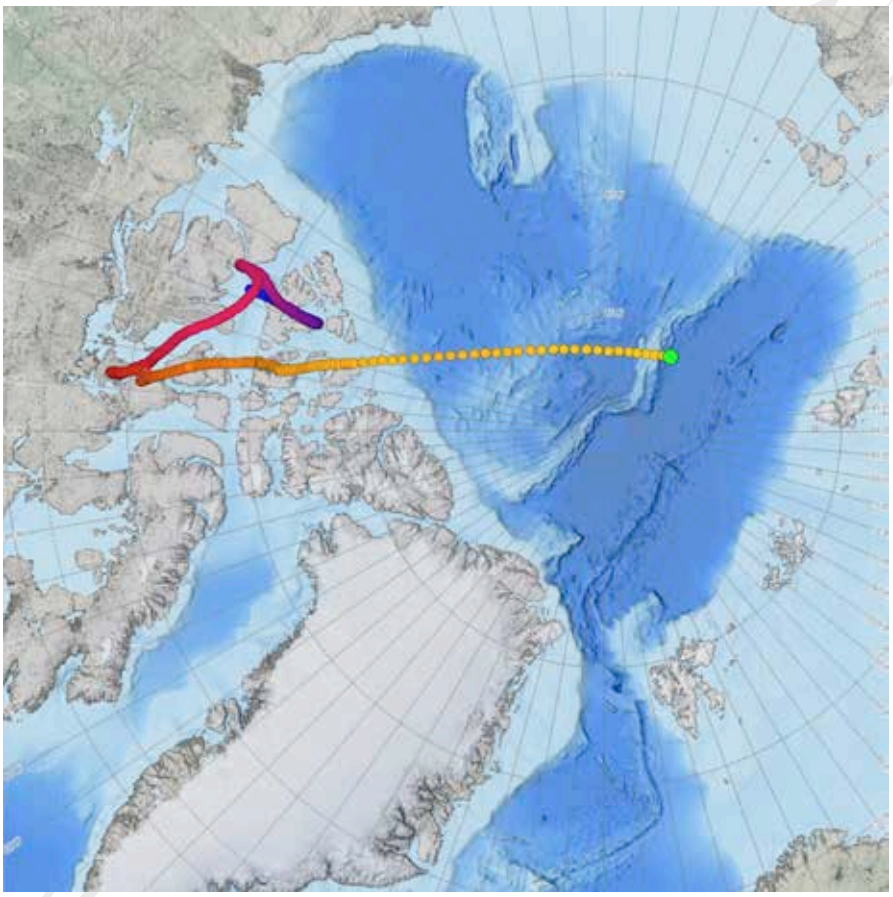
Updating of magnetic variation tables (MagVar Tables) occurs when the world magnetic model is updated, which occurs every 5 years.

These updates take resources. It is a considerable collective effort globally for each responsible State/Air Navigation Authority, Airline, Aircraft Owner, and other industry participants to update these tables every 5 years. Moreover, it is known that tables do not always get updated in a consistent or timely way.

A mismatch between the MagVar table used on a particular airframe, when not matching the MagVar table being used for a particular approach or the alignment of a particular ground-based NAVAID or approach aid, leads to irregularities. These irregularities can mean increased workload for pilots or ATCO, or in some cases the restriction of certain types of approaches for

A camp at the Geographic North Pole with two Canadian Coast Guard planes on a reconnaissance flight for submarines.

credit: Matti & Keti, via wikimedia (cc-sa4.0)



The wandering Magnetic North Pole - blue is the position ± 1590 to green, where it estimated to be in 2025.

source: NOAA

certain types of aircraft as a precaution to defend against mismatched values between the ATM systems, tools, and mapping, and what is on the aircraft.

The use of magnetic as a reference for aviation is also getting outpaced by modern navigation. GPS navigation, and associated PBN and PBCS minima and procedures, as well as the utilization of ADS-B surveillance, all are sourced in reference to true north. Similarly with meteorological modelling and mapping, such as wind data, these occur in reference to true north. The presentation of tracks, approaches, alignment of ground-based NAVAIDS and approach aids, and other elements of navigation and headings in ATM – all of these are now normally sourced in true north, with MagVar tables being used to convert back to Magnetic (subject to correction and change every 5 years).

True North Advisory Group & IFATCA Role

In early 2024, ICAO convened a working group, True North Advisory Group, tasked with providing advice to ICAO on the possibility of a global transition to true north, developing a concept of operations for such a change, including cost-benefit analysis and safety risk assessments.

This working group has a three-year mandate to complete the work, then provide a report to the ICAO Air Navigation Commission in 2027. The ICAO ANC is then responsible to evaluate the report and decide on any recommendations to the ICAO General Assembly, possibly in 2028.

The 30-member working group is comprised of 17 States from the 7 different ICAO regions, along with 13 international organizations representing various interests within the aviation community (for example, Air Navigation Authorities, Aircraft Owner Associations, Manufacturer Representatives, Pilot and ATCO associations).

IFATCA participation on an ICAO working group like this means that we can have a voice and contribute to the possible adoption of change from the unique perspective we bring to the aviation community, and to the provision of safe and efficient ATC. Around the globe, we do have expertise not just in the rules of ATC, the separation minima, procedures, phraseologies, etc. We also in our role have a unique and informed perspective on managing safety risks, strategic thinking, workplace stress & mental health, fatigue, and change management. Many critical issues are confronting the aviation community and ATCO in our role within it, around the globe. As the future unfolds, 'heading north' might come to mean something very different than it does today. Charting that path, IFATCA has a role in contributing to the possibilities, whether it is the right path and how best to navigate along it.

dan.walker@ifatca.org

FURTHER READING

- **IFATCA 2023 Working Paper**
- **European Space Agency: Tug-of-War Drives Magnetic North Sprint**
- **ICAO: Moving from Magnetic to a True North reference system in aviation**
- **NOAA: Historical Declination**
- **NOAA: World Magnetic Model**

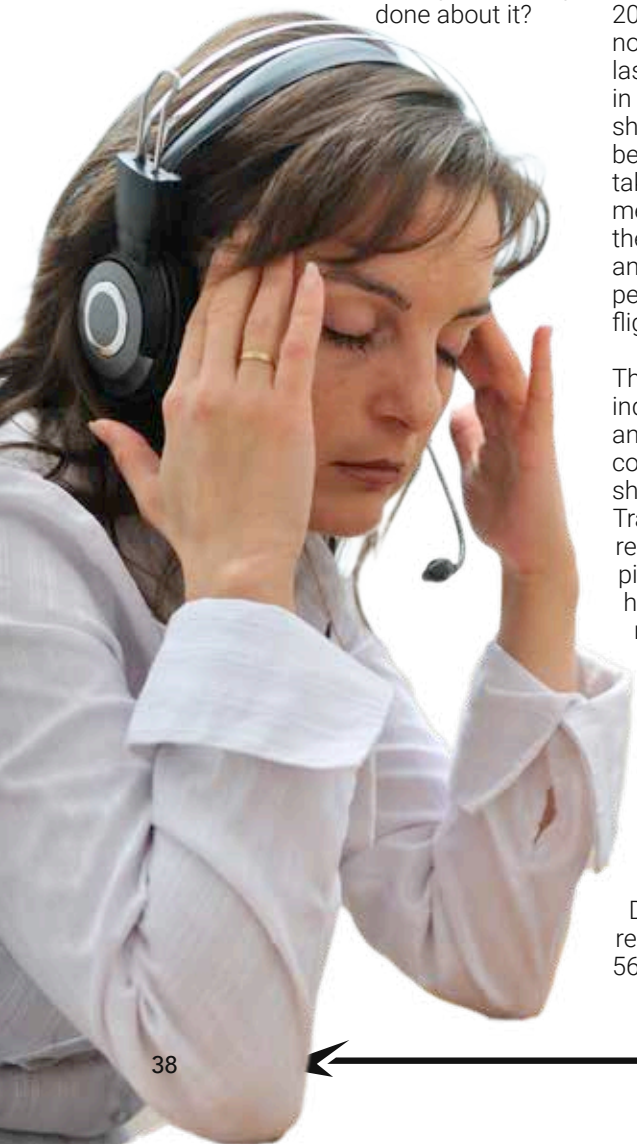
FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

WHY IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOGA AND VEGETABLES

BY CAPTAIN DAVE FIELDING, CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEER ASSIST AVIATION COALITION (IPAAC)

Pilots and Controllers are superhuman, right? Highly trained skilled personnel who can function at their very best any time day or night to deliver passengers safely to their destinations. We are paid the film star salaries (sic) to be perfect every single time we go to work. Only we know it isn't actually like that.

We all struggle with life sometimes, because life has its say, and no-one is immune. Extensive academic studies have proved to peer-reviewed standards that pilots and controllers are, in fact, only human. Incredible, I know. Yet roughly one in five of the adult population could be suffering a significant mental trauma at any given moment. You don't need to be a genius to work out the potential impact of this on flight safety. So, why is this not more widely acknowledged and why is something not being done about it?



The good news is, there is a growing recognition in the industry that mental health issues; or to be more precise: mental wellbeing and performance issues, represent a significant threat. A recent Bloomberg report highlighted the shocking figure that the second highest cause of fatalities in western-built aircraft since 2011 is pilot murder suicide. Poor mental wellbeing is no longer a case of struggling with your downward dog or needing to practice meditation, in aviation it is literally a killer. The Germanwings tragedy of 2015 made Europe sit up and take notice. The Alaskan Airlines pilot last October who was jumpseating in the cockpit and attempted to shut the engines down mid-flight because he was hallucinating after taking magic mushrooms as self-medication against depression made the US do the same. Mental wellbeing and performance in safety-critical personnel is now the hottest topic in flight safety.

The not so good news is that an industry that is at its heart empirical and black & white. Is struggling to comes to terms with the infinite shades of grey that is the human mind. Traditionally, the aviation medical regulatory position has been if any pilot or controller exhibits mental health issues, including substance misuse, the safest thing to do is to ground them until they are better. Unfortunately, given that most of these issues take a long time to be resolved, if they ever are completely, this has had the result of driving the problem underground. Ironically, this has made the skies less safe, as the two examples above and many more demonstrate. Data in this area is scarce, but a recent study of US pilots revealed that 56% of them had exhibited healthcare avoidance behaviour at some point in their career. This study is being replicated in different countries and initial results are indicating even higher levels elsewhere. At some stage, the same study will be run on air traffic controllers. The results will be fascinating to compare.

What is clear is that there is no silver bullet to this problem of safety-sensitive personnel hiding their issues. It is taking multi-stakeholder engagement to reach the stage whereby any pilot, air traffic controller, aircraft engineers or flight attendant feels confident enough in the system to come forward at an early stage to get help for a problem which, if left unaddressed, could develop into something serious. A key component of this puzzle is Peer Support Programmes (PSPs). This is where a Safe Haven is created consisting of only the client contacting the program, a trained colleague, and a mental health professional who oversees the process and brings clinical credibility. Confidentiality is guaranteed, unless there is a clear threat either to self or others, and the client can discuss their problems with someone who does the same job and fully understands the pressures.

These programmes are running in various sectors of aviation and are achieving remarkable success. In established programmes for pilots, for example, between 3% and 5% of the population annually reach out for help. Whilst that is short of the 20% figure for the general population quoted above, it is still a significant number. For flight attendants in the US, albeit with their differing regulatory and medical requirements, the figure is even higher. What is notable with all these programs across the world is the

International Peer Assist Aviation Coalition

IPAAC

The International Peer Assist Aviation Coalition (IPAAC) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to progressing the development and implementation of Peer Support Programmes (PSPs) for all safety critical personnel in aviation.

Several very high profile accidents, such as the Germanwings 9525 crash in 2015, have shown that the impact of unaddressed mental health issues can have catastrophic effects on flight safety. In this complex area, Peer Support Programmes have been shown to offer an effective and confidential method for safety-critical personnel to ask for and receive help if they are struggling with life's issues.

IPAAC is dedicated to promoting best practice and sharing experience and expertise from PSPs all over the world. Whilst there are a number of key elements which must form part of a successful programme, there is no 'one size fits all' and different cultures around the world will have different requirements to make their programmes effective.

https://www.ipaac.com

fact that around 75%-80% of all cases that come into a PSP get resolved just by conversations with a trained Peer. The remainder are signposted into professional help quickly and efficiently.

This is all well and good if that professional help does not lead to their medical or licence being suspended due to archaic regulatory requirements. There is progress being made as a new generation of Chief Medical Officers in key Regulators, such as the US, Australia, New Zealand and EASA, are recognising that the safest way, wherever possible, is to let pilots fly whilst under supervision and treatment for their mental wellbeing issues. They are changing the regulations and expanding the lists of medications that pilots can fly on. This approach is cascading into the ATC medical requirements, resulting in more controllers being able to work safely with issues such as depression or anxiety when previously they would have been disqualified.

In terms of specialised help, aviation-knowledgeable psychologists and psychiatrists are not widley available depending on where you are in the world. There is still much work being done to create specific qualifications in aviation psychology and psychiatry to swell the ranks of mental health professionals who can both guide and oversee PSPs and provide help to aviation safety critical personnel. EASA has just finished a 2-year project to provide the knowledge for Aviation Medical Examiners (AMEs) to have a greater understanding of mental wellbeing and performance issues, which is changing the face of medical requirements.

The final piece of the puzzle is the pilot, controller, flight attendant or engineer themselves. No matter how supportive the system may be, it is of no use if nobody uses the program because they still fear the consequences of disclosing a mental health or performance issue. This is where the International Peer Assist Aviation Coalition (IPAAC) comes in. A gathering of all the world's experts in various disciplines of peer support, along with the key medical regulators around the world. IPAAC is dedicated to furthering best practice and implementation to destigmatise mental health issues and help persuade any safety-critical aviation personnel that it is OK to come forward and seek help for their issues. It is crutial the PSP be well designed, trained, resourced, and marketed effectively to gain the trust of the workforce. There are some truly innovative ideas out there of how to reassure the target populations. Get all the key players together in one place so those ideas can be discussed and adapted worldwide.

I am delighted to say that IPAAC has forged a close working relationship with IFATCA. Jaco van der Westhuizen, the chair of IFATCA's Mental Well Being Task Force, spoke at our conference in Cologne last year, myself and other key players in the IPAAC world were invited to a panel discussion in Singapore earlier this year as part of the IFATCA annual conference. We have a breakout session scheduled at the 2024 IPAAC conference later this year in Osaka, Japan. IFATCA, Eurocontrol and (hopefully) representatives from ANSPs around the world will meet to discuss broadening the provision of peer support to air traffic controllers. They will have access to the latest and best practice from this rapidly expanding field. With the collective goal of enhancing and upskilling the programs available to controllers. It is truly a global effort in aviation.

Suicide and substance addiction can be the tragic result of unaddressed mental well health issues. We all probably have a collegue who's dealt with one or both of these conditions. You may even be struggling and heading down these pathways yourself. IFATCA, in conjunction with the experts in the field from around the world, is working to build the support systems to ensure that controllers no longer need to suffer in silence. Ultimate responsibility will still lie with the aviation professional to declare any mental health issues. But we stive to show the continued progress towards more options, both in approved medications and programs for support. You can get help without risk of losing your job, and that employers and unions are working to be more supportive and understanding about these issues.

email@something

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

INTRODUCING IFATCA'S NEWEST TASK FORCE

BY BRON SANDERSON, IFATCA MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE MEMBER

IFATCA's Mental Wellbeing Task Force (MWTF) is responsible for promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing initiatives. They aim to promote mental wellness and reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues. Additionally, the group may provide educational sessions, workshops, and activities aimed at enhancing coping skills, building resilience, and improving overall mental health and wellbeing. Ultimately, it is to empower individuals to take proactive steps towards self-care, seek help when needed, and advocate for mental health awareness and support within their community.

The Task Force will address the following areas:

- Assessment of current mental health and wellbeing initiatives and policies of IFATCA.
- Identification of potential stressors and mental health and wellbeing challenges within the Air Traffic
- Management domain.
- Development and implementation of strategies to enhance mental health and wellbeing.
- Promotion of awareness and education on mental health and wellbeing issues.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented initiatives.

Jaco van der Westhuizen, South Africa

Jaco started his career as an ATC in 1995 and has migrated into specialising in Safety and Human Factors since 2008. He represents IFATCA at the ICAO Mental Health Work Group and is is the CEO of Mayday-SA, a non-profit organisation that aims to promote mental health and wellbeing through peer support amongst aviation professionals in South Africa and beyond. He completed an MBA in 2006 and a PhD in Organisational Behaviour in 2018.

Marc Baumgartner, Switzerland

Marc works as an operational air traffic controller and Centre Supervisor in Geneva ACC since over 25 years. He holds a university diploma in psychology. Until 2021, he Chaired the Eurocontrol Performance Review Commission. Marc has been a member of the Performance Review Body/Performance Review Commission from 2011 until December 2016. Until April 2010 he has been the President and CEO of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA) representing the technical and professional interests of more than 50'000 air traffic controllers from 137 States around the globe (8 years). On behalf of IFATCA he coordinates SESAR, EASA and the Joint Cognitive Human Machine System Group (JCHMS). He led the study on behalf of Helvetica and Skyguide on the psycho-cognitive decline due to age for Swiss Air Traffic controllers and is associated to the follow-up work of this study. Marc is a ICISF Trained CISM Instructor.

Andrew LeBovidge, USA

Andrew is a 30-year veteran air traffic controller and is currently the Executive Vice President for the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), United States of America. Throughout his career, Andrew has worked to influence policy and to advocate on behalf of FAA employees facing aeromedical issues in the air traffic control environment, with a particular focus on mental health. After serving as the chair of NATCA's Drug and Alcohol Committee, he later served on the NATCA team responsible for negotiating FAA processes allowing air traffic controllers in the United States to obtain medical clearances with special consideration while being treated with certain selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. Andrew also contributed to a compendium for NATCA representatives to utilize while assisting members facing health issues, including mental health concerns, compiling a broad spectrum of information under one umbrella to facilitate access to those in need.

In 2023, Andrew represented IFATCA on a mental health panel during ICAO Air Navigation conference. More recently, he served as a member of the FAA's Mental Health and Aviation Medical Clearances Aviation Rulemaking Committee which published its finding on April 1, 2024.

Bron Sanderson, Australia

Prior to commencing her career as an air traffic controller in 1995, Bron spent 3 years working in general aviation as a charter pilot and flying instructor. Now recently retired, in January 2023, she is extremely happy and proud to take on a role as one of the National Coordinators for PAN Priority, the peer support program for Airservices Australia. Since its inception, this program has benefitted from the unwavering support of Civil Air. Her long term aim is to have robust wellbeing programs are embedded within all areas of aviation.

Saifullah, India

Saifullah, or Saif for short, has been an air traffic controller for the past 15 years. Over the past four years, he has been involved in the Critical Incident Stress Management programme in India. His motto when it comes to mental health is "Asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength".

Željko Oreški, Croatia

With 32 years of rich experience at ACC Zagreb, Željko has honed his skills as an air traffic controller. In addition, he hold the roles of Shift Supervisor and AMC Coordinator, further enhancing his expertise in the field.

Željko's professional interests are deeply rooted in addressing stress and fatigue within the aviation industry. As a committed Human Factors Specialist, he trained as a CISM peer and TRM facilitator. In addition to his operational roles, he is also an associate lecturer at Zagreb Transportation University, with a focus on ATM, Human Factors, and the Professional Environment.

Olubunmi Opeyemi, Nigeria

Olubumni has been an operational approach and en-route controller at Muritala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, Nigeria, since 2012.

Jessica Walton, Australia

Jessica Walton is a graduate of the first peer support course delivered at her Air Navigation Service Provider, Airservices Australia. This is her first time volunteering on an IFATCA taskforce. She is passionate about salutogenic approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

Cristian Radu, Romania

Born and raised in Romania, Cristian has been an air traffic controller since 1993. In 2023, he became Romania's national Critical Incident Stress Management Coordinator.

Marija Savikj, North Macedonia

Marija has degrees in Mathematics and Software Engineering and is an operational tower and approach controller since 2004. She. Within her home association in North Macedonia, she has chaied the committee that deals with operational training and social wellbeing of ATCOs) since 2021.

Maicol Parreno, Dominican Republic

With a solid background in clinical psychology and a decade of experience in air traffic control, Maicol has dedicated his career to improving the mental health and well-being of those facing critical challenges in their professions. His passion for helping people develop a positive self-concept, based on understanding their capabilities and limitations, is the driving force behind his work.

Throughout his career, he has brought his knowledge and experience to various air traffic control organizations, where he has delivered lectures and courses on human factors in air traffic control. He is currently a key member of the Dominican Association of Air Traffic Controllers (ADCA) team, where he plays a fundamental role in managing stress in critical incident situations (CISM). Additionally, he serves as an instructor at the Superior Academy of Aeronautical Sciences and is a supervisor at the control tower of Cibao International Airport, where his expertise and leadership are vital for the safe and efficient operation of air traffic.

wellbeing@ifatca.org

HOW VOLUNTEERISM BROUGHT ME PLACES

BY RENZ MARIONE BULSECO, AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER – DAVAO SURVEILLANCE APPROACH; IFATCA COMMS ASIA PACIFIC; TOC ELECTED MEMBER; TRAINING TASK FORCE MEMBER

It was around July 2022 when our association, the Philippine Air Traffic Controllers' Association (PATCA), began preparing the 38th IFATCA Asia Pacific Region Meeting held in the country's Queen City of the South, Cebu City. To save resources, the association decided not to hire external talents. Instead, we formed committees for the tech team, programs and events, souvenirs, transport, hotels, etc. I never thought air traffic controllers in the Philippines could have multiple talents and skills! True enough, it was a collaborative effort. In my case, I volunteered to host the 3-day program because that's the only thing that I knew I could contribute to our association. I never liked being involved in the food or souvenir committees, but I want to cooperate and contribute to my home association. It's the least that I can do. I was glad I was accompanied by my close colleague, Katrine, to be my co-host for two days.

Two weeks before the APRM, it had finally dawned on me–what have I done? As Kat and I finalized the script for the 3-day program, I felt nervous and anxious. I couldn't just chicken out because the flow of the program had already been put into place, formal outfits were already bought and dry-cleaned, and we were already done with our dry runs.

I remember during the first day I was so nervous that I couldn't smile in front of the camera and to the audience! During breaks, I went to the washroom, stared in front of the mirror, took a deep breath, and tried to smile. Since then, everything went well until the last day, but there were some unexpected hiccups in the middle of the program (it's normal when you're running a hybrid program). We worked as a team, and we pulled it off. At that moment, I saw the spirit of volunteerism in everyone. We worked so hard that we cannot afford to settle for mediocrity. Everyone was happy, and Rudy, our National Chairperson, was delighted. It was such a nice feeling, after all.

After the program, I had the chance to stay longer. I mingled with other international delegates and guest speakers as we were stranded in

Scientific studies show there are multiple benefits which can be linked to volunteerism. Contributing to a mutual goal, the opportunity to network and make new friends, personal growth and better career opportunities are just a few of them.

Throughout the regions the willingness to volunteer within IFTACA is relatively high. However, many people are held back by a (potential self-imposed) language or required knowledge level barrier. Although the learning curve can be steep, many of the volunteer positions offer the possibility to learn and grow.

Should you be thinking about taking on an IFATCA role, reach out to one of your volunteering IFATCA contacts. They will be more than happy to provide you with information.

Renee Pauptit,
IFATCA 20230+ Task Force

Cebu because of an airport incident (how ironic). I remember Cheryl and JF talked about creating IFATCA's communications team as part of the 2030+ Task Force's objective and invited me to become part of it on the spot. I thought my volunteering acts were done at this point, but no. The IFATCA APRM 2022 opened so many opportunities for me to grow. I was supposed to leave the country and embark on a new adventure in Sydney, Australia, but this was an important crossroad in my life. The prospect of being involved in the international federation was grand yet exciting. I told my peers in our association, and they were supportive. Eventually, I canceled my plans to leave my home country and focused on my new goals and challenges with the federation. No regrets, not even an ounce of it.

I've always considered myself timid and reserved, but I wanted to grow and be more confident. Joining as one of the volunteers in IFATCA is one of the best decisions in my life. I thought I was jumping into an unknown chasm or going to a war armed with a dull butter knife. It was so intimidating meeting the comms team for the first time. I remember having jitters as if I was going to defend my thesis, but I was wrong. Everyone was so welcoming, and I felt seen and heard. Everyone matters. When you're in this group, you'll grow as they foster positivity, teamwork, and camaraderie.

Since then, I have gotten involved with other committees: a facilitator for the Speak English Programme (SEP), one of the members of the Asia Pacific Executive Team, an Elected Member of the Technical & Operations Committee, and a website developer for the Training Task Force. My colleagues would always ask me if I get paid for doing it. Whenever I say no, they are surprised. What's driving me to pursue this?

Volunteerism may have one clear definition but has several interpretations for most people. I believe that when you're passionate about doing something for the greater good, that's already enough motivation for me to pursue and take the role in the federation. Aside from class and wit, money can't buy genuine networking and connection. When you connect with people from the other side of the globe who share the same ideas and passion, brilliant ideas will come out that will benefit not just the people involved in the committee but everyone. At IFATCA, we strive for a better working environment for air traffic controllers.

Over the years, I became more confident with myself. Never in my life did I imagine presenting a technical paper about VFR Saturation to over 200 people coming from different countries around the world. Never in my life did I expect that I'd be communicating with people from different cultures. The once timid and awkward 15-year-old self would not believe how much I've grown. I wouldn't dare say that I've already reached my peak because, until today, I strive to learn more and grow as a person.

Kat once told me that she was proud of me that I found my tribe and she hasn't seen me happier despite the huge roles I partook in the federation. I told her that when you do something you love and are passionate about, it won't be busy after all.

In IFATCA, I am always safe, seen, valued, and included.

renz.bulseco@ifatca.org

CONTROLLER ADAPTIVE DIGITAL ASSISTANT

HOW TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN ATM RESEARCH IN EUROPE

BY MARC BAUMGARTNER, IFATCA'S SESAR COORDINATOR

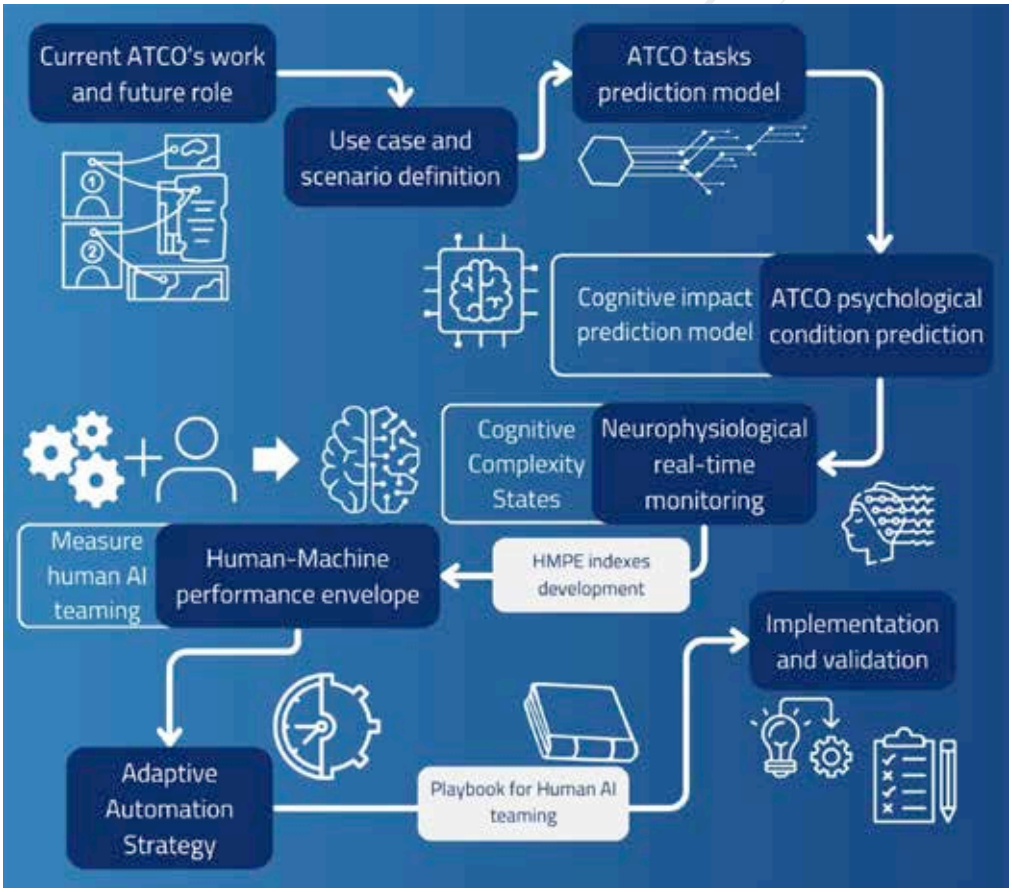
The Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) program started in 2008 to harness EU Research funds for ATM through a Joint Undertaking. SESAR is one of the five pillars of the Single European Sky and provides, for more than two decades, support to research new solutions for the future of Air Traffic Management.

IFATCA has been actively contributing to all the SESAR editions as part of the Advisory or Governing Bodies and by working together with the SESAR Joint Undertaking, based in Brussels, through dedicated contracts.

IFATCA provided its expertise in the form of comments, criticism and active participation in validation exercises. A certain level of frustration, however, was perceived by the IFATCA experts, as they were not involved in the project elaboration and were not able to influence the research, but rather only reduced to a role of input at a certain level of maturity.

With the advent of new technologies and the ongoing research work in the Joint Cognitive Human Machine System Group, the idea matured to bid for an exploratory research call by a consortium composed of universities, international institutions, industry and ANSPs. Greatly helped by an ATM consultant, we were able to submit a bid in 2021 as part of a consortium based around IFATCA, under the leadership of the former EVP Europe Tom Laursen. The submission named 'COLLEAGUE' did not win the contract, however it helped IFATCA to understand the mechanism and the functioning of the submission of bids to the SESAR exploratory research calls to tender.

The CODA Project Description:



During the recent research calls for SESAR projects (called waves), IFATCA was associated with 4 bids for wave 1 and 6 bids in wave 2. In both waves, one bid with which IFATCA was associated, was awarded the research contract. These are called CODA (wave 1) and AWARE (wave 2).

CODA

The CODA project started in July 2023 and will last for 26 months. The official description of the of the research is as follows:

Air traffic control is reputed as one of the five most stressful professions there is. Addressing the mental workload of controllers is therefore an important area of SESAR research and innovation and one that can be addressed using artificial intelligence. The project aims to develop a digital assistant capable of predicting future traffic, and assessing controllers' stress levels and attention span, and whether they would be capable of handling the anticipated workload. The assistant would decide how to act, following an adaptation strategy: it may, for instance, increase the level of automation, enable additional AI-based tools, or request changes to the airspace (sector splitting).

The system will bring together state-of-the-art from different fields:

- Prediction models to foresee future situations, ATCO activities and their impact on the same human performance;
- Neurophysiological assessment of mental states to enable the system to know operators' real current level of workload, attention, stress, fatigue, and vigilance by validating the predicted cognitive models and maximising the effectiveness of the interaction between the human and the machine by developing an HMPE (Human Machine Performance Envelope);
- Implementation of advanced adaptable and adaptive automation principles to dynamically guide the allocation of tasks to the ATCO to the digital assistant, reacting to real-time and predicted operator's cognitive status by calculating the impact of future tasks in terms of cognitive complexity.

The strategic objective of the project is to develop a system in which tasks are performed collaboratively by hybrid human-machine teams and dynamically allocated through adaptive automation principles. This will increase the efficiency, capacity, and safety of ATM, maximizing Human-AI teaming

IFATCA brings operational and scientific expertise into the project. Several representatives of the Joint Cognitive Human Machine System collaborate with the consortia together. A lot of work is associated with this research call. The work has been broken down into different work packages resulting in bi-monthly coordination meetings of the different work packages.

Participants to CODA project Deep Blue, Ecole Nationale De L' Aviation Civile (ENAC), Brainsigns, Centro De Referencia Investigacion Desarrollo E Innovacion ATM (CRIDA), Universidad Politecnica De Madrid, Eurocontrol, International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations (IFATCA), Universidad De Granada, Stichting Koninklijk Nederlands Lucht - En Ruimtevaartcentrum (NLR)

sesar.coord@ifatrca.org

CANSO AIRSPACE WORLD '24

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 19-21 MARCH 2024

BY PHILIPPE DOMOGALA, IFATCA INDUSTRY PARTNER COORDINATOR

For the second and last time, the CANSO Airspace World exhibition was held in Geneva, Switzerland. Because Switzerland is relatively expensive, the organizers decided to move it to Portugal next year.

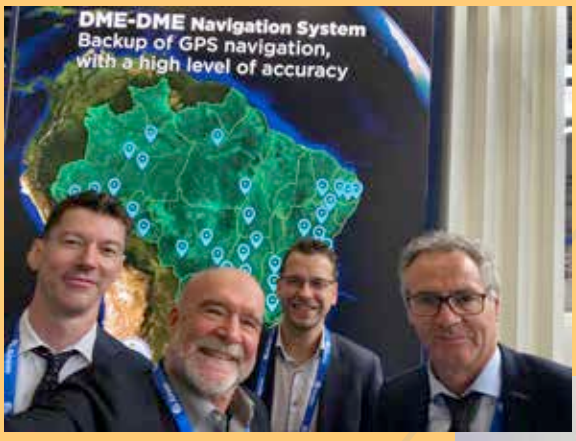
All major ATM companies had sizeable stands, including nearly all our IFATCA industry partners. As always, checking in with each of them was a pleasure! EUROCONTROL shared a smaller booth with EU and SESAR and showed few innovations. Also present were our fellow professional organizations IFALPA, IFATSEA, and IFISA, with whom it is always useful to reaffirm our ties.

There was no easily discernable main theme for the event this year: the drones that were once omnipresent in Madrid were mostly gone. The "green agenda" is still there but more discrete. Air mobility seemed to be the new buzzword, and CO2 emission reduction was mentioned in every speech, but mostly as intentions and hope rather than offering practical solutions. The global airline fleet is expected to grow by one-third over the next decade: airlines are planning to operate some 36,000 aircraft by 2033, up from about 27,400 today. 99% will be equipped with conventional engines, and with "green SAF fuel" costing about eight times more than conventional fossil jet fuel, it is difficult to see how they will reduce emissions and meet the 2050 targets.

SESAR's first real technical implementations have quietly shifted from 2030 to 2040, all while traffic is expected to continue growing steadily

credit all photos: Ph.Domogala:

IFATCA EVP Asia/Pacific Cheryl Yen-Chun Chen, second from the left, with her co-panelists of the Diversity panel



Duncan Auld (IFATCA President and CEO), the author , Benjamin Van der Sanden (IFATCA EVP Technical) and Paul Vissers (Chair IFALPA ATS Committee) under the future : DME-DME separation:

Digital controller, the old human versus the robot.:

IFATCA Deputy President Helena Sjöström during the panel on attracting new talents .

There is still a market for paper strips and plastic strip holders in 2025, it seems.

in that period. The CEO of the German ATS provider DFS stated that the war in Ukraine was pushing more traffic to them, forcing them to innovate and bring in more "new technology." This has become the new mantra of almost every ANSP, promising this "new technology" will solve all our problems. While we wait for this new technology to save us, some current ones are causing real headaches. The impact of GPS Jamming and spoofing needs to be mitigated by relying on old terrestrial navigation aids like VORs and DMEs. There is even talk of re-establishing LORAN, a 1940 technology!

Interestingly, in our digitalization age and among all these future technologies, a small stand was selling plastic strip holders and paper strips. The lady in the booth even admitted she was surprised to see her business booming, after being told 20 years ago there was no future in paper strips!
The German research institute DLR again presented its view of a digital controller where Artificial Intelligence (AI) will solve conflicts. Their robot even wore a red jacket, possibly to help inspire confidence. At least it drew some attention!

Swiss ATS provider Skyguide is developing a system where AI and machine learning will help controllers accept more traffic by proposing solutions to complex situations. They demonstrated this in their nearby Geneva ACC. While impressive, it failed to convince me since the controller remains responsible for the machine's actions. It is difficult to see how a mixture of AI and humans could possibly work. If AI is to control traffic in the future, it should offer a complete solution by exchanging data with an equivalent AI on board the aircraft. It would mean that controllers and pilots would no longer be in the loop and would no longer be needed. A mix of AI and humans is, at least in my view, not a solution.

On the more practical side, Aireon, after successfully deploying space-based ADS-B, is now considering providing space-based VHF communications. That could change a few things, including providing an alternative to HF and improving datalink communications over remote regions.
IFATCA was very well represented at Airspace World this year. Two members of our Executive Board were even invited to be panellists in two of the many workshops held during the show. Cheryl Chen, our EVP Asia-Pacific, was a panellist on 'Strategies for Diversity in Aviation', and Helena Sjöström, our Deputy President, spoke on the 'Strategies for Talent Attraction' panel.

As usual, they were very interesting days, reconnecting with old friends, making new ones and having interesting discussions. The next Airspace World will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, from the 13th to the 15th May 2025.

philippe.domogala@ifatca.org

NEW VIBE LOGO

Our Premium Partner VIBE has recently updated their corporate logo and identity. VIBE is an HR software specially developed for Air Traffic Controllers. Vibe solution is based on three basic modules: Infoboard, Competency, and Roster. Each of them is designed to cover a range of tasks to help ATCO in his/her everyday activities. Visit their new website on https://www.vibeatc.eu

VIBE Navigating excellence in ANSP workforce management

IFATCA WELCOMES GATE AS INDUSTRY PARTNER

GATE is challenging and advancing ATC training solutions, benefiting students and customers. By tailoring training to meet each customer's unique requirements, GATE ensures a smooth transition to unit training. Their student-centered approach integrates proven methodologies to meet the needs of today's learners within a modern training environment.

If you are interested in learning more about their innovative training solutions, please visit https://www.gate.aero

GATE AVIATION TRAINING

IFATCA WELCOMES PREMIUM INDUSTRY PARTNER SKYSOFT!

Skysoft has an extensive range of ATM solutions specifically designed to provide the highest quality systems for air traffic management. One of the market leaders in recording solutions, their SkyRec technology currently records thousands of screens, keyboards and mice as well as radar and voice channels around the globe. For over 15 years, their SKYSIM multipurpose portable ATM simulation solution for large ATCO simulation environments has achieved noteworthy success.

They maintain close cooperation with their clients to develop customized solutions with user-friendliness and flexibility, core features of their philosophy. At the same time, respecting continuity and valuable existing know-how.

To learn more about their products, please visit https://www.skysoft-atm.com

skysoft ATM

MORE ABOUT OUR INDUSTRY PARTNER PROGRAM ON
HTTPS://IFATCA.ORG/MEMBERSHIP/INDUSTRY-PARTNERS
OR CONTACT US VIA IPS@IFATCA.ORG

EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES

THE ADVANTAGES THAT ATC CONSULTANTS CAN OFFER

BY JULIJA RAZMISLAVICIENE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, FOXATM BALTICS

A kindergarten dream of becoming a pilot is well known among us, who work in aviation. A dream of becoming an air traffic controller, on the other hand, is less frequent, but does sound very interesting and catchy to people outside the aviation industry. And for those who are in the industry it sounds... nice... "nice" just because - it is challenging, it is mysterious and not well known, it is rare, it is diverse.

This is what we are aiming for here - diversity. Only one thing to mention - we are going for the diversity in the environment in which our heroes of the skies work. To mention a few - equipment, unit supporting tools, like noise measuring in the center, and such.

Becoming a consultant after years of operational work for some might sound strange. It is strange indeed, but believe us when we say - it is a very interesting transition. Getting to discover a whole world around, different people with a variety of expertise, but at the same time - talking about the same things.

Operationally speaking, if to put aside different LoA's, military or other restricted zones, weather or surroundings (mountainous area, for example), air traffic control is the same everywhere. You have the same vectoring, speed control, level/altitude change techniques which get you "there" - with which you establish separation. Requirements are the same - you have to stay calm under pressure, you have to manage your airspace with precision and act responsibly and professionally.

Being a consultant opens so many other doors of what is behind, ahead of the operational units. The operational experience and knowledge is applied to improve systems or acquire new ones, improving procedures, programs across various ANS providers around the world. The consulting work at FoxATM opens those doors and allows us to have a look inside ANSPs and industry suppliers. Sometimes for a few hours, sometimes for much longer, even for years in some cases.

As we work either with the operational or technical divisions of ANSPs, we see a large variety of issues. Starting with the obvious, the European core area has such a traffic to manage that stress and workload are the main issues. But does this apply everywhere?

Definitely not! Visit ANSPs at the edge of Europe and you'll see different issues. Some ANSPs still have roughly 30% less traffic because of the war in Ukraine and everything is not perfect there either. Changes in traffic patterns, more military traffic, different flows over the day and week and less predictability are also getting more common.

Working with different ANSPs gives us a chance to observe their tools and procedures. For example, some units have a minimum separation tool even in the training simulators and use it every minute to calculate the minimum distance between the traffic. Well imagine having the same amount of traffic and complexity and not having that magic line providing you with calculated miles of distance. Would you calculate it all in your head while providing the same three or five nautical miles. Tough to even imagine, huh?

Expect the unexpected should always be the case and an operational air traffic controller is calm and ready, in an ideal world, for that. That in no case should be considered as given. A lot of effort is put into getting and staying calm and always prepared.

This is why an outside help/assistance is needed - tools like noise measuring equipment in the ops room - with a clear display to employees when the noise level in the ops room gets too high. Why monitor noise? Because it is distracting, it reduces focus and concentration, raises stress which all lead to an error. Clear and correct communication (readback, hearback) is the key to a good ATC job so noise has to be regulated not only on the frequency, but in the whole unit as well as it has a direct impact on traffic safety.

There is more than that, though.

The point here is not to name any specific place, we have seen a lot, but to help the reader to understand that ATCOs have to deal with different things in different places. Some control centers have zero physical security.

The doors are simply open. Some have facilities dating back in the 70s and 80s where little maintenance and upgrades have been made. This applies to ATM systems but not only - even basic facilities like resting rooms or toilets need an upgrade every now and then.

Issues can also be very different in nature. Facilities and equipment are one obvious example, but there are a lot of others, like the quality of the social dialogue, fatigue management, stress management, and remember that just culture is not a given everywhere yet, which even sounds painful. But having very high salaries sometimes puts you at risk of being prosecuted over an error, which in other countries would just turn into a safety report.

The relationship between an ANSP and their regulator also varies largely and can have a major impact on daily and long term conditions in an ANSP.

As FoxATM, we are partnering with IFATCA to help us stay on top of the issues which arise in all these mentioned events and relationships. It is like another window, another angle into ANSPs management and operational staff which supports our overall understanding.

As Steve Jobs once said, if you want to make everyone happy, sell ice cream. FoxATM is not here for that, we are in the consulting to really get to know why some things are the way they are, why they need to be improved or changed, why and how it needs to be maintained, cared for, discussed and dealt with.

We are not shy of taking a stand and sharing our opinion and expertise with partners worldwide, even if sometimes, selling that ice cream would be easier, but we don't compromise. ➤

julija.razmislaviciene@foxatm.com

IFATCA IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE ITS NEW PODCAST: IFATCA SPOTLIGHT, IN WHICH IFATCA COMMS TEAM MEMBER THORSTEN RAUE SHINES A LIGHT ON IFATCA'S MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS.

THIS PODCAST, WHICH WAS MADE BY ATCOS FOR ATCOS, PROVIDES INSIGHT INTO DIFFERENT CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS WORLDWIDE.

THE FIRST EPISODE, WHICH FOCUSES ON NORTH MACEDONIA, IS NOW UP. THE SECOND EPISODE, FEATURING TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WILL BE RELEASED SOON.

LISTEN TO THIS PODCAST VIA MOST POPULAR PODCAST APPS AND SERVICES, INCLUDING SPOTIFY, APPLE, DEEZER AND MANY MORE.

AERO'24 FRIEDRICHSHAFEN

GENERAL AVIATION PIONEERS DEVELOPMENTS TO BEAT COMMERCIAL AVIATION

BY PHILIPPE DOMOGALA, IFATCA INDUSTRY PARTNER COORDINATOR

This year was the 30th anniversary of the AERO 2024 show, dedicated to all aspects of General Aviation. This edition was more extensive than ever and was hosted in Friedrichshafen, the German city where Zeppelins and Dorniers were developed and built. Aero is the largest General Aviation (GA) exhibition in Europe and an excellent place to witness innovation and talk to start-ups developing new ideas. Arguably, most of aviation's innovation comes from GA. The high-end GA aircraft are far more advanced than airliners in the Boeing- Airbus, Embraer ATR-Dash category. These high-end developments may also impact how we work as controllers…

For the past 20 years, Gulfstream has been developing Infrared (IR) cameras to see through weather and at night. The basic system is called Enhanced Vision System (EVS). Recently, Gulfstream coupled it to their Heads Up Display (HUD). Combined with a new generation of IR cameras, which operate in the shortwave infrared (SWIR) spectrum, this sensor is tuned to the frequency of runway lights and is sensitive to the light inherent in the surrounding environment. The small nose-mounted camera sends its image to the HUD, giving the pilot an accurate look in low visibility conditions. Even at night, EVS renders visible runway markings, taxiways, adjacent highways, and the surrounding landscape. As such, it drastically reduces the margin for error and helps avoid Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT), especially in areas with high terrain. It is a very impressive system that does not rely on any ground infrastructure: you can make a visual approach to any runway in dense fog at night.

Avoiding Runway Incursions

In collaboration with Garmin, Aircraft manufacturer TBM developed a Runway Occupancy Awareness (ROA) System. Installed on their latest model, the TBM900, it issues warnings before entering active runways if the runway is too short or occupied by another aircraft. As the accident in Tokyo Haneda recently demonstrated, it would benefit commercial aircraft as well…

The TBM900 which features a runway occupancy warning system

credit: Ph. Domogala

The Gulfstream G800 cockpit, and its Head-up Display (HUD) that shows the terrain ahead.

credit: Ph. Domogala

Auto Landing

Garmin also developed an autonomous automatic landing system that takes over when a pilot gets incapacitated: passengers can press a button that initiates an autonomous landing at the nearest suitable airport. Though it may sound more like a gimmick, the technology behind it is impressive. The feature is also prevalent in single-man-cockpit business aircraft, as people with money are prepared to pay extra for safety features such as this one.

GPS & Drones

Two small German start-ups, Hensec and Securiton, developed tools to detect GPS jamming and spoofing against drones. It could have applications in commercial airline operations, but they admit it is a cat-and-mouse situation: currently, the (military) jammers are always ahead.

Environment

Another noticeable development is the fight against CO_2 emissions. Even more than commercial aviation, the GA industry is heavily criticised for its environmental impact. They are consequently also planning to go electric. Unsurprisingly, the primary issue is to overcome the range problem, especially in the high-end market. For instance, the new Gulfstream 800 offers a 15,000 Km range at Mach .925. This is simply not possible with electric or even hybrid engine technology. The German research institute DLR presented a hydrogen-fueled regional aircraft, but they appear to be the only ones researching this technology.

Concept drawing of the DLR hydrogen-fueled regional aircraft credit: DLR

Electric aircraft may be a viable solution for the small, regional market - the 9 to 19-seat segment. It could make sense for Island hopping or in mountainous areas like Norway or Switzerland. One company, AURA Aero, presented their Electric Regional Aircraft (ERA). One of the most advanced projects so far, it has already received some 500 pre-orders. It will be a 19-seat hybrid aircraft with six electric engines that provide a 150 km range in pure electric mode. The range can be extended to 600 Km through two small APU generators that use SAF fuel to remain CO_2-neutral. A prototype is being built and they aim to become operational in 2029.

During one of the presentations, the following environmental point was made: GA relies on small regional airports that are often not economically viable and that face increasing calls to shut them down. Small electric aircraft could shuttle passengers between these small airports and larger hubs in a CO_2 neutral manner. An interesting view that is aimed at convincing States to retain their small airports by arguing it is better for the planet...

The ERA hybrid electric regional jet credit: ERA

Turbulence Cancelling

A very promising feature presented at the show was turbulence suppression. A small start-up company developed an ingenious system that activates trailing-edge flaperons on the wings to compensate for turbulence. They had a demonstrator, and it was extremely impressive. The simulator was programmed to fly through moderate to severe turbulence; a button activated the system, making the flight smooth. The system is already offered on a few small ultra-light aircraft, but I am sure it will not be long before we see this technology implemented on bigger aircraft and airliners.

Demo of the turbulence cancelling technology. credit: Ph. Domogala

Urban Mobility

Volocopter, a German company at the forefront of developing eVTOL taxis, was not showing anything this year. All their attention was on their first live demonstration trials during the 2024 Paris Olympics. The Volocopter looks like a small helicopter, powered by 18 small electric rotors. It flies at 80 km/h at 1500 feet, has a range of 35 km and can carry two persons. The company placed a barge on the Seine River, near Austerlitz quay in the Centre of Paris, to act as a heliport (which they call a "Veliport"). The initial idea was to fly autonomously shuttle passengers from Paris Charles De Gaulle airport to the centre of the city for around 100 euros one way. EASA, the European regulator, did not permit deviations from current rules, which meant it could only operate in visual flight conditions, needed a (commercial) pilot and 30-minute fuel reserve, amongst other restrictions. Modifying their plans, they would shuttle single passengers between CDG and Le Bourget, a 5-minute flight while the Veliport in the centre would be used as a base for short tourist round trips at around 200 euros per flight. The plan was to have ten aircraft in Paris, to help overcome the 15-20 min recharging between each flight. Unfortunately, the modified plan had to be scrapped at the last minute over delays in the certification of the vehicle's engine.

Volocity eVTOL air taxi tests in Paris credit: Volocopter

Aside from regulatory and certification problems, it remains to be seen whether there's any commercial sense in rolling this out. Many see it as "the future", but it looks more like a feasibility study than a viable commercial concept. Time will tell if indeed this kind of operation can revolutionise urban mobility.

From an ATC point of view, under the current rules, they will be treated just like helicopters. When and if they become autonomous, that will be another debate.

The Aero 2025 show will again take place in Friedrichshafen from 9 to 12 April 2025.

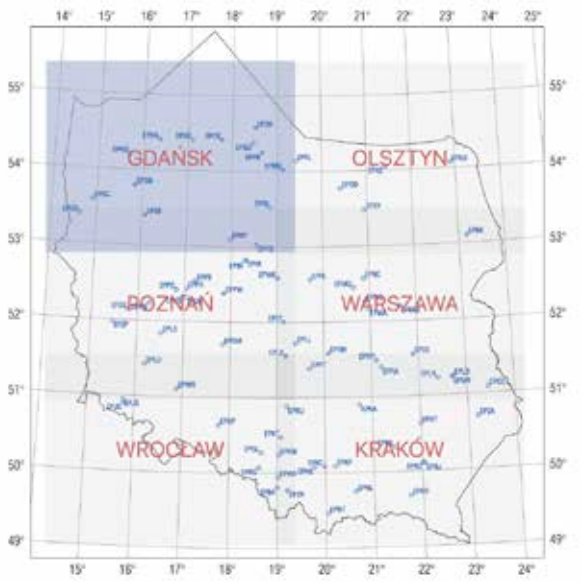
philippe.domogala@ifatca.org

LATAŁEM VFR-EM PO POLSCE

FLYING VFR IN POLAND

BY PHILIPPE DOMOGALA, IFATCA INDUSTRY PARTNER COORDINATOR

Historically, Poland was and still is an aviation-minded country with influential aircraft manufacturers as early as the 1920s and 1930s. These included RWD and PZL (Państwowe Zakłady Lotnicze, for State Aviation Works). The Second World War and the occupation by Germany from 1939, followed by that of the Soviet Union from 1945 until 1990, unfortunately stymied their aviation industry. However, production of gliders, like the famous SZD (Szybowcowy Zakład Doświadczalny, or Glider Experimental Works) and other smaller types of aircraft, like the ugly but very efficient "Wilga" utility aircraft, continued. Many of these are still in use in many parts of Poland today. Since 1990, aircraft development and production have restarted. It focuses mainly on General Aviation and innovative ultra-light aircraft.



Map of Polish airports

credit: PANSA

Flying VFR to and inside Poland is easy as the country is very General Aviation friendly. I planned a trip to Wroclaw and Krakow in South Poland during the Summer of 2022. All the VFR maps and visual approach charts for all airports in the country are free of charge on the Polish ANSP's website, PANSA. It makes planning the trip very easy. AVGAS availability is not an issue, even at the major airports. A helpful planning feature is the online Airspace User Plan (AUP), which informs of real-time military activity and active restricted areas. By moving a time and altitude--slider, your planned flight path changes colour to indicate whether it is available.

The weather during the flight from Germany to Wroclaw was good, and the flight was mostly straightforward. Unfortunately, we could not reach Poznan Flight Information on entering Poland. The frequency given to us by Langen Info in Germany was the same as we had on our up-to-date map, but nobody answered our calls. We unsuccessfully tried various other frequencies listed on the map. It was slightly uncomfortable, as Poland shares a long border with Ukraine, and we were not sure how sensitive the Polish authorities might react to a foreign GA aircraft penetrating their airspace without radio contact. After about 30 minutes, we finally talked to Krakow airport, who told us that the FIS frequency had changed the day before.

The beautiful Wroclaw city centre

We had initially planned to land in Szymanow (EPWS), a small airfield north of Wroclaw city with an aeroclub and a low landing fee. However, we were told that excessive rain had left their grass runway very wet. It would probably not affect our landing, but take-off the next day could become an issue. Our Robin DR400-120 only has a 120 HP engine and is not renowned for its take-off performance. So we decided to divert to EPWR, Wroclaw's main international airport. We were welcomed on the 2500m-long concrete runway between the commercial passenger jets. The airport handling service was very efficient: they bussed us to and from the (new) terminal, printed weather maps, refuelled the

On downwind to Wroclaw airport

credit all photos: Ph.Domogala:

Full service from Wroclaw airport handling

aircraft and even cleaned the canopy! The handling fee, Including the landing and parking costs for 24 hours, only set us back around €55. From the airport, we went to the beautifully restored city centre, where we were pleasantly surprised by the excellent dining opportunities.

The next day, the weather towards Krakow was unfavourable, with overcast low clouds at 1500 ft. It was forecast to deteriorate further the next day, and as we had overfly mountainous terrain, we might get stuck there. We changed our plans and headed south towards Czechia, even though that meant we had some 3500-foot-high mountains to overfly. In the late afternoon, we got the 2500 ft minimum ceiling needed to allow us to depart. We anticipated that the cloud base would lift above the mountain tops, about half an hour flying time away. Unfortunately, that did not happen. We were forced to stay low in a valley until we eventually found a blue hole in the cloud layer. It enabled us to go VFR on top of the clouds. Fortunately, the weather cleared 20 minutes later, and we continued in full CAVOK weather. The Czech Flight Information Service soon welcomed us and guided us on avoiding the numerous military and CTR areas on our route.

Our Polish trip was shorter than planned but still very interesting. Flight Information and ATC in and around Wroclaw were top-class, and we look forward to returning to this lovely country with its rich aviation history. ➤

philippe.domogala@ifatca.org

Celebrating finally finding CAVOK weather, after passing the mountains

CHARLIE'S COLUMN

BY CHARLIE@THE-CONTROLLER.NET

IF IT'S NOT BOYIN, I'M NOT TOYIN!

Over the past years, the Boeing Company has lost some of its name brand value. The problems with the 737 MAX, doors coming off in mid-flight, getting two astronauts stranded in space, … It seems like bad publicity is neverending for this giant of air and space manufacturing. But you know you're in real trouble when Chinese toy manufacturers are avoiding your brand as well. It seems that the same can be said of one of the large US carriers. As soon as we figure out how to pronounce WNITED, we will look into why that may be…

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

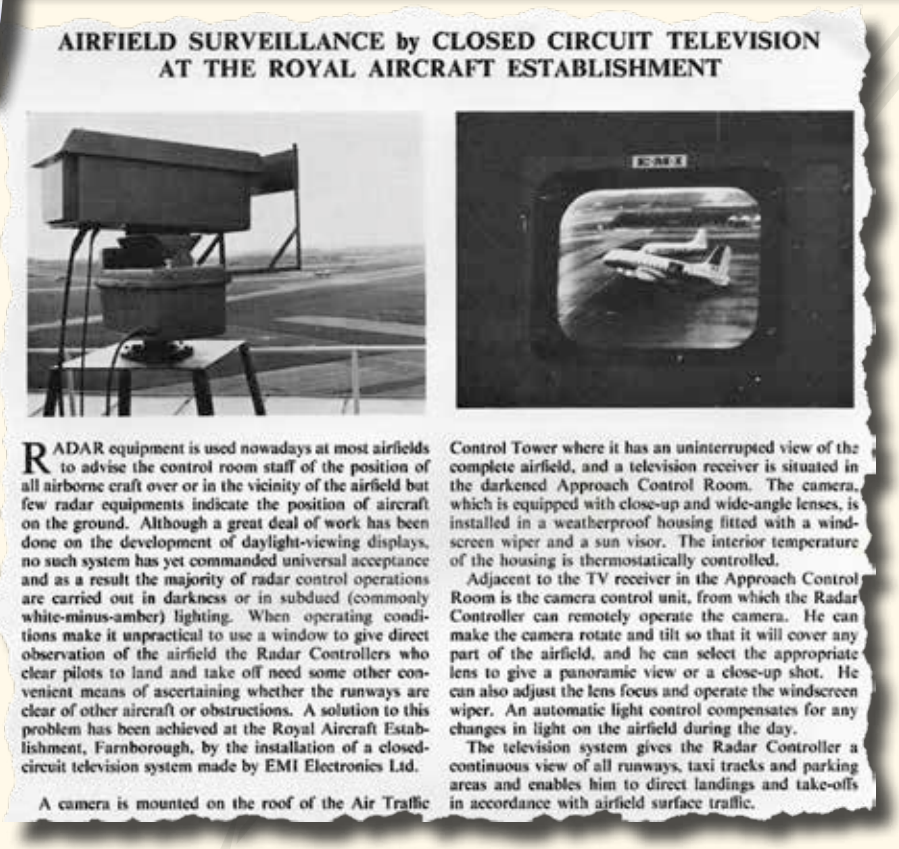
Many service providers and equipment manufacturers have jumped on the remote tower concept. Claims of better, cheaper and more flexible air traffic control services, brought by this innovative and new technology, would be our share. Huzzah!

But as this article from The Controller in 1962(!) shows, the idea has existed for well over 60 years… Admittedly, the terminology has changed a little bit and the technology has had a bit of an upgrade as well, but remote is remote…

So where are all those benefits that they keep telling us about? You would think that after 60 years, they would have figured it all out!

SAFETY CARDS - THE BRUTALLY HONEST VERSION

To be completely realistic, they should included people that bring their handluggage when evacuating the airplane. And the ones taking a selfie when making it to the tarmac…



AIRFIELD SURVEILLANCE by CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION AT THE ROYAL AIRCRAFT ESTABLISHMENT

RADAR equipment is used nowadays at most airfields to advise the control room staff of the position of all airborne craft over or in the vicinity of the airfield but few radar equipments indicate the position of aircraft on the ground. Although a great deal of work has been done on the development of daylight-viewing displays, no such system has yet commanded universal acceptance and as a result the majority of radar control operations are carried out in darkness or in subdued (commonly white-minus-amber) lighting. When operating conditions make it unpractical to use a window to give direct observation of the airfield the Radar Controllers who clear pilots to land and take off need some other convenient means of ascertaining whether the runways are clear of other aircraft or obstructions. A solution to this problem has been achieved at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, by the installation of a closed-circuit television system made by EMI Electronics Ltd.

A camera is mounted on the roof of the Air Traffic Control Tower where it has an uninterrupted view of the complete airfield, and a television receiver is situated in the darkened Approach Control Room. The camera, which is equipped with close-up and wide-angle lenses, is installed in a weatherproof housing fitted with a wind-screen wiper and a sun visor. The interior temperature of the housing is thermostatically controlled.

Adjacent to the TV receiver in the Approach Control Room is the camera control unit, from which the Radar Controller can remotely operate the camera. He can make the camera rotate and tilt so that it will cover any part of the airfield, and he can select the appropriate lens to give a panoramic view or a close-up shot. He can also adjust the lens focus and operate the windscreen wiper. An automatic light control compensates for any changes in light on the airfield during the day.

The television system gives the Radar Controller a continuous view of all runways, taxi tracks and parking areas and enables him to direct landings and take-offs in accordance with airfield surface traffic.