



## The National Warbird Operator Conference concludes in Pensacola, Florida

More than 230 warbird owners and operators gathered February 17 – 20 in Pensacola, Florida, for the annual National Warbird Operator Conference (NWOC). Representatives from EAA and the Warbirds of America (WOA) included Rod Hightower, EAA president; Sean Elliott, vice president of industry and regulatory affairs; Doug Macnair, vice president of government relations (who presented an update on the unleaded fuels issue); Bill Fischer, WOA executive director; and Rick Siegfried, WOA president.

NWOC provides an opportunity for the warbird community to share ideas and information about the safe operation and restoration of these storied aircraft. Offerings include programs to enhance pilot skill and knowledge; expand aircraft maintenance technician and restorer knowledge; develop awareness of medical and insurance facts; and address aircraft-specific topics to “keep ’em flying” safely.

Discussion on [FAA Order 8130.2G](#), specifically certification and operation of Experimental exhibition/air racing aircraft occurred with Dennis Pratte, division manager-GA and Commercial Division for FAA Flight Standards, and David Keen, an aviation safety inspector for the Aircraft Maintenance Division. The industry and FAA have collaborated for the past several years on the order, seen as critical on how experimental exhibition airplanes are certificated as well as their operating limitations.

Fischer remarked, “It’s good to have the ability to sit face-to-face and work through the issues.” Aviation safety is first and foremost, he added, but there are some issues regarding restrictions that have no commensurate safety benefit. “We need to make sure we’re operating in a safe manner, but restrictions should not be onerous.”

The order is slated for implementation in April, and the FAA pledged to report back by March 11, 2011, regarding the operators’ suggestions. Operators have asked for a 60-day extension to more fully explore the warbird community suggestions.

At several aircraft specific breakout sessions, attendees shared maintenance, pilot training and performance, and above all, safety information. Attendees also received a “behind the scenes tour” at Pensacola’s National Naval Aviation Museum. Overall, the conference was deemed a success by the NWOC Planning Committee and the attendees. Next year’s NWOC host city has yet to be determined.

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Special thanks to the NWOC planning “Crew” – Bob Cannon, Mark Clark, Wendee DeBusk, Bill Fischer, Darcy Kaapke, Rick Siegfried, and Eric Van Hoff.

Stay tuned for details on next year’s NWOC at [www.warbirdconference.com](http://www.warbirdconference.com).