

## **NATIONAL Warbird Operator Conference Concludes in Washington D.C.**

FEBRUARY 23, 2009

The 2009 National Warbird Operator Conference (NWOC), by all accounts, was a huge success. The host city of Washington D.C. presented some unique sightseeing opportunities for NWOC attendees including a tour of the Pentagon and the Smithsonian's Udvar-Hazy Museum. These attractions, combined with a strong line-up of conference speakers, helped entice over 230 warbird pilots, owners, mechanics, and enthusiasts to attend this year's conference.

The host hotel was the Crown Plaza – Dulles Airport that provided an excellent venue for the various NWOC sessions. The hotel staff worked hard to make sure the needs of the conference attendees was met.

For those NWOC attendees who arrived on Thursday morning, a special tour of the Pentagon was arranged by NWOC crewmember Mike Ginter. The tour was an interesting glimpse at what goes on in the world's largest office complex. After the tour, time was allotted to visit the Pentagon's 9-11 outdoor memorial.

Thursday evening, a Welcome Reception was held in the main meeting facility. It was a chance for old friends to reunite and network.

Friday morning NWOC attendees got down to business. The early bird group was the Formation and Safety Training (FAST) group. They scheduled a board and check pilots meeting before breakfast!

Opening remarks were given by Bill Fischer, Executive Director of EAA Warbirds of America and NWOC crewmember. Following Bill, Doug Rozendaal from the CAF introduced Representative Sam Graves, IMO, who gave a special welcome to NWOC attendees. Representative Graves is a great supporter of general aviation and has a special appreciation for warbird aircraft types.

Next on the agenda was the Aero Medical Session, featuring Dr.'s Michael Schloss, Bill Busch, and Warren Silberman. As always, the Dr.'s did a great job in covering the medical issues that affect pilots – including cardiovascular risk factors, human factors, and FAA aerospace medical certification.

Dr. Schloss emphasized pilots need to monitor, on a regular basis, their blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. By keeping those numbers in check, along with a program of regular exercise, and a healthy diet, pilots should be able to maintain their FAA medical certification for years to come.

Dr. Busch covered the topic of human factors during his portion of the aero medical presentation. He noted that 80% of airplane accident causes go back to human/pilot factors and pilot performance can be degraded by a series of human factors. Dr. Busch also noted there is a concern about carbon monoxide levels in fighter type aircraft. He encouraged pilots of fighter types to monitor, if possible, the levels of carbon monoxide in the cockpit.

Dr. Silberman, Director of the FAA Aerospace Medical Certification Division, gave NWOC attendees updates on revisions to FAA forms. He noted the FAA would be asking for information regarding social security disability benefits. Pilots now need to report if they have been compensated for a disability. He also covered the requirements for vision testing for color deficiency and noted that A.M.E.'s will ask for additional information from the applicant if they acknowledge a D.U.I. on the forms. The Aero Medical Session is always well attended and NWOC thanks Dr.'s Schloss, Busch, and Silberman for their participation.

Next up was the FAA Panel Discussion, moderated by Bill Fischer. Joining the panel was Anne Graham, Acting Division Manager of the Flight Standards Service, FAA General Aviation and Commercial Division; Ray Stinchcomb, Aviation Safety Inspector with the Flight Standards Service, and Marv Nuss, the Continued Operational Safety Program Manager with the FAA Small Airplane Directorate in Kansas City. Topics covered in the panel discussion included an outline of the roles and responsibilities of FAA Flight Standards as they relate to arbird programs. Anne Graham covered the topic of risk mitigation and Ray Stinchcomb outlined the national Designated Pilot Examiners Registry and Experimental Aircraft Examiners programs. Marv Nuss gave an update on the T-6 and T-34 airworthiness directives and covered aging aircraft issues.

The next session was entitled Formation 101 or more accurately An Introduction to the F.A.S.T. Program. Mike Filucci and Jim Tobul worked together to put together a panel of experts who covered the basics of the Formation and Safety Training Program and how pilots interested in formation flying can get started. The panel members included David Burroughs, Richard Hess, John Lohmar, Stoney Stonich, Jeff Weller, Mike Filucci, and Jim Tobul.

The Friday lunch speaker was Major General John Alison, USAF (Ret.) A distinguished WW-II veteran and ace, General Alison spoke of his experiences flying with the American Volunteer Group (AVG) in China. The NWOC crowd was quite amused when General Alison recounted a story about his first air-to-air combat experience with the AVG. The General quipped, "I thought I was a pretty good pilot...until I met that Japanese boy!" After the talk, General Alison received a standing ovation.

After lunch Doug Rozendaal from the Commemorative Air Force presented Accident Analysis/Stats/Training. Doug's presentation is an excellent opportunity for pilots to get re-focused on a culture of safety before they begin a busy season of air show flying. He encouraged pilots to start a "spring training" program in order to sharpen their skills.

One of the most talked about issues at NWOC 2009 was the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Large Aircraft Security Program (LASP). The TSA is proposing a full-scale security program be developed and implemented for all aircraft over 12,500 pounds gross take-off weight. EAA's Doug Macnair gave the NWOC attendees an update on the TSA LASP and at the time of his presentation, only eight days remained for the public to comment on this issue. All the warbird related associations and groups, along with nearly all of general aviation, oppose the TSA LASP and have provided comment to the TSA and our elected officials. To follow up on this important issue, visit [www.warbirds-eaa.org](http://www.warbirds-eaa.org) or [www.eaa.org](http://www.eaa.org).

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in the ever-popular aircraft breakout sessions. In the break out sessions, the following groups met and discussed topics of mutual interest: T-6, T-34, Jet, Liaison/Primary Trainer, T-28, Fighter, Yak/CJ, and Bomber/Transport.

Beginning on Saturday morning, Mark Clark of Courtesy Aircraft Sales and a member of the NWOC crew welcomed the NWOC attendees and moderated the Engine Panel Discussion. The Engine Panel Discussion covered a wide variety of engine types, from Allison's to Marlins, from small radials to large radials. The panel members included Mike Nixon from Vintage V-12's, Bob Dalton from Precision Engines, Sam Thompson from Tulsa Aircraft Engines, Paul Draper from Roush Aviation, and Bud Wheeler from Allison Competition Engines.

Mike Pangia is a partner in the firm of Anderson, Pangia & Associates in Washington D.C. and specializes in aviation, product liability, and complex litigation. He gave an interesting presentation entitled "What to Do When the FAA Comes Knocking". In his presentation, Mike did a great job providing NWOC attendees with a detailed explanation of the enforcement process.

Following Mike, Bob Cannon of Cannon Aviation Insurance and a NWOC crewmember, served as moderator for the Insurance Panel Discussion. Panel members included Angie Harris from Cannon Aviation Insurance, Shelly Petty from AirCapital Insurance, Ted Thomas from Specialty Aviation Underwriters, Anthony Bacewicz from US Specialty Insurance Company, and John Young from Aviation Claims Administrators. The panel outlined some of the issues faced in the aviation insurance industry and provided ample time for a question and answer session with the NWOC attendees.

The Saturday lunch speaker was NASA astronaut Joe Edwards. Joe gave a very interesting and humorous talk, outlining his career as a Naval Aviator, including F-14 pilot, test pilot, and transitioning to NASA, joining the crew on Space Shuttle Endeavor mission STS-89.

Saturday afternoon's educational session was the Aircraft Maintenance Panel Discussion. Panel members included Don Anklin from the Fighter Factory, Jamie Trudeau from Trudeau Warbird Enterprises, Dave Goss from GossHawk Unlimited, and moderator

Mark Clark. The panel members discussed inspection programs and airframe issues, encouraging owners and operators to be meticulous in their effort to maintain their warbirds.

The late afternoon time slot on Saturday was reserved for a tour of the Smithsonian's Udvar – Hazy Museum at Dulles Airport. NWOC attendees were treated to the opportunity to view many world-famous airplanes including the Boeing B-29 Superfortress "Enola Gay". Other rare aircraft highlights included the Dornier Do-335 Pfeil and the Northrup P-61 Black Widow.

After the museum tour the day wrapped up with a reception, followed by dinner at the hotel. After dinner, Bob Cannon provided NWOC attendees with a very special speaker, Jessica Cox. As a result of a birth defect, Jessica was born without arms. She shared with NWOC attendees how she adapted and overcame obstacles through out life and in October 2008, became the first person to earn her pilot certificate without the use of her arms. Jessica gave a wonderful presentation that received a standing ovation.

On Sunday morning John Cudahy, Executive Director of the International Council of Air Shows, (ICAS) gave a report on the state of the air show industry.

The final presentations at NWOC 2009 were the reports given by the various aircraft break out sessions. Thanks goes out to the Breakout Session moderators including Rick Siegfried, Mark Pasqualino, Richard Hess, Tom Gordon, Linc Dexter, Stewart Dawson, Gordon Witter, and Charlie Tilghman.

The 2009 National Warbird Operator Conference was presented by Cannon Aviation Insurance. Sponsors included Air Capital Insurance, Air Assets International, Cannon Aviation Insurance, Commemorative Air Force, Courtesy Aircraft Sales, EAA Warbirds of America, Precision Aircraft Engines, Specialty Aviation Underwriters, Trudeau Warbird Enterprises, Tulsa Aircraft Engines, US Specialty Insurance, Warbird Depot, and Warbird Digest.

Hats off to the NWOC planning committee or "Crew", including Bob Cannon, Mark Clark, Wendee DeBusk, Bill Fischer, Mike Ginter, Jack Harrington, Rick Siegfried, and Eric Van Hoff.

For more information visit the website [www.warbirdconference.com](http://www.warbirdconference.com)

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