

# THE WESTWIND JOURNAL

Promotion | Website in Focus | MeetMe Column | Cockpit Chatter

### WestWind Airline 2026 YTD Stats

Total Flight Hours:	2,919.7
Total Offline Hours:	2,403.8
Total Online Hours:	365.9
Total Flights:	899
Total Cargo (lbs.):	13,662

### WestWind Hub Rankings

#### January 2026

#### Top 3 Hubs by Total Hours

1 - Singapore	351.2
2 - Chicago	288.2
3 - Cincinnati	281.5

#### Top 3 Hubs by Total Flights

1 - Chicago	111
2 - London	94
3 - New York	94

#### Top 3 Hubs - VATSIM Hours

1 - New York	98.2
2 - Chicago	87.5
3 - London	562



Late January John Condon announced that he is stepping down from all of his management positions at Westwind effective immediately. The rest of Westwind management wishes John the best in whatever he decides to do next.

John filled several roles now open, bringing new opportunities for the right person or persons to fill his various roles.

The Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Pilot is a Executive Committee Position and is the Department Head for the Administration and Training Departments. If you are interested in this position send your Resume to the President via PM.

After we receive a few resumes the 4 remaining EC members will review them and pick the candidate they feel best suited for the Position.

I decided to try my hand at the newsletter. I ran into a few issues trying to import and edit the January Issue. I hope to have those issues worked out in the March Issue.



Bob Sturm - WWA230

# WESTWIND

## PROMOTIONS AND AWARDS



### Pilot Promotions - January

Dave Winum WWA258 - Sr. Cmd. Captain +2  
 Doug Addington WWA761 - Sr. Cmd. Captain +9  
 Chase Boni WWA3675 - Command Captain  
 Waldemar Filho WWA76 - Sr. Cmd. Captain +17  
 Craig Paul WWA1962 - Category V  
 Steve Canham WWA11 - Sr. Cmd. Captain +10  
 Kenneth Haynes WWA2055 - SR. Cmd. Captain +40  
 Bryan Sutherland WWA3177 - Sr. Cmd. Captain +8  
 Brian Ware WWA2220 - Sr. Cmd. Captain +16

### Recognition Awards – January

John Oddo WWA2293 - 17 Years of Service  
 Waldemar Filho WWA76 - 1000 Hours 748  
 Hal Morse WWA3615 - 2025 Aviator of the Year  
 Donnie Wade WWA3321 - 5 + flights for each month  
 Mike Spina WWA2482 - 1,000 flights logged  
 Bryan Sutherland WWA3177 - 5,000 Hours  
 Joe Gay WWA2610 - Ten Million Pounds  
 Brian Ware WWA2220 - P001 Flight Around the World  
 Brian Mills WWA1108 - 100 Hours in one Month  
 Brian Ware WWA2220 - 2500 Hours in Type B780



### WestWind Leadership Team

#### WestWind Executive Committee

President & CEO - Sean McConnell  
 CIO - George Forster  
 CAO & Chief Pilot - Vacant  
 COO - Phil Cohen  
 CMO - Joe Gay

#### WestWind Executive Management

VP of Scenery - Bob Sturm  
 Director of Marketing - Don Tinc  
 Director of Aircraft - *Vacant*  
 Director of Online Ops - Ed Ward  
 Alaska Regional Mgr - Scott Robinson  
 Europa Regional Mgr - Andrea Maccioni  
 Caribe Regional Mgr - Ian Crawford  
 Hawaii Regional Mgr - Phil Cohen  
 Tahiti Regional Mgr - Sean McConnell

#### WestWind Hub Management

COO - Phil Cohen  
 Hub Ops Manager - *Vacant*

#### Hub Managers

Amsterdam - George Forster  
 Atlanta - Mike Jones  
 Calgary - Scott Robinson  
 Chicago - John Oddo  
 Cincinnati - David Reason  
 Dallas-Ft. Worth - Al Stallbaumer  
 Denver - Brian Mills  
 London Heathrow - Ken Rotker  
 Los Angeles - Steve Canham  
 Miami - *Vacant*.  
 New York - Tony Yonek  
 Seattle - Dwayne White  
 Singapore - Bob Sturm  
 Sydney - Kenneth Haynes

#### The WestWind Journal

Editor - Sean McConnell



## NOW HIRING

Exciting career opportunity awaits you!

WestWind Airlines is seeking applications for **Vice President of Aircraft**.

WestWind Airlines is seeking an enthusiastic and detail oriented individual who enjoys working in a team environment with a focus on promoting and growing our aircraft department. This position requires that you have the ability to paint aircraft in MSFS 2024.

Are you ready to accelerate your virtual career into overdrive?

Contact **Joe Gay** via Private Message on the WestWind Forums to apply.



## Promotion Announcement

I am excited to announce the promotion of **Ed Ward (WWA28)** to **Director of Online Operations and Events**.

In his new role, Ed will be responsible for planning, promoting and managing online and offline flight events, as well as, responsibilities for all VATSIM pilot training and development for WestWind Virtual Airlines.



Joining WestWind in June of 1996, one of the first pilots to join, Ed brings a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge to his new position. He has previously served as JFK Hub Manager, Chief Pilot & Executive Vice President of Training.

“In addition to my 30 year virtual career here at WestWind Airlines, I’m also a retired international Line Captain for a major firm and have flown in excess of 7,000 high performance jet hours along with 3,000 hours in general aviation light piston aircraft” said Ed Ward in a recent interview. “I also hold a current Certified Flight Instructor license with Instrument and Multi-engine endorsements.”

Ed has a lot of great ideas already planned out. Looking forward, I know that Ed will continue to be an integral part of the airline and help drive us towards even greater success.

Ed is a Senior Command Captain +5 with over 3,500 flight hours and holds a P4 - Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL) rating with VATSIM. He is currently assigned to WestWind’s JFK hub.

Please join me in congratulating Ed on his promotion to Director of Online Operations and Events.



## WestWind Hub Updates for XP12 Continues

---

**Bob Sturm, VP of Scenery**, updates Los Angeles International Airport.

The Los Angeles International Airport (KLAX) Hub scenery has undergone a major update and is now available for download. This file is a updated version corresponding to the latest Navigraph charts. This was a major rebuild of KLAX from the default airport which had many incorrectly labeled taxiways, several missing taxiways and several taxiways that had been removed completely. I also built the Mid-Field Satellite Concourse Located between taxiways N and L. This was depicted as a construction site in the default airport And in the last version of the LAX Westwind Hub, Many other small details were incorporated.

From Wikipedia:

Los Angeles International Airport commonly referred to by its airport code, LAX (with each of its letters pronounced individually), is the primary international airport serving the Greater Los Angeles Area and the world's eighth busiest airport. Located in the Westchester neighborhood of Los Angeles, it is 18 miles (30 km) southwest of Downtown Los Angeles and close to the Pacific Ocean.

LAX is a major international gateway to the United States, and also serves a connection point for passengers traveling internationally. LAX is the world's busiest origin and destination airport, since relative to other Airports, many more travelers begin or end their trips in Los Angeles than use it as a connection.

LAX serves as a major hub or focus city for seven airlines, more than any other airport in the United States.

### Aerial View



Cont on next page...

## WestWind Hub Updates for XP12 Continues



KLAX - XP12  
Passenger Terminal

Passenger  
Terminal



KLAX - XP12  
Passenger Terminal



KLAX - XP12  
Charter Terminal

Charter  
Terminal

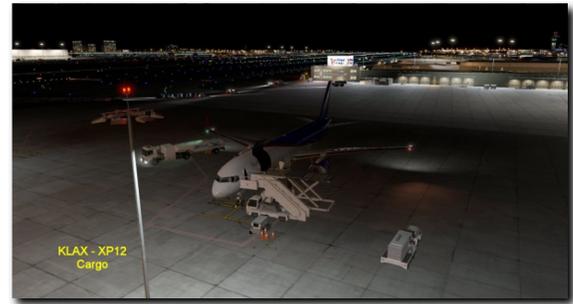


KLAX - XP12  
Charter Terminal



KLAX - XP12  
Cargo

Cargo  
Terminal



KLAX - XP12  
Cargo



**Aeroproyecto Cessna U206F**  
For FSX / FSX:SE / Prepar3D

**Aeroproyecto Cessna U206F**  
**WWA DISCOUNT 20% OFF**

ORIGINAL PRICE  
~~\$17.00~~  
SPECIAL PRICE\*  
**\$13.60**

**AIRCRAFT INCLUDES**

- External and Interior Modeling
- Virtual Cockpit
- Paint Schemes
- Systems and Additional Features

Aeroproyecto's Cessna U206F Stationair for P3D v1-v4 and FSX comes in four liveries, with full 3D instrumentation based on Cessna equipment and the 1970s ARC 300 avionics series, autopilot, custom sounds and additional tools for aircraft set-up.

The aircraft features cargo or passengers (depending on the cabin setting), animated pilot, friendly frame rates, several additional adjustable cameras and animations for almost every moving part or mechanism.

\*Discount is for active WestWind pilots only. To receive promo code, pilot must apply [here](#) and purchase directly from **Aeroproyecto website**.



### NOW HIRING

Exciting career opportunity awaits you!

Our Information Technology division is actively seeking

#### Director of IT - Website.

WestWind Airlines is seeking an enthusiastic individual who enjoys working in a team environment with a focus on promoting and growing our website and overall IT infrastructure. Successful candidates should have prior experience.

Are you ready to accelerate your virtual career into overdrive? Apply today!

Contact **George Forster** via Private Message on the WestWind Forums to apply.



## PMDG Releases the Boeing 739 for MSFS24

Hot on the heels of last months release of the 737-800, the -900 And -600 models have also been released. In February. PMDG.com Customers who purchased the PMDG 737-900 for MSFS 2020 will receive a 60% discount at checkout when purchasing this version at PMDG.com. MS Marketplace Customers are eligible for the same promotion when purchasing this update in MS Marketplace. Users must log into their PMDG.com account before selecting this product in order to activate the discount. Discount to be displayed at time of purchase. If discount is not displayed, please reach out to support.pmdg.com for assistance prior to purchase.

Welcome to the new PMDG 737-900NG, built natively for Microsoft Flight Simulator 2024!

A continued evolution of PMDG's highly respected simulation of the 737, this product has undergone a significant update to ensure performance, viability and longevity in MSFS 2024 for many years to come. Built upon the industry recognized simulation technology from the team at PMDG, this new version has been significantly upgraded with new, lidar scanned models, improved textures and lighting, greater functionality and even more simulation value. The PMDG 737-900 leverages the capabilities of MSFS 2024 in order to lay the groundwork for a truly native product that capitalizes on the platform.

Representing the longest of the 737NG series airframes, this package includes both the 737-900 and the 737-900ER in a variety of configurations, making the PMDG 737-900NG a premier simulation product in every regard.

doors and cabin lighting and a new 100% spatialised 3D audio authentic sound pack, recorded from the real aircraft in partnership with Echo19. Over 70+ real-world liveries can also be downloaded and installed using the included PMDG Operations Centre 3.0.

You can purchase the PMDG Boeing 737-800 for Microsoft Flight Simulator 2024 for \$74.99 from the PMDG store. It's also available in the MSFS24 Marketplace.

If you own the PMDG 737-800 for Microsoft Flight Simulator 2020, you are entitled to a 60% discount at purchase.



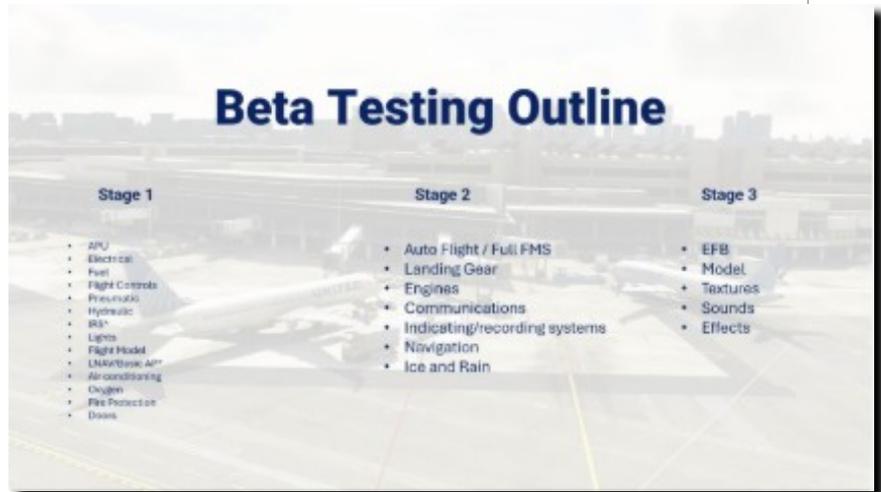
# Cockpit Chatter



## Bluebird confirms 2026 release for the 757 for MSFS

Release is confirmed for 2026, but no exact date has been provided. The developer stated to look For it sometime third quarter.

Excludint the EFB, Systems Progress is about 90% done. Based on the picture, the team Is getting ready to enter stage 2 of the beta testing process. The largest remaining lift for The team systems wise is the EFB and server side Infastructure, Which will allow BlueBird to release The product on both in Just Flight And their store.



As was covered previously, the \$80 Purchase price gives pilots access to The -200 and -300, both engine engine models and wingtip configuratoinis. However, the team is prioritizing the Rolls Royce RB211 engine model prior to release. It is unclear whether the Pratt and Whittney model, and if not it will come as a free update shortly after.

The757 will be compatible with both MSFS 2020 and MSFS 2024 upon release, with a 2024 native Version coming at no cost to customers futher down the line.

Credits, article by Martin Harasimowicz FSElete content writer



# WestWind Journal - MeetMe Column

Welcome to another edition of the MeetMe column where The WestWind Journal sits down with fellow pilots within the airline to learn more about them.

This month, we had the opportunity to sit down with **Donald Tinc** (WWA3635), **Director of Marketing** and Singapore **Assistance Hub Manager** here at **WestWind Virtual Airlines**.

**WWJ:** I'd like to thank you for taking the time to sit down with us for an interview. I know you're a busy guy so we'll jump right in. How long have you been with WestWind Airlines?

**DT:** I joined WestWind in June of 2020 so I'm working on 6 years with the airline.

**WWJ:** I always enjoy asking this question because we get so many different answers, but why did you join WestWind Airlines?



**DT:** I was interested in computers and aviation and also had a flight sim on my PC. I'd been flying GA aircraft for a long while and wanted to step my game up. The next logical step was to fly for a virtual airline. I also wanted to learn how to properly fly airliner SIDs and STARS.

**WWJ:** What is your favorite thing about flying for WestWind Airlines?

**DT:** The total flexibility. We can fly any route from any hub and we are not locked in to just flying our hub's routes or flying whatever route the Hub Manager tells us to. That's really one of WestWind's top selling points.

**WWJ:** Not only have you been with the airline for almost 6 years now, but you've also taken on a couple of management roles. Why did you join the management ranks?

**DT:** Why not? I had the time and willingness to chip in, so here I am.

**WWJ:** What past management roles have you held at WestWind?

**DT:** In addition to being our Marketing Director here at WestWind, I was also hired as Assistant Hub

Manager for Singapore after flying there for a few years. Bob's a good advertiser for the hub. He talked me into joining the hub with an ad he posted... LoL)

**WWJ:** Can you describe your key responsibilities within your current roles as Director of Marketing position?

Cont on next page...

**DT:** I have a lot of responsibilities, but here's a quick summary. I work closely with John Condon and the rest of the EC to develop and implement marketing strategies. I oversee marketing research in an effort to gather insights, assess competition and adapt new strategies. I also protect and enhance our organization's brand reputation, use analytics tools to track marketing performance, and maintain and expand on our social media presence.

**WWJ:** What are your top priorities within your management role?

**DT:** I would say that my top priorities are developing and implementing marketing strategies, protecting and enhancing our brand reputation, and maintaining and expanding on our social media presence.

**WWJ:** On behalf of the airline, I'd like to thank you for stepping up and volunteering into your management role - it's greatly appreciated.

Let's switch gears a little bit. What got you interested in flight simulation?

**DT:** Flight Sim was a way of scratching the aviation interest itch without actually having to buy an aircraft and go to a flight school. I was interested in aviation, but I couldn't see it as an actual career - and I was thinking that actually learning to fly was way too expensive for me.

With hindsight, I probably could've bought my own plane twice by now with the money I've sunk into this hobby and the associated equipment.

**WWJ:** How long have you been flying flight simulator?

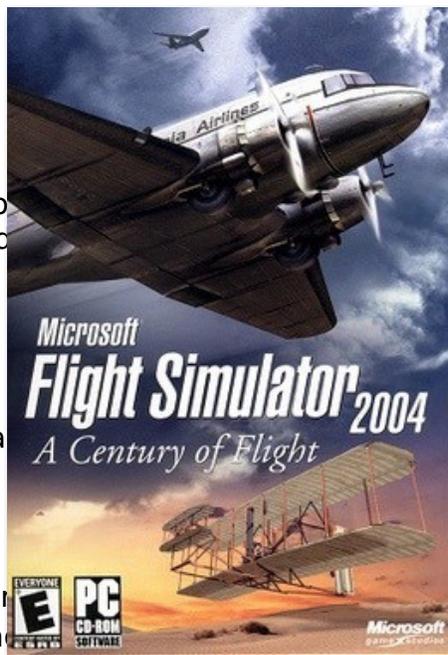
**DT:** Oh geez... over 30 years now.

**WWJ:** What was your first flight sim platform?

**DT:** Oh wow, you're testing my memory now! How dare you.... LoL Let me see, I think it was Microsoft FS9 - waaay back in 1995 or 1996.

**WWJ:** What simulator platform do you fly today?

**DT:** Today I fly both MSFS 2020 and MSFS 2024 but I'll probably be flying MSFS 2024 full time by the end of this year. And what a mess the MSFS 2024 launch was.



**WWJ:** Out of curiosity, why did you fly MSFS 2020 and MSFS 2024?

**DT:** That's easy. I've been with Microsoft platforms from the beginning and I'm a creature of habit, so there's that.

**WWJ:** Are you a real world pilot?

**DT:** No, I am not. As I mentioned before, the whole reason I got into flight simulation was due to the cost of obtaining my license.

Cont on next page...

**WWJ:** What’s your favorite airplane to fly in flight simulator?

**DT:** I have “favorites”, as plural. There’s no one plane I’m going to single out here, it’s impossible!!

For airliners, no question about it, I’ve been a Boeing boy! I knew there was no

contest here, but I exported my flight log and checked the actual hours I have in each aircraft.

Here are the top 3:

- 1) Boeing 747-8i the Queen of the Sky
- 2) Boeing 777-300ER
- 3) Boeing 737-800

I will say that Airbus has been growing on me recently. I’ve been flying the Headwind Sim A330 and FBW A320. Now I’ve bought the Inibuilds A350. The Fifth-Gen avionics package is SWEET!!



For GA flights I like the SF50 Vision jet and the me the asset packages? There’s a woeful lack of H-Jets or the Daher TBM 930 and Kodiak 100. I go smaller then it’s either the SR22, Beech Bonanza, or the H125 Helicopter.

**WWJ:** Do you have a favorite route to fly in flight simulator?

**DT:** No favorite routes - I just pick a route and fly it.



Don’s flight sim setup

**WWJ:** Other than flight simulation, what other hobbies do you enjoy?

**DT:** I play other games on the computer, but guess what? Most are Sims like American Truck Simulator and such. I do like Assassins Creed. Other than that, traveling with the family, Astronomy, Science stuff in general. Oh,

**WWJ:** It’s been great interviewing you, Don. Is there anything else you’d like to share about you and flight simulation? Anything new on the horizon?

**DT:** I’ve been trying to learn how to use the MSFS SDK to modify scenery and such. That’s not the hard part... building hangers, signs, and painting textures, then using them in blender IS the hard part. Anyone want to help me learn this?? Or just build the stuff and send

**WWJ:** I’m hopeful that someone reading this will have the knowledge in building scenery in MSFS 2020 and MSFS 2024 and will reach out to you.

Again, it was great chatting with you today. Thanks again, Don!





.....

## NOW HIRING

.....

Exciting career opportunity awaits you!

WestWind Airlines is seeking applications for **H u b Operations Manager**.

WestWind Airlines is seeking an enthusiastic and detail oriented individual who enjoys working in a team environment with a focus on promoting and growing our hub operations division. This position assists the COO in overseeing daily operations, team leadership, staff development and quality/safety standards for the airline.

Are you ready to accelerate your virtual career into overdrive?

Contact **Phil Cohen** via Private Message on the WestWind Forums to apply.



## Navigraph Academy Review

A lot of Simulator Pilots want to start out in the 737 or 747 but even in the simulator that is a bad idea. It is far easier to start out small in a 172 and work your way up to slightly bigger and more powerful aircraft. Learning in smaller steps instead of one giant leap into the heavy irons. Real World pilots start out in a small aircraft such as the Cessna 172 while working on their PPL and Instrument Ratings. Often when a new pilot receives their PPL the Examiner will say here is your license to learn. A good pilot is always learning.

In Navigraph Academy you start out with a Cessna 172 G1000 avionics. There are 14 lessons each building on the previous lesson. Each lesson starts out with a ground school lesson and video at [academy.navigraph.com](http://academy.navigraph.com) before flying the lesson in the sim. The first lesson is more about setting up your hardware and getting familiar with the the 172. I actually changed my Alpha and Bravo hardware setup to what Navigraph Academy suggested with the flaps on the #6 axis. All of the lessons have been developed by real flight instructors bringing real world training into the simulator. For now it is just for MSFS 2020 and 2024 but they hope to bring it into X-Plane in the future. They also have Instrument Flight and IFR approaches on the road map.

After installing the lessons in the sim you go to Activities and Custom Content to start each lesson in the sim. After each sim session you close out the flight sim and after a couple minutes go back to the Academy Website to debrief how you did. Since the 172 is the same aircraft I flew when I was actively flying I set a overall goal of 90% before going on to the next lesson. I met that standard on all but one lesson and it turned out that there is a bug that limited me to 80% on the stalls lesson. Even at that I spent approximately 5 hours start to finish and receiving my Virtual Privat Pilots License.

The final lesson/VPPL Check flight is a VFR flight into LOWI in the C172. The briefing on the website guides you through planning the flight in Navigraph Charts. Then you fly the flight in the simulator visually identifying each check point out the window. Since you planned the flight in Navigraph charts you already know the heading and how long it should take you to get to each point. You really do not need the plan loaded up in the sim.

I will wrap this up by asking if you have taken a look at Navigraph Academy and completed the first course please share you thoughts on the forums.

## 2025 WestWind Screenshot Winners - A Year in Review

### January



### February



### March



### May



### June



### July



### August



### September



### October



### October



### October



### November



December Screenshot  
Competition Winner

**Brian Mills**  
**WWA1108**

**Congratulations!**

I did not find any screenshots for January 2026. this page kept as a place holder.



# WestWind Executive - Charter of the Month

## February 2026 - Charter of the Month - P028 NFL Super Bowl



### Search Charter of the Month - P028

**Category:** Professional Sports, Hobbies  
**Origin:** KSEA, KBOS, Or any Hub  
**Stops:** 1

**Region:** North America  
**Destination:** KSFO  
**Aircraft:** Multiple, see briefing

The New England Patriots and Seattle Seahawks Team Owners, entertainers, and fans are heading to the Super Bowl. The Teams and Coaches have Chartered WestWinds Airbus and Boeing Aircraft to depart From KBOS and KSEA and arriving at KSFO. Owners and their guest, entertainers and wealthy fans charter Our best Executive Jets, departures are from anywhere, Pilots Choise and arrive at KSFO. Fans, Broadcasting Media charter from any where.

**Aircraft:** Airbus 320, Boeing 737, Bombardier CRJ, Cessna Citation 550/750/CJ4





# From the Flight Deck

## FlightSimExpo 2026 – Discounted Travel and Hotel Rates/Locations Revealed

**FlightSimExpo 2026** will take place on **June 12-14, 2026**, at the **Saint Paul RiverCentre** in **Saint Paul, MN USA**. Perfectly located for those flying into the city, as the convention centre is situated a 15-minute drive from Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP).



### Discounted Travel Rates

If you are traveling to Minneapolis-Saint Paul via plane, then you can save money through discounted rates with Delta, United, Southwest Airlines, and their partner airlines. For those using Delta or United, you could save between 2-10% on the base airfare, whilst those using Southwest may also be eligible for an additional 25% Rapid Reward Points in addition to an up-to 5% discount.

If you're flying internationally, you can use the discount codes on multiple codeshare airlines.

**[You can view the discounts on airlines here.](#)**

### Hotel Locations and Rates

As with the 2025 show, there are multiple hotel locations for FlightSimExpo 2026. All of the hotels are within a reasonable walking distance of the Saint Paul Rivercentre, where FlightSimExpo 2026 will be held.

The primary hotel for FlightSimExpo 2026 is the Intercontinental Saint Paul Riverfront, which features great views of the skyline, spacious rooms and more. It's just an 8-minute walk to the convention centre and offers free cancellation until 72 hours before.

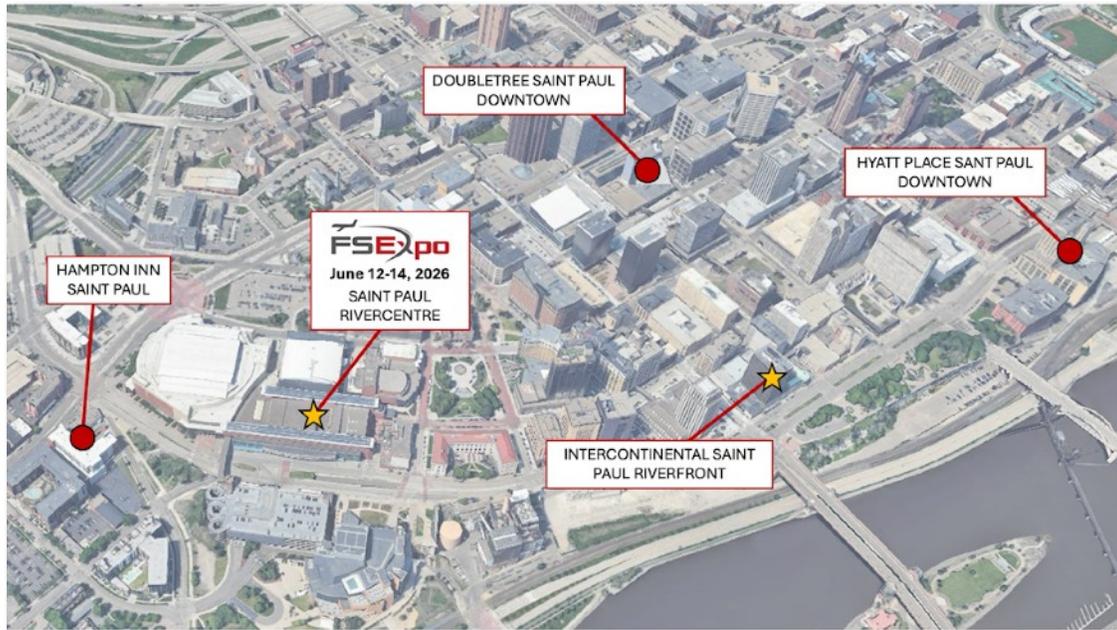
The other hotels that FlightSimExpo has secured for discounted rates include the Hampton Inn Saint Paul, Doubletree Saint Paul and also Hyatt Place Saint Paul Downtown (available to book in February 2026). All hotels include free cancellation, free luggage storage, parking options, and some even include complimentary breakfast. See venue map on next page.

Cont on next page...



# From the Flight Deck

## FlightSimExpo 2026 – Discounted Travel and Hotel Rates/Locations Revealed



### FlightSimExpo 2026 Activities and Tickets

At this stage, it's too early to speak about activities and tickets. That said, #FSExpoFriday has been confirmed to return on Friday 12th June 2026, with the exhibit hall then open all weekend for attendees to try out the latest and greatest software and hardware in flight simulation.

Expect stages, community talks, seminars, workshops, and much more.

**~~Tickets will be available in the future. For now, sign up to the mailing list to stay up-to-date.~~**



### Consider supporting the flight sim hobby by...

Joining *The Flight Simulation Association* - it's FREE!  
 Help build a community driven organization the promotes home flight simulation as both a hobby and aid to pilot training. [Click here to learn more!](#)



# WestWind Website in Focus

## SimBrief Now Integrated into WestWind Flight Dispatch

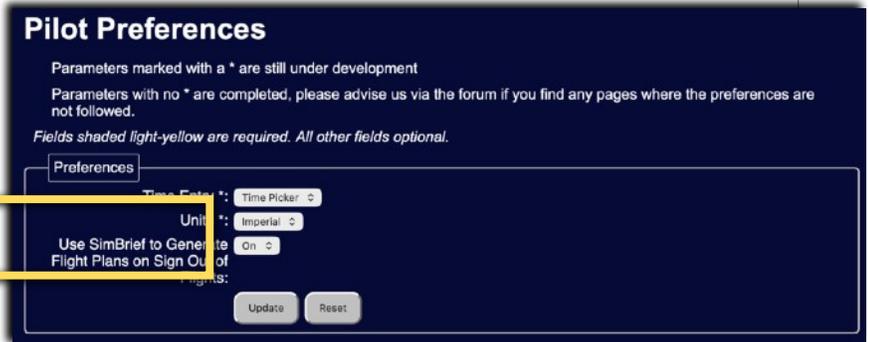
By WestWind CIO, George Forster

You can now use SimBrief to generate your flight plans when you sign out a flight.

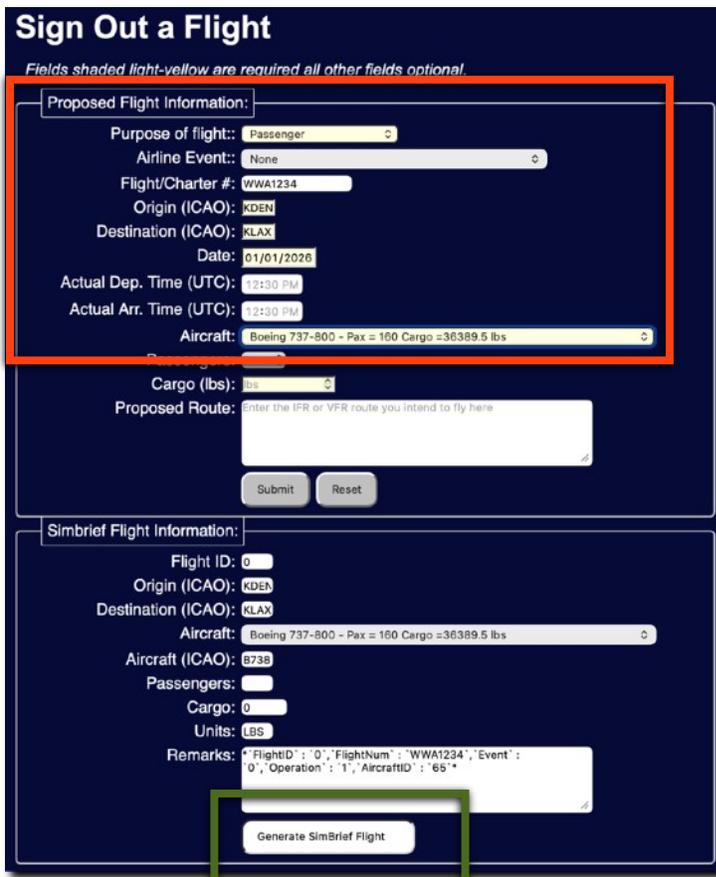
You will require a SimBrief/Navigraph account to access this feature, but the free SimBrief account access is all you need. (The paid Navigraph subscription service is an option, but not required.)

All of the authentication is handled by Navigraph and the first time you use it you may need to authenticate yourself with them, or sign up for a free account.

To activate the option, you first need to go to your preferences page and turn SimBrief On.



Then when you go to the sign out page, you get an extra panel at the bottom of the page.



Next, under the Proposed Flight Information section, you will need to enter your flight **Origin**, flight **Destination** and **Aircraft** type.

Next, click on the **Generate SimBrief Flight** button at the bottom. The text boxes above the button are to send the data to SimBrief and cannot edit these.

**IMPORTANT:** If you click the **Submit** button in upper panel, then this will sign the flight out without getting a flight plan from SimBrief.

Cont on next page...

# WestWind Website in Focus

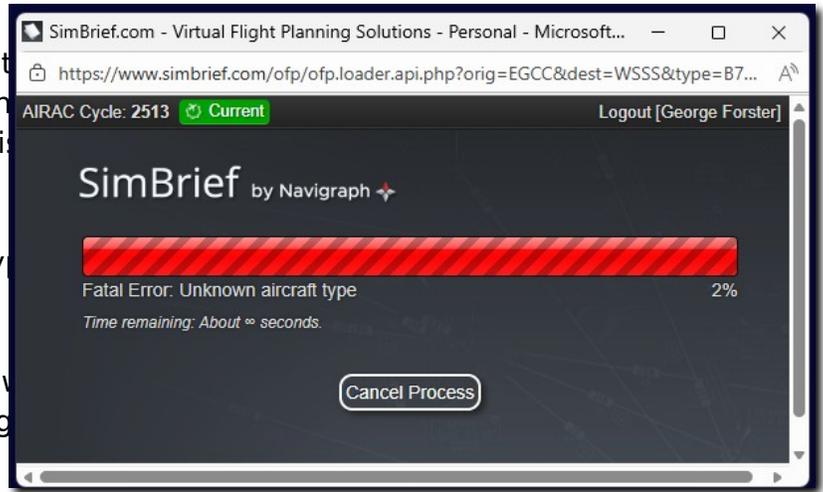
## SimBrief Now Integrated into WestWind Flight Dispatch (Continued)

By WestWind CIO, George Forster

At this stage you may need to validate your account, or you may see the Navigraph window appear as it is generating the flight.

If you get an unknown aircraft type screen, as seen here, you will need to select a different aircraft. This is either caused by us having the wrong aircraft ICAO code, or SimBrief not having that aircraft type in their database at the moment.

If everything is successful, you will end up at the Flight Details page with the route now populated.



If you have any questions then please post on the WestWind Forums page.



## THIS MONTH IN AVIATION HISTORY

February 9, 1969, First flight of the [Boeing 747](#) “Jumbo Jet” airliner takes place in Seattle, Washington. The wide-bodied, long-range transport is capable of carrying 347 passengers, and is the largest aircraft in commercial airline service in the world.



The [prototype 747](#) was first displayed to the public on September 30, 1968.



The [Pratt & Whitney JT9D](#) high-bypass turbofan engine was developed for the 747.

## WestWind Airlines Online Operations

WestWind Online Operations is devoted to flying online, using a massive network called VATSIM, a free organization with over 190,000 members and many servers. At any time during the day, there can be anywhere from 200-1200 people online, with an average of 500-600.

## VATSIM News

### Changes to VATSIM's Leadership | New VATSIM President

The Board of Governors is pleased to announce the election of Don Desfosse as President of VATSIM effective 1 February 2026 for a two-year term. Don will serve as the eighth VATSIM President in VATSIM's 24-year history.

After serving two successful terms as President, Tim Barber has decided to retire from the role. Pursuant to VATSIM's Code of Regulations, the President of VATSIM serves a two-year term after which the Board of Governors hold an election for who shall serve in this role for the next two-year term. The current president may be re-elected should they wish to run again in the future.

[Click here for full NOTAM](#)



## UPCOMING POPULAR VATSIM EVENTS

<h3>Tuesdays in Brasil Edition</h3>	<h3>Tropical Tuesdays</h3>
<h3>Frankfurt Friday</h3>	<h3>Northern Lights Tuesday</h3>

**January's Feature Event of the Month**

## All Aboard The Brightline

Saturday, January 31, 2026 - 2359 to 0400z

**All Aboard the Brightline SNO**

**KMIA • KFLL • KPBI • KMCO**

**January 31st**  
**2359-0400Z**

[Click event for further details](#)

## From the WestWind Hangar

**Joe Gay**, WestWind's **Chief Maintenance Officer**, and team, have been busy painting several new aircraft for our enjoyment. In addition to our normal WWA liveries, Joe created our 30th Anniversary livery. A big shoutout and thank you to Joe, and team, for their hard work and dedication in the painting department.



## ***In the Real World - Aviation News***

### **100-Ton Weight Error Caused LATAM 777 Tail Strike in Milan**

Italian aviation authorities have concluded that a serious take-off weight miscalculation caused a tail strike involving a [LATAM Airlines Boeing 777-300ER](#) during departure from Milan Malpensa in July 2024. Although the aircraft returned safely and no injuries were reported, investigators later classified the event as an accident due to the extent of structural damage sustained during rotation.

The findings were published by Italy's National Agency for the Safety of Flight, which determined that the incident stemmed from human and procedural errors rather than any technical malfunction. The aircraft had been operating a scheduled long-haul service from Milan to São Paulo when incorrect performance calculations led to an early and aggressive rotation, resulting in the tail contacting the runway.

According to the final report, the aircraft departed on July 9, 2024, from Milan Malpensa Airport with its gross take-off weight underestimated by approximately 100 tonnes. The captain mistakenly subtracted expected taxi fuel from the aircraft's take-off weight, producing a figure that was dramatically lower than the actual mass. That incorrect value, 228.8 tonnes instead of the correct 328.4 tonnes, was verbally shared in the cockpit and entered into both pilots' electronic flight bags.



Because the same erroneous data was used in both performance calculations, the standard cross-check process failed to detect the discrepancy. As a result, thrust settings and take-off speeds were computed using invalid assumptions. Investigators found that the calculated rotation speed was more than 30 knots below what was required for the aircraft's true weight, significantly increasing the pitch rate at rotation and the likelihood of a tail strike.

The aircraft's flight management system displayed a "V-speeds unavailable" message prior to departure, but the crew did not fully assess its significance or consult the applicable abnormal procedures. The take-off was continued using manually derived speeds, which proved insufficient for the heavily loaded aircraft.

After lift-off, the crew observed abnormal indications consistent with an unusual take-off profile and possible structural damage. They stopped the climb, coordinated with air traffic control, and elected to return to Milan. To land within structural limits, the aircraft jettisoned approximately 72 tonnes of fuel before conducting an uneventful approach and landing.

Cont on next page...

## ***In the Real World - Aviation News***

---

Post-flight inspections revealed damage to the rear fuselage, tail skid assembly, drain mast, and surrounding structural elements. The aircraft, registered PT-MUG, remained grounded for several months and only returned to service in February 2025 following extensive repairs and regulatory approval.

Investigators highlighted breakdowns in cockpit coordination and procedural discipline, noting that critical weight figures were not cross-checked against the official load sheet or aircraft systems. The report concludes that multiple safety barriers failed simultaneously, allowing a major performance-planning error to propagate unchecked.

The Milan incident has renewed industry discussion around enhanced take-off performance monitoring and tail-strike prevention systems. Safety specialists stress that while modern aircraft are highly automated, they remain fundamentally dependent on accurate human inputs and rigorous procedural compliance.

Sources: AirGuide Business [airguide.info](http://airguide.info), [bing.com](http://bing.com), [simpleflying.com](http://simpleflying.com), [aviationa2z.com](http://aviationa2z.com)



# Pilot's Tip of the Month

## Bold Idems on a Checklist

From Pilot WorkShops

### Pilot Question

"My Cessna 172S emergency checklist has some items in bold and others in a normal font. What's the difference?" —Janet M.

### David:

"The bold items result from extensive research into the human factors affecting the use of a checklist. Instead of requiring pilots to memorize every action for every checklist, the most important items on time-critical emergencies like an engine failure or electrical fire were placed in bold type (or in a red box, or with some other emphasis). These are the items to memorize and perform in an emergency before viewing the checklist. You can then consult the checklist to confirm all memory items were completed and then finish the remainder of the actions for that emergency by reading the checklist.

Emergencies that don't present an immediate hazard, like an alternator failure, have no memory actions. So they have no bolded items in the emergency checklist.

Therefore, you must have embedded all of the bolded items for your airplane in your long-term memory so you can act without referencing the checklist. As soon as it's safe and practicable, get the checklist out, start at the top to confirm you performed all memory items, and then complete the remaining actions. Emergency procedures with no bolded items mean you go right to the checklist before doing anything. That's so you don't make the situation worse with inappropriate or out-of-order actions conducted from memory.

I hope it goes without saying that the emergency checklist must be readily available to you in the pilot's seat. It is a good idea to make a copy of all the POH checklists on laminated cards you can keep in the sidewall pocket or other easily accessible location.

Finally, I highly recommend that you periodically refresh your aircraft system knowledge by reviewing the airplane and systems descriptions in Section 7 of the POH. Understanding the systems can help you recognize abnormal system behavior before it becomes critical. There may also be procedures to mitigate risk in these situations, and the system descriptions will contain amplifying information, which can help you deal with the emergency scenario."

CESSNA  
 MODEL 172S NAV III  
 GFC 700 AFCS

EM

### ENGINE FAILURES (Continued)

#### ENGINE FAILURE DURING FLIGHT

1. **Airspeed - 68 KIAS (best glide speed)**
2. **FUEL SHUTOFF Valve - ON (push)**
3. **FUEL SELECTOR Valve - BOTH**
4. **FUEL PUMP Switch - ON**
5. **Mixture Control - RICH (if restart procedure)**
6. **MAGNETOS Switch - BOTH (or START)**

**NOTE**

If the propeller is windmilling, automatically within a few seconds. If (possible at low speeds), turn Mixture Control to RICH. On START, advance throttle slowly from idle to full rich as required for engine operation.

7. **FUEL PUMP Switch - OFF**

**NOTE**

