

THE WESTWIND JOURNAL



Operation EastWind | MeetMe Column | Computer Rigs



WestWind Airline Stats YTD

Total Flight Hours:	28,112
Total Online Hours:	3,280
Total Offline Hours:	24,832
Total Flights:	8,480
Total Cargo (lbs.):	124,651,819

WestWind Hub Rankings

September

Top 3 Hubs by Total Hours

1 - Chicago	723
2 - Miami	413
3 - Los Angeles	313

Top 3 Hubs by Total Flights

1 - Miami	161
2 - Chicago	147
3 - Los Angeles	107

Top 3 Hubs - VATSIM Hours

1 - Los Angeles	113
2 - Calgary	82
3 - London	60



Operation EastWind Underway

By Sean McConnell

Hurricane's Helene and Milton, both monstrous storms, struck the Southeast of the United States within one week of each other. As of the writing of this article, Helene and Milton death toll hits over 300 with hundreds of people still reported missing.

Operation EastWind is WestWind Virtual Airlines' Humanitarian aid response to various real-world disasters around the globe. As in the real world, there is often very little notice as to when Operation EastWind goes active. Operation EastWind has been known to move cargo amounts in the 10's of Millions of pounds of aid supplies in as little as 30 days.

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NOW HIRING

Exciting career opportunity awaits you!

The Online Operations & Events department is now hiring for **Director of Online Operations & Events**.

WestWind Airlines is seeking an enthusiastic individual who enjoys working in a team environment with a focus on promoting and growing our online and events department.

Are you ready to accelerate your virtual career into overdrive?

Contact **John Condon** via Private Message on the WestWind Forums to apply.



There 3 general parts to this Operation/Event. The first part usually involves collecting supplies such as Emergency Generators, Emergency housing kits, Survival Food Kits, Emergency Medical kits, and anything else that may be needed in the area affected. WestWind Hubs usually serve as major collection and distribution points.

The Second part involves moving cargo and Emergency Management personnel from WestWind Hubs to a major airport near the disaster area.

The third and final part is moving the cargo into the area affected, this often requires smaller aircraft capable of bush operations.

For those that have Air Hauler 2, Air Hauler aid missions often fit in well with Operation EastWind. I have from a reliable source that in an upcoming AH2 update you will be able to upload factory products to be moved by the Air Hauler Virtual Airline.

Each Operation EastWind event will have a subtitle such as the Current event, Operation EastWind: Hurricane Helene Relief. I expect this event to be extended and include Hurricane Milton as Search and rescue operations continue in western North Carolina and Central Florida.

To date, WestWind has moved an impressive 6,300,000 lbs. of emergency supplies, along with over 1,300 search and rescue and insurance adjusters to the hurricane CAT areas. Way to go!



WestWind Airlines Online Operations

WestWind Online Operations is devoted to flying online, using a massive network called VATSIM, a free organization with over 176,000 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

VATSIM announces that the VATSIM Code of Conduct has been updated. These updates will officially take effect at 0001z on October 1, 2024.

Most of the changes in the new Code of Conduct (CoC) are designed to clarify existing practices on the network, ensuring that both pilots and ATC operate in a more structured and prepared manner.

A few significant updates include new controller suffixes, changes allowing observers to use **toverview**, and updates to surveillance codes for flight plans.

[Click here for full NOTAM](#)



UPCOMING POPULAR VATSIM EVENTS



Click event for further details

WestWind Journal - MeetMe Column

Welcome to the first MeetMe column where we sit down and interview fellow WestWind pilots.

This month, The WestWind Journal had the opportunity to sit down with **Sean McConnell** (WWA659), **President and CEO** of **WestWind Virtual Airlines**.

WWJ: Sean, I'd like to thank you for taking time out of your busy day to sit down and answer some questions for our new column.

WWJ: How long have you been with WestWind Airlines?

SM: I first joined WestWind back in 1998, but soon had to take a Military Leave of absence when operation Desert Shield started. I returned to WestWind in 2006 after I retired from Active Military Service.

WWJ: Before we move onto the next question, thank you for your service, Sean.

WWJ: I'm always curious why flight sim enthusiasts join VA's. Why did you join WestWind?

SM: I liked the airline structure in that it had the relaxed "flying club" feel. I also liked that you did not have to have the latest flight simulator platform.

WWJ: What's your favorite thing about flying for WestWind?

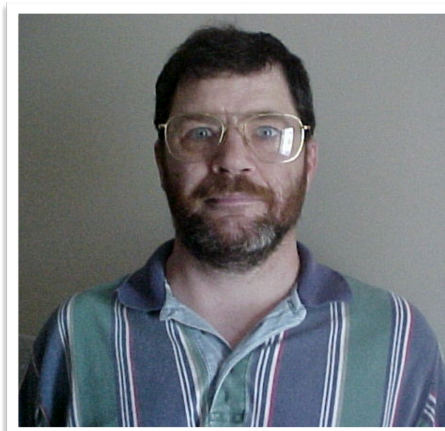
SM: I like that you can fly what you want within, or below, your current rank, where you want regardless of your hub assignment, and when you want, and no bounds to the scheduled times listed. In a nutshell, I like the freedom that WestWind offers its pilots.

WWJ: One key part of any successful VA is the stability of its management team. Why did you join the management ranks?

SM: Above all, I wanted more accountability for myself; an actual reason to fly more than once a month (actually two months for line pilots). I also enjoy giving back to the flight sim community.

WWJ: As you talked about earlier, you've been with the airline a long time and you've also been in management a long time. What past management roles have you held at WestWind?

SM: I started out as an Assistant Hub Manager in Toronto in 2014. I then became the Hub Manager at Toronto after the HM left. When Toronto was closed (converted to a mini-hub) I was offered the HM position at New York JFK.



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SM: (Continued) In late 2018, I was offered the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Chief Pilot position which included a seat on the Executive Committee. After we lost contact with then President & CEO Mark Kusiak, I was elected acting President and later elected President & CEO which I hold today.

WWJ: Being President & CEO of WestWind Airlines is a big responsibility. Can you describe some of your key responsibilities in your role?

SM: As the President & CEO, I function as the head of the Executive Committee. I am responsible for the day-to-day operations, strategic planning, and overall management of the airline.

Some people may not realize this, but even though I have a voting position on the EC, my vote is not necessarily needed unless there is a tie between the other four voting members of the EC.

WWJ: As our President & CEO, what are your top priorities in your role right now?

SM: Over the past 5+ years, I have noticed a downward trend in our active membership. This has resulted in fewer flights and flight hours for the airline. My biggest priority right now is to reverse this trend and start growing the pilot base. It will take some time, but the EC is working on several initiatives to work towards this goal. More on this later, but I will say that Microsoft 2020 did bring back some old pilots, as well as some new ones, but we still have a long way to go.

WWJ: I appreciate you talking about your management goals. Lets shift gears and talk about flying. How long have you been flying flight simulator?

SM: LOL I think I'll answer this with your next question. (See the next answer.)

WWJ: What was your first flight simulator platform?

SM: Sub-Logic Flight Simulator and Flight Assignment ATP on a Commodore 64 computer.



WWJ: Wow! Sub-Logic on the Commodore 64 means you've been flying sims for nearly 40 years now. What got you interested in flight simulation?

SM: I was an Aviation Electronics Technician in the U.S. Navy and worked on the H3 Sea King helicopter and simulators. I never could fly the helos that well. LOL So with my aviation career in the Navy, it was easy and fun for me to jump into the simulator.

WWJ: What simulator platform do you fly today? And why?

SM: At first it was Microsoft Flight Simulator series up until FSX; that was before I started working on my Private Pilot License. The flight school I used had both X-Plane and FS2004. The Chief Flight Instructor and FAA examiner said X-Plane was better for aircraft systems and aircraft interactions with the environment. FS2004 and FSX was better for scenery.

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SM: (Continued) Then along came X-Plane 11 and this was a game changer for me and the flight school. The school dropped MSFS and exclusively used X-Plane 11 for all of their simulator work. I continue to primarily use X-Plane 12 but still use MSFS occasionally.

WWJ: You mentioned PPL. Are you a real world pilot?

SM: Yes I am.

WWJ: That's great. What rating do you hold?

SM: I hold a PPL SEL with about 120 hours. Like so many pilots, I was working on my instrument rating, but then ran out of money.

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

SM: The DC3/C47 and the Boeing 757.

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

SM: I can't say that I have a favorite route, unless you count the random route function. I really like that feature.



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

SM: I really enjoy woodworking and recently got into N Scale model trains.

WWJ: Sean, I'd like to thank you again for taking the time to answer our questions and we look forward to sitting down with you again in the future. It's been a pleasure to chat with you today.



September Screenshot
Competition Winner

Erwin Michael
WWA2244



Congratulations!

Chasing the Perfect Flight Rig

By John Condon

Ever since I can remember, I have been chasing my flight sim computer setup. I start out with decent results, but then I update to the latest and greatest sim version and my computer is no longer up to the task. So I buy a new computer with all the latest and greatest tech stuff, and all is fine for a couple of years. Then I update to the newest sim version... and around and around we go.

MSFS 2024 will be available for download on November 19th, and like many, I want to upgrade. But once again, I find myself in the same old predicament of chasing the next computer to ensure MSFS 2024 runs smoothly. Though this time is a bit different; I'm newly retired and living on a fixed income. Going to the computer store and dropping three grand on the latest tech isn't in my budget.

My current flight sim rig, purchased in 2022, is an iBuyPower with an Intel 11th Gen i7-11700KF 3.6 GHz 8-core processor, 16GB of RAM, NVIDIA GeForce RTX 3080 10GB OC GAMING graphics card, ID-COOLING FrostFlow X240 liquid water cooler, with a 750 watt power supply. This was supposed to be my "forever computer" - you know, future proof? I've learned there's no such thing.

I run a 3 monitor setup. One is for my primary flight deck while the two other monitors run utilities.

My primary flight deck display is a 32" LG with 162Hz refresh rate, the other two are 27" with 75Hz max refresh rate. I also have a RealSimGear GNS530 that I run while flying GA, but it's disconnected when not in use.

I use MSFS 2020 and primarily fly the PMDG 737-800/900 with a few add on scenery airports. My utility software includes Navigraph, SPAD.neXt, aviaworx, vPilot, BeyondATC (when VATSIM is not online) and Mozilla Firefox.



Flying my PMDG 738/9 with mid to high graphic settings, my system is producing frame-rates in the mid to low 20's which isn't great. After a three hour flight, my final approach becomes jittery and unacceptable for smooth landings. I have watched countless YouTube videos, and read articles, in an effort to find

that good balance between acceptable visual quality with decent frame-rates, but I've failed to find that sweet spot with my current PC.

With MSFS 2024 coming out next month, and based on Microsoft's suggested computer requirements, I'm fairly confident that my system will deliver similar results as MSFS 2020. However, unlike previous versions of MS flight sims that can only utilize single core processing, it's reported that MSFS 2024 will now be able to leverage multiple CPU threads leading to improved performance. This should be interesting to see.

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Chasing the Perfect Flight Rig (Cont.)

For the past few weeks, I've been researching and thinking about the best path forward. My initial thought was to just upgrade my current PC with the newest i9 Intel chip, increase my memory to 64 GB and buy the latest graphics card (GPU) - the RTX 4080 SUPER. (The RTX 4090 is simply out of the question due to cost.)

After adding these components to pcpartpicker.com, a great PC building site, I realized a couple of things. First, my 750 watt power supply wasn't enough - I'd need to upgrade to 850 watts, or more. Then I learned that my motherboard doesn't support the latest i9 chipset, so a new motherboard was required. If I upgraded to a new motherboard, my DDR4 RAM was no longer compatible. I would also need to upgrade my 240mm water cooler to a 360mm cooler. I quickly realized that this approach was costing me a lot of money. Was it time to just buy a whole new rig?

My next thought shifted to selling my rig online and buying a new pre-built PC that I found on costco.com. After doing some research, I learned that I could sell my system for roughly \$900. A far cry from the \$2,500 I paid three years ago. And an even further stretch from the pre-built computer I wanted.

Once I got over the sticker shock of my first two build options, I headed back online and tried a different approach - one I named my "Hybrid FS Rig". So I asked myself, what if I just upgraded my motherboard, chipset and memory? After all, my RTX 3080 GPU has been a rockstar and MSFS has always been limited by the CPU, not the GPU.

But would my 750 watt power supply run everything? Back on pcpartpicker.com, I plugged everything in and learned that my idea would in fact work.

After a lot of online research, I learned that the AMD Ryzen 7 7800X3D 4.2 GHz processor is a gaming beast. Maybe the best on the market right now? This chip runs relatively cool so my 240mm water cooler would be more than adequate. And the 7800X3D doesn't draw a lot of power, so the 750 watts of power was just fine. So I decided to go with the Ryzen 7 7800X3D.



I found the ASUS ROG Strix B650-A motherboard as a good companion to the Ryzen 7800X3D. It's budget friendly, yet has everything I need for future expansion.

For memory, I decided to go with TEAMGROUP T-Force Delta DDR5-6000 32GB RAM. Once again, this memory was the budget friendly option while still providing decent gaming specs. Though, I am wondering if I'm shooting myself in the foot for not going with 64 GB. Nah... I have to keep chasing my computer, right?

I'm going to reuse my RTX 3080 GPU, both hard drives, water cooler, power supply and mid-tower case.

As of the writing of this article, I ordered the CPU, motherboard and memory and my new components should be delivered within a week or so. Once I complete my hybrid PC build, I will provide an update in next month's WestWind Journal which will include updates on the build itself and MSFS 2020 performance results. Stay tuned.



In the Real World - Aviation News

Alaska Airlines 737 Windshield Cracks, Forces Emergency Landing in Montana

An Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 made an emergency landing in Missoula, Montana, after the flight deck windshield cracked mid-flight.

The incident occurred on October 11th during flight AS345 from Columbus to Seattle.

Flightradar24 data revealed that the aircraft was cruising at FL360 when it diverted. The plane landed safely on Runway 29 at Missoula Montana Airport at 10:52 local time. [Click here to read more.](#)



Flames seen under Frontier Airlines flight as it makes hard landing in Las Vegas

A Frontier Airlines flight seemed to catch fire as it made what officials described as a “hard landing” at Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas on Saturday.



Flight 1326 was arriving from San Diego, and the plane was “in the process of landing,” when smoke was reported in the cockpit and the pilots declared an emergency, according to statements from Frontier and the Federal Aviation Administration.

The plane “experienced a hard landing where basically tires blew,” airport officials told CNN. Video obtained by CNN shows flames underneath the plane and a trail of smoke after it landed.

The Clark County Fire Department responded immediately, and all the passengers and crew were safely transported to the gate area, airport officials added. A total of 190 passengers and seven crew members were on board when the incident occurred around 3:15 p.m. PT, Frontier said.

“The cause of the incident is currently under investigation,” the airline added. A ground stop at the airport was in effect until 7 p.m. on Saturday evening, according to the FAA.

The National Transportation Safety Board will also investigate the incident, according to a Saturday statement. [Click here to read more.](#)



Pilot's Tip of the Month

Transition Training

The lack of transition training has been cited as a causal factor in many GA accidents. Accidents frequently result from pilots being unprepared for challenges presented by the new, or different, aircraft they are flying. Even when pilots are legally certificated to operate aircraft within a specific category and class, significant differences can exist among different types of aircraft within that category and class — thus necessitating the need for effective transition training.

Background

From 2001–2010, there were 1,250 fatal loss of control accidents. About half of these accidents occurred in the maneuvering and approach phases of flight — think stall/spin/crash.

It's also true that many accidents occur when pilots fly aircraft they're unfamiliar with. In fact, the first 50 to 100 hours in a new aircraft type are particularly dangerous, especially when a formal transition training program isn't followed.

What is Transition Training?

Imagine yourself sitting behind the wheel of a car that has a stick shift, but all you've ever driven is an automatic transmission. Sure it's a car like any other, but if you're driving a car with a stick shift, you'll need to know how to operate the gears and clutch. You'll need transition training from an automatic to the manual transmission.

Similarly, pilots who are transitioning to unfamiliar aircraft require not only stick and rudder development, but also specific training in the new aircraft's systems and with its operating characteristics to include normal, abnormal, and emergency procedures.

Remember — skills learned in some aircraft don't directly translate to other aircraft. Your new aircraft may look and feel like the one you're used to flying, but subtle differences can exist such as faster or slower performance, higher stall speeds, and variations in handling characteristics that could ultimately affect your reaction time and/or lead to loss of aircraft control in normal, adverse, and emergency conditions.

Transition training is important whenever you're operating an unfamiliar aircraft or avionics systems.



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Pilot's Tip of the Month

Transition Training (Cont.)

Stepping Down and Stepping Up

Transitioning to another aircraft works both ways — stepping down is just as important as stepping up. It's not just about learning how to fly a more complex airplane. It's also about learning to transition from high performance aircraft to aircraft with lower performance and complexity, which can be equally challenging.

The same rules apply when you're operating in unfamiliar environments — you need to train for your new environment as well.

Transition Training Program

Whether you're transitioning from higher- to lower-performance aircraft, or even to a different model, you should follow these three steps to ensure you have a sound transition training program:

- Hit the books.
- Train with a qualified instructor.
- And practice, practice, practice — twice a week is suggested to yield the best result.



Step 1: Hit the Books

You can get a leg up on your transition if you study the pilot's operating handbook first — especially if you've flown similar aircraft before. Your study topics should include basic characteristics of the aircraft's systems (e.g., fuel, electrical, control, hydraulic, avionics, and environmental) and how characteristics of the new aircraft differ from aircraft you have already flown.

Get a feel for what you can and can't do with the aircraft and focus on normal and abnormal procedures, performance characteristics, and what to expect on takeoff, landing, climb, cruise, descent, and glide. Also address the aircraft's limitations such as weight and balance, speeds, and wind limits. Know your aircraft's emergency procedures, speeds, power setting, and configurations for normal operations.

Step 2: Train with a Qualified Instructor

Finding the right instructor is key. Interview current owners, aircraft type clubs, or pilot organizations. They provide an excellent source of aircraft specific information, and a roster of instructors. Simulation training providers are another good source of information.

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Aviation Statistics

United States - Air Traffic By The Numbers

16,405,000 - Flights handled by the FAA annually
 45,000 - Average daily flights handled by the FAA
 10,000,000+ - Scheduled passenger flights annually
 5,400 - Aircraft in the sky at peak operational times
 24,100,000 - Square miles of oceanic airspace
 5,300,000 - Square miles of U.S. domestic airspace
 520 - Airport Traffic Control Towers
 147 - Terminal Radar Facilities
 19,633 - U.S. Airports
 5,082 - Public
 14,551 - Private
 21 - Air route traffic control centers
 14,000+ - Air Traffic Controllers
 2,900,000 - Passengers flown



Transition Training (Cont.)

Talk to more than one flight instructor. They must be experienced in the make and model of your aircraft. More importantly, they must have recent experience. Let them know about your experience and capabilities as well, and how you intend to use the aircraft.

Assess their communication style. Are they clear and easy to understand? Would they be an effective teacher?

Make sure your instructor uses a syllabus — a training roadmap that should contain training events and schedules, completion standards, and established roles and responsibilities for you and the instructor.

The National Association of Flight Instructors advocates the ACE (**Analyze, Create, Execute**) training method. **Analyze** the aircraft's performance. **Create** your list of concerns about the new aircraft. And **Execute** several flights similar to the type of operation you plan to do in the aircraft.



Step 3: Practice, Practice, Practice

It is important to practice with your instructor — twice a week is suggested to yield the best result — and in your operating environment. Develop personal performance figures and minimums, and develop your personal data at mission weights.

Practice slow speed maneuvering at altitude, manage distractions, seek regular refresher training, and document your achievement in the Wings Pilot Proficiency Program!



This Month in History

09 October 1999 (USA) – At a Saturday air show at Edwards Air Force Base, California, NASA Research Pilot Rogers E. Smith and Flight Test Engineer Robert R. Meyer, Jr., flew Lockheed SR-71A-LO 61-7980, NASA 844, on what would be the very last flight of a Blackbird. Although it was scheduled to fly again for the Sunday air show, a serious fuel leak prevented that flight.



WESTWIND

PROMOTIONS AND AWARDS



Pilot Promotions

Hal Morse WWA3615 - Sr. Command Captain +30
 Al Stallbaumer WWA107 - Sr. Command Captain +18
 Nicholas Baker WWA3229 - Sr. Command Captain +13
 Nathaniel Miller WWA1055 - Sr. Command Captain +12
 Jim Gesell WWA3461 - Sr. Command Captain +6
 Paul Runge WWA14 - Sr. Command Captain +6
 Brody Larsen WWA2700 - Sr. Command Captain +6

Recognition Awards

Al Stallbaumer WWA107 - 10,000 Hours
 Nicholas Baker WWA3229 - 7,500 Hours



Welcome New Pilots

Edgar Guinart - WWA3680 - Seattle Hub



WestWind Leadership Team

WestWind Executive Committee

President & CEO - Sean McConnell
 CIO - George Forster
 CAO & Chief Pilot - John Condon
 COO - Phil Cohen
 CMO - Hal Morse

WestWind Hub Management

COO - Phil Cohen
 Hub Ops Manager - Bob Armer

Hub Managers

Amsterdam - George Forster
 Atlanta - Hal Morse
 Calgary - Scott Robinson
 Chicago - Hal Morse
 Cincinnati - David Reason
 Dallas-Ft. Worth - Al Stallbaumer
 Denver - Brian Mills
 London Heathrow - Ken Rotker
 Los Angeles - Steve Canham
 Miami - Bob Armer
 New York - Tony Yonek
 Seattle - Dwayne White
 Singapore - Bob Strum
 Sydney - Kenneth Haynes

WestWind Regional Management

Alaska Regional Mgr - Scott Robinson
 Europa Regional Mgr - Vacant
 Caribe Regional Mgr - Braden Vonderau
 Hawaii Regional Mgr - Hal Morse
 Tahiti Regional Mgr - Sean McConnell

The WestWind Journal

Interim Editor - Karl Truman
 Interim Editor - John Condon