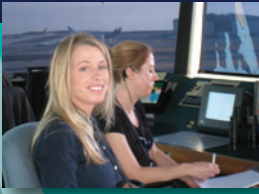




VOICES

A GLIMPSE INTO THE NEXT GENERATION
OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION, AFL-CIO



Every day our nation's air traffic controllers are responsible for ensuring the safety of the flying public. This highly dedicated group of people comprise a proud team that serves the public with perfection as its minimum acceptable level of performance.

As more and more veteran air traffic controllers head into retirement, a new generation of young men and women are stepping up to take their place. The next generation of air traffic controllers come from all walks of life and each of their stories is different, yet one thing remains the same – their dedication to safety, their profession and their fellow NATCA brothers and sisters.





When the controllers featured here were just beginning their careers they didn't know what to expect. From getting hired, to attending the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, to transitioning to their first facility for training, these men and women learned as they went along. Now all certified professional controllers, these 11 members of NATCA's next generation are ready to reflect on the beginning of their aviation safety careers and offer valuable insight and advice for all that will follow in their footsteps.

Through this interactive project, they would like to provide you with an in-depth look into their own personal experiences as they progressed along their journey to becoming a CPC. In addition to the questions and answers found here, you can learn more from these young men and women by visiting their personal Web pages at www.natcareloaded.com where you can watch a video interview with each controller at their respective facility as well as find additional questions and answers.

All of the information provided here comes directly from the people who lived through this experience, in their own words.



Dan D'Ambrosio
Houston Center (ZHU)
Hired May 2006

www.natcareloaded.com/dan.aspx

Why did you choose a career in air traffic control?

My father was a PATCO controller who was fired in 1981. Before he was fired, he would take me up in the tower at Miami International Airport. Ever since then I always wanted to be an air traffic controller.

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

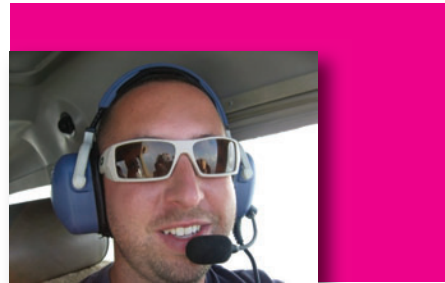
NATCA is the watchdog that keeps the flying public safe and gives me the ability to speak out, while protecting me from any repercussions. I got involved in NATCA simply because the FAA gave me the feeling I was not wanted. NATCA fought for the issues most important to me: per diem, leave, work rules etc.

Advice or words of wisdom?

Do not take the job for granted. You have to study and work hard, but the rewards are worth it.

Evan Munro
Fort Worth Center (ZFW)
Hired July 2006

www.natcareloaded.com/evan.aspx



What was training like?

Training is intense and you have to be mentally prepared for it when you come into work. Training with a lot of people can be very subjective and I learned very early on to listen to my instructors and work hard, which has paid off tremendously. The hardest part is trying to get used to a new trainer or working a new position, but in the end it feels great to know that I can join the ranks of other controllers around the world.

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

From filing a grievance to having someone to talk with about air traffic control, to providing information, there are many ways in which the union has been there for me. The inspiration to get involved started from day one, but I had to wait until I had a year in the Agency and bit more training. Eventually, I helped roll out a new web site for our local membership and have been involved ever since.

Jim Cnota
Chicago Center (ZAU)
Hired February 2007

www.natcareloaded.com/jim.aspx



What was training like?

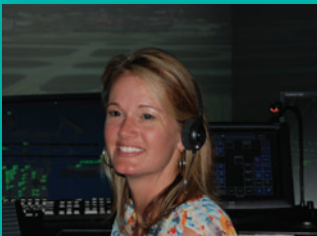
Training was definitely difficult. At Chicago Center, we use an accelerated training program known as functional training. It's supposed to allow people to check out after only 18 months at a facility. It's a lot of information in a short period of time. You can expect to have a roller coaster of emotions during the training process, including self doubt. But at the end, you feel like you accomplished something that you never thought could happen. It takes months or years, but it is a great feeling when done.

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

NATCA has helped me with medical questions, basically explaining what my rights are and how to fill out forms for employment. I became involved because of what I have seen them do for others. It is a testimonial to what you represent when a controller has a question and the first person they ask is their NATCA representative, not their supervisor. NATCA cares for, and is always thinking of, your best interest.

Advice or words of wisdom?

Study hard. Learn as much as possible because you might only need a maneuver once, but that one time might save someone else's life. It's a game of chess with major consequences.



Dawn Johnson
Atlanta Center (ZTL)
Hired July 2005

www.natcareloaded.com/dawn.aspx

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

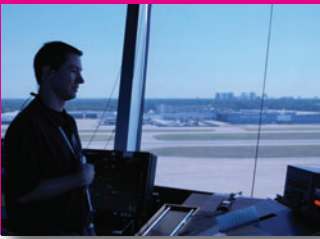
NATCA has shown me what it's like to have family at work. NATCA has been fighting for us new hires since we stepped foot in Oklahoma City.

What's an average day like?

With training, it was a roller coaster ride. Now that I have finished, every day is different and I really enjoy what I do. I couldn't imagine having any other career.

Advice or words of wisdom?

Study hard. Come into this job with a good attitude and a strong work ethic.



Joe Romero

Dallas Love Field Tower (DAL)

Hired June 2007

www.natcareloaded.com/joer.aspx

What was training like?

Training is a lot of things all in one. Each OJT instructor likes to do things different ways. There are many ways to handle a situation correctly. However, it does get frustrating when you've been taught something one way and then have a different instructor tell you to do something else. Checking out is not an overnight process; it will take months, even years, but do not get frustrated. You will have good days and days you want to forget. The important thing is to remain focused, pay attention and in time you will gain the skills you need to certify.

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

NATCA has shown me nothing but respect from day one. I chose to get involved when an FAA director told me "If you don't like it, leave," in response to how they justified paying us \$8/hour at the Academy. I felt as if the B-Scalers at my facility were not being fairly addressed, while the veterans making over twice as much did not have the same concerns. NATCA Reloaded is a fantastic program that addresses the concerns of the new controllers.

What's an average day like?

Sign in, go up to the tower and see who needs relief, then get into rotation.



Rob Reddeg

Southern California TRACON (SCT)

Hired January 2008

www.natcareloaded.com/rob.aspx

What has NATCA done for you?

NATCA is incredibly important because it gives me a voice! Being part of this union allows us to help make things better for everyone and allows us to get involved and be a part of change in all aspects of the air traffic control field. This includes everything from equipment in the facility to where the next convention should be held. It is a unique opportunity to guide your career field in the direction you think is best. I have also had the opportunity to attend the NATCA Convention, NATCA in Washington, as well as events in Oklahoma City. Until you experience these events in person, it is hard to understand the size, power and pull that our union has.

Sandra daMotta
Chicago Center (ZAU)
Hired January 2007

www.natcareloaded.com/sandra.aspx



Describe your background before joining the FAA:

Before I came to the FAA, I was primarily a flight instructor and contract pilot. I hold a commercial pilot certificate with single engine and multi-engine land and sea ratings as well as type ratings in both the Cessna Citation CE-500 series and the Douglas DC-3. I have also worked for Pratt & Whitney and Lockheed Martin and have been an aviation and aerospace enthusiast since the first airshow I attended at Moffett Field when I was five years old.

Why did you choose a career in air traffic control?

I chose to take the air traffic control path after watching the slow decline in job security within the airline and charter industries. I wanted a career in aviation that made a difference, paid the bills and provided good benefits.

Advice or words of wisdom?

Stay focused. It is very easy to fall off the training wagon and lose sight of the end goal. Though I would tell anyone that it's healthy to put the work aside during the weekends, I would also recommend that during the workweek, a student should make sure they get enough sleep and try to absorb as much information as they can. If the facility allows you to monitor sectors in your assigned area before you've completed DYSIM training, take advantage of it and learn as much as you can from veteran controllers about your area of specialization. This will help not only once you get to "the floor" but also in your DYSIM scenarios.

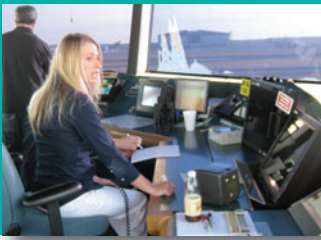
Advice or words of wisdom?

The best advice I could give is to be 150% ready to go, 100% of the time. Do everything you can on your free time, including breaks, evenings and time off to prepare yourself. Although it is a huge mountain to climb, there is a large group of people around you to help you succeed: NATCA.

What can you expect as a trainee?

Expect high standards, no matter where you go. We are dealing with people's lives every day, so we have to take every second seriously. Many of the CPCs have 10, 15 or even 20 years of experience, so they have a lot of information to pass on to us. This requires us to be prepared at all times during training, getting a good night's sleep and focusing on learning.





Lisa Stephenson

San Francisco Tower (SFO)

Hired May 2008

www.natcareloaded.com/lisa.aspx

Why did you choose a career in air traffic control?

It was kind of by luck, actually. Although air traffic control was my first choice as a job, I joined the Air Force without a job assignment and was lucky to get it. While I was in the Air Force, I realized what a good career ATC is outside of the military and decided to find a job with the FAA.

How important is NATCA to you?

At times, NATCA members seem to be the only people on our side when it comes to certain work-related issues. They are the ones who will stick their necks out for you when you need it. NATCA worked hard to get me, as a VRA hire and ex-military member, the ability to use my GI Bill benefits while training. It helped to offset my low pay while I was still training.

Advice or words of wisdom?

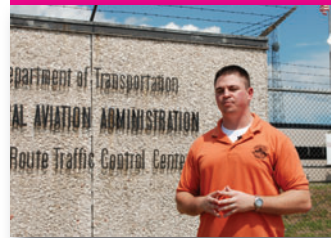
My advice would be to work hard during training and if you're having a problem with a specific item in training or with a particular trainer, don't be afraid to speak up – it's your career on the line.

Ryan Corley

Houston Center (ZHU)

Hired February 2006

www.natcareloaded.com/ryan.aspx



What was training like?

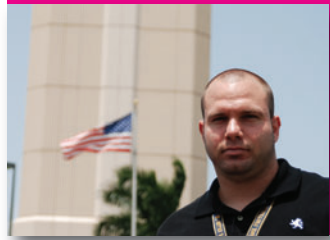
Functional Training was a steep learning curve for the first couple of months and then pretty routine after that. It involved a lot of studying and classroom time, which included drawing and memorizing maps, learning a lot of information quickly and a lot of up and down days, like a roller coaster. All in all, if you really put your mind to getting checked out, you more than likely will.

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

NATCA has played a vital role in my career from day one. NATCA has made sure I had and will have what is fair and right. I chose to get involved with NATCA because I want to make sure my future as a controller is the best it can be and that my chosen profession is protected. Be proud of choosing to become a controller and get involved. The future of ATC depends on our generation to step up and keep our profession strong.

Chris Caraynoff
Miami Center (ZMA)
Hired April 2006

www.natcareloaded.com/chris.aspx



What is an average day like?

An average work day consists of plugging in and usually working an hour to an hour and a half, then getting a 40-minute break. Times on position can go past the two hour mark, but those are few and far between. During the summer, we expect decreased traffic with a lot of weather, but in the winter, more traffic and good weather, with lots of wind. We are working five day weeks, but because my area is so short-staffed, overtime is common.

What has NATCA done for you and why have you gotten involved?

NATCA has been great so far, with lots of people extending their hands to make sure you make it here okay and that everyday life for you is peaceful. It's a great feeling knowing that the Union has your back. Someone, somewhere in NATCA, cares about your situation and will go to bat for you. If you make the effort to put yourself out there, you won't go unnoticed and someone will always be there.



Joe Segretto
Bakersfield Tower (BFL)
Hired June 2007

www.natcareloaded.com/joes.aspx

Advice or words of wisdom?

Always, always stay positive. This career demands an enormous amount of skill, concentration, and dedication day in and day out. When you arrive to your facility, study! study! study! You, the trainee, are a huge part of the success of the certification process. Go to work every day well rested and ready to train/learn. Do not have any confrontation with anyone in the facility, especially management. Let NATCA do all the talking and representing for you.

What do you like most about your job?

I love being an air traffic controller. The precision we have every day we go to work is incredible. The adrenaline rush of being relieved off position after a busy session is also amazing. Being involved in aviation and moving aircraft all over the sky every day is probably my favorite part. Taking aircraft from all over and bringing them all to one piece of concrete with the skill, precision, and knowledge we use everyday is like no other job in the world.

NATCA Reloaded is a program designed to assist and encourage NATCA's newest members as they make the transition from the FAA Academy, to their first facility and through the completion of their training to become a Certified Professional Controller (CPC). In addition to helping make your transition as easy as possible, NATCA Reloaded is also working to create and foster the development of NATCA's next generation of activists.

The most important thing for you to remember is that NATCA is here to help you! With more than 20,000 members, NATCA is one of the strongest and most influential labor unions in the federal sector. NATCA is also one of the most highly respected and prominent organizations in the aviation community. We represent not only air traffic controllers but other safety-related professionals, including engineers, traffic management coordinators and staff specialists.



Within the NATCA family you will discover some truly amazing people who will be there every step of the way as your progress through your career. From your fellow controllers, to your regional elected officials, and all the way up to the NATCA National Leadership, "We Are All Here For You!"

*"NATCA is always looking to the **future** and making sure we are given the best opportunities to make our profession the best it can be."*
– Ryan Corley (ZHU)



For more information:
www.natcareloaded.com
1.877.4.OKC.ATC
(1.800.465.2282)

“Being a NATCA member allows you to get involved and help be a part of change in all aspects of the air traffic control field. It is a **unique opportunity** to guide your career field in a direction that you think is best.”

– Jim Cnota (ZAU)

“Keep your eyes on the prize, lay low, keep your head down and come to work ready and prepared. Your **dream** of becoming an air traffic controller is within your reach.”

– Evan Munro (ZFW)

*“NATCA is important to me because at times they seem to be the only ones **on your side** when it comes to certain work-related issues. They are the ones that will stick their necks out for you when you need it.”*

– Lisa Stephenson (SFO)



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