

August 2009



# Medallion Foundation Review

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## Smokey Bay Air Homer, Alaska

Claire McCann is the owner and operator of Smokey Bay Air in Homer, Alaska. Claire and her staff of twelve operate out of the Homer airport serving four communities in the area. Even though Smokey Bay Air is a small operator Claire has been successfully met the requirements of three of the five stars in the Medallion Foundation's 5 Star Shield program. They include the Safety, Operational Control, and CFIT Star programs.

The success demonstrated by Smokey Bay Air validates that the Medallion Foundation's 5 star/shield program is not just for large operators.

Some of her biggest challenges and

A Safety Culture is Evident when Everyone does the Right Thing even When NO ONE is watching.

by Richard Harding

Medallion Foundation President

The culture in Alaska has made a significant shift in the last few years. The Medallion Foundation Five Star Shield program is working. In the years 1997-2000 (prior to the establishment of the foundation) Alaskan air carrier accidents averaged 36 per year with over 40 fatalities annually. From 2005 through 2008, the accident rate for Alaskan commercial carriers was reduced to an average of 19.25 (a reduction of nearly 50%). Fatal accidents during the same time frame went from 6.75 per year to 1.75 per year (a reduction of almost 75%). 2007 was the first time in history of aviation in Alaska when 135 operators went over a year without a fatal accident. That fatality free status continued for over twenty-seven months.

About two years ago, Nicholas Sabatini (retired), FAA Associate Administration for Aviation Safety, made the comment during a speech that Alaska has gone from having the worst accident statistics in the USA to the best. He said he believed the dramatic change was due to the Medallion Program.

Even though not all carriers are participants in the Medallion Program, the carriers that do participate carry most of the freight and passengers in the State and the Shield carriers are responsible for the majority of that.

Over the past thirty-seven months there has not been a fatal accident with Shield Medallion Foundation Members.\* Shield level members

obstacles in obtaining the stars were the time elements. Making time during business hours to ensure the "team" is working together for safety can be a struggle; but by learning to delegate and building the basic methodology of the safety culture does change the overall process.

McCann said, "With being involved with the Medallion Foundation, it has heightened the awareness of safety issues. Every employee at Smokey Bay is a "safety officer" which then gets everyone on board to see the end results of a safer operation."

One of the changes Smokey Bay has implemented in their flight risk assessments process was to standardize parameters used in assigning specific pilots to specific missions. In other words, the standardization of individual flight qualification parameters takes the guesswork out of the "go-no-go" process by removing the influence of pilot ego.

To describe their safety culture, Claire stated that employee awareness plus when the competitors depart their flights in bad weather and we decide not to go, we see it as not making it about the flight schedule, but making it safer. The flight risk assessment process ensures management is involved as risk is elevated. Claire says that she finds it gets easier to say "no go" when the risk factor is too high. Safety is the forefront of Smokey Bay Air operations!

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are those that have completed all five safety "Stars" and have developed a consistently audited safety culture. The Shield auditor's interview employees throughout the company, including new hires, to assure the safety culture permeates from top management to lowliest employee. These Shield level members maintain the lowest risk of accident of any air carrier in the world. Their insurance rates should reflect that.

I've been working, on behalf of the foundation, with Aon Insurance West to develop a "risk purchase group" for Shield Carriers. If we can significantly reduce premiums for Shield Carriers there will be a great incentive for other star carriers to get the the shield level which in turn should improve the accident statistics. This could result in a huge benefit for Medallion members.

\*One carrier had a fatal accident 24 months ago, but was not a Shield carrier at the time, but is now.

## What's HAPPENING!

"Alaskan Off Airport Operations Guide" on line  
<http://www.medallionfoundation.org/Tutorials.asp>

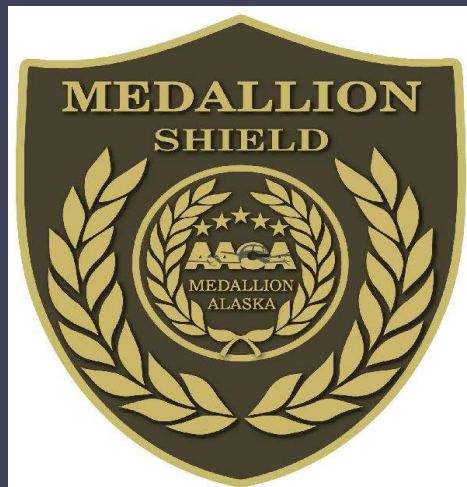
Aviation Expo North 2009 Fairbanks  
Oct 15-17, 2009  
<http://www.aviationnorth.org>

Seminars in Palmer Event  
[http://www.alaskajournal.com/stories/082109/loc\\_img14\\_001.shtml](http://www.alaskajournal.com/stories/082109/loc_img14_001.shtml)

## 2009's Award Ceremony October 30th, 2009

Shield Carriers  
Alaska Airlines  
ERA Aviation  
PenAir  
Taquan Air  
Wings of Alaska  
Wings Airways

Star Carriers  
Aero-Metric  
Arctic Transportation Services  
Aviation Management Directorate  
Bald Mountain Air Service



Palmer Pilot Adventure was a great success!!!

Lt. Gov. General Campbell attended the 1st annual event. Making the proclamation of August as being the Aviation Safety Motnth.



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Other benefits from the Board of Directors  
The changes that was made in our dues structure.

The Board of Directors have decided to allow a credit for training classes to encourage greater class participation.

-Maintain the membership fees as they stand.

-The clients' membership fee will serve as a credit towards class/training up to 150% of the dues paid. Once the 150% level has been met, the client will pay full price. This will off set the cost of training for the client and show that there is investment in the program.

Bering Air  
Hageland Aviation Services  
Lynden Air Cargo, LLC  
Missionary Aviation Repair Center  
Pacific Airways, Inc.  
Prism Helicopters, Inc.  
Yute Air

For more information

[www.Alaskaaircarriers.org](http://www.Alaskaaircarriers.org)

907-277-0071

as of Sept 1st, 2009

## PA18 SuperCub Simulator UPDATE

Until Sept 3rd, 2009 the Supercub Sim is located at Arctic Air Flight School



in Palmer. Please contact Medallion Foundation for usage of this one-of-a-kind sim!

**Aviation Appreciation Day at the Alaska State Fair. Friday Sept 4th, 2009. Medallion will be featuring the PA18 Sim at the fair!**

Sept 12th, 2009 the PA18 will be located at the Medallion headquarters for the winter.

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-Eliminate ATD and PA-18's fees to promote better usage.

-Non-members will pay for services, such as TapRoot Drilldown, PA-18, classes.

This fall the new back side to the web will be available and each client will be able to see what their company credit is and be able to apply it towards training.

## CFI/DPE & PA-18 Program

by Dennis Ward, Executive Director Medallion Foundation

### THE PHONE CALL

When Bob, the CFII, answered the telephone he heard his friend's voice Dan. Dan called to ask Bob if he would teach Dan's son how to fly in Dan's supercub. Bob was excited about the prospect of getting some more tail wheel time and readily agreed to the deal.

Ok so here is the big question-what are the two primary assumptions about outcome? This could generate hours of discussion as there are many possible answers but there are two universal assumptions. The first assumption is that Bob will teach Dan's son how to fly and pass the private pilot practical test. The second assumption is that Bob will make sure that Dan's cub doesn't get wrecked. These two assumptions are a major part of what Dan is going to pay for and what is expected.

Flight instructors--let me ask you question. What kind of "supervision in the cockpit" training did you receive during training or certification for your initial flight instructor rating? During training you probably practiced correcting "common student errors" with your instructor filling the role of a "student". Then on your check ride you demonstrated correcting common student errors to the FAA inspector who was giving you the check and who was also filling the role of the student. We learned how to correct common student errors like not being able to maintain altitude or heading, inappropriate control input during spin entry and recovery, failure to tune and identify a frequency etc. What about training on how far you can let a student go on a botched landing before you take over?

Would it surprise you that in Alaska more than 50% of the instructional accidents involved inadequate supervision in the cockpit? Some of these accidents resulted in fatal injuries to both the instructor and the pilot. According to NTSB contributing factors in many of these accidents were loss of directional control, complacency, and failure to take prompt corrective action and so on.

About 3 months after Bob started teaching Dan's son how to fly, I was sitting at my desk looking out my window, minding my own business. It just so happens that my desk was in the Fairbanks Alaska Flight Standards District Office and my window looked directly out on 19R1L, the main runway in Fairbanks and also the taxiway. I was sitting there doing my Operations Inspector's job and happened to look out on the taxiway just as Bob went by with Dan's son in Dan's super cub. Dan's son was going to be ready for his check ride in about a week and had been an exceptional student. Bob was having Dan's son practice fast taxi with the tail up. About 2 seconds after I looked out the window I saw the super cub swerve sharply to the left and then the right gear folded and the right wing began

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## New Member

Alaska Department of Public Safety

Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Aircraft Section

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any questions or comments about the Medallion Foundation contact us at: [info@MedallionFoundation.org](mailto:info@MedallionFoundation.org)

or  
907-743-8050

spreading white paint on the taxiway. Can you imagine how bad it would be to wreck your friend's super cub! But can you imagine how bad it would be to have an on scene witness, namely a FAA Ops Inspector? According to the NTSB the causes of this accident were inadequate cockpit supervision and complacency on the part of the instructor. What that really boils down to is Bob didn't provide an adequate amount of cockpit supervision.

### A FEW MORE QUESTIONS

Now a few more questions-did you receive any training on how to establish your personal limits as a flight instructor? How do you guard the controls? Can you define how far you can let a student go before taking control to prevent an accident? More than 50% of the instructors in Alaska mishaps didn't know, and my guess is that there is a similar picture in your area. Remember, as an instructor you are being paid to make sure the training is appropriate and in accordance with PTS or other standards and regulations, and you are being paid to bring the student and airplane back in one piece.

### ABOUT THE MEDALLION FOUNDATION

In Alaska, the Medallion Foundation is a federally funded non-profit aviation safety group is striving to make a difference in general and commercial aviation. The mission of the Medallion Foundation is to reduce aviation accidents in Alaska by fostering a new safety culture and by promoting higher safety standards through research, education, auditing, advocacy of higher flight-training standards and elevating aviation safety through conscious endeavor, not maintaining the status quo

The stats are clear on showing a reduction in Alaskan commercial aviation accidents since Medallion Foundation inception in 2001. Introducing a new program and a one-of-a-kind aviation-training device, Medallion seeks to achieve the same results with Alaskan general aviation and has aspirations to project lessons learned to general aviation as a whole. The one-of-a-kind aviation training device is a 3 axis motion PA-18-150 simulator.

The Medallion Foundation has been working to identify and correct deficiencies within the knowledge and skill base of instructors and DPE's in Alaska for several years but until recently didn't have a tool to address skill. This motion base simulator provides the skill tool. Our PA-18 simulator is designed to help facilitate the recognition of leading causes of accidents and to provide a tool that allows instructors and pilots to practice judgment and decision making before getting in an airplane. Our goal is to reduce general aviation accidents through more focused aeronautical decision making, a better understanding and application of practical test standards (PTS) for pilot certificates, and viewing the PTS as a minimum standard applicable before and after the check ride.

Thus far, we have developed two different scenarios for use in the super cub simulator. The first one addresses cockpit supervision for

the instructor. The second one is specific to landing accidents which occur during off airport operations common to hunting season.

## COCKPIT SUPERVISION FOR THE FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

Successful completion of any scenario regarding cockpit supervision is predicated upon inclusion of key elements to be considered before and applied during the scenario. This platform provides instructor the opportunity to see the consequences of decisions or lack of decisions before getting into an airplane. As an Instructor Pilot (IP) training another IP toward gaining practical experience in cockpit supervision, care should be given to provide emphasis, discussion, and realistic areas for application regarding the following main concepts:

Identifying and Establishing Personal Limits as a CFI clearly sets limitations and provides structure for flight lessons to follow. This includes honestly answering the questions of: (a) How far will I let a student go before intervention and (b) How far will I expand my comfort level in the pursuit of training (where is the point of diminishing returns)? An IP cannot let a situation get so far out hand that when a PIT does the unthinkable, the IP cannot recover.

Practice in Guarding the Controls provides a layer of incident/accident prevention. When providing instruction, give thought to items such as: (a) how to guard the controls when "supervising" while a pilot-in-training (PIT) is flying and (b) how to brief the control guarding process beforehand.

Avoiding CFI Complacency in the cockpit by willfully not allowing your comfort level with a "star student" or a more experienced PIT influence the level of IP supervision or cause the relinquishing of more aircraft control authority to the PIT. An IP has the final authority over all flights in which they give instruction/supervision and should act accordingly with the same vigor and adherence to procedure regardless of PIT experience and/or credentials.

Developing and Maintaining Skills in Determining and Exercising Judgment requires practice just as maneuvers and instrument skills need practice and direct application in order to avoid atrophy. Adequate supervision includes providing the instructor opportunities to practice and refine judgment and decision-making skills with pre and post-flight learner-centered discussions.

Providing for and ensuring all instructional flights are never in danger of becoming a statistic is a key focal point in addressing cockpit supervision. In this, the successful outcome of any instructional flight should never be in doubt as adequate cockpit supervision will identify and appropriately address flight performance deficiencies or anomalies before they become contributing factors to an aircraft accident or incident.

## OFF AIRPORT LANDING ACCIDENT SCENARIO

Many of you know that Alaska has a lot of super cubs and that Alaska has a lot of off airport accidents when hunting season starts in August. Medallion has developed a scenario in the super cub simulator that address common causes of off airport landing accidents. Based on a moose hunt, these scenarios are for flight instructors to practice recognizing and avoiding, and teaching recognition and avoidance, of the causes of off airport accidents before getting into the airplane. The scenarios are also available pilots to practice recognition and avoidance of the most common causes of off airport accidents. Scenario conditions include wind and other weather factors, short runways, take off's and landings at gross weight, and identification and use of personal performance parameters.

#### OTHER MEDALLION ATD'S

The Medallion Foundation recognizes the need for enhanced training outside of the cockpit and has provided Aviation Training Devices throughout Alaska (Category III Basic ATDs). While originally provided to address training requirements for Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT) Avoidance, these ATDs can be utilized to hone instrument flying skills, practice in recognition of deteriorating weather conditions, and for a multitude of scenario-based training modules.

With an enhanced terrain data package, created by merging high-resolution satellite imagery with terrain data models, these ATDs are capable of accurately replicating mountain pass flying, VFR cross-country planning, and basic route orientation with infinitely variable and pilot-controllable weather conditions. In some areas the graphics are so realistic that those flying in the simulation and wanting to see their house have been surprised to see their car in the driveway or their airplane tied down on their grass strip.

The Medallion Foundation provides these units at zero-cost and are available to flight instructors and anyone else with at least a student pilot certificate. You should take the time and stop by one of our 10 locations throughout Alaska: Anchorage, Bethel, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Palmer, and Wasilla.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE TO THOSE FLYING TO ALASKA SOON

If you are flying to Alaska soon and plan to tour around the state you will wind up flying through one of Alaska's passes-Atigun, Windy, Merrill, Rainy, and others. These passes are littered with the remains of aircraft, and in many cases, bones. Our ATD located at the Anchorage Lake Hood float plan leasing office has software on it to fly all the passes. Our ATD's in Ketchikan, Juneau, and Fairbanks also have all of the pass data sets installed. Use of these devices is free even to instructors using them to instructional purposes. You should stop in and take a flight before you tackle the real deal. It could save you a lot of trouble.

For more information regarding the Medallion Foundation, the CFI/DPE program, the PA-18 simulator, or other ATD's please call or stop by our office: Medallion Foundation 5520 Lake Otis Parkway, Suite 104, Anchorage, Alaska, 99507. (907) 743-8050, or visit us at [medallionfoundation.org](http://medallionfoundation.org).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dennis Ward is a retired FAA Operations Inspector with CFII, MEI, Commercial ASES, ASEL, and Multiengine ATP with a little over 16,000 hours. Formerly he was a pilot examiner and Director of Operations for a commuter airline in Fairbanks Alaska. He is now the Executive Director of the Medallion Foundation.

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