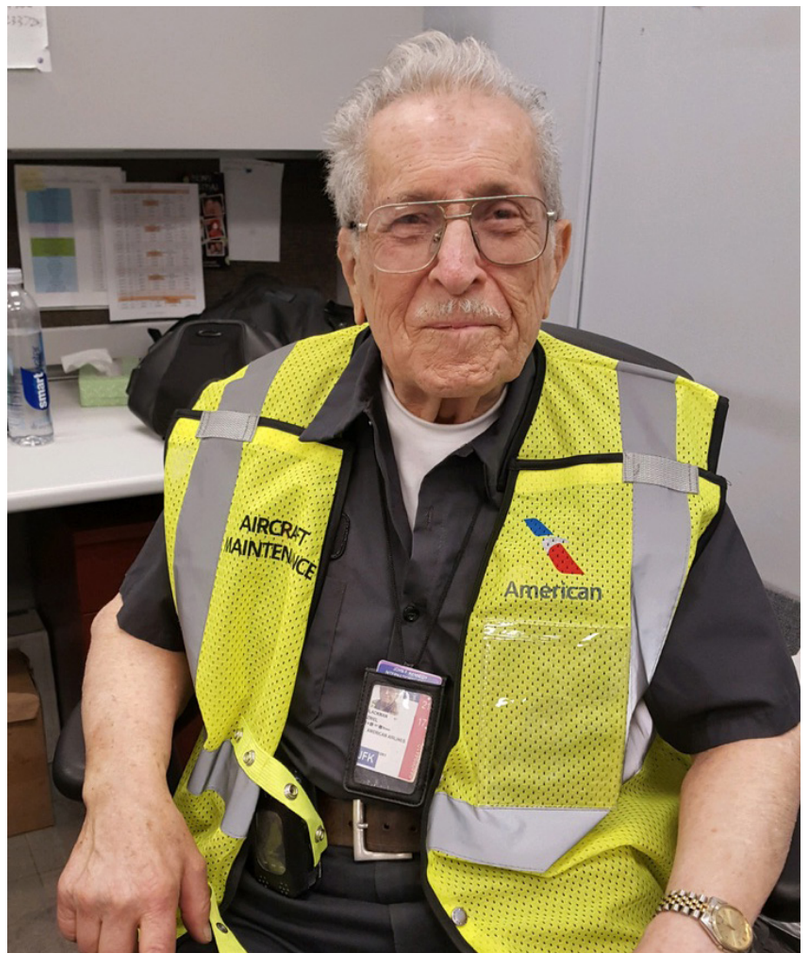
# Age is just a number




I could start this column by telling you how much I love my job working in Aircraft Maintenance. I could tell you that it's never really felt like a job because it's a craft I love and take great pride in every day. I could share that I've worked on more than 50 different aircraft types during my career or that I served with the U.S. Army in Korea at a facility located across from the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. Yes, M.A.S.H. Yes, that M.A.S.H.

But instead, I'll start with the reason I was asked to share my story. This year marks my 75th as an aviation maintenance technician at American Airlines. That's right — 75 years. I started just before I turned 17; I'm now 92. That has landed me in the Guinness Book of World Records for having the "Longest Career as an Airline Mechanic." But don't think for a second that this is a retirement letter. See, American keeps buying new planes – in fact, we have the youngest fleet among major U.S. carriers. Many of these new planes are from Boeing, which happen to be my favorite to work on. And while I may not be as hands on as I used to be, I still do some sheet metal work from time to time. My primary role, however, is coordinating our team members so they're safe and successful at getting our planes back in service.

You might find this hard to believe, but I still see every day as a new challenge. I always have. My late wife, Dolores, knew it too. She used to tell me, "Go to work; go play with your friends." We were married 57 years before she passed away about seven years ago. But I still hear those words, because they're true. My colleagues are my friends. And they are the finest group of aviation mechanics in the world.

When I'm not working to maintain our fleet, you can find me restoring vintage aircraft for the Historical Aircraft Restoration Project at Floyd Bennett Field, a few miles west of my work home — John F. Kennedy International Airport. I guess that makes me an antique fixing an antique. It's possible I know some of our aircraft as well as you know your kids, but I consider that a good quality in a mechanic. And while I will eventually leave our fleet in the capable hands of my colleagues, American's maintenance hangar at JFK will always be home. My fellow mechanics — my friends — have made sure of that.

On behalf of American and my more than 100,000 colleagues, thanks for flying with us today.



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