American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Shaping the industry

1/8/2021

I was 18 when I stepped foot on an airplane for the first time. Not as a pilot, but as a first-time passenger on my way from my home in Concord, New Hampshire, to attend the Naval Academy. I planned to be on a ship, but those plans were quickly changed my junior year when I was introduced to aviation. From then on, I knew I wanted to fly. I flew eight years of active duty in the Navy before I joined American Airlines more than 30 years ago.

About five years ago, I knew I wanted to give back to a career that has done so much for me. I ran for and was elected the Boston Chair of the Allied Pilots Association (APA), the union representing American's pilots. It's through that work that I became part of the APA's Boeing 737 MAX Return to Service Ad Hoc Committee.

For the past 20 months, this group has worked side by side with our colleagues in American's Flight, Training and Flight Service departments, as well as the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, which represents American's flight attendants. Our mission was clear: Assist in the safe return of the 737 MAX for American Airlines.

Safety has always been a universal common ground for the company, our unions and every team member at American. And we know now, more than ever, that the best solutions are ones we develop together. Returning the 737 MAX to service is no exception to this. As the Ad Hoc Committee, we took our experience as pilots, partnered with leadership and provided input to both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Boeing. We helped shape the industry when it comes to pilot training, checklists and procedures, providing a map not only for American's pilots, but all 737 MAX pilots. It's work that I'm incredibly proud of, and, beyond that, I'm confident in it.

Just as pilot training is critical, so is the work that our Tech Ops team has managed since the aircraft was taken out of service in 2019. It's something I witnessed firsthand — both when I ferried our final 737 MAX from Roswell, New Mexico, to our base maintenance facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and when the Ad Hoc Committee visited Tech Ops –

Tulsa to learn more about our comprehensive storage program. Our Tech Ops team has spent more than 64,000 hours keeping these aircraft in impeccable shape with regular care and maintenance, making sure that when the aircraft was recertified, we were ready.

Before returning any 737 MAX back to service, the Tech Ops team will complete all FAA-required maintenance, including updating software. In addition to completing an Operational Readiness flight and being signed off on by the FAA, our FAA-licensed aviation maintenance technicians (AMTs) inspect and sign off on every airplane. They're one of the many behind-the-scenes heroes who keep our airline moving every day.

As a pilot, my greatest responsibility is the safety of my passengers and crew. And as a dad, the same is true. Just as I look forward to flying my own family on a 737 MAX, I look forward to doing the same for you and yours.

Capt. Peter Gamble
Boeing 737 (BOS)