



Q: I retired after more than 30 Navy years. During my service I flew in all kinds of Navy, Marine and Air Force aircraft. I believed then that all military pilots were experts, and on most flights I managed to hide my fears.

Now that I'm a senior civilian and my adult kids and grandkids live many miles away, I need to get the courage to take commercial airline flights. How can I fight this nagging fear? *JRMcK, San Diego CA*

A: First of all, since you managed to make it through all those military flights, you should have no trouble with airline experiences. Today's commercial aviation is the most reliable form of public transportation, much more safe than auto, train, bus and cruise ship. There are many sophisticated warning and back-up systems in passenger aircraft to make flying trouble free.

When you book your first civilian air journey, it may help to take a relative or other companion with you. It could be a calming influence during check-in and on the flight. Also, consider just one relaxing drink at the airport bar before boarding.