



Black box inventor and air safety pioneer Dr. David Warren named 2016 ICAO Edward Warner Award recipient

Montréal, 28 September 2016 – The 41st Edward Warner Award, the highest honour in international civil aviation, was conferred posthumously on Australia's Dr. David Ronald de Mey Warren yesterday evening by the President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu.

Dr. Warren was recognized by the ICAO Council and the international civil aviation community for the outstanding contributions to aviation safety – made possible by his invention and refinement of the first-ever aircraft flight recorder, or black box.

The award ceremony took place on the opening day of ICAO's 39th triennial Assembly, with hundreds of international dignitaries on hand to see President Aliu present the award to three of Dr. Warren's children.

"Flight recorders are one of our most relied upon resources for the improvement of aviation safety," President Aliu highlighted, "and I wish to acknowledge here the tremendous debt of gratitude owed to Dr. Warren's vision, commitment and tenacity, and for his far reaching contributions to international civil aviation."

In 1953, Dr. Warren was a jet-fuel expert recruited to a special team assembled to analyze the mysterious mid-air explosions being experienced by the world's first commercial jet aircraft, the de Havilland Comet. In the course of this work he realized how valuable it would be for post-accident safety analysis if a recording were available of what had transpired on the aircraft prior to their accidents.

Having recently observed one of the world's first miniature recorders being demonstrated at a trade fair, he began to imagine how such a device could be adapted for use in modern commercial aircraft, eventually developing a first demonstration unit.

"While today we all understand and appreciate the safety benefits of Dr. Warren's inspiration, like many innovations his was first met with scepticism. But consistent with his passion for innovation, and his commitment to help prevent accidents and save lives, Dr. Warren persevered with his idea to the benefit of air transport and its now billions of yearly passengers," Dr. Aliu stressed.

As his innovation became widely adopted in the ensuing decades, Dr. Warren went on to enjoy an illustrious scientific career characterized by numerous recognitions and honorariums. Notable among these was his appointment as Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2002, and the Royal Aeronautical Society's awarding him the Lawrence Hargrave Award in 2001.



The President of ICAO Council, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu conferred the 41st Edward Warner Award posthumously upon Dr. David Ronald de Mey Warren in recognition for his outstanding contributions to aviation safety.

Resources for Editors

About the ICAO Edward Warner Award

Named in honour of the first President of the ICAO Council, Dr. Edward Warner of the United States, ICAO's Edward Warner Award is bestowed once every three years on an individual or institution in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the safe and orderly development of civil air transport. [More information here.](#)

About cockpit flight recorders

Audio recordings from cockpit voice recorders supplement flight data by providing related details on flight crew responses, and by aiding in assessments of how radio communications or other outside distractions may have been a factor in an accident. Their data has assisted investigators' understanding of how aircraft perform, both before and during an accident or incident, as well as providing useful information for airline flight data analysis programmes.

About ICAO

A specialized agency of the United Nations, ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation throughout the world. It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, capacity and environmental protection, amongst many other priorities. The Organization serves as the forum for cooperation in all fields of civil aviation among its 191 Member States.

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