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Captain Michael Gitt Papers - Mrs. Cornelia K. Gitt - Wives Safety Petition, 1952

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 12:41:42

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per 100 Million Plane Miles" shows this. The author has chosen the parameters of plane miles and accidents rather than the usual ones of passenger fatalities per passenger mile because it is more representative of the pilot's viewpoint. He flies many thousands of miles per year, and from his personal safety angle it matters little if there are one or one hundred passengers riding behind him. He is particularly interested, however, in what is likely to happen during the millions of miles he will fly during his career.

Figure 1 is a plot of accidents and fatal accidents per 100 million plane miles for all flying by U.S. scheduled domestic and international airlines for the years 1938-50. All figures are taken from Civil Aeronautics Board records and the Board's definition of an accident ("involving serious injury to persons and/or substantial damage to the aircraft") was used with no screening. The mileage for all types of flying, revenue, non-revenue, charter, ferry, test, and training was used, for it is obvious that the pilots were exposed to all types.

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn is that the record of both types of accidents has improved tremendously over the years, with accidents dropping from a rate of 48 to 10, and fatal accidents from approximately 8 to 1.5. This

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is indeed improvement.

In following the trend of the curves, several points are of significance. First is the rapid improvement in the years 1938-1942. The pilots attribute this primarily to the influence of the Independent Air Safety Board. There were, of course, other factors involved, notably the wide introduction of the DC-3, but it is the pilots' opinion that a large share of this improvement was due to the many reforms and aggressive actions of the Air Safety Board during its brief life. While it is not the purpose of this paper to indulge in the controversy which has raged for years around this board, it appears desirable to comment in passing that the pilots still believe in the principle of independence involved, even though we feel that the present CAB Safety Bureau is doing a good job. We feel that if a board comprised of experts has the power of enforcement, rather than having its recommendations and policy tempered by a higher authority of non-technical membership, greater safety progress would result with marked benefit to the industry.

The second period of interest in Figure 1 is the war years, 1943-45, in which while accidents declined slightly, fatal accidents continued at a high level. This we attribute to inexperienced personnel, both flight and ground, and to the

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