NPS55PK76071

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE VARIABILITY OF

MONTHLY MAJOR AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT RATES

by

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July 1976

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.

Prepared for:
Naval Safety Center
Norfolk, Virginia 23511

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
Monterey, California

Rear Admiral I. W. Linder, USN   Jack R. Borsting
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     The purpose of this report is to inform the sponsor of
results obtained using multiple regression techniques to identify
human and/or aircraft variables which account for the variability
in monthly major aircraft accident rates.

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER NPS-55Pk76071	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Factors Involved in the Variability of Monthly Major Aircraft Accident Rates.		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Technical Report. April - July 76.
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Gary K. Poock		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduage School Monterey, CA. 93940		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS N6339376P000001
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Safety Center Norfolk, Virginia 23511		12. REPORT DATE July 76
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 14
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS(if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) UNCLASSIFIED
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Accidents
Major Aircraft Accidents
Multiple Regression.

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Results are presented showing the development of regression equations to help determine human and/or aircraft variables which appear to account for the variability in monthly mjaor aircraft accident rates.

DD FORM 1473 EDITION OF 1 NOV 65 IS OBSOLETE
1 JAN 73
S/N 0102-014-6601

FOREWARD

This report is one of several being generated during
a two year investigation into a variety of questions concerning
major aircraft accidents.

NOTE: All reference to accident rates in this paper are in
terms of the number of accidents per 10,000 flight
hours.

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1. Introduction.

Previous work by this author and military officers working for him has been reported in Poock (1976) and Maxwell and Stucki (1975).

This report represents the work of the author and two military officers, Lt. Gary Johnson and Lt. Cdr. Lawrence Bucher who are currently working with the author in an attempt to use multiple regression techniques to identify variables which account for the variability in monthly major aircraft accident rates. The research described here deals with the data at an aircraft type and command level, versus the work of Maxwell and Stucki (1975) which concentrated on a macro view of the Navy as a whole.

The purpose of this paper is to present the equations which have been developed during the past three months. Each equation is the best result at this point in time, after having tried approximately ten different forms of equations for each of the aircraft types and commands. As the reader is probably aware, the development of a regression equation is somewhat of an art because the number of variables and forms of those variables is limitless, i.e., one can use the raw data, the square of the raw data, the cube root of the raw data, etc., which is purely up to the equation developer. Hence what is presented here is the best equations developed so far, after having tried some ten different alternative forms and combinations of variables. Better equations accounting for more of the variability in major aircraft accident rates may be found in future efforts but no guarantee can be

made, since the best combination of variables may already
have been found. One should also note that the regression
technique is used here to identify important variables rather
than to be used as a predictive technique. Prediction would
not always be possible as some variables are only known after
the accident occurs. If possible, future efforts will examine
"non-accident" pilots to compare distributions of their
variables with "accident" pilot variable distributions.

2. Equation Development.

The regression program used was that of a forward inclusion type. It first brings in the independent variable most highly correlated with the dependent variable (monthly accident rate) and then continues to search for the next variable if it will account for a significant additional amount of the variability in the dependent variable. Equation development is termianted when unused variables would be of no useful benefit when inserted in the equation.

The following variables were mutually chosen by the investigator and Safety Center personnel for analysis at a command level and an aircraft type level. The analysis in each case uses data for the time period July 71 - June 74.

The dependent variable was monthly accident rate for the command or aircraft type.

Independent variables used from each accident were:

1. DNA - Years experience as a designated Naval aviator.

2. TTIME - Pilot's total flight time in aircraft model in which accident occurred.

3. AGE - pilot's age

4. TOT90 - Total flight hours in previous 90 days

5. NITE90 - Total night flight hours in previous 90 nights.

6. CLDAY - Number of day carrier landings in last 30 days.

7. CLNITE - Number of night carrier landings in last 30 nights

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8. ACTOUR - Number of aircraft tours for the
    aircraft.

9. ACHRS - Aircraft flight hours since last major
    or minor inpsection.

10. DAY90 - Total day flight hours in previous 90
    days.

Various forms of the independent variables and some
combinations of the variable were used to arrive at the follow-
ing equations. The R^2_{adj} figure is the amount of variability
in the dependent variable, accident rate (Y), accounted for
by the independent variables in the equation. The $(1 - \alpha)$
figure can be interpreted to refer to the confidence level with
which one can assume that these variables properly belong in
the equation. The α level usually means there is an α amount
of chance that the equation is not statistically correct, but
the reverse $1 - \alpha$ interpretation may be easier for some to
interpret or understand.

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3. Aircraft Analysis:

The following equations apply to the respective individual aircraft or combinations of aircraft as designated and for which sufficient data were available

A-7 R^2_{adj} = .55016   (1 - α) of .99

$$Y = 0.27170 \sqrt{CLDAY} - 0.01856 \ (CLNITE)^2$$

$$+ 0.21346 \sqrt{NITE90} + 4.01164 \sqrt{DNA}$$

$$- 0.88896 \ (DNA) - 3.70545$$

A-6 R^2_{adj} = .40275   (1 - α) of .75

$$Y = 16.28967 - 0.04604 \ (DNA)^2 + 2.33592 \sqrt{DNA}$$

$$- 20.30561 \sqrt{ACTOUR} + 5.34649 \ (ACTOUR)$$

$$+ 0.05874 \sqrt{TTIME}$$

A-4 R^2_{adj} = .45907   (1 - α) = .99

$$Y = -0.02157 \ (DNA)^2 + 0.00151 \ [ACTOUR \times ACHRS]$$

$$+ 0.85168 \sqrt{DNA} + 0.54683 \sqrt{NITE90}$$

$$- 0.0096 \ [TOT90 \times NITE90] - 1.23815$$

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<u>ATTACK</u> R^2_{adj} = .74021 $(1 - \alpha)$ = .99
(A3,A4,A5,A6,A7)

$$Y = 1.01024 - 0.01845 \, (ACTOUR)^2 + 0.00445 \, (ACHRS)$$

$$- 0.00763 \, [NITE90 \times CLDAY] + 0.94584 \, \sqrt{CLNITE}$$

$$- 0.0001 \, [TTIME \times DAY90]$$

<u>FIGHTERS</u> R^2_{adj} = .40458 $(1 - \alpha)$ = .99
(F4, F8, F9)

$$Y = 1.21906 \, \sqrt{ACTOUR} + 0.23768 \, \sqrt{DAY90}$$

$$+ 0.01897 \, (CLDAY)^2 + 2.38695 \, \sqrt{CLDAY}$$

$$- 0.92126 \, (CLDAY) - 2.48215$$

<u>F-4</u> R^2_{adj} = 0.34799 $(1 - \alpha)$ = .95

$$Y = 0.19142 \, \sqrt{DAY90} - 0.03663 \, (CLNITE)^2$$

$$+ 0.17982 \, \sqrt{TTIME} - 0.01302 \, (DNA)^2$$

$$- 1.59073$$

<u>HELO</u> R^2_{adj} = 0.09308 $(1 - \alpha)$ = .90

$$Y = 0.00062 \, (TTIME) + 0.65405$$

<u>PROPS</u> $R^2_{adj} = 0.43250$ $(1 - \alpha) = .95$

$$Y = 0.00002 \ [\text{TTIME} \times \text{NITE90}] - 0.00022 \ (\text{NITE90})^2$$

$$- 0.00001 \ [\text{AGE} \times \text{TTIME}] + 0.00108 \ [\text{CLDAY} \times \text{DNA}]$$

$$- 0.00595 \ [\text{CLNITE}]^2 + 0.35935$$

4. Command Analysis

<u>CNATRA</u> $R^2_{adj} = .33$ $(1 - \alpha) = .90$

$$Y = - .31346 + .11248 \ \sqrt{\text{ACHRS}}$$

$$- .00003 \ (\text{ACHRS})^2 - .00002 \ (\text{DAY90})^2$$

$$+ .03482 \ \sqrt{\frac{\text{TTIME}}{\text{DNA}}} - .00092 \left(\frac{\text{TTIME}}{\text{DNA}}\right)$$

<u>MARPAC</u> $R^2_{adj} = .392$

$$Y = 1.26335 - .32047 \ (\text{ACTOUR})^2$$

$$+2.21178 \ (\text{ACTOUR}) + .01042 \ (\text{NITE90})^2$$

$$-19.20769 \left(\frac{\text{NITE90}}{\text{DAY90}}\right) - .00565 \ (\text{ACHRS})$$

$$- .00462 \ (\text{WINGS})^2$$

where WINGS ≊ AGE - DNA

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<u>AIRLANT</u> $R^2_{adj} = .429$ $(1 - \alpha) = .99$

$$Y = .89771 + .11823\sqrt{ACHRS} - .00002(ACHRS)^2$$

$$- \frac{464.21653}{(TOT90)^2} - .00002\left(\frac{DNA}{TTIME}\right)^2$$

$$- 4.76996\sqrt{\frac{TTIME}{DNA}}$$

<u>AIRPAC</u> $R^2_{adj} = .457$ $(1 - \alpha) = .995$

$$Y = 1.47479 - \frac{670.77272}{(DAY90)^2} - .00134(WINGS)^2$$

$$+ .15733(ACTOUR) + \frac{304.94442}{(ACHRS)^2}$$

$$+ .00001(ACHRS)^2$$

<u>MAR LANT</u> $R^2_{adj} = .565$ $(1 - \alpha) = .99$

$$Y = - .17128 + .88657\sqrt{DNA} + .52634\sqrt{NITE90}$$

$$- .06351(NITE90) - 57.37027\left(\frac{DNA}{TTIME}\right)$$

$$- .00115(TTIME) + .06901(CLNITE)^2$$

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MARTC $R^2_{adj} = .799$ $(1 - \alpha) = .99$

$$Y = -.36132 + 65.28325 \left(\frac{NITE90}{DAY90} \right)$$

$$+ .00328 \, (TTIME) - .00008 \left(\frac{TTIME}{DNA} \right)^2$$

$$- .41913 \, (NITE90) + .00385 \, (WINGS)^2$$

NAVAL RESERVES $R^2_{adj} = .813$ $(1 - \alpha) = .999$

$$Y = .83553 + .00084 \, (NITE90)^2 - .56367 \left(\frac{NITE90}{DAY90} \right)^2$$

$$- \frac{311.23233}{(ACHRS)^2} - .22889 \sqrt{CLDAY}$$

$$+ .00002 \left(\frac{TTIME}{DNA} \right)^2$$

NASC + RDTE $R^2_{adj} = .808$ $(1 - \alpha) = .95$

$$Y = -1.21331 + .71262 \, (NITE90)^2$$

$$+ .23598 \sqrt{TTIME} + \frac{19.68521}{(DNA)^2}$$

$$- .61421 \sqrt{\frac{DNA}{TTIME}} + \frac{182.91525}{(TOT90)^2}$$

$$+ .38527 \sqrt{TOT90}$$

5. Summary.

The foregoing represents purely mathematical results of an attempt to use regression analysis to help identify variables and/or combinations of functions of variables which help to explain the variability in monthly accident rates for major aircraft accidents.

Mathematical results were presented by aircraft type and also at a command level. Logical and meaningful explanations of why some variables may account for accident rate variability will be the subject of the next phase in the research, i.e. does it seem meaningful, besides being mathematically correct, that two variables may be combined in an equation and possibly make sense because they combine into what one might call pilot proficiency, or aircraft worthiness, etc. Logical analysis of the equations and possibly more advanced equations will be presented in the master's theses of Lt. Gary Johnson and Lt. Cdr. Lawrence Bucher in about October 1976.

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Maxwell, J. S. and Stucki, L. V., <u>Analysis of the Variable Behavior Manifested in All Navy/Marine Major Aircraft Accident Rates.</u> Masters thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, September 1975.

Poock, G. K., <u>Trends in Major Aircraft Accident Rates.</u> Technical Report NPS55Pk76061, Naval Postgraduate School, June 1976.

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