

AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC.

220 NORTH FOURTH STREET

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

December 30, 1932.

Mr. Amon G. Carter,
Fort Worth Star-Telegram,
Fort Worth, Texas.

Dear Amon:

You ask in your memorandum about two things: about the accidents which have occurred recently; and about the morale of the personnel. I will give you what information is available on the accidents first. Some of them have occurred very recently and we do not like to form conclusions about the cause of the accident without a minute examination and, consequently, I cannot tell you in detail what caused at least one of them until later.

We count forced landings in the same category as accidents for the reason that any forced landing may result in an accident and we, therefore, make thorough investigations of all forced landings. Recently we have had the following operating difficulties:

December 5, 1932. Pilot W. B. McAllister, Pilgrim airplane NC 735N. Forced landing at Raymondsville, Texas on account of propellor failure. The propellor failed in the air and about eighteen inches of the blade was lost. A forced landing was made without damage to the airplane.

December 5, 1932. Pilot M. D. Girton, Fokker Super-Universal airplane NC 9134. Forced landing at Memphis, Texas on account of engine failure. The engine failure was occasioned by an exhaust valve breaking near the stem while in flight. This is classed as a material failure and no negligence can be charged to the maintenance department. The valve is either of faulty material or workmanship. Landing gear of airplane damaged. No injury to pilot or passengers.

December 15, 1932. Pilot M. D. Girton, Fokker Super-Universal NC 9128. Forced landing at Rolla, Kansas account weather too bad to permit further flight. No damage to airplane or injury to pilot or passenger. The pilot was flying off course in weather which is not permitted by our operating rules. For his direct violation of these rules the pilot has been discharged.

AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC.

220 NORTH FOURTH STREET

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Mr. Amon G. Carter,
Fort Worth, Texas.
Page #2.

December 23, 1932. Pilot L. S. Willard, Stearman airplane NC 483W. Forced landing at Union, Miss. on account of motor failure. Motor failure was the cause of the same trouble which was experienced in the forced landing of December 5, 1932, Pilot M. D. Girton, that being an exhaust valve breaking near the stem while in flight. This is a failure of material and no negligence can be attributed to personnel. The pilot landed the airplane in a field which measures 100' x 500' without injury to the plane. The field is so surrounded by trees that it will not be possible to fly the plane out and it will have to be dismantled and moved to another field. The pilot did some excellent flying in making this landing.

December 24, 1932. Pilot Chas. Dolson, Stearman airplane NC 488W. Forced landing on the airport at Evansville, Ind. account engine failure, which, also, was caused by valve failure. No negligence. All of these material failure are being taken up with the engine manufacturer but it looks like the valves cannot be built in such a manner that they will not once in a while fail.

December 24, 1932. Pilot Leo Wassenberg, Pilgrim airplane NC738N. Forced landing at Columbia, Mo. account motor failure. Cause of motor failure not yet ascertained. Thorough investigation being made. Pilot Wassenberg injured in back. Probably be in hospital about two months with full recovery. Two passengers uninjured and one passenger had bruised arm. Airplane about 80% washed out

December 27, 1932. Pilot J. H. Burns, Fokker Super-Universal airplane NC 9127. Pilot made forced landing one half mile from airport. No passenger in plane. Pilot slightly injured and plane washed out. The Fokker Super-Universal airplane is a plane with peculiar flying characteristics. If you endeavor to bring it into an airport for a landing and do not maintain a fairly good speed (much more than the ordinary airplane) you lose control of the aileron action and, therefore, of the

AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC.

220 NORTH FOURTH STREET

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Mr. Amon G. Carter,
Fort Worth, Texas.
Page #3.

December 27, 1932. Pilot Burns (continued)

airplane. Most pilots are aware of the peculiar flying characteristics of this type of airplane and fly it accordingly. We have an operating rule to the effect that before a pilot flies an airplane on the route which he is not familiar with he must fly the airplane without passengers before making his flight on the route. Burns was making a test flight in accordance with this rule and came in for a landing. He evidently came in too slow and lost control of the airplane about half a mile from the airport, crashing in timber and practically washing out the ship. Burns has been with us four years and this is his first accident. On account of his previous good record his discipline has been limited to grounding of thirty days without pay.

December 29, 1932. Pilot Glenn Fields, Stearman airplane NC484W. In landing on the airport at Chatanooga, Tenn. the pilot ran into some water on the airport and nosed over. No injury to pilot. Airplane undamaged except that it will have to be recovered. Landing was made at night. Field is bounded by small river and during night the dike broke and a portion of the field was flooded. Flooded section was in corner of field away from administration building and night attendant did not notice water. Field attendant fined for failure to make examination of field on account of heavy rain and subsequent landings by planes that night safely made as information about condition of field was transmitted to pilots by radio.

To sum- the accidents up: The accident caused by the propellor failure would be difficult to prevent. We do all that we can to prevent propellor failures by making a detailed inspection of the blades before each flight but even then we have a propellor failure once in a while. We are investigating this accident to determine if

AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC.

220 NORTH FOURTH STREET

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Mr. Amon G. Garter,
Fort Worth, Texas.
Page #4.

any negligence was apparent in the prior inspection of this propellor. So far we have found that no negligence can be attributed to personnel in this accident but we are continuing our investigation.

The accidents on December 5, December 23 and December 24, were all the result of the same cause: valve failure, which is the fault of the material and not attributable to any lack of attention on the part of our maintenance personnel. The accident on December 15, Pilot Girton, is the result of disobedience and negligence on the part of the pilot. The pilot has been discharged and all other pilots notified. That is as far as we can go there.

The accident at Columbia, Mo. is the most serious one of the accidents enumerated here. It is fortunate that the pilot and all of the passenger were not killed for the country in which he landed, at night, is very hazardous. We also had a material failure in this accident in that the night landing flare, which is supposed to burn for three minutes, burned only one, leaving the pilot to make his landing in absolute darkness except for the light furnished by his landing lights. The cause of this motor failure is as yet undetermined but it will be found out before our investigation is completed.

The accident on December 29, landing in the water or rolling into the water after landing, is a combination of negligence on the part of the field employee and the unusual condition of a dike quietly breaking and flooding a portion of the field.

This list of forced landings and accidents is a long one - much longer than we want. I have been in this business now for over four years and it looks like accidents always happen in bunches and it has been my personal experience that they always happen just at the time when we have a change of administration - when you want to make the best record. Witness the accident at Redlands, Cal. in which five people were killed. It happened about the third or fourth day of Mr. Cohu's regime, which was certainly an unfortunate time for the operating department.

I have been a good deal worried about the morale of the personnel. I believe that there is a direct - although intangible - connection between how the men in the company are feeling and the number of accidents which we have. The morale of the personnel has been low for some months now on

AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC.

220 NORTH FOURTH STREET

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Mr. Amon G. Carter,
Fort Worth, Texas.
Page #5.

account of the many controversies which we have had in the past few months and the changes in the official personnel of the company. The personnel are still a good deal "in the air" for there are going to be some more changes on account of splitting the company into two divisions and we cannot get the men settled down until they know what is going to happen. We have been more on the alert lately to prevent accidents than ever we have in the past, for temporarily at least we have a morale situation which may result in accidents. We are getting some gray hairs from worrying about how to best keep the business running safely and efficiently. Just now we are responsible for the safety of the entire company yet there is not a great deal that we can do to better the situation for all of the people in this part of the country know that they are going to be working for someone else this time next month and it makes our job exceedingly difficult.

I am hopeful that we can this splitting of the company into two divisions over as promptly as possible for the operation cannot continue to function efficiently with the present spirit of uncertainty. Seymour was with us for several days and made a good impression on the personnel. He has been very fair with me and I have done the best that I could to do a good job for him. It seems to me that taking back the operation of the Southern Division after endeavoring to run the entire operation is something of a demotion but we intend to run the Southern Division so efficiently and so economically that the management will feel that they made no mistake in giving us the responsibility.

I believe that Lyndol Young is going to be quite a factor in aviation before he gets through. Lyndol, in addition to being a nice fellow, is a very smart man and before the story ends up I think that he will be the leading figure in Aviation Corporation. LaMotte and Eddie Rickenbacker heard me recommending Lyndol during the fight and had some fun at my expense but Lyndol has always been my friend and I see no reason why it should be concealed, no matter what side he is on.

You understand, of course, Amon, that it is not a policy of our company to give out information concerning accidents except by order of the President and ordinarily I would not write anyone but Mr. Seymour about the accidents but after all you are a director and we are all working to prevent further accidents and I am sure that Mr. Seymour would not object to the information which has been given you herein.

Pardon the length of the letter but it takes about that much space to tell the story. I hope to see you during the coming month for I am hopeful that our move to Dallas can be accomplished as quickly as is

AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC.

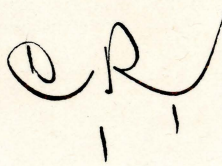
220 NORTH FOURTH STREET

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Mr. Amon G. Carter,
Fort Worth, Texas.
Page #6.

possible for any delay longer than is necessary only adds to the present
confusion of the personnel.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O. R. J.' with a flourish at the end. The letters are written in a cursive style.

CRS