

Under the present system and terms of enlistment the R.N.Z.A.F. is not obtaining a satisfactory proportion of men of sound educational background. The present time-lag between the school leaving age and the age of recruitment allows the best potential tradesmen to enter civilian trades and become fairly settled before they are old enough to enlist in the Air Force. With the object of overcoming this difficulty, an apprentice scheme is under consideration.

Every encouragement is being given to serving personnel to improve themselves educationally for accepting higher responsibility. R.N.Z.A.F. scholarships have been introduced to enable selected candidates to complete a degree at one of the affiliated colleges of the University of New Zealand. The broader aspects of general education among serving personnel will be assured in the coaching of personnel for the recently approved compulsory Educational Promotion Examination.

The establishment of a sound and ample educational and vocational training scheme within the Service is one of the chief attractions to young New Zealanders of the basic calibre required, and it will be necessary to develop this organization still further both as an aid to recruiting and as a means of ensuring that airmen are in a position to undertake technical instruction.

FLYING ACCIDENT PREVENTION

The Accidents Investigation Branch created during the war in the office of the Chief of the Air Staff is now established as the Flying Safety Organization on the staff of the Air Secretary. It is responsible to the Chief of the Air Staff for the investigation of particular flying accidents in the R.N.Z.A.F., the preparation of information on accident prevention, and for compiling accident statistics.

Station Accident Prevention Committees have been formed, and Station Accident Prevention Officers have been appointed on all R.N.Z.A.F. flying-stations. It is expected that these measures, together with flying safety bulletins, safety suggestions, and posters issued by the Flying Safety Organization, will engender a fuller understanding of the causes of aircraft accidents and result in a reduction in accident rates.

During the period under review there were 2 fatal accidents involving R.N.Z.A.F. personnel; 1 occurred in England during conversion training to Mosquito aircraft, the other in a missing Mosquito aircraft which was being flown from England to New Zealand, the crew being now presumed dead. Two personnel were slightly injured when another Mosquito crashed during a flight from England, and a pilot was injured in Japan as the result of a landing accident. There was 1 serious accident during the 6,232 hours flying of the transport squadron operating the service to Japan, and this resulted in 3 being slightly injured when the aircraft was wrecked in the Philippine Islands. Apart from minor failures, this Service has been particularly free from incident.

These accidents were spread over a total flying-time of approximately 21,000 hours.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In addition to the routine public-relations activities carried out during the year approximately nine hundred and fifty next-of-kin were informed of the results of investigations carried out by the R.A.F. Missing Research and Inquiry Service. In most cases next-of-kin were supplied with the findings of the investigation, together with a report on the circumstances surrounding the last flight. Investigations on outstanding cases are still proceeding.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

Narrative work on most aspects of the history of the R.N.Z.A.F. should be completed within twelve months, with the major exceptions of the narrative of the history of operations in the Pacific during 1944 and 1945 and the Fighter Command narrative, which are both handicapped by lack of staff. This work is directed by the Editor-in-Chief, New Zealand War Histories, and staff is provided by the R.N.Z.A.F.