

Robert Ditchey

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EXPERT WITNESS EXPERIENCE. Robert Ditchey has been engaged as Expert Witness in aviation litigation by more than fifty different law firms. His expertise includes aircraft maintenance, aircraft design, engineering issues, pilot errors and omissions, aircrew errors and omissions, aviation contractual issues such as leases, Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, personal injury and wrongful death, mesothelioma litigation, patent disputes, and wrongful terminations. He has been an expert witness for both defendants (including major manufacturers) and plaintiffs both individuals and companies. He has written numerous declarations and opinions, he has been deposed numerous times, and has testified in court four times.

BIOGRAPHY. Graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, Robert Ditchey subsequently completed flight training in Pensacola and became a military pilot. Over the next fourteen years, his Navy aviation experience included piloting transport-category aircraft (the 4-engined Lockheed P3), supervision of aircraft operational units in both Atlantic and Pacific areas, aircraft carrier operations during the Vietnam War, and command of a remote, island-based facility. He has more than 3,000 pilot hours and was aircraft carrier qualified. His experience included the development of expertise in aircraft maintenance, pilot and aircrew training and scheduling, and operations management.

While still on active duty with the Navy, Mr. Ditchey twice returned to the academic community, receiving a Master of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA and later, the post-master's degree of Aeronautical Engineer (AE) from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena CA. Mr. Ditchey received an award for excellence in engineering research for wind-tunnel research, and submitted an AE thesis at Caltech on computer analysis of aircraft structures. As an option to his MS curriculum, he completed formal schooling in aircraft accident investigation and analysis.

After leaving the Navy, Mr. Ditchey began a career with the airline industry, initially at National Airlines in Miami, in Maintenance and Engineering. Following the National-Pan Am merger, he moved to New York as a senior member of Pan Am management, also in Maintenance and Engineering. During this period, he supervised the Pan Am jet engine and component repair facility at the *JFK Jet Center*, which at the time was the largest Pratt & Whitney engine repair facility in the world, employing over 1000 mechanics. Leaving Pan Am, Mr. Ditchey was one of the founders of America West, and was its first Senior VP Operations from the origin of the company through the completion of its first full year of revenue service. Leaving America West to attempt the start-up of an aircraft leasing venture, he subsequently terminated that effort and joined a newly-created team that started-up MGM Grand Air in Los Angeles, financed by Kirk Kerkorian. At MGM Grand Air, Mr. Ditchey was VP Operations and Maintenance. He had principal responsibility for the FAA Part 121 certification of two new entrant airlines.

He has consulted for airlines, a financial institution pertaining to an aircraft modification investment, and for a manufacturing company pertaining to airline marketing initiatives. Experienced in international airline operations, he has completed several different extended projects abroad including in Eastern Europe and Sub-Sahara Africa.

Mr. Ditchey has frequently appeared on national television as a commentator on airline matters, including appearances on network television, including CBS, NBC, CNN, and Fox News. He has also made frequent live broadcast interviews on several Los Angeles radio shows, including KNX Radio and KCRW with Warren Olney. Other live radio broadcasts by Mr. Ditchey have been from Toronto and from BBC London. A number of Mr. Ditchey's articles about aircraft accidents and aviation matters have been published in The Los Angeles Times' Op-Ed pages. His opinions and comments on aviation topics have also been frequently quoted in the Los Angeles Times.