

February 6, 1936

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE  
Washington

REPORT OF THE ACCIDENT BOARD  
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE

Statement of probable cause concerning an aircraft  
accident which occurred to an airplane of United  
Air Lines Transport Corporation on October 30, 1935  
near Cheyenne, Wyoming

To the Director of Air Commerce

On October 30, 1935 at about 7 40 p.m. at a point approximately five miles south of Cheyenne, Wyoming, a commercially owned airplane, while being flown on a test flight, crashed with resultant death to all on board and the complete destruction of the aircraft.

The airplane, a Boeing, model 247-D, was owned by the United Air Lines Transport Corporation of Chicago and bore Department of Commerce license number NC-13323. The pilot, Marion T. Arnold of Cheyenne, Wyoming, held a Department of Commerce transport pilot's license. E. E. Yantis and E. A. Kauffman, instrument mechanics for the company, and Hanley G. Cohn, a pilot for another air line, were riding with the pilot in an official capacity.

This flight was for the purpose of checking the performance of the airplane, instruments and engines following a routine change of engines and instruments. Such a flight requires abrupt test maneuvers. The weather at the time indicated a ceiling of 1200 feet, visibility 15 miles and light snow. Other pilots in the vicinity at the time reported sufficient ice formations on their windshields to obstruct forward vision.

The airplane took off from the Cheyenne Municipal Airport at about 7:20 p.m. Just before the accident it was observed flying toward the northeast in level flight and at a low altitude over a point approximately three and one-half miles south of Cheyenne. Shortly after this it was seen to start making a right turn from which it crashed.

Whether or not the last turn was being made as a test maneuver cannot be determined. A left hand turn would have afforded more visibility and would have kept the airplane over lower terrain. The nose was seen to suddenly drop and the airplane dived into the ground at an angle of about 70° and with the right wing slightly low. Fire followed immediately.

An examination of the wreckage did not indicate any failure or malfunctioning of any part of the airplane or engines. It is reasonable to believe that the windshield was iced sufficiently to obscure forward vision but this would not have hindered the pilot materially as he had a full complement of navigation instruments and presumably had unobstructed vision out either side.

It is the opinion of the Accident Board that the probable cause of this accident was poor judgment on the part of the pilot for executing an abrupt maneuver with insufficient altitude for safety and failure of the pilot to maintain proper control of the aircraft during this maneuver.

(Advisory J. L. Kinney, Air Line Inspector)

Respectfully submitted,

ACCIDENT BOARD

Jesse W. Lanford (Sec'y) R. W. Schroeder, Chief  
Chief, Safety Section Air Line Insp. Svc.

Richard C. Gazley, Chief Engineer  
Manufacturing Inspection Service