

April 29, 1936

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE  
WashingtonSTATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE CONCERNING AN AIRCRAFT  
ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED TO A COMMERCIALY OWNED AIR-  
PLANE AT NUNDA, NEW YORK ON DECEMBER 11, 1935

To the Secretary of Commerce

On December 11, 1935 at about 3.35 p.m. at Nunda, New York, a commercially owned airplane, in the course of a cross-country flight, crashed with resultant death to the pilot and passenger and the complete destruction of the aircraft.

The airplane, a Beechcraft, model 17R, bore Department of Commerce license number NC-499N and was owned by the Ethyl Gasoline Corporation, New York City. The pilot, Dewey L. Noyes, held a Department of Commerce transport pilot's license. The passenger was Mr. Edford M. Walters.

The take-off was made from Newark, New Jersey, at approximately 2 00 p.m. for Detroit, Michigan, via Buffalo, New York. Weather reports at that time indicated that on a direct line between Newark, New Jersey, and Buffalo, New York, the ceiling was practically zero and dangerous icing conditions were indicated over the Elmira-Buffalo portion of this route. Contact flying could have been accomplished by taking the alternate route, Buffalo via Albany. The pilot chose the direct route, apparently depending on instrument flying to overcome existing weather conditions.

The airplane was heard flying west near Nunda, New York, at about fifteen minutes prior to the accident. Immediately before the accident it was seen and heard flying east. witnesses state that the airplane was flying low at both times and that the engine sounded normal.

The airplane struck the edge of a small hillside wooded area with such force that the wings were torn completely free and the cabin continued through the trees and into a small clearing. The engine was torn free and rolled forward at a distance of approximately 50 feet. The propeller was badly twisted, indicating that the engine was functioning at the time of first contact. Only small sections of the wings could be found and the instruments were so damaged that nothing could be determined from them.

It is the opinion of the Bureau of Air Commerce that the probable cause of this accident was poor judgment on the part of the pilot for attempting the flight over this particular route in the face of known dangerous weather conditions.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene L. Vidal  
Director of Air Commerce