

Adopted: November 22, 1943

File No. 2333-43

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft
During a Local Practice Flight

Harry Willis Johnson was seriously injured in an accident which occurred at Yankee Lake, about 5 miles northeast of the Municipal Airport, Youngstown, Ohio, at approximately 3:45 p.m. on June 7, 1943. Johnson held a student pilot certificate and had flown about 57 solo hours, approximately 22 of which were in the type of airplane involved. He was enrolled in the War Training Service advanced course at the Wolverine Aviation Company. The aircraft, a Taylorcraft BF12-65, NC 36285, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation, Washington, D. C., was extensively damaged by impact and immersion.

Johnson secured clearance for a one-hour solo practice flight and took off from the Youngstown Municipal Airport for a practice area east of the airport. Pilot Charles West, flying NC 24485, was cleared for a practice flight in the same area and took off from the Youngstown Airport at about the same time. Shortly thereafter the two airplanes were observed approaching a small amusement park lake in this area. Several steeply banked turns were executed at a fairly high altitude, following which the planes were seen circling, one behind the other, and losing altitude. According to a witness, who was standing on the lake shore about 200 yards south of where the accident occurred, both airplanes then dived down over the lake and headed north, with Johnson in the lead and NC 24485 slightly behind and about 50 feet higher. When approximately over the center of the 1200-foot length of the lake, the undercarriage of Johnson's plane struck and severed a two-cable power line suspended from poles on each side of the lake. The plane then struck the water in an upright position and sank. The pilot extricated himself and hung onto the tail surface of the floating plane until he was rescued.

West, the pilot of NC 24485, completed his practice flight, returned to the airport, and departed for Youngstown without notifying anyone at the airport of the accident. The accident was reported by the wife of the owner of the lake amusement center, while her husband assisted in rescuing the injured pilot from the wrecked aircraft.

Pilot Johnson stated, "I was out of bounds and flew low over the lake. I tried to pull up over the wires when I saw them but it was too late and the landing gear caught them. The only satisfaction I can hope to get out of this is that the other boys learn a lesson from my mistake."

This accident was obviously the result of poor judgment and recklessness on the part of the pilot in deliberately flying at an extremely low altitude.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary