

Accident January 5, 1944

File No. 2840-43

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

Pilot Virgil Eugene Steimer and his passenger, Edward William Stritch, were seriously injured in an accident which occurred on the Euclid Avenue Airport, Willoughby, Ohio, at approximately 11:00 a.m. on July 10, 1943. Steimer held a private pilot certificate with a single-engine land, 0-330 h.p. rating. He had flown about 207 solo hours, of which 3 were in the type of aircraft involved. Stritch, an apprentice mechanic, had formerly held a student pilot certificate which expired May 12, 1943. The aircraft, an Aeronca C-3, NC 12401, powered by an Aeronca 36 h.p. engine and owned by William Blood and John Bolan, was extensively damaged.

At 10 50 a.m. Pilot Steimer secured clearance from the Euclid Avenue Airport, Willoughby, Ohio, for a flight to the Lake County Airport located on the opposite side of town. Accompanied by Stritch, he attempted to take off toward the east from a 1500-foot runway. (The wind was southeast about 6 m.p.h.) After two unsuccessful attempts, he taxied to a 3000-foot runway and took off toward the southwest over rising terrain with an electric power line and trees in the flight path ahead. The aircraft became airborne approximately 1000 feet down the runway and then climbed slowly to an altitude of from 40 to 50 feet. Near the airport boundary the pilot, apparently believing that he could not clear the wires and trees ahead, turned back. During this turn the plane was stalled and fell off to the left. It crashed on the nose and left wing about 50 feet inside the airport boundary. Both occupants unfastened their safety belts and crawled through the grass away from the wreckage. A witness to the accident drove across the airport to the scene and in so doing ran his car over the pilot inflicting further injuries.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to the accident. The plane was heavily loaded with the combined weights of the pilot and passenger totaling 350 lbs.

The pilot used very poor judgment in attempting to take off in a heavily laden and low-powered aircraft over rising terrain with obstructions in the flight path, when he had already demonstrated to himself the poor performance of the aircraft under existing conditions.

This accident was the direct result of a stall at an altitude too low to effect recovery.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Craig A. Toombs
Secretary