

Adopted January 3, 1944

File No. 3198-43

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

An accident which occurred approximately 2 miles west-northwest of the Municipal Airport, Dansville, New York, about 3 44 p.m. on July 31, 1943, resulted in serious injuries to Pilot Dorothy Loretto Kuhn and one passenger, Eugene Reynolds, while another passenger, Paul Edward Lorms, received minor injuries. Miss Kuhn held a private pilot certificate with a single-engine land, 0-80 h.p. rating. She had flown approximately 112 hours, all in the type of airplane involved. Reynolds was not certificated as a pilot. Lorms was a War Training Service trainee and had accumulated about 57 hours of flight time. The aircraft, a Piper J5A, NC 38024, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation, Washington, D. C. and being operated in the War Training Service program by the Dansville Flying Service, Inc., was demolished.

Pilot Kuhn secured clearance from the Dansville Municipal Airport for a cross-country flight to Buffalo, New York. With Reynolds and Lorms in the rear seats, she took off about 3 41 p.m. After leaving the traffic pattern she headed on a direct northwest course toward Coffee Hill Ridge, which rises 700 to 800 feet above the altitude of the airport, 2½ miles away. As the plane approached the sloping terrain, the pilot was unable to gain sufficient altitude to clear the hill, and started a turn to the left, during which she stalled the aircraft about 175 feet above the terrain. It fell off to the left and dived almost vertically with power on until it struck the ground nose-first.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no indication of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to impact. The aircraft was loaded close to its maximum allowable gross weight. The temperature was 85° and while approaching the leeward side of the hill heading into a northwest wind of about 13 m.p.h., the pilot probably encountered descending air currents. Although Miss Kuhn was considered a competent pilot, she evidently miscalculated air conditions and erred in attempting to climb the heavily laden airplane over the ridge instead of gaining sufficient altitude to clear it by circling over the lower terrain or flying around it.

The probable cause of this accident was an inadvertent stall at an altitude too low to effect recovery.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs  
Secretary