

Adopted: March 24, 1944

File No. 3359-43

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

Instructor John Warner Kenyon and his student, Harry Eugene Homan, were seriously injured in an accident which occurred approximately one-half mile west of Ashland Airport, Ashland, Kentucky, about 6:00 p.m. on July 31, 1943. Kenyon held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land, 0-80 h.p., and flight instructor ratings. He had accumulated approximately 1901 hours of flight time, about 500 of which were in the type aircraft involved. Homan was not certificated as an airman but had received 10 hours of dual instruction time. The aircraft, a Piper J5A, NC 32658, owned by Kenyon, was extensively damaged.

Instructor Kenyon and Student Homan took off on a check flight from the Ashland Airport at approximately 6:00 p.m. with Homan at the controls. At an altitude of about 150 feet the engine began to sputter and lose r.p.m. Kenyon took over the controls and attempted a steep 180° turn to the left in an effort to get back to the airport. During this turn the aircraft was partially stalled and the pilot lost control. Before recovery was effected the plane struck the ground on the nose and left wing.

There was no evidence of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to the accident and the manner in which the propeller was broken indicated that power was being developed when the plane struck the ground. Analysis of the fuel being used revealed that it was inferior and not suitable for use in aircraft engines. It tested only 52 octane and was reported to have been sold from drums at the subject airport as 73 octane aviation gasoline.

While partial failure of the engine, apparently due to the use of inferior fuel, was a definite contributing factor, the direct cause of this accident was poor judgment on the part of the instructor for attempting to turn back to the airport when suitable landing areas were available almost directly ahead.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary