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

Henry John Peterson, Jr., was fatally injured in an accident which occurred about 4 miles northwest of Joy Airport, Fraser, Michigan, at approximately 10:30 a.m. on August 20, 1943. Peterson, a War Training Service trainee, had flown approximately 30 dual and 21 solo hours. The aircraft, a Piper J3F-50, NC 24798, owned by Detroit School of Aviation, Inc., as demolished.

Peterson, flying solo from the rear seat, took off from Joy Airport about 9:50 a.m. to practice a series of maneuvers in a practice area approximately 4 miles northwest of the airport. About 35 minutes later two pilots who were playing golf observed the plane at an altitude of approximately 1500 feet. They stated that they watched the pilot practice stalls, then a few minutes later saw the aircraft in a steep dive about 100 feet above the tree-tops. Full power was applied as the plane disappeared behind trees and immediately thereafter the two witnesses heard it crash. The plane struck the ground nose-first at a steep angle, turned over and came to rest in an inverted position.

Investigation revealed that during flight the fire extinguisher had fallen from its bracket in the cockpit and become lodged beneath the push-pull elevator control link rod slightly forward of the control stick socket in the rear cockpit, while the stick was in the forward position. As the stick was moved toward the rear, the link rod jammed on top of the extinguisher, resulting in an uncontrollable dive. Although equipped with a parachute there was no indication that the pilot had attempted to use it.

This accident was caused by the fire extinguisher becoming loose from its bracket and lodging beneath the elevator controls in a manner which prevented recovery from the resultant dive.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs  
Secretary