

Adopted: May 19, 1944

File No. 4166-43

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of a Propeller Accident

Instructor Daniel Watson Lomax was seriously injured by an aircraft propeller at Owens Field, Columbia, South Carolina, about 3:00 p.m. on September 24, 1943. Lomax held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land, 0-80 h.p., and flight instructor ratings. He had flown approximately 467 hours, all in the type plane involved. The aircraft, a Piper J3C-65, NC 41074, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation and being operated by the Hawthorne Flying Service, Inc. sustained a broken propeller.

Instructor Lomax and his student, Irving Albert Williams, a War Training Service trainee, preparatory to a local instruction flight, taxied around the forward aircraft parking line and attempted to turn left down the ramp toward take-off position. The aircraft was not equipped with brakes. An 11 m.p.h. quartering tail wind and a slight downgrade resulted in the aircraft swinging wide and rolling, out of control, toward two Army automobiles parked on the ramp. Realizing they were in danger of colliding with the automobiles, Lomax closed the throttle, got out of the plane about 50 feet from the parked cars and attempted to stop the plane by holding back on the right wing diagonal struts. Another instructor, an onlooker, caught hold of the right wing tip and attempted to swing the plane around and away from the cars, at the same time calling to the student to cut the switch. Lomax then left his position at the right wing struts and ducked under the nose of the plane. As he did so, the idling propeller struck him on his head and right hand. Following this impact the engine stopped and the plane came to a standstill, facing the foremost automobile.

Since this accident, local field rules have been issued that a ground attendant shall accompany each plane when in the vicinity of the parking area, and a request has been made of the Officer in Charge of Motor Transportation that automobiles not be parked on the ramp to offer a hazard to taxiing aircraft.

While the presence of parked cars on the ramp created a hazard to taxiing aircraft, the probable cause of this accident was the instructor's poor judgment in attempting to taxi under existing conditions without the assistance of a ground attendant, and thoughtlessness in his efforts to avoid an impending collision.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary