

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of a Mid-Air Collision Between Two
Local Instruction Flights

A mid-air collision which occurred approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles northeast of Meadville, Pennsylvania, about 11:40 a.m. on October 4, 1943, resulted in fatal injuries to Instructor Roy Franklin Good and his student, James K. Samour, in Piper J5A, NC 38293, and Instructor Clarence Bishop Root and his student, Robert Stewart Phillis, in Piper J3L-65, NC 41559. Both Good and Root held commercial pilot certificates with single-engine land, 0-330 h.p., and flight instructor ratings. Good had flown approximately 354 solo hours, about 231 of which were in the type plane involved. Root had accumulated approximately 862 hours of solo flight time, about 636 of which were in the type plane involved. Students Samour and Phillis were War Training Service trainees receiving the Army indoctrination course. Both aircraft, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation and being operated by Granam Aviation Flying Schools, Inc. in the War Training Service program, were destroyed by impact and fire.

Instructor Good and Trainee Samour took off from the Meadville Airport in Piper NC 38293 for practice area No. 9 at approximately 11:00 a.m. The purpose of the flight was to give Samour a final 10-hour cross-check flight, which consists of correcting any bad flying habits the trainee might have acquired and observing his technique generally. At approximately the same time, Instructor Root and Trainee Phillis took off from the same airport in Piper NC 41559 for the purpose of giving Phillis his 9th one-hour lesson. They were assigned to practice area No. 5, located south of area No. 9 and divided from it by a highway.

About 11:20 a.m. Root's plane was observed maneuvering acrobatically at a low altitude and diving at a group of farmers working in their fields, which were well inside the boundary of practice area No. 9, assigned to Instructor Good. This type of flying was continued for approximately 15 or 20 minutes, with Root and his student waving and shouting to the observers on the ground. The aircraft was then climbed to about 1000 feet and was heading south in level flight when the plane occupied by Good and Samour arrived from the north-west flying at approximately this same altitude. Root, banking from side to side, still maintained his southerly heading. Good, on passing him, executed a loop, followed by a steep climb which terminated in his aircraft striking the fuselage of Root's plane at a point directly under the front seat. Good's plane was developing considerable power at the time and its nose section and the wooden propeller, shattered at the hub, imbedded in the fuselage of the other aircraft, destroying its control structure at the torque tube and base of the stick. The two planes, interlocked, traveled about 1000 feet in a southerly direction, then crashed to the ground in a field 100 feet north of the southern boundary of area No. 9, where they were destroyed by fire.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no indicator of failure of any part of either aircraft prior to the collision. The body of Samour, who had occupied the front seat of NC 38293, was lying 40 feet east of the wreckage. He had evidently jumped at an altitude too low for his parachute to function, as the rip-cord was pulled completely out and the parachute stretched out partly unfolded beside the body. Instructor Good apparently tried to leave the aircraft and his body was found outside the doorway. Both occupants of the other aircraft, equipped with parachutes, were found in their respective seats with safety belts fastened.

Instructor Good and his student were flying in their assigned practice area, while Instructor Root and Student Phillis were not in the area to which they had been assigned. Prior to the collision both aircraft were being flown acrobatically at a low altitude, in violation of Civil Air regulations and TS contractual requirements. Instructors Good and Root were not regularly assigned to the Army indoctrination course at this operation, but had been called upon to instruct while waiting assignment as flight instructors in an Army Instructor Course, scheduled to start on October 15. Investigation revealed that neither instructor was familiar with the practice areas assigned to them and both were dependent on their trainees to show them the boundaries. The maps used to define practice areas at this operation were not clearly outlined.

While disregard for practice area boundaries by Instructor Root was a prime factor, the probable direct cause of this accident was the action of Instructor Good in executing an acrobatic maneuver in close proximity to the other aircraft.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toonios
Secretary