

Adopted. May 5, 1944
File No. 4659-43

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

Richard Wilnot Deaver was fatally injured in an accident which occurred approximately 14 miles east of Wichita, Kansas, about 12.05 p.m. on October 31, 1943. Deaver held a student glider pilot certificate and had made approximately 250 glider flights, 6 of which were in the type glider involved. The aircraft, a Bowlus BA-100 glider, NC 41777, owned by Philip Heasley Entz, was demolished.

Deaver, after attaching the tow rope and testing the tow release for proper operation, was towed into the air by a winch from a large open field. According to witnesses, the take-off and climb appeared normal until an altitude of from 120 to 150 feet had been reached, at which point the wings were rocked through one oscillation as a signal for less speed. Immediately following this signal the glider nosed down sharply and crashed into the ground in a vertical dive.

There was no indication of failure of any part of the glider prior to the accident. The release mechanism, which had released due to the force of impact, functioned properly when tested. Investigation revealed that the tow rope had fouled under a bush, which was obscured from view by a slight rise in terrain between the bush and the point of take-off. Apparently the pilot was not aware that anything was wrong and by the time he had reached an altitude of from 120 to 150 feet, the fouled location was almost directly beneath him. At this point the fouled tow rope pulled the glider into a vertical dive from which recovery was not effected. It is probable that the glider overrode the tow cable and could not be released or that in the few seconds between encountering the difficulty and the crash, the pilot did not realize what was happening in time to pull the release. Had the take-off area been properly cleared of underbrush or had the pilot exercised reasonable care in laying out the tow line, this accident would have been avoided.

The probable cause of this accident was carelessness in laying out the tow rope and preparing the take-off strip.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary