

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

Instructor Homer Oliver Hansen was fatally injured and his student, Philip Robert Pistone, received serious injuries in an accident which occurred near Chapman Field, Waterloo, Iowa, about 12:55 p.m. on November 18, 1943. Hansen held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land, 0-80 h.p., and flight instructor ratings. He had flown approximately 1179 solo hours, about 1100 of which were in the type of airplane involved. Pistone, a War Training Service trainee, was receiving his second instruction flight. The aircraft, a Taylorcraft L-2A, No. 42-35914, owned by the U. S. Army and being operated by the Miller-Cavalier Flying Service, was demolished.

Hansen and Pistone took off from Chapman Field on a routine instruction flight. The take-off and climb appeared to be normal but when the plane had reached an altitude of approximately 100 feet several witnesses observed smoke coming from the engine compartment and trailing back over the right wing. The aircraft was immediately put into a steep left turn, during which it was seen to slip to the left and crash before recovery was effected.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no indication of failure of any part of the aircraft nor of the presence of fire. The oil tank filler cap was found off the filler neck. This allowed oil to spill from the supply tank onto the hot exhaust manifold causing the smoke that led the pilot to believe the plane was on fire. The student stated that just after taking off the instructor said, "We are on fire," and immediately turned back toward the airport. It is possible that the pilot, in an effort to avoid the fire which he believed existed in the right side of the aircraft, initiated the side-slip but failed to recover.

While failure to secure the oil tank cap in place before taking off was a contributing factor, the probable cause of this accident was confusion of the pilot which resulted in poor technique in executing a turn at low altitude.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Looney
Secretary