

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

Instructor Lawrence Ervin Short and his student, Theodore Frank Boersma, were seriously injured in an accident which occurred approximately 3 miles southwest of the Municipal Airport, Yakima, Washington, about 12:45 p.m. on November 23, 1943. Short, age 32, held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land, 0-330 h.p. and flight instructor ratings. He had flown approximately 1364 hours. Boersma, age 36, held a student pilot certificate and had accumulated about 60 hours of flight time. The aircraft, a Piper J5B, NC 38870, owned by Boersma, was demolished.

Short and Boersma took off from the Yakima Airport at 12:00 noon for a local instruction flight to consist of low altitude maneuvers in an area 3 miles southwest of the airport. About 45 minutes later, while practicing "S" turns at an indicated altitude of 600 feet, the instructor closed the throttle and called for a simulated forced landing. The student selected a field and made an approach, including two 90° turns. He was on the final leg when the instructor told him to pull up and go on. Due to loss of flying speed, the instructor took over the controls and opened the throttle. Whether he applied power too late or the engine failed to respond could not be definitely determined. However, the stall became complete and the plane crashed to the ground on its nose at an angle of about 30°.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to the accident. The manner in which the propeller was broken indicated that little, if any, power was being developed at the time of impact. Short stated that he instructed the student to start the recovery at approximately 300 feet above the ground but that the engine failed to respond when the throttle was opened. However, both he and his student stated that the simulated forced landing was begun at 600 feet indicated altitude above the level of the airport. As the terrain at the scene of the accident is 225 feet higher than the Yakima Airport, it appears that the plane was only 375 feet above the ground when the instructor called for the simulated forced landing. The maneuvers described would entail a loss of considerably more than 75 feet of altitude and might reasonably be expected to bring the plane to within 100 feet of the ground. Damage to the aircraft indicated that the plane had been stalled at a low altitude, perhaps 75 to 100 feet. The terrain in the vicinity of the accident was suitable for a landing.

The probable cause of this accident was the instructor's faulty judgment in allowing the student to make a simulated forced landing below a safe altitude and in failing to take corrective action in time to prevent a stall.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred L. Tombs  
Secretary