

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

Instructor Frank Leroy Cornish and his student, George Edward Rieken, were seriously injured in an accident which occurred near the Municipal Airport, Mansfield, Ohio, about 10:30 p.m. on November 30, 1943. Cornish, age 35, held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land, 0-330 h.p. and flight instructor ratings. He had flown 1350 solo hours, of which 700 were in the type airplane involved and 60 were flown at night. Rieken, age 21, held a private pilot certificate with a single-engine land, 0-80 h.p. rating. His certificate carried a notation of waiver for defective vision and he was required to wear correcting lenses while piloting aircraft. The aircraft, a Piper J5A, NC 35582, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation and being operated by the Harrington Air Service, Inc., was demolished.

Cornish and Rieken took off to the northwest from the Municipal Airport for a local night instruction flight, with the student in the front seat. Immediately after passing the north boundary of the airport, they encountered fog. The instructor took the controls, made a steep left turn out of the fog, and headed south, crossing over the airport at an altitude of approximately 100 feet. He made another left turn just past the south boundary of the field in an attempt to return to the runway of take-off. At the completion of this turn, while headed east, they encountered another fog bank over a wooded area of tall trees. The aircraft struck a large beech tree at the edge of this area about 40 feet above the ground, then continued on, striking several other trees, and crashed to the ground in an inverted position. The instructor and student climbed out of the wreckage and were trying to find their way back to the airport but, due to fog, were walking in the wrong direction when found by airport personnel who were searching for them.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no evidence of failure of any part of the airplane prior to impact with the trees. Cornish and Rieken had made a previous flight the same night, from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and after landing and finding frost on the wings, the airplane was placed in a heated hangar to thaw.

The instructor was using the 6:30 p.m. weather report compiled at Hayesville, Ohio, about 10 miles east of the Mansfield Airport. This report indicated a 9° spread between temperature and dew point. However, there were three later reports available to him upon request, as follows:

<u>Hour</u>	<u>Temperature</u>	<u>Dew Point</u>
7:30 p.m.	27	20
8:30 p.m.	27	24
9:30 p.m.	29	26

At 10:30 p.m., the time of the accident, the temperature was 29, while the dew point was 27. Had the instructor observed this trend, he would have been aware of the approaching fog conditions. Further, there were at least two fog banks in close proximity to the field at the time of take-off and visual observation of weather conditions surrounding the airport, as well as the frost formation experienced on the earlier flight, should have been sufficient warning to the

instructor. He stated that, "before we started the plane, I thought it would be pretty hazy, but all around the field, except the east, it looked pretty clear."

The probable cause of this accident was the instructor's extremely poor judgment in attempting a flight in adverse weather when reports were available indicating such conditions.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs  
Secretary