

Adopted: May 29, 1944

File No. 4899-43

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD  
on the  
Investigation of an Aircraft Propeller Accident

William Arthur Debus was seriously injured while starting an aircraft engine at the Municipal Airport, Boulder, Colorado, about 8:15 a.m. on December 3, 1943. The aircraft, a Piper J3C-05, NC 26887, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation and being operated by Mountain States Aviation Company, was not damaged.

Debus, a War Training Service Navy trainee, was assisting Jack Willard Wood, another WTS Navy student, in starting the engine of NC 26887. After calling "switch off" and "throttle closed," Debus pulled the propeller through several times to prime the engine, then called "contact," whereupon Wood turned on both switches and cracked the throttle. At this point an instructor nearby called Debus' attention to the fact that there were no chocks in front of the wheels and Debus, without removing his hand from the propeller, reached for the chocks and in so doing moved the propeller. The engine started and the propeller struck him on the right hand, breaking several bones.

Investigation disclosed that although the students had been properly instructed in the correct method of starting an engine, additional instruction has been given to all students by the flight operator to prevent similar occurrences.

The probable cause of this accident was carelessness on the part of Student Debus in not following instructions properly.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Tocribs  
Secretary