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File No. 5072-43

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

Lewis Smith McClain was seriously injured by an aircraft propeller about 12:45 p.m. on December 8, 1943, at the Minden, Nevada Airport. The aircraft, a Meyers OTW-160, NC 34349, owned by the Defense Plant Corporation, was not damaged.

McClain, a commercial pilot with an instructor's rating, was preparing to take George Warren Shapard, a War Training Service student enrolled in the instructor course, up for a final check flight prior to graduation. The usual personnel were not available to assist in starting the engine, as it was during the noon hour, and McClain attempted to start the engine himself with the student at the controls. He instructed the student to get in the front cockpit and asked him if he could reach the ignition switch, which is located in the rear cockpit but is accessible to the front cockpit. When Shapard answered in the affirmative, McClain started around the wing to the front of the airplane. At the left wing tip he called to Shapard and asked if the switch was "off." Shapard said, "Yes, switch off," and McClain then asked him to use the wobble pump. Stepping to the front of the plane McClain started turning the propeller and again asked if the switch was "off." This part of the conversation was misunderstood by the student who immediately turned the switch to the "on" position. On the third swing of the propeller the engine started and the propeller struck McClain across the right hand, fracturing two bones.

This accident was due to the student's misunderstanding of instructions given by the instructor, and carelessness on the part of both in their technique in starting the engine.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary