

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft
During a Cross-Country Practice Flight

An accident which occurred 3 miles north of Fulton, Kentucky, at approximately 4:40 p.m., on December 12, 1943, resulted in fatal injury to the pilot, Alvin Gerald Kearney. Kearney, age 36, held a student pilot certificate and had accumulated about 26 solo and 16 dual hours of flying time, all in the type aircraft involved. He was on his second solo cross-country flight. The aircraft, a Piper E-2, NC 15394, owned by the pilot and Woodrow Leidigh, was demolished.

Pilot Kearney took off from North Cairo, Illinois at 3:00 p.m. for a cross-country flight direct to Union City, Tennessee, about 40 miles to the south. Approximately one and one-half hours later the aircraft was observed near Fulton, Kentucky, headed north at an altitude estimated as 200 feet, at a point about 8 miles east of a direct course to Union City. The pilot made a complete circle to the right, losing altitude during the turn, and started an approach to a field suitable for landing. As the plane neared a high tension line which crossed the flight path, an abrupt left turn was attempted, during which the aircraft was stalled and fell off to the left. It struck the ground nose-first at an angle of about 45°, 15 feet in front of the high tension line.

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 or no power was being developed at the time of impact. Weather conditions were suitable for contact flight and are not considered to have been a contributing factor to this accident.

It is apparent that the pilot, inexperienced in cross-country flying, became lost and attempted a landing but failed to observe the high tension line in his flight path until its proximity made immediate action necessary to avoid it. In his attempt to avoid the wires, the pilot stalled the aircraft at an altitude too low to effect recovery.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary