

Adopted: July 28, 1944

File No. 1171-44

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

Engine stoppage in a glide, while approaching the airport for a landing, followed by a forced landing in Lake Wickham, bordering Warwick Airport, Warwick N.Y., about 6:15 p.m. on April 27, 1944, resulted in drowning of Instructor Arthur Joseph Daly, age 36, of Stamford, Connecticut. His student, Leland Ross Jewett, age 18, of San Rafael, California, swam to shore.

Instructor Daly held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land, 0-330 h.p. and flight instructor ratings. He had flown about 1777 hours, including approximately 793 hours in the type plane involved. Student Jewett, a merchant seaman, had not soloed. The aircraft, owned by Safair Flying School, was an Aeronca L-3B, tandem trainer, NC 30443, equipped with a Continental 65 h.p. engine. The time on the engine was 158 hours. The aircraft was not materially damaged by the impact, but was damaged considerably by immersion and during recovery from the lake.

Instructor Daly and his student took off from Warwick Airport at 5:50 p.m. for a routine training flight. Prior to take-off the student idled the engine for a moment at which time it stopped. The instructor cranked the engine again and cautioned the student, "You have to watch that." After a practice landing, a second circuit was made and a second landing attempted. During an unusually low glide in to the airport over the water, the engine failed. The student said he felt the engine was quitting and "pumped the throttle" but the engine did not catch. The instructor took over and made a landing on the water 500 feet off shore. Although the cockpit filled with water as the occupants got out, the aircraft stayed afloat for approximately 20 minutes. Daly, who wore a heavy flying suit, became exhausted and drowned before he could reach shore. Student Jewett, who wore only a flying jacket other than usual clothing, was exhausted by his swim but was otherwise unhurt.

Since the approach was too low to reach the landing area, it would have been necessary to open the throttle. The idling adjustment of the carburetor might have been improper, as indicated by the previous stoppage at the airport. With improper carburetor adjustment, and the engine running cold from idling, inexpert operation of the throttle would probably cause the engine to stop.

The immediate cause of this accident was a forced landing in the water due to engine stoppage, the cause of which was not determined. A contributing factor was poor judgment of the instructor in allowing his student to make a landing approach that was too low.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary