

Adopted: July 28, 1944

File No. 2237-44

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

A dive to within 50 feet of the ground followed by a steep pull-up ended in a spin and crash that claimed the lives of Student Pilot Sylvester Carl Peer, age 35, of Turtle Creek, Penn., and his son Donald, age 8, at Pitt-Walkin Airport, Pitearn, Penn., about 3 23 p.m. on April 30, 1944.

The pilot had 350 solo hours, including 50 hours in the proceeding 90 days and 15 hours in the type aircraft involved. The aircraft, an Aeronca 65-C, NC 23587, owned by G. F. Sichelsteel, J. Balotta, L. L. Peer, and the pilot, was extensively damaged.

Peer took off at 3:00 p.m. accompanied by his son. The aircraft left the vicinity of the airport and when next observed by two adult witnesses, about 3:22 p.m., was in a shallow dive toward the airport. This dive was continued to a height of approximately 50 feet, followed by a steep climb to about 300 feet. At this point the aircraft was stalled and entered a spin to the left. Rotation was stopped after one turn but the airplane continued downward, striking the ground at an angle of about 45°.

This was a plain case of bad judgment by the pilot. Peer was known to have a habit of pulling up sharply at low altitudes in this aircraft and had been warned against such a practice. He was considered overconfident. Dual controls were connected and operative. Parachutes were not worn.

The probable cause of the accident was an inadvertent spin at an altitude too low to permit recovery, during a reckless flying demonstration.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary