

CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
SAFETY BUREAU

Adopted: December 24, 1946

Released: January 6, 1947

Accident Investigation Report Concerning
An Aircraft Accident at Salt Lake City, Utah
August 26, 1946The Accident

An air collision between a small civilian training plane and a Navy fighter at the Salt Lake City Municipal Airport #1 on August 26, 1946, resulted fatally to Student Pilot Leverett H. Nugent of Salt Lake City. His Taylorcraft, NC 39152, owned by Thompson Flying Service, was demolished. The Navy pilot, Commander Richard L. Fowler, was uninjured and his plane, an F8F-1 Grumman, #94807, was damaged but slightly.

Investigation*

Nugent, a student with about 12 solo hours, was practicing solo take-offs and landings. He was not equipped with a parachute. Commander Fowler had flown about 4000 hours including combat in the Pacific. At the time he was leading a formation of four Navy single-seat aircraft from Denver to San Diego. The formation circled the Salt Lake Airport until permission to land was obtained whereupon it broke up and Commander Fowler entered the traffic pattern. Nugent was flying south on the downwind leg of the traffic pattern and Fowler was flying approximately southwest. Collision occurred at an altitude of about 500 feet at a point approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles northwest of the center of the airport. The Taylorcraft spun to the

* In connection with the investigation a hearing was held at Salt Lake City, Utah, on September 6, 1946.

ground while the Grumman was landed normally on the field.

The Grumman was the overtaking aircraft. Impact was between the bottom of the Grumman's fuselage and the Taylorcraft's left wing and propeller while the two planes were on courses converging about 45°. At the time (about 5:46 P.M.) the Grumman was headed toward a bright, low sun.

The control tower operator did not see the collision or the two planes in close proximity. He did see the Taylorcraft spinning after the collision.

Weather conditions were good and apparently not contributory to the collision except for possible impairment of the Navy pilot's vision by the sun. He testified that he did not see the other plane prior to the collision and that his first knowledge thereof was when he felt a slight jolt and heard an unusual noise.

Probable Cause

The probable cause of this accident was failure of the pilot of the overtaking Navy plane to observe and avoid the Taylorcraft. A contributing factor was impairment of vision of the Navy pilot due to sun glare.

BY THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD:

/s/ OSWALD RYAN _____

/s/ HARILEE BRANCH _____

/s/ JOSH LEE _____

Landis, Chairman, and Young, Member, did not participate in the decision.