

Adopted: July 17, 1945

File No. 33-45

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft
In Scheduled Air Carrier Operation

Following an attempted routine mail pickup an aircraft owned and operated by All American Aviation, Inc. struck a tree and crashed approximately 2½ miles south of Greensburg, Pa., January 10, 1945. The pilot, Albert Eugene Holstrom, Jr., was killed, his flight mechanic, Lillard Cecil Lingar, sustained serious injuries and the aircraft was demolished.

Holstrom, age 27, held an airline transport certificate with a single-engine land 0-325 h.p. rating. He had flown approximately 3023 hours including 149 in the type of plane involved. He had received approximately 68 hours training on pickup technique and route familiarization and had made 18 solo flights for a total of 81 hours which included eight round trips on the route involved. Lingar, age 30, held a commercial pilot certificate with single-engine land 0-80 h.p. and flight instructor ratings and an aircraft and engine mechanic certificate. As flight mechanic he operated the mail pickup device. The aircraft, a Stinson SR-10C, NC 22535, was powered by a Lycoming 245 h.p. engine.

The flight, designated as Trip 9, departed from Harrisburg, Pa., at approximately 1603 to make aerial deliveries and pickups of mail and express at stations en route to Pittsburgh, Pa. About 1753 the plane approached the Greensburg station. Following a steep descent with considerable speed a low approach was made in which the pickup rope of the outbound mail container caught on the landing gear. The container was dragged approximately 300 feet at which point the rope broke and the container and rope fell to the ground. The plane was climbed to an altitude of approximately 100 feet and a medium-banked turn to the left was started. Lingar stated that at this time the pilot turned his head to the right and looking back said something he does not remember. During this time the turn steepened and the plane lost altitude until its right wing and right landing gear collided with a tree at a point about 30 feet above the ground. The plane then swerved to the right and struck the ground, slid forward about 55 feet and cartwheeled to a stop approximately 1000 feet beyond the tree.

Examination of the wreckage revealed no indication of failure prior to impact with the tree and the flight mechanic stated that the plane and engine functioned normally.

The pilot diverted his attention from his flying following the pickup attempt apparently in an effort to determine from the flight mechanic what had happened. This, it is believed, resulted in his inadvertently permitting the plane to descend during the turn to a point where collision with the tree occurred.

The probable cause of this accident was the pilot's diverting his attention during a low turn which resulted in a loss of altitude and collision with a tree.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary