

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE
Washington

October 3, 1935

REPORT OF THE ACCIDENT BOARD
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE

Statement of probable cause concerning an accident which occurred to a plane of Wyoming Air Service, Incorporated, on May 27, 1935 in the vicinity of Glendo, Wyoming

To the Director of Air Commerce

On May 27, 1935 at about 4 05 p.m. at a point 1 1/2 miles South of Glendo, Wyoming, an airplane of United States registry piloted by a licensed airman, while being operated in scheduled flight carrying mail and express, accidentally collided with the ground with resultant death to the pilot and the complete destruction of the aircraft.

The plane, a Boeing Monomail, model 221-A, bore Department of Commerce license number NC-725W and was being operated by the Wyoming Air Service, Incorporated. The pilot, Alva Lucas, held a transport pilot's license. No passengers were carried.

This trip was the south bound flight from Billings, Montana to Cheyenne, Wyoming, via Sheridan and Casper, Wyoming. Departure from Billings was without any unusual circumstances. Although weather reports were not complete as to several dew points and barometric readings, they did indicate flyable weather. At the point where the accident occurred, there was a low ceiling, fog and clouds lower over the hill tops and a heavy rain.

A radio contact was made with Cheyenne at 3 48 p.m. from a point 3 miles south of Douglas. Shortly before the time of the accident, people observed the plane apparently following highway No. 185 through the low part of a canyon at a point about 4 miles NE of where the accident occurred. The plane was below the tops of the canyon walls which are not more than 250 feet above the highway. Fog and clouds were also below the tops of the canyon walls and it was raining hard.

It is believed that the pilot, while doing contact flying, using Highway No 185 as a guide and knowing that this highway circled to the right around the hill directly ahead, elected to fly up into the cloud mist and over the hill and then let down out of the mist and pick up the highway again on the far side of the hill.

This hill is horse-shoe shaped and at the point where the pilot attempted to fly over was in effect two separate hills. It is believed that the pilot in letting down to pick up the highway again misjudged the exact contour of the hill. Evidence on the ground indicated that the plane had struck the ground while flying under normal power and with the plane in a descending position.

It is the opinion of the Accident Board that the probable cause of this accident was an accidental collision with the ground while flying low due to extremely severe local storm conditions.