

C. Earl Hulburd

Letters Regarding The Death Of His Son In A Small Airplane Crash

(Compiled By Ted Hine – June, 2003)

C. Earl Hulburd's son, Earl Seward Hulburd ("Bud" or "Herky") was killed at age 21 along with his flight instructor in a small airplane crash in St. Charles, MO near St. Louis on March 24, 1950. Bud was in the final stages of obtaining his private pilots license at the time.

The following scanned letters were found among the possessions of Betty Seward Hulburd Hine-Alderson (Bud's sister and Earl's younger daughter) after her death.

Some of these letters represent communications regarding Earl's attempt to find out the cause of the crash.

The letter written by C. Earl Hulburd on June 12, 1950 suggests possible reasons for the crash (though the referenced copy of the CAB report is missing). Note that this letter significantly exaggerates the flying credentials of Kirt Hine, my father. The letter suggests that student pilots should have had parachutes but that Bud's instructor would not allow them. That stall and spin maneuvers were performed well below the 5000 to 6000 feet considered safe (a reference says the CAB report determined the ceiling was 2500 ft with strong gusty winds). There is a reference to the fact that the stabilizer may have been stuck and to the "failures mentioned in the CAB report". Also the night before the flight, Bud evidently told his father that he hoped the instructor would not conduct the "test" because he was not a safe pilot and took to many chances". Evidently Bud also objected to others about taking the test with the assigned instructor. C. Earl Hulburd concludes that the flight school was negligent due to both poor maintenance on the aircraft and for allowing a dangerous instructor to fly. I know of no law suits that were ever pursued and have no copy of any final government report regarding the cause of the crash

Table of Contents

Letter From Mayor of St. Louis – March 28, 1950	2
CAB Letter To Earl – March 31, 1950	3
CAB Letter To Earl – April 4, 1950	4
Letter From Earl – June 12, 1950 – Page 1.....	5
Letter From Social Security Administration – June 13, 1950	8

Letter From Mayor of St. Louis – March 28, 1950



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF SAINT LOUIS
MISSOURI

JOSEPH M. DARST
MAYOR

March 28, 1950

Dear Earl:-

I was profoundly shocked and grieved to learn of the tragic and untimely death of your son. I regret very deeply that I did not at once realize that the boy who was killed in the County airplane crash was your son. Yesterday afternoon when I inquired about when the services were to be held, I was told that they had been held that afternoon.

Words are of small value in such circumstances, but I do want you to know that my heart goes out to you and that you have my deepest sympathy.

I am sorry there is not something I could do to help my old friend in his hour of grief. I know you have the courage to stand up under your sorrows, and in doing so you deserve the admiration of all.

Cordially yours,

Joe Darst
Mayor

Mr. C. Earl Hulburd
c/o Mrs. Marie Hoffman
5077 Washington Avenue
Saint Louis, Missouri

CAB Letter To Earl - March 31, 1950



CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD

WASHINGTON 25

Bureau of Safety Investigation
2203 City Hall Building
Kansas City 6, Missouri

March 31, 1950

Mr. C. Earl Hulburd
5077 Washington Blvd.
St. Louis 8, Missouri

Subject: Aircraft Accident - St. Charles, Mo. - 3/24/50
Pilot E. C. Schmid - Fatal
Student Pilot E. S. Hulburd - Fatal
Cessna 140, N-2064V

Dear Mr. Hulburd:

This office is in receipt of your letter of March 29, 1950 in which you make inquiry regarding the subject aircraft accident.

This is to advise that all factual information in connection with our investigation of aircraft accidents must be released by our Washington office. We are therefore forwarding your letter to the Chief, Hearing and Reports Division, from whom you may expect to receive an early reply. Any further correspondence regarding this accident should be referred to the above office.

Yours very truly,

R. P. Parshall
Chief of Region V



CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
WASHINGTON 25

April 4, 1950

Mr. C. Earl Hulburd
5077 Washington Boulevard
St. Louis 8, Missouri

Dear Mr. Hulburd:

Your letter of March 29 to our Kansas City Office has been referred here for handling.

In connection therewith, please be informed that to date this office has preliminary information only on the aircraft accident in which your son lost his life near St. Charles, Missouri, March 24, 1950. We shall be glad to write you again when a detailed report is received from our investigator.

Please accept our most sincere sympathy in the loss of your son.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Allen P. Bourdon", is written over a horizontal line.

Allen P. Bourdon
Chief, Reports Section
Bureau of Safety Investigation

Letter From Earl - June 12, 1950 - Page 1

5077 Washington Blvd.,
June 12, 1950

Mr. Chelsea O. Izman
721 Olive Street
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Chelsea:

Enclosed herewith is the report of the Civil Aeronautics Board of the accident which resulted in the death of my son, and attached hereto is a report on my investigation and my observations re same. The persons mentioned are:

E. Kirtland Hine

My son-in-law, an electrical engineer at Curtiss-Wright Propeller Division. His duties consist largely of experimenting with the pitch of propellers in bringing about better maneuverability of airplanes. About a year ago he was called to Washington D.C. to demonstrate his findings to Symington, Eisenhower, Bradley and other bigwigs in the Army and aeronautics. He learned to fly about fifteen years ago and now flies everything from Piper Cubs to B-29s, although now he has a test pilot when making demonstrations. He is inclined to be a "company man" where accidents are involved. In fact he told me of a suit against Curtiss-Wright for \$15,000 which plaintiff won and which definite proof showed him to be at fault. The pilot was flying a very large plane and thus sat about 15' above the ground. He came in and was instructed to land on a certain lane and stick to that lane. He didn't, and crashed into a small plane which caught on fire and he was burned about the face (collecting 15M). He said there was no justification whatever for the jury's decision.

E. J. Landcaster

Now the Deputy-Officer-in Charge (US Airforce) at Emerson, representing the Government in its dealings in connection with Amament products. He was a Captain-Pilot in the last war, making a number of missions over enemy territory. He goes much further than Hine in that he says the flight school is to blame if even a cotter pin is defective in a plane.

Ed. Hosack and Charles Kingen

Flight Instructors who taught Bud to Fly. Both now are with another flight school, and both are "on our side". I believe both are now with the Brayton Flying Service, Inc., Ferryhill 5-2914, at least Hosack is.

With this foreword I'll get on with the report.

Sincerely,

FINDINGS OF C. E. HULBURD WITH RESPECT TO THE AIRPLANE ACCIDENT OF MARCH 24, 1950, WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF EARL SEWARD HULBURD.

I. E. K. HINE reports as follows:

A. When he leared to fly in Seattle:

1. He never left the ground without a parachute. He does not recall whether this was the law or a rule of the school.

According to the CAB report schimd, employed by the flying school as an Examiner, would not permit a chite.

2. He was never permitted to stunt (stalls and Spins) under 5000 to 6000 feet.

The CAB report states the ceiling was 2500 feet, with pre-vailling strong gusty winds.

- B. He is convinced that the tail stabilizer froze in the down position thus forcing the nose of the plane downward. This seems to be borne out by the CAB statement that the engine was throttled low, evidently to give them time to right the stabilizer. He states, however, that this would be hard to prove. It would also be difficult to prove that the structural failures mentioned in the report were visible failures as the report also stated that the log indicates regular inspection in compliance with CAA regulations.

- C. The ~~examiner~~ is always in complete charge of a dual-controlled plane. He is responsible for the safety of the student pilot and the plane. If the student pilot does something wrong it is up to him to right it for two reasons:

1. Safety of the plane and student pilot.
2. Self-preservation.

II. E. J. LANCASTER reports as follows:

- A. He agrees with the opinion of Hine except that he emphatically goes further.
- B. He states that the periodic inspection should have revealed the failures mentioned in the CAB report.

III. MY SON, EARL.

- A. The night before the test he told me he hoped Smitty would not conduct the test as Smitty took too many chances.
- B. I kidded him about wanting an easy test. He replied that he did not care about the exactness of the test, that he had all the respect in the world for smitty's ability as a pilot, but that he took too many chances.

IV. Ed Hosack and Charles Kingen report as follows:

- A. When Bud learned that Smitty was scheduled to give him the test he objected strenuously and requested that someone else be assigned.
- B. Hosack and Kingen prevailed upon Bud to accept Smitty (which, of course, they always will regret).
- C. That the owners of the flying school, John H. Logsdon and Robert L. Donovan, "cut corners" whenever possible, and this subsequently was the cause of the loss of their CAA license.
- D. CAA regulations require that student flyers be equipped with parachutes.

V. TO SUM UP

- A. Whether or not it can be proved that the plane was defective:
- B. Smitty, Hosack and Kingen all were employed by the Flight School and thus represented said school in dealings with Bud.
- C. The Flight School was negligent through employes in that:
 1. Hosack and Kingen persuaded Bud against his better judgment to accept Smitty as his examiner.
 2. Smitty was in complete charge of the flight and thus responsible for Bud's safety (The report names him as "Pilot") and yet:
 - a. He would not permit parachute equipment.
 - b. He conducted the test, including stunt flying, under most unfavorable conditions.
 - (1) Ceiling 2500 feet, when much higher altitude was desirable.
 - (2) Prevailing strong, gusty winds, which made low altitude stunting dangerous.
- D.

- D. I lost a son through negligence on the part of the Flight School (Through the employes representing it) thus I feel I am entitled to the full amount of indemnity (\$15,000) allowed in this state.
- E. From a practical layman's standpoint I cannot see how compensation enters into it. Suppose I had lost a wife or small daughter from whom I could expect no financial assistance.

VI. The CAB people do not wish to become involved and thus will not see me to clarify any statement made in their report.

Letter From Social Security Administration - June 13, 1950

FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

BUREAU OF OLD-AGE AND
SURVIVORS INSURANCE

IN REPLYING, ADDRESS: SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
FIELD OFFICE

8th & Olive
St. Louis 1 Mo.
June 13, 1950

Telephone Ce. 3200 Sta. 29

C. Earl Hulburd
5077 Washington Blvd.
St. Louis 8, Mo.

Re: Earl S. Hulburd
150-18-8576

We would appreciate your calling at this office as soon as it is convenient for you to do so. Our office hours are from 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

We wish to discuss with you the inquiry regarding Social Security payments due on your son's account.

Please bring his discharge papers with you, if available, when you come in. Let us hear from you within five days.

It is important that we discuss this matter with you. If you are not able to come in, please notify us promptly by mail or telephone.

Sincerely yours,

T. L. GAUKEL

Manager.

Mary Cockrell
(Miss) MARY COCKRELL
Claims Ass't.

*No benefits
accrued under
a bill before the house
passed, in which case make
another inquiry*