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169

ACCIDENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

WAR DEPARTMENT  
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

44-9-19-38

84109

(1) Place Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma (2) Date 19 September 1943 (3) Time 1631 CWT  
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model A-20-G-10-DO (5) A. F. No. 42-54152 (6) Station Lake Charles Army Air Base, La. Chas., La.  
 Organization: (7) III Bomb Cd Third AF 416th Bomb (L) 670th Bomb (L) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL PLL PLL 8860

DUTY (10)	NAME (Last name first) (11)	RATING (12)	SERIAL NO. (13)	RANK (14)	PERSONNEL CLASS (15)	BRANCH (16)	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (17)	RESULT TO PERSONNEL (18)	USE OF PARACHUTE (19)
	P. McWhirt, Joseph R.	P	0-420615	Capt.	01	AC	III Bomb Cd	None	None
	X. Monroe, Hugh A.	P	0-749489	2d Lt.	18 01	AC	III Bomb Cd	None	None
	E. Atchison, Robert E.	E	1701624	M/Sgt.	20	AC	III Bomb Cd	None	None
	X. Young, Clarence R.	E	15062994	T/Sgt.	20	AC	III Bomb Cd	None	None



PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT

(20) McWhirt, Joseph R. (21) 0-420615 (22) Capt. (23) 01 (24) AC  
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
 Assigned (25) III Bomb Cd Third AF (26) 416th Bomb (L) (27) 670th Bomb (L) (28) Lake Charles Army Air Base, La. Chas., La.  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)  
 Attached for flying (29) III Bomb Cd Third AF (30) 416th Bomb (L) (31) 670th Bomb (L) (32) Lake Charles Army Air Base, La. Chas., La.  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)  
 Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 7/11/41 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 7/11/41 Instrument rating (37) None  
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type 162:30 (42) Instrument time last 6 months Not Involved  
 (39) This model 31:50 (43) Instrument time last 30 days Not Involved  
 (40) Last 90 days 68:20 (44) Night time last 6 months Not Involved  
 (41) Total 791:45 (45) Night time last 30 days Not Involved

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>M 4</u>	<u>Nose and belly of fuselage damaged</u>
(47) Engine(s) <u>0 4 4</u>	<u>Sudden stoppage both engines</u>
(48) Propeller(s) <u>0 4 4</u>	<u>Both propellers bent</u>

(50) Weather at the time of accident CAVU

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No

(52) Cleared from ICAAB, Lake Chas., La. To Will Rogers Field, Okla. Kind of clearance CFR

(55) Pilot's mission Administrative Cross Country

(56) Nature of accident Landing Accident - Ship overrun runway and nosed over - Emergency air brake was used but failed to stop ship

(57) Cause of accident Major Cause - Other Personnel  
Minor Cause - Maintenance  
Underlying Cause - Hydraulic system failed to function as did emergency air brake - Low supply hydraulic fluid

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## DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

(Brief narrative of accident. Include statement of responsibility and recommendations for action to prevent repetition)

At 1631 CWT, on 19 September 1943, an accident occurred on Will Rogers Field to an A-20-G-10-DO type aircraft, Number 42-54152. Joseph R. McWhirt, Captain, A. C., was flying this ship, and had arrived from Lake Charles, Louisiana with Hugh A. Monroe, 2nd Lt., A. C., M/Sgt. Robert E. Atchison, and T/Sgt. Clarence R. Young aboard. This airplane made a normal landing and the pilot had noticed nothing irregular until his brakes failed to function during his roll down the runway. After using the manual hydraulic pump without success, Captain McWhirt activated the emergency air brake to prevent overrunning the runway, but this too failed. As a result, the airplane passed the end of the runway and continued rolling until it reached a shallow ditch at the edge of the field, where the nose-wheel collapsed. While the extent of the resultant damage was concentrated on the nose of the ship's fuselage and landing gear, it is believed that the condition is repairable. None of the crew was injured.

A thorough inspection of the hydraulic system of this ship was conducted immediately after the accident described here, and it was found that the hydraulic reservoir contained a low supply of fluid. No other irregularity was found, however, since the entire system operated satisfactorily after the proper amount of fluid had been added. This fact left only one other possible cause, that being pilot error. After a discussion with the pilot, however, it is believed that his actions could not have averted what actually occurred, and it must be assumed that a failure in the hydraulic system was the cause of this accident, the source of this difficulty being traced to the low supply of hydraulic fluid. While it is believed an excellent suggestion that a visual check of the fluid supply be incorporated in the pilot's inspection before entering the plane, there is no regulation requiring it. It is required, however, by the preflight check made by maintenance personnel, and responsibility must be placed there for this particular accident, since this is so.

## RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that a complete check list be prepared and requirements be made that it be followed by all pilots before entering any combat type aircraft for a proposed flight. It is further suggested that a check of the hydraulic fluid supply be included in this visual inspection. Besides providing an opportunity for the pilots to "know" their ships more thoroughly, a check of this kind will start them "flying" before they enter the cockpit.

Signature

*J. H. Cameron*  
 J. H. CAMERON, Investigating Officer  
 1st Lt., Air Corps,  
 Aircraft Accident Officer.

Date 28 September 1943

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20 September 1943

SUBJECT: Accident Report.

TO : Whom It May Concern.

At 1615 on Sunday, 19 September 1943, I, Captain Joseph R. McWhirt (O-420615), pilot of airplane type A-20-G, Number 42-54152 of the 670th Squadron of the 416th Bomb Group (L) located at Lake Charles Army Air Base, Lake Charles Louisiana, circled Will Rogers Field at Oklahoma City preparatory to landing.

The airplane's radio transmitter was apparently inoperative in-as-much as I was unable to get the tower to answer my signal although I could hear their signals to other ships. The interphone system was also inoperative.

I entered the traffic pattern and lowered the wheels on the down-wind leg preparing to land on runway 12. The wheels came down and locked and the hydraulic pressure gauge registered 900 lbs. I did not check the pressure after this and the flaps were lowered on the approach leg and came fully down. I accomplished a normal landing, the airplane touching down well within the first one-third of the runway. I applied the first brake pedal pressure about one-half way down the runway and getting no braking action immediately began operating the manual hydraulic pump handle. I continued this effort, still without braking action, until the ship had traveled approximately four-fifths the length of the runway at which point I turned the emergency air brake handle. As I turned on the air brake handle I released the toe-pedal pressure and upon hearing the noise of escaping air around or thru the air brake handle I immediately reapplied toe pedal pressure. There was still no braking action.

The airplane ran off the end of the runway at an angle of 15 to 20 degrees to the right of its original landing direction - I cut the switches - the airplane rolled across some soft dirt, a grassy area, and then across a drainage ditch coming to complete rest in a tail hi position on the top of the far side of this ditch.

Preliminary examination of the damage reveals the following:

- a. The nose wheel assembly and cover door are completely sheared off. (This occurred just as the plane came to a full stop).
- b. Three of the six propeller blades are bent.
- c. Left tire blown out.
- d. Forward lower nose section damaged and front end of bomb-bay doors torn.

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I was making a cross country flight from Lake Charles, Louisiana to Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City on Verbal Orders Of The Commanding Officer.

The following were passengers on the airplane, none being injured in the accident:

Monroe, Hugh A., 2nd Lt.  
Atchison, Robert E., M/Sgt.  
Young, Clarence R., T/Sgt.

The cause for the lack of brake pressure and the failure of the air brake are as yet undetermined, and in my opinion, the accident was entirely unavoidable since every means possible to stop the airplane was attempted.

*Joseph R. McWhirt*  
JOSEPH R. MCWHIRT,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Pilot.

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Accident Report

At approximately 1630, 19th of September 1943, I, 2nd Lt. Hugh A. Monroe was riding as a passenger in the gunners compartment of an A-20-C type airplane Number 4254152, enroute from Lake Charles Army Air Base to Will Rogers Field.

Captain J. R. McWhirt, the pilot made a normal landing on runway 12 at Will Rogers Field. The first I knew of anything wrong was when the airplane swerved slightly and left the runway a few feet before its end. I looked out the side of the gunners canopy and noticed that Captain McWhirt had cut-off both engines. We rolled over rough ground for several seconds and then had a rather rough jar, at which point the airplane came to rest.

On viewing the accident it appeared that the airplane had crossed a ditch approximately 15 Feet wide and 2½ Feet deep. The nose wheel was apparently sheared off on hitting the far side of the ditch. The airplane had stopped on the far side of the ditch after tearing down part of the fence which borders the south side of the field.

At the time of the impact, all the personnel in the rear of the airplane were well braced as we all realized by that time that we had no brakes.

I, myself, suffered no injuries and am quite positive none of the others were hurt.

Before landing, Captain McWhirt was unable to contact Will Rogers Tower and also he said he attempted to call me several times on interphone although I did not receive him. I was listening on the headset during the whole trip.

*Hugh A. Monroe*

HUGH A. MONROE,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps,  
O-749489.

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19 September 1943

Report of Accident on Airplane, A-20-G 42-54152

The airplane took off at Lake Charles and everything seemed normal. When we reached Will Rogers Field I noticed that the pilot could not contact the tower. After circling the field two or three times we landed on runway number 12.

Before we hit the runway I noticed that the flaps and wheels were down. When we went off the end of the runway I looked out the side window and saw that we were headed for a fence. I braced myself on the door crank and lower machine gun. We hit the fence and ditch and stopped.

The engines were cut and fully stopped before we hit. One blade of the left prop. was damaged and two blades of the right. The nose stout was torn completely off. The left tire was also blown out. The nose and bomb bay doors were damaged, but the fuselage was not buckled. There was no hydraulic pressure shown on the gauge. The ditch was about 15 feet wide and four feet deep.

No personnel were injured.

*R. E. Atchison*  
R. E. ATCHISON,  
M/Sgt., Air Corps,  
Engineer.

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20 September 1943.

S T A T E M E N T

On September 19, 1943 I was a passenger in A-20G Airplane 42-54152 piloted by Captain McWhirt. We took off from Lake Charles Army Air Field and flew to Will Rogers Field. The trip was uneventful until we landed at Will Rogers Field. I felt the pilot land and roll down the runway but could see nothing as I was sitting on the floor in the rear gunners compartment. I felt the ship hit something and then go up on the nose. I received no injury.

*Clarence R. Young*  
Clarence R. Young  
T/Sgt, 15062994

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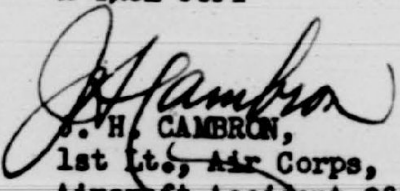
84th Sub-Depot Inspection Department  
Office of the Chief Inspector

23 September 1943

Report of investigation of crashed airplane A 20 G 42-54152. This ship was removed from the scene of the crash to the 84th Sub-Depot. We were able to pump up the hydraulic system to 825 lbs., normal operating pressure, by using the hand pump which draws its supply of hydraulic fluid from the bottom of the tank. A serviceable propeller was installed on the #2 engine and engine driven pump was checked. At the first run up the fluid was so low in the hydraulic supply tank that the pump would not operate, the engine was stopped, and the tank filled with 1 1/2 gallons of hydraulic fluid the pump primed, and the engine again run up the pump operation ok. The system pressure ok 825 lbs to 875 lbs. Wing flaps operated ok. Brakes operated ok. Emergency air had been exhausted, air bottle refilled and air brake system tested ok.

/s/ Tex Hall  
/t/ Tex Hall  
Chief Inspector

A TRUE COPY

  
S. H. CAMBRON,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Aircraft Accident Officer.

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ARMY AIRWAYS COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

AIRDROME TRAFFIC CONTROL ACCIDENT REPORT

Tower: Will Rogers Field Date of accident Sept. 19, 1943

Did you witness the accident? No Time of accident: 1631 CWT

Number of aircraft involved: One Place of accident: The aircraft stopped after going into the ditch near the highway after landing to the SE on the NW-SE runway.

Name(s) of pilot(s) involved and rating(s) (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

Capt. Joseph R. McWhirt

Serial number and type of aircraft involved: 42-4152 A-20

Location and path of aircraft(s) at time of accident: The aircraft was landing SE on the SE-NW runway.

Damage to property other than aircraft (as observed from the tower): None

Weather report current at the time of the accident: Wind East. Three (3) miles Per hour.

Additional weather information as observed by the airdrome traffic controller: Very little wind. Shifting continually.

Indicate radio instructions or visual signals given to aircraft prior to accident: \_\_\_\_\_

Tower had no radio contact with aircraft although several attempts were made to gain contact with plane. Tower put out a blind call for the aircraft to check his landing gear and then gave the aircraft a green light to land.

Give a brief account of the accident including the emergency-action taken by the airdrome traffic controller at the time of the accident: Aircraft landed without radio contact and was given a green light to land. His wheels touched the ground after using about five hundred feet of runway. Brakes must have been weak or out for he still had five thousand feet of runway left. The ship came to rest about three hundred feet to the right of the end of the SE-NW runway. The nose wheel gave way. Lt. T.S. Merritt was in the tower at the time. The crash alarm was sounded and all concerned notified.

I hereby certify that the above statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A TRUE COPY

*J. H. Cambron*  
J. H. CAMBRON,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Aircraft Accident Officer.

/s/ S/Sgt James L. Mowry  
/t/ S/Sgt James L. Mowry  
Airdrome Traffic Controller  
on duty

*Incl 7*

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HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR BASE  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER  
WILL ROGERS FIELD, OKLAHOMA

E-12-12 *JMB*

File 360.33  
Acrft. Accidents Gen'l.

28 September 1943

SUBJECT: A. A. F. Form 14 on A-20-G-10-DO Aircraft #42-54152.

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces,  
Attention: Flight Control Command, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Pursuant to instructions contained in paragraph 1a, Section V, Part Eight, AAF Regulation 62-14, dated 26 May 1943, inclosed herewith is AAF Form 14 covering Group II accidents to A-20-G-10-DO Aircraft #42-54152 on 19 September 1943; Pilot Captain Joseph R. McWhirt, A. C.

For the Commanding Officer:

*B. H. Levy*  
B. H. Levy,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant

8 Inclosures:

- Incl. 1- AAF Form 14.
- Incl. 2- Stmt by Pilot.
- Incl. 3- Stmt by Lt. Monroe.
- Incl. 4- Stmt by M/Sgt. Atchison.
- Incl. 5- Stmt by T/Sgt. Young.
- Incl. 6- Report of Chief Inspector.
- Incl. 7- Airdrome Traffic Control Accident Report.
- Incl. 8- Four Photographs.

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518

Accident No. 44-9-19-35

Date

Checked by Lee 10-6-43

Analyzed by Mc 10-6-43

Copied for Wright  
Field by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes ~~Attorney's copy~~

Maintenance

DL

1225:9-V

Accident No.

44-9-19-38

Pilot's Name

McWhitt Joseph R Capt

06 Nature Group

Landing

37 Specific Nature

Hit ditch

37 Underlying Nature

Brakes did not hold

100% 09 Cause Group

Maintenance

47 Specific Cause

servicing personnel

60 Underlying Cause

carelessness

Cause Group

Specific Cause

Underlying Cause