

343rd Fighter Squadron  
354th Fighter Group  
APO 141, US Army

1 December 1944  
1530 hours  
4914 – 0808 E

S T A T E M E N T

I was flying No. 2 position in Red flight, 353rd Fighter Squadron, with Captain Gordon T. McEachron flying in No. 1 position on a dive-bombing mission over Germany. We had found a secondary target, dropped our bombs and strafed trains for approximately 45 minutes before Captain McEachron went down. We were approaching Landau, German [sic], from the north, at approximately 1,000 feet above the ground. We circled the city to the left and upon completion of a 180 degree turn, Captain McEachron called on the R/T saying, "I've had it." I did not notice any flak over Landau, but we had gotten moderate and accurate flak over Karlsruhe, approximately 15 minutes before we circled Landau. I assumed he was hit by flak, however, at Landau. He maintained a heading of north while losing attitude. About a half minute after he said he'd had it, I saw coolant streaming out of the ship in a light, thick vapor. He force landed the ship (wheels up) on a heading of north four miles NNE of Landau and two miles SE of Edesheim. The ship skidded on a cultivated field and hit no obstructions. He called on the R/T after landing the ship and said he was okay, and asked me to drop my pistol to him because he had none and two Germans were approaching. I dropped my 45 automatic to him on one pass over his ship and two extra clips on another pass, and continued circling at about 300 feet, waiting to see if he had found them. Within five minutes he called back on the R/T and said he could not find the gun, and added again that he was safe and okay. I remained in the exact area waiting for approximately ten minutes and told him I was going home. He acknowledged, saying he was still alright and that the Germans were near the ship. He was in the cockpit of the ship when I last saw him. Less than five minutes after I had begun gaining altitude to head for home, he called me on the radio and said that there were many German civilians around the ship and that they all seemed friendly. Again he reassured me that he was alright. All of his radio transmissions after his crash-landing were loud and clear and he had no trouble receiving mine.

*Hugo E. Pressnall*  
HUGO E. PRESSNALL,  
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Pilot.