

RE: 2nd Lt. HAMMOND SADLER



POST MAIL 10 DAYS AFTER CRASH



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he would call me the next morning if it was to be that rite. He expected to make a flight to Kousa Sunday & if he didn't he would tell me to come on up. He never called. I called him yesterday morning, only to learn of the accident. So I immediately went up to the camp to learn what I could from the other men.

I talked to a crew of another B-29 who happened to be in the air over Tinian at the time of the crash - & to Lt. Cedacholm, the Radar man, who, by chance, let another man take his place for the flight. This is all I learned.

Candy & the full original crew, except for Cedacholm & Cox, (the bombardier who recently went home for discharge) - took off from North Field on a routine single flight ^{last} Wednesday morning (3 October). They were up to put in their required monthly flight time. The crew of the other B-29 saw them over Tinian & all seemed well - but between



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1100 & 1200 they saw the wreckage of a B-29 in the water about 8 miles west of Aquijan — or about 15 miles S.W. of Tinian. They think they saw the wreckage immediately after the accident & came over very low & circled the area until the weather closed in & forced them to leave — but by that time shore boats & a "D.E." ~~was~~ were over half way out from Tinian & a FBM or FBY was making a rescue. They saw only 2 men in the water — the airplane was badly broken up & indicated that it must have struck the water with great force. There was hardly any wreckage at all on the surface.

The engineer & the radio operator were picked up — the engineer was dead & the radio operator has not been taken out of the hospital at Saipan yet — so nothing has been learned from him yet.

It is the opinion of the crew of the other B-29 that it was



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miraculous that even one man
survived the crash - considering the
force with which ~~no~~ 30 struck
the water - & ~~the~~ ^{they} ~~believes~~
that if anyone else had survived
the impact they would have been
picked up by the rescue craft.
A miracle is always possible; yes,
but of all of the possibilities that
we have tried to speculate upon,
^{none} appear to be possible - considering
the rescue craft which was so
quickly on the scene & the
observation of the other B-29. The
crew of the other airplane told
me they would have seen anyone
else in the water because they
came over so low - It is now
Thursday 11 Oct. as I rewrite
my original letter & I called
it Cedarholm yesterday - but
there has been no further word.
I believe that if Candy were
still alive, he would have been
picked up by now & we would
know - So I am sending this
letter on to Pam to give to
you, Hammond, so that you
may use your own judgement



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whether it would be better for Louise & Sigie to spare them the knowledge for now — or to accept the inevitable finality of a war ~~but~~ confirmation that will come later — maybe not for 6 months — & drag out their apprehension, hoping ~~for~~ for nothing.

It is usually the procedure to list as "missing", those whose bodies are not recovered.

It is now Saturday 13 Oct, as I rewrite the last part of this letter once more. Lt Cedacholm called me yesterday to give me the full details of the crash — as told by the radio operator who has just been returned to Guam. Very briefly, this is what he saw —

They were cruising at 2000' when he felt the airplane shudder. He got up to look out a hatch & saw no 2 engine feathered. At the same instant no 1 started throwing oil in a stream — they feathered it immediately. They started



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to lose altitude & he went back to his position & put on the intercom — to hear Candy say "we're going down, ~~to~~ stand by your ditching positions".

They all got their ditching gear on & were ready — the approach was perfect. The next thing he knew he was standing on the ceiling just forward of the front bomb bay — ~~the~~ thigh deep in water — the ship was on his back. He was pretty stunned & weak & he opened the hatch into the bomb bay to see sunlight thru the open bomb bay doors. It was all he could do to climb out thru the bomb bay. Once out, he tried to make his way ~~out~~ back to the tail to help someone out (he ~~that~~ he heard someone say they were following him out from up front) — failing that, he tried to come back forward — but in the very heavy sea it was more



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than he had strength for. He was completely exhausted & couldn't even inflate his one man raft. He was in the water $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hrs when he was picked up by a crash boat but they continued searching for survivors (both boats & airplanes) - for 5 hrs. The visibility on the water was good & they would have found anyone else afloat easily. The engineer ~~only~~ was pulled out of the water dead. He said he was scared half to death right after he got out of the airplane by the other B-29 - it came so low, circling.

Also, both boats & airplanes continued searching the area the next 3 days - in vain.

The engineer's watch stopped at 1209 - .

Lt Davine was very well liked & respected as a responsible pilot - that all the men I talked with were emphatic on. They firmly believe that he would have ordered them to bail out



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if he thought it possible. But 2000' is pretty low for 10 men to get out — you can bail out as low as 700' — but it was losing altitude fast & he probably figured the best way to save them all was by ditching her. Ditching is not such a dangerous operation — hundreds have been made successfully without mishap — but by pure accident — one chance in many — they probably hit in the trough of a wave, instead of on a swell, & turned over in the ~~heavy~~ unusually heavy sea that has been whipped into a torment by over 2 weeks of continuous rain & winds —. This probably killed the others instantly — or knocked them unconscious so that they never knew what happened —.

Such a dual engine failure is not unusual to a B-29. The Wright engine installation has always been notoriously the most undependable characteristic



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of the airplane — & a great many have been ditched because of this. On one of his later raids Andy had to abort & come in on 2 engines when 2 ~~engines~~ cut out right after take off.

It is very hard for me to yet realize that this has actually happened — & after the "big job" is done. Andy was a part of my life out here that I cannot explain — & I cannot get him out of my mind. I'll always remember him as he was out here — he was always happy-go-lucky — full of enthusiasm — & for me, it was a new, but deep friendship that I'll always cherish. Be proud of him — & try to be brave in his memory of real courage. They don't come any better — or any braver — he was a dear friend — & a man.

Andy was a good pilot too — they made the flight to Korea & back that Sunday — for a "show of airpower" — 18 hrs nonstop. Back at North Field that night



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Candy made the landing - his
 just at rate - & they told me it
 was perfect.

I think you should know, too,
 that his papers for 2nd Lt. came
 thru the morning he left - he
 was to be suborn in that day.

I know there is no such thing
 as consolation for you - but I
 want to say this, in my deep
 sympathy & small share in your
 suffering: After 13 missions over
 Japan, Candy had a very real -
 more than average - personal
 stake in the victory that is ours,
 the living. And it is now up
 to us not to waste it. At least
 too, he lived to see the fruits
 of his courage - the end of the
 war —.

Also it is impossible to
 seek an explanation of why this
 happened now - & to Candy -
 I want you to know that I
 never will believe in "fate" in
 any of its forms - & that this
 accident was just that - an
accident, no more - yes, that
 probably could have been
 prevented, but wasn't.



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it was perhaps a chance in a hundred — but the wrong one out of 99 others — which probably could have more easily have happened when I flew over Eto that day — but didn't.

But it does make me believe more firmly something that a great poet once wrote — that "the good go first, the bad linger on to plague us" I guess that's why it didn't happen to No. 33 over Eto that day. ^{Of all my friends that I have lost in the war — it is my best friends that are} I'll be back in the States again ^{soon}.

shortly — perhaps as early as the middle of Nov. ~~but not~~ later than Nov as I believe, — if there is any more of my knowledge of the accident that you ^{would} want me to share with you then — please ask me.

my heart breaks for you — & somehow I feel strangely close to you in sharing at least a small share of your great loss. So if there is ever anything that I can do — or can be to you — please let me —

with love & sympathy,

Bob