

Source:

Suzanne Sadler Stone, sister of 2nd Lt Hammond D. Sadler, provided the following 3 letters.

Summary of letters included in this file:

Letter # 1 dated 11 October 1945 is from Colonel Carl R. Storrie, 314th Bombardment Wing, Air Corps, Commanding to Walter H. Sadler, Hammond Sadler's father – it tells the disappearance of 2nd Lt. Sadler. This letter was sent and received BEFORE the family had received any kind of Official notice from the then War Department.

Letter # 2 dated 09 November 1945 is from Colonel Carl R. Storrie, 314th Bombardment Wing Air Corps, Commanding to Walter H. Sadler, Hammond Sadler's father in reply to Mr. Walter Sadler's letter (which is not which is unavailable) – it tells of the gross error his office made in releasing Letter No. 1 before they family was officially notified.

Letter # 3 dated 28 December 1945 is from the War Department to Walter H. Sadler, Hammond Sadler's father regarding the known details of the crash of plane.

1.

HEADQUARTERS 314th BOMBARDMENT WING
Office of the Commanding General
APO 246 Unit 2, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

11 October 1945


My dear Mr. Sadler:

Through this letter I wish to share with you some of the sorrow in the recent disappearance of your son, Flt O Hammond D. Sadler, T-6055. To some extent I can appreciate your anxiety during these difficult days of waiting while he is listed as "~~Missing In Action~~". I too am waiting, not alone for news of your son, but also for news of others who are listed as "Missing".

I realize how vitally important every scrap of news concerning your son must be to you. Therefore I wish to pass on to you all that we know in this Headquarters. Even with the War's end it has been necessary to make many routine flights from our base here. On the 3rd of October, during one of these routine flights, your son's plane developed engine trouble and was forced down at sea. The pilot brought the plane down near Aguijan Island, a few miles south of Tinian. Upon hitting the water the plane exploded. Rescue craft proceeded to the scene of the crash immediately. One survivor was picked up and the body of one crew member recovered. I sincerely wish there was more news for us to pass on to you. This, however, is all that we know at the present time.

If, in the end, we learn that this War has cost us your son's life, then, through our tears, let us take pride in his noble sacrifice, and let us keep his memory with honor.

Sincerely,


CARL R. STORRIE,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 314th BOMBARDMENT WING
Office of the Commanding General
APO 246 Unit 2, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

9 November 1945

My dear Mr. Sadler:


Your letter of October 18, 1945, is before me, and I hardly know how to begin to answer it.

First, let me offer you my sincerest apologies for the error which allowed your letter to leave our office before the proper date. These letters are supposed to be held for thirty days so that the War Department will have ample time to notify next of kin. Somehow, in the great confusion of these recent weeks, your letter was mailed before it should have been. By now you no doubt have received War Department notification of your son's disappearance. The facts of the accident remain the same as in my former letter.

In answer to your questions concerning Hammond's loss, we have the following information: He was flying with Captain Devine and his regular crew. The plane was returning to Guam from a routine flight. These flights are made in order to keep the crews and airplanes in a state of readiness for whatever situation we may be called upon to face. The whole Orient is still very tense, and we do not know from day to day what we may be called upon to do. Also, there are frequent search missions for missing airplanes, and our crews must be prepared to fly over vast expanses of ocean on such missions. Hammond's commission as a second lieutenant had come thru, but his promotion was so recent that his rank still appeared as flight officer on the casualty report. The only survivor of the crash was S/Sgt Charles E. Jackson, Route #3, Weiser, Idaho.

Again, let me express to you my profoundest sorrow for the check which our mistake must have caused you!

Sincerely,


CARL R. STORRIE,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.



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HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES

WASHINGTON

IN REPLY REFER TO: AFPPA-8

AAF 201 - (14943) Sadler, Hammond D.
T-6055

28 DEC 1945

Mr. Walter H. Sadler
2533 Via Anita
Palos Verdes Estates, California

Dear Mr. Sadler:

I am writing with reference to your son, Flight Officer Hammond D. Sadler, who was reported by The Adjutant General as having been killed on 3 October 1945.

Information has been received indicating that Flight Officer Sadler was the co-pilot of a B-29 (Superfortress) bomber which departed from North Field, Guam on a transition and flight training mission on 3 October 1945. The report reveals that while flying with the number two engine stopped (reason unknown), the number one engine of Flight Officer Sadler's aircraft caught on fire. The flames extended beyond the length of the fuselage and when the plane had descended to an altitude of 2000 feet, the pilot gave the command "prepare for ditching". The first impact of the plane striking the water was felt about three minutes later. The only survivor, Staff Sergeant Charles E. Jackson, the radio operator, stated that after the first impact, he believes that the plane nosed over on its back as he next remembers standing on the ceiling of the radio compartment in about two feet of water. He made his exit through the forward bomb bay as the bomb bay doors had been torn off. He thought that the navigator was following him but the navigator was never seen after the radio operator made his exit. After clearing the burning pool of oil surrounding the plane, Sergeant Jackson inflated his life vest. He could then see one of the other crew members in the flames. This man was later identified as the flight engineer, Master Sergeant John W. Courtney who died as a result of injuries and severe burns.

The bomber remained afloat for approximately one minute after the ditching and the entire crew with the exception of the radio operator and the flight engineer, went down with the plane when it sank. A rescue aircraft sighted the radio operator at 12:20 p.m., approximately ten minutes after the bomber became submerged. The two men were rescued at 2:00 p.m., but Sergeant Courtney died approximately one hour later.

The ditching occurred at a point located eight miles west of Aguijan Island and twelve miles southwest of Tinian. It is regretted that no further information is available in this headquarters relative to Flight Officer Sadler's last mission.