

Luzon, P.I.
July 1, 1945

Dear Mrs. Adams:

I've just received your letter in which you tell us that you have received official notification of C.B.'s death. I wish I could have written sooner, but in order to prevent rumors from starting, the War Department doesn't permit us to write of casualties until 30 days afterwards or until we know the nearest of kin have been notified.

At times like this I always wish so much that I could write well and thus give you a real picture of C.B. here and what he meant to us. I know nothing I can say will make such a loss easier, but I feel a well drawn picture of his life here would be a great satisfaction to you and would help fill in any gaps in your memories of him while he was over here. Now that we know you know, you can expect a lot of information.

I can give you the details of the accident as I know them. It happened on Northern Luzon about 15 miles southeast of a little town called Cervantes. I wasn't along on the mission but I understand he was trying to bomb a target on a mountain. It was an especially large concentration of Japs with a few tanks, trucks and supplies. Since dive bombing is the best way to hit a target like that, that's what C.B. tried. There wasn't quite enough room between the clouds and that mountain and after he released his bombs he hit the mountain in his pull out. He encountered what is technically known as a high speed stall in his pull out. He was trying to do a difficult, necessary job and it cost him his life. The ship burned after it hit the ground.

This seems a ruthless way to write this to you, but to us it reads like the story of a job well done. He hardly seems gone to us. There are so many of his ideas still functioning in the Squadron. So many things being done the way C.B. wanted them.

He was the best loved Squadron Commander I ever saw. Of course, all the pilots loved him. WE'd been with him since he was in the California desert. It was the Enlisted Men who didn't know him so well who really reflected the feeling his loss occasioned. His crew chief, (Sgt. Stimile in the picture) was very broken up. We held a memorial service the next Sunday for C.B. After it, there was a long, quiet period such as always follows when a bunch of men have been deeply moved.

About his promotion. He knew that he was Major Charles B. Adams. The orders got to him the same day but he heard it that morning. I remember him walking around here smiling from ear to ear, really beginning to look like what we'd affectionately nicknamed him, the Little General.

I have a few pictures of him which I am enclosing. I hope they add something to your picture of him. There is nothing we can do now, to make you feel better, but you may be sure the Third Fighter Squadron will always remember its loss in C.B. and will always fondly remember its gain in having been under his command.

Sincerely yours,

Sam Pratt