

CV38/VBF-85/P6-1

U. S. S. SHANGRI-LA (CV-38)

96VBF/HEH/erf

Serial 743

c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, California

6 AUG 1945

Mrs. Edythe Dilg Schaeffer,  
74 Prescott Street,  
Reading, Massachusetts.

Dear Mrs. Schaeffer:

By the time you receive this letter you undoubtedly will have been notified by the Navy Department that your husband, Lieutenant Richard Tague Schaeffer, was reported killed in action on 30 July 1945. It was with deep regret that I was compelled to make such report to the Department.

While participating in a fighter bombing strike on an enemy aircraft plant in Hiratsuka, Honshu, Japan, Richard's plane was hit in the starboard wing and engine by anti-aircraft fire. His engine was seen smoking and he called his flight leader saying he was losing oil pressure rapidly and thought he was going in.

Richard and his wingman, Ensign Allen Oscar Philipp, started for the ship, but when they were about fifteen miles off shore Richard could stay airborne no longer and had to make a forced landing. He made a good water landing, but did not get out of the plane which sank almost immediately. There was no sign of any movement in the cockpit when the plane hit the water and he did not come to the surface. The spot was orbited for some time thereafter but all search and rescue efforts were fruitless.

Richard was the third senior aviator in his squadron, and a division leader. He was doing a grand job. He was a good pilot and a fine leader, and very popular with his shipmates. Your great sorrow is shared by us all and we shall miss him keenly. Do not hesitate to communicate with me if I can be of any assistance in the future.



R. F. WHITEHEAD,  
Captain, U. S. Navy,  
Commanding.