

Thoma, Edward

Accepts Honors for Heroic Son



Lt. Col. J. W. Barker is shown here as he presented John Thoma, 801 Evans Street, with the DFC, the Air Medal and Cluster, posthumously awarded his son, Lieut. Edward Thoma, killed in action.

Parents Accept High Honors Awarded Posthumously to Son

Lieutenant Colonel J. W. Barker, of the Reading Army Air Field, last evening presented the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with an Oak Leaf Cluster, awarded posthumously to Lieutenant Edward Thoma, USAAF, to the young flyer's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Thoma, of 801 Evans Street, at a ceremony in the Harry F. W. Johnson American Legion Home.

Lieutenant Thoma, 21, was killed June 20, 1944 by flak while participating on his twentieth bomber combat mission over enemy territory.

The citation accompanying the DFC follows: "For extraordinary achievement while serving as deputy leader of a bombardment group of a B-17 aircraft on a bombing mission over Germany, June 20, 1944. On this date, the lead aircraft of the group in which Lieutenant Thoma was flying was forced to leave the formation. Demonstrating skill, Lieutenant Thoma assumed the lead of the group and directed the formation through an

excellent turn at the initial point. In spite of the heavy flak, Lieutenant Thoma refused to take evasive action which might have interfered with the accuracy of the bombing and continued straight and level over the target. Fragments of anti-aircraft fire from a shell bursting directly below his aircraft penetrated the fuselage, killing Lieutenant Thoma almost instantly. The courage, coolness, and devotion to duty displayed by this officer reflect the highest credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States."

The Aid Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster citation follows: "For exceptionally meritorious achievement while participating in five separate bomber combat missions, and while participating in sustained bomber combat operations over enemy occupied continental Europe. The courage, coolness, and skill displayed by this officer upon these occasions reflect great credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States."

The invocation last evening was offered by Chaplain Linden Fisher, who in turn presented Lieut. Col. Barker.

The officer was born in Bursonville, June 4, 1923, and attended St. John's Capistrano Parochial School. He graduated from Liberty High School in 1941 and enlisted in the Army Air Corps the same year.

After receiving his basic training at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., he graduated from the Pampa Air Field, Pampa, Texas, in October, 1943, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. He went overseas

March 9, 1945