

Novasilech, Steven F.

Bethlehem Man Fighting Japs With Searchlights

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WITH THE 14TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT COMMAND ON LUZON—Pfc. Steven F. Novasilech, husband of Mrs. Hilda Novasilech, 750 Dellwood Street, Bethlehem, is facing the Japanese on Luzon Island at close range—his weapon giant searchlights of Major Gen. William M. Marquat's 14th Antiaircraft Command. It is the first time the big lights have been used in the Pacific and their mission is to provide "artificial moonlight" for the fighting doughboys.

During the fight to capture Ipo Dam, vital source of Manila's water supply, their long penetrating fingers pointed out signs of Jap activity bringing Long Toms and howitzers thundering forth with barrages which sent the Japs scurrying back to their caves. Commanders risked heavy casualties in putting the lights within enemy artillery range but banked successfully on the antiaircraft men's ability to bathe probable emplacements with such brilliancy that the Japs dared not bring their pieces into play to any great degree.

Of inestimable value was the psychological effect on tired American

foot soldiers. Nerves, long accustomed to tautness during black nights inviting infiltrations and banzai attacks, were relaxed as the beams played over no-man's land.

"Combat fatigue dropped and efficiency definitely increased as a direct result of the morale-boosting factor of the lights," stated an infantry staff officer colonel.

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