

Feilbach, Raymond

Lt. Ray Feilbach Receives DSC, Purple Heart, Cluster, Medal

FEB 2 1944

"For extraordinary achievement" reads the opening sentence of the citation which accompanied the Distinguished Flying Cross presented the week of January 22 to Lieut. Raymond Feilbach, U. S. Army Air Forces, somewhere in England.

Lieut. Feilbach, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Feilbach, 522 Second Avenue, Bethlehem, is the navigator of a B-17 bomber engaged in the devastation of German cities and strategic objectives and based in England. He tells the story of his experience which won him the DSC, the Purple Heart and the Oak Leaf Cluster and Air Medal in letters home.

Some time ago The Globe-Times carried word that Lieut. Feilbach had been injured, but said nothing about how he came by the injury. His first letter home from which this story is constructed was dated "Dingleberry Hall," Sunday afternoon, Nov. 14, 1943. In it he tells of receiving letters and Christmas packages, etc., from home and from his wife, Margaret, and from friends, and of reading in The Globe-Times the story of his mishap.

"I am definitely in England," he wrote, and gave his address. "My job is being navigator on a B-17 Flying Fortress. Now I can tell you that I got hurt while on a raid (not my first one, either!) over Bremen when a 20mm. shell from a German fighter plane attacking our formation exploded in the nose of my ship. The Purple Heart medal I got was for being wounded in action on a raid over enemy territory.

"Also, after my three weeks in the hospital and my week in the rest home I'm absolutely all right and back on duty."

The country he says, is very much like Pennsylvania or New Jersey and is intensively cultivated. "The fields are small but when you ride along and pass a thatched-roof cottage or an old, old inn or a church five or six hundred years old—well, you know you aren't in the U. S. A!"

He tells of two colleges visited, both at Cambridge University; the one being St. John's, the other Trinity, and of a bus trip to Huntingdon, a small town near Cambridge, and of a visit to the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell, as well as the school he attended.

The other letter, dated January 22, describes briefly the presentation of the awards to combat crew members at the station who had completed five missions over the enemy territory.

He wrote:

"Dearest Mother and Dad,
"Golly, you should see my blouse with all the decorations I wear on it now—you'd think I was General Marshall instead of a First Lieutenant—almost!

"There was a presentation of



LT. RAYMOND FEILBACH, AAF

combat crew members who completed five missions are awarded the Air Medal and for each additional five missions you receive an oak leaf cluster to stick on the medal. I received the Air Medal and one cluster.

"Then they awarded the more awards made this week. All the important medals, and the Colonel pinned on my blouse the Distinguished Flying Cross! Before giving it his aide, a major, read the citation stating why the award was made."

"Awarded for extraordinary achievement while serving as navigator of a B-17 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany October 8, 1943. During a fierce attack by enemy fighters, Lieut. Feilbach was wounded and his aircraft heavily damaged. After successfully bombing the target, the pilot was unable to maintain a position in the formation. In spite of his painful wounds, Lieut. Feilbach skillfully navigated the aircraft back to the home base. The courage, technical skill and devotion to duty displayed by Lieut. Feilbach on this occasion reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States".

"I have sent the Purple Heart, the Air Medal and the DSC with the citation to Margo (his wife Margaret)," he wrote. "I'm still less than half finished with my tour of duty here, but another four or five months might see me on the boat for home. Oh Happy Day!"

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