

Stoneback, Paul M.

# Local Naval Officer's PT Sinks Jap Transport In South Pacific

## Lt. Stoneback's Crew Blasts Nip Vessel

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## Sinks 5,000-ton Jap Cargo Ship

Probable sinking of a 5000 ton Jap cargo transport has been credited to the Seventh Fleet PT boat aboard which Lt. (jg) Paul Milton Stoneback, 34, USNR, of Bethlehem, Pa., is serving as executive officer.

Lt. Stoneback is the son of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Stoneback, 941 Main Street, Bethlehem.

The action took place on December 12 several miles north of Ormoc Bay off enemy held territory. Stoneback's PT was previously credited with sinking a Jap destroyer on November 10 near the Camotes Islands west of Ormoc.

Lt. Stoneback assisted in the torpedo fire control and conned the 40 millimeter gun crew.

"We closed toward the target and identified her as a Jap destroyer," Lt. Stoneback says, "She was lying dead in the water with a smaller vessel alongside. It was a perfect broadside shot."

"We fired our torpedoes at extremely close range, then veered off. A few minutes later we noted a slash from the waterline of the enemy ship followed by two explosions.

Both explosions sent large columns of black smoke in the air, and debris could be seen 100 feet in the air. Not a single shot was fired at the



Pictured here is Lt. (jg.) Paul Milton Stoneback, 941 Main Street, executive officer of the "Impatient Virgin" after the PT had sent a broadside into a 5,000-ton Japanese cargo transport on December 12 in the South Pacific.

PT. The attack was made on a dark overcast sea. The surprise was complete.

"Much credit must be given our crew," Lt. Stoneback says. "They coolly manned the stations. At that close range the heavier fire power of the Jap "can" could have blown us completely out of the water."

Lt. Stoneback has been in the Southwest Pacific three months and

has participated in 12 combat patrols in the Philippines. He received his commission in the Naval Reserve on November 22, 1943, and trained at Fort Schuyler, N. Y.

Before joining the Naval Reserve he was employed for seven years by the Bethlehem Steel Co. He was a buyer in the purchasing department. He graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1933.

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