

Diehl Jr., Robert H.

Sgt. R. H. Diehl Given Medal For Combat

OCT 12 1944
A 7th AAF HEAVY BOMBER
BASE IN THE MARIANAS—Sgt.
Robert H. Diehl, Jr., of Bethlehem,
has been awarded the Air Medal at
this advanced 7th AAF base in the
Marianas for strikes against Jap-
anese bases in the Pacific Ocean
area. He is ball turret gunner on
the Liberator bomber, "Curly Bird."

Sergeant Diehl, 21-year-old son
of Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Diehl, Sr.,
1426 High Street, graduated from
Liberty High School in 1942 and
was employed by Mack Manufactur-
ing Company prior to entering the
armed service April 2, 1943.

"My most exciting mission," Diehl
recalled, "was a strike against Iwo
Jima in the Bonins, 650 miles from
Tokyo. Anti-aircraft fire was un-
usually heavy over the target. As
we went into the bombing run, a
shell hit the "Curly Bird" a foot
behind the ball turret, passed within
inches of the waist and top turret
gunners and whistled past the ear
of the tail gunner before it emerged
from our plane.

"When we landed at our 7th AAF
base in the Marianas, we could tell

by the gaping holes the projectile
left in the bomber that the shell
was from a 75 mm. anti-aircraft
gun, a shell fused to explode at a
certain altitude. If it had been a
20 mm. shell or if the Japs' aim
had been a little better, we might
not have returned to our base. A
20 mm. shell, although much smaller
than a 75 mm., is fused to explode
on contact and would have shot its
fragments through our gun posi-
tions."

Sergeant Diehl joined the 7th
AAF in the Central Pacific, April
19, 1944, and is a member of the
"Bat-Out-of-Hell" heavy bomber
squadron.

October 12, 1944