

Stiles, Gephart T.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1942

FORMER MAIL CARRIER IS CITED FOR BRAVERY

DEC 19 1942

Localite Recommended for Advancement by U. S. Navy, Marine Corps Reserve.

The United States Navy and Marine Corps Reserve both have issued citations for bravery and recommendations for advancement in rank for Gephart Thomas Stiles, 247 Eighth Avenue, a chief specialist (mail) in the U. S. Naval Reserve.

The citation was made by Captain Guy Rogers, United States Marine Corps Reserve, troop officer aboard the S. S. Matthew Thornton, for conduct "above and beyond the call of duty." Lieutenant G. G. Barclay, officer in charge, fleet post-office, Navy 131, in the Caledonia area, also recommended that the Bethlehem man be promoted to rank of warrant officer.



GEPHART THOMAS STILES

Stiles, 37, and father of three daughters, entered the Navy in June. He previously had served with the Navy about five years, about 15 years ago. He was a Bethlehem letter carrier for 12 years prior to his enlistment. His wife lives at the Eighth Avenue address with their daughters, Nancy, 12, and Joan and Jean, twins, aged 10 years.

The citation by Captain Rogers follows:

"I would like to commend and to make permanent record of the commendation, the conduct above and beyond the call of duty of Gephart Thomas Stiles, chief specialist (Mail), U. S. N. R., during the extended voyage of this vessel from the west coast to White Poppy via ports in the Fiji Islands.

"Stiles' conduct, especially during an enemy submarine attack on the Matthew Thornton was heroic and cool to a degree and in the best traditions of the American Navy.

"The attack took place at night on the eve of this vessel's arrival at White Poppy. Stiles happened to be close to No. 3 hatch, the sleeping and living quarters of about 200 Marines and Bluejackets, most of whom were asleep at the time.

"The nearest torpedo passed across the bow only a few feet away. Stiles immediately dashed below. As the minutes passed and while general quarters were ordered, Stiles went from bunk to bunk in the sleeping quarters, arousing all the hands and bringing them topside.

"His action cleared the hold of personnel in astonishing time. As it was later revealed, the enemy sub continued to stalk our vessel, but fortunately was unable to make a further successful approach.

"Had a later torpedo hit, however, Stiles' action would have resulted in the saving of many lives.

"Furthermore his action was spontaneous and voluntary and was carried out before any order could have resulted in the same, clearing of the hold.

"Stiles' further conduct during the long and tedious voyage was exemplary. He showed unusual initiative in deck duties, delivering lectures, maintained fire discipline over lower ratings and Bluejackets and otherwise stood out as a conscientious and imaginative leader.

"Without hesitation I recommend that his power of leadership be given the maximum rank and position consonant with the judgment of his future superior officers."

December 13, 1942