

Hochella, Michael

## Local Flier Tells How American Bombers Blasted Rabaul In Raid

How the U. S. bombers blasted Rabaul is vividly described to the Associated Press by Captain Hochella, Bethlehem Army flier, son of Michael A. Hochella, 410 Grandview Boulevard. Captain Hochella was one of the hundreds of American airmen who participated in the huge raid on the strategic Jap South Pacific base Oct. 12, a raid since described by General Douglas MacArthur as "the turning point of the South Pacific war."

One hundred seventy-seven Jap planes were destroyed in the raid, and the Mitchell bombers of General George Kenney's force used a new type of parachute fragmentation bomb, developed by the general.

Quoting Captain Hochella, the dispatch says, "We carried double the usual fragmentation load and used new tactics of several ships abreast to keep down the ack-ack by blasting Hell out of them at once."

"Many Mitchell flights hit Vunakanau ahead of us but we were the first to be attacked by Zeros, indicating again their lack of preparation. They hit us a minute after we left the target, which was burning fiercely."

"They attacked us for five minutes, then trailed us about 10 minutes all the way to a wide bay. They seemed to be trying to get in position but we were too fast for them, and with 10 or 12 gun turrets pounding at them they weren't too eager to press the attack," Hochella concluded.

Losses by the raiding force, consequently, were small in compari-



**CAPT. MICHAEL HOHELLA**  
... In Dramatic Raid

son to the huge number of ships involved, three Liberators, a Mitchell and a Beaufighter falling to the Japs while the latter lost 177 planes and thousands of tons of shipping.

All of the American P-38 Lightning fighters making their first raid over Rabaul, got back to base safely. Virtually every one of the estimated 60 Japanese aircraft at the Vunakanua airfield and 36 at nearby Rpopo were destroyed by the Mitchells.

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