

Hero Home

OCT 25 1944



T-SGT. KOVALCHIK

Cementon Flier Rescues Pal In Air Battle

Technical Sergeant Edward F. Kovalchik, 22, 133 South Third Street, Cementon, is home on a well-earned furlough. One of nine Pennsylvanians attached to the Army's crack 8th Air Force, Kovalchik won the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and 11 Oak Leaf Clusters.

Sgt. Kovalchik, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Kovalchik, is one of three members of his family serving in the armed forces and has been overseas since July, 1943.

The young Cementon flier won the coveted DFC for heroism displayed in rescuing from almost certain death a fellow-member of a Flying Fortress crew returning to England after a bombing raid over enemy territory.

While over France their Fort was set afire by a volley of incendiary bullets from a German plane. Staff Sergeant Lavern Stein, Buffalo, N. Y., the turret gunner, made an attempt to leap from the burning plane. Kovalchik, the tail gunner, seeing Stein's intentions soon noticed that the man's parachute had opened, causing the upper section to catch in the interior of the ship. When Sgt. Kovalchik reached the distressed man, he was dangling in midair while the slip-stream from the propellers caused his body to continuously strike the undercarriage of the plane.

Kovalchik spent several harrowing minutes before he managed to drag the unconscious man to safety. After dragging Stein to a place of security, he himself was injured when struck by an enemy bullet. Crewmates succeeded in putting out the plane fire and the ship crash-landed on the English Coast, with its landing-gear shattered by the attack of Nazi planes.

Kovalchik required hospital treatment along with young Stein, whose both feet were frozen.

Shortly after his release from the hospital, Sgt. Kovalchik was awarded two bronze oak leaf clusters and the Purple Heart.

Kovalchik was formerly employed by the Durable Pants Company, Northampton, and the Bethlehem Steel Company. He attended Whitehall High School and is a member of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Northampton.

Two brothers are also serving overseas: Charles with the AAF in the European theater of war for 2½ years; and Matthew, U. S. Navy, in the South Pacific for 1½ years.

After a 23-day furlough Kovalchik will return to Atlantic City, N. J., for further assignment.

*Kovalchik, Edward F.
Charles
Matthew*

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