

Hochella, Michael
Elwood

Capt. Michael Hochella's Daring Wins Cluster to His Flying Cross

JUN 22 1944

June was a month of good news for Michael A. Hochella, of 410 Candview Boulevard, who has received word that his son, Capt. Michael F. Hochella, flight commander on a B-25 bomber, has been cited again and that the young flier, who has been in the Southwest Pacific theater for the past 18 months, expects to be home on leave for his rest period in the near future.

Last night, Associated Press wires carried the story of Capt. Hochella's award of the bronze oak-leaf cluster to add to his Distinguished Flying Cross for "leading a formation of B-25's in raid over Rabaul. His formation is credited with destroying seven grounded aircraft and three in the air. The DFC was given him for action in a raid over Rabaul, New Britain, in 1943.

In a letter received from his son June 5, Mr. Hochella was informed that the young man, having completed his allotted flying hours was expecting a leave to come home for his required rest period. This was the first word he had received from his son in three months.

A first hand story of the action in which Capt. Hochella was wounded and reported lost in action was given to Mr. Hochella this week by Capt. Frank Latawics, of Philadelphia a former Bethlehem boy and classmate of Capt. Hochella, who served with him in the same squadron. Capt. Latawics is in Atlantic City, N. J., for his rest period and came to Bethlehem for a short visit with Mr. Hochella.

TELLS STORY OF RAID

Capt. Latawics told Mr. Hochella the dramatic story of the raid in which their plane had participated and of the necessity of a forced landing at sea on the return to their base.

It was the skillful handling of the plane by Capt. Hochella and the



CAPT. MICHAEL HOHELLA

landing without wrecking the plane that enabled five of six men in the crew to climb out before the plane sank. The sixth man went down with the plane, he said. The men were able to put on their "Mae West's" and to float until they were picked up by a PT boat several days later, he stated. It was on this occasion that Capt. Hochella was wounded and was first reported missing in action by the War Department. When he appeared at his base several days later, Mr. Hochella was informed by the War Department.

Capt. Hochella's brother, Lieut. Elwood Hochella is a pilot on a B-26 Marauder, stationed in Shreveport, La., and is expecting overseas duty shortly.

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