

Heller, Leonard R.

Quakertown Marine Officer Decorated

(The following story was written by Technical Sergeant Diggory Venn, 291 Union Street, San Francisco, Calif., a Marine Corps combat correspondent and distributed by the Associated Press.)

SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, (Delayed)—In recognition of "gallantry and intrepidity" during four months of combat duty on Guadalcanal, Second Lieutenant Leonard R. Heller, U.S.M.C., 25, of R.F.D. 1, Pennsburg, Pa., has been decorated with a silver star medal.

Second Lieutenant Heller's citation, signed by Admiral William F. Halsey, U. S. N., commander South Pacific area, commended him for work as forward artillery observer during action October 24, 1942, when a Japanese regiment battered itself to death against a thin wedge of Marines defending the airfield.

"The resolute and courageous action," the citation read, "contributed greatly to the utter defeat and virtual annihilation of a Japanese regiment."

A silk worker in civilian life, Second Lieutenant Heller enlisted April 28, 1938, in Philadelphia, and was commissioned August 1, 1942. A native of Quakertown, Pa., he attended the Quakertown High School where he was a four-letter athletic star. His wife, Thelma May Heller, and year-old daughter, Linda Ferne, are currently living in Pennsburg, her home town.

Award of a silver medal to Lieutenant Heller follows a citation last April in which the young Marine officer was commended for his gallantry during the Guadalcanal operations. Later he was reported to have been transferred to Australia. Lieutenant Heller's wife is the

former Thelma May Leister, Hoppenville, near Red Hill. Their daughter was born April, 1942. Heller, who was sent overseas about 16 months ago, has never seen his daughter.

He has two brothers, Paul R. Heller, of Allentown, and Nicholas G. Heller, Allentown R. 60.

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