

Novakovitz, James E.

## Bethlehem and Bangor Youths Had Narrow Escape On Bomber

AUG 10 1944

Two area youths, Flight Officer James E. Novakovitz of 315 South New Street, this city, and Cpl. Michael B. Falcone of 725 Pennsylvania Avenue, Bangor, are members of the crew of a Liberator in the Southwest Pacific which recently saw action of a kind they'll never forget.

The Liberator was in action over Yap Island, with Second Lieutenant Walter A. Scalese of Windber as pilot, when the plane was hit. The bomber was in a "Long Rangers" formation which had just loosed hundreds of bombs on the principal Jap runway on the island.

The plane lurched momentarily; then anti-aircraft fire tore a hole two feet across in the horizontal stabilizer. Shrapnel tore 100 holes in the fuselage and a cannon shell ripped a huge hole through the left wing, cutting the control cables

and knocking out the main hydraulic system.

Scalese had to fly with the control wheel yanked clear to the right and then by use of the automatic pilot. With the hydraulic system knocked out, three of the gun turrets went out of commission and had to be worked by hand.

According to Novakovitz, "When that Zero hit us, I could see the pilot". Cpl. Falcone, the waist gunner, counted the holes in the fuselage during the homeward flight.

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