

James Riegel Dies In Nippon Prison Camp

SEP 7 1945

"Died May 15, 1942, of malaria, in a Japanese prison camp," was the terse telegram from the War Department received yesterday by Mrs. James Riegel residing on the Butz-town-Macada road.

It shattered a hope that had lingered since the early days of the world hostilities that her son, James, might still be alive despite previous telegrams, "missing in action" and "probably dead" and that he might turn up with some of the prisoners heretofore unaccounted for and listed by the War Department as "dead" and who were liberated from Japanese prison camps.

Young Riegel enlisted in the armed forces on February 14, 1941, and after receiving his basic training at Fort Monmouth, N. J., left this country about July 3 of the same year and arrived in the Philippines a month later.



JAMES RIEGEL

The family received a cablegram extending greetings on Christmas Day, 1941, and the last letter dated February 28, 1942. However, in a letter relayed from friends in Manila he had written that he was fortunate in escaping the first skirmish he had engaged in with the Japanese and with a small group of American soldiers had taken to the mountains. It was this letter that engendered the long lingering hope that he was still alive in a Jap prison camp or had hidden in the mountains and probably joined up with a guerrilla group.

In May, 1942, a telegram from the War Department listed him as "missing" and a few months later as "probably dead." Even then the mother refused to give up hope. Then the telegram yesterday which left no further doubt and which apparently followed the disclosure of official records.

The young soldier was assigned to an aircraft warning company and among the first of the American troops sent to the Philippines. His father died several years ago. The survivors are the mother, three sisters, Mrs. Kenneth Lauer, Nazareth; Mrs. Thomas Bachman, Bethlehem, and Mrs. Ira Bieber, Oakland Park, and two brothers, Charles of Oakland Park, and Robert, of Butztown-Macada Road in Bethlehem Township.

Riegel, James

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