

BETHLEHEM SOLDIER ACCLAIMED A HERO

SEP 23 1942
Sgt. Joseph Vanic Among Group
Described in New Guinea
Dispatch.

Vanic, Joseph

"For two hours their lives were in constant danger but all miraculously escaped injury. Many cases of small arms, sheltered among the trees, exploded and set off several huge bombs. I saw one crater 60 feet deep created by one big bomb.

"Dense billowing black clouds of smoke rose slowly from the explosion. An ammunition dump in this particular area seemed doomed. Men were fleeing everywhere for their lives.

"Then Ordnance Captain Harvey Bauss, of Buffalo, N. Y., and San Antonio, Texas, a former Michigan University intercollegiate wrestling champion, called for volunteers to remove the ammunition. The following immediately responded:

"Lieutenant Barde Baldwin from Canton, Mo.; Sergeant Sheldon Nearing, Hammond, Ind.; Joe Vanic, Bethlehem; Martin Zimmerman, Ozone Park, L. I.; Julius Shellenberg, Brooklyn; Jim Schiller, Chillicothe, Ohio; Privates Charles Mesrobian, Providence, R. I.; and Bertram Robas, Brooklyn.

"Major V. C. Huffsmith of Greeley, Colo., insisted on accompanying the men on their wild ride through dense smoke and fire to the scene. There they found several bomb carrying trailers and labored prodigiously in loading and hauling the trees and around them and nearby bomb blasts blew them over.

"Undaunted, they continued to work until everything possible was removed to safety. I saw them, their faces and bodies blacked by smoke and dirt and sweat pouring off them. They were exhausted but unhurt and triumphant.

"Captain Bauss was thrilled by the job that had been done. He said: "This was the greatest experience in my life and I'm proud of all my boys. When I called for volunteers, all eagerly responded and being ordnance men, they knew what they were risking. I wouldn't have blamed them if nobody had volunteered. But they knew also what it would mean to lose all that power."

Sgt. Vanic is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Vanic, 649 Atlantic Street, this city. He was inducted into the army on May 17, 1941, just one month after his marriage to Florence Chickey, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael A. Chickey, 1015 East Fourth Street. He is a graduate of the Bethlehem High School, class of 1936, and was employed by Bethlehem Steel prior to entering the army, where his father and five brothers are doing defense work at present.

Family of the young soldier, who had not heard from him for some time, expressed relief and gratification last night upon receipt of the news of his heroic action.

Mrs. [Name], who is employed by the Mode Bag Company and resides with her parents here, had the unique experience some time ago of seeing her husband in a news reel depicting American soldiers in action.

Heroic action in which the lives of many American soldiers and the safety of millions of rounds of small arms ammunition and thousands of big bombs during a swift-spreading grass fire were at stake, was attributed by a foreign news dispatch to Sergeant Joseph Vanic, of this city; three officers, four other sergeants and two privates.

Wires of International News Service, to which The Globe-Times subscribes, brought from the battlefields of New Guinea the epic story of these men's bravery and swift action in the presence of terrible danger. Pat Robinson, I. N. S. writer, eye-witness to the scene, thus describes the action:



SGT. JOSEPH VANIC

"For two hours their lives were in constant danger but all miraculously escaped injury. Many cases of small arms, sheltered among the trees, exploded and set off several huge bombs. I saw one crater 60 feet deep created by one big bomb.

"Dense billowing black clouds of smoke rose slowly from the explosion. An ammunition dump in this particular area seemed doomed. Men were fleeing everywhere for their lives.

"Then Ordnance Captain Harvey Bauss, of Buffalo, N. Y., and San Antonio, Texas, a former Michigan University intercollegiate wrestling champion, called for volunteers to remove the ammunition. The following immediately responded:

"Lieutenant Barde Baldwin from Canton, Mo.; Sergeant Sheldon Nearing, Hammond, Ind.; Joe Vanic, Bethlehem; Martin Zimmerman, Ozone Park, L. I.; Julius Shellenberg, Brooklyn; Jim Schiller, Chillicothe, Ohio; Privates Charles Mesrobian, Providence, R. I.; and Bertram Robas, Brooklyn.

September 23, 1942