

HANZSEK, Joseph

## BETHLEHEM SAILOR IS JAP PRISONER

SEP 9 - 1942

### Joseph Hanzsek Writes He is Well, Busy Repairing Shoes.

"Dear Mother: I wish to let you know that I am alive and healthy and am now a prisoner of war in Zentsuji, Japan."

These are the opening words of a letter received last week by a Bethlehem widow, who had not heard from her son, a first class machinist's mate in the U. S. Navy, since the Japanese attack on Guam.



JOSEPH HANZSEK

It is believed that Joseph Hanzsek, son of Mrs. Rose Hanzsek, 215 Taylor Street, this city, and the brother of an Eastonian, is the first Lehigh Valley boy to write to relatives from a Nipponese prison camp.

The letter which was typewritten, probably by a Japanese officer, contained a small picture of the prisoner at work in the camp. It was examined by a U. S. censor.

The message continues:

"Please do not worry about me, as I am being treated well. We are all working here. I am repairing

shoes in camp for the Japanese. Some of the men are working on farms. I hope everybody at home is fine. I don't know how Elisa and the babies are, but I hope God will take care of them until we can be together again. I don't know whether you'll be able to write to me, but if you want to, go to the Red Cross and they'll be able to help you. I'd like to hear from you if I could. Life here goes pretty fast as long as we keep busy, so please don't worry. As soon as the war is over, I'll be home to see you. May God bless you and take care of you until I see you again. Your loving son, Joe."

"P. S. The shoe repairing is for the men in camp and not the Japanese."

The prisoner is a brother of Rudolph Hanzsek, 1109 Wood st., Easton. He once worked with his brother in Easton as a shoe repairer. The Easton man is foreman manager of the H. L. Green Shoe Repair Dept., Easton.

The Navyman's brother says that the signature on the letter is that of his younger brother. The enclosed photo is also authentic.

Joseph Hanzsek enlisted in the Navy in March 9, 1937, when he quit Bethlehem high school to develop a marine career. He has not been home for three years. During the first two years of his service, he was stationed on the West Coast and was home several times on furlough. He was stationed in Guam three years prior to the outbreak of war.

Mrs. Hanzsek received a letter from the Navy Department, written by Randall Jacobs, chief of the Bureau of Navigation of the Navy Department, under the date of Feb. 21, by direction of Admiral C. B. Hatch, five months ago, stating that it was believed that her son was a prisoner of war.

The letter is the first word she had received directly from her son.

Mrs. Hanzsek is the mother of six other children: John, 25, Rudolph, 26, Charles, 20, Frank, 18, and William, 11. The only daughter, Helen, is a twin sister of Charles.

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