

Skok, Joe

Northampton Bos'n's Mate, Only 35, Has 17 Years In Navy

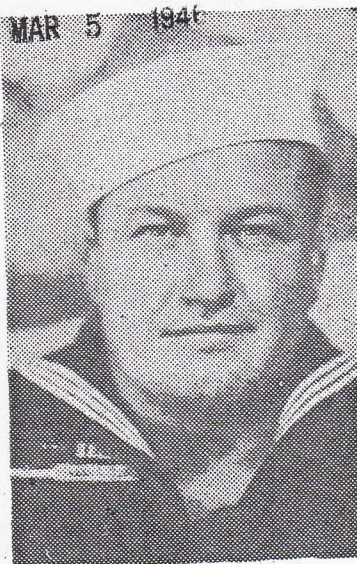
Joe Skok, Boatswain's Mate 1/C, who served his country 17 of his 35 years and is entitled to wear six campaign ribbons with four battle stars, today is in Northampton on a re-enlistment leave with his parents, who reside at 1404 Washington Ave.

In his service record are many famous battles. At Pearl Harbor, where the infamous attack occurred December 7, 1941, Skok's ship, the USS Maryland, was severely damaged by a Japanese aircraft bomb but managed to survive. While aboard the assault vessel, USS Alchiba, that participated in the Guadalcanal and Tulagi occupation from August 7 to 9, 1942, Skok witnessed the great night battle of Savo Island from a landing craft invasion boat in the rain.

On October 15 and 16 that same year, enemy dive bombing attacks and submarine attacks miraculously missed his vessel on four trips between New Hebrides and San Cristobal. In the Solomon Islands the following month, the Alchiba was victim of an enemy submarine torpedo attack 3000 yards east of Lunga Point on Guadalcanal. After the ship exploded and was finally beached, the next four days, according to the veteran, he "witnessed four days warfare I had never thought possible." For his part in controlling fires he wears a battle star and the Presidential Unit Citation.

His ship was a mass of flames, roaring and exploding ammunition and gasoline, a sure target for the Japs. Eight days after the first attack, his ship was again ripped open by a sub torpedo while still beached two miles east of Guadalcanal. All hands were ordered to abandon ship and the Alchiba went under. Although officially stricken from Navy records as lost, the crew pumped and repaired her sufficiently to limp back to a West Coast port.

Boatswain's Mate 1/C Skok then



BOS'N'S MATE SKOK

transferred to the Liberty ship, USS Kenmore, and served aboard her during the occupation and defense of the Marshalls in February, 1944, and later in Saipan.

Skok, in addition to his theatre ribbons and battle stars, wears three stars on his Good Conduct ribbon, signifying 16 years of good behavior. Upon expiration of his furlough he will return to San Diego, Cal., where he is stationed for two year's shore duty in the Industrial Command, U. S. Naval Repair Base. His younger brother, Sgt. Lewis Skok, recently returned to the States after serving 38 months overseas duty in the Pacific. They are members of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Prior to entering the service the Navy veteran was employed at Herb Deibert's recreational center cafe. His father is a retired Universal Atlas Cement Company employe.

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