

Wounded In Guam Invasion, Sgt. Blechman Of Marines Dies Aboard Hospital Ship

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SGT. SOLOMON BLECHMAN

Testa Credited With Saving Crippled Plane

Further details recently released by the Army Air Corps with regard to the recent "miraculous" landing of the crippled plane upon which S. Sgt. Stefano Testa, serves as tail gunner in the South Pacific area reveals that it was in large part due to the heroic daring of the Mamaroneck gunner that the plane reached its base.

"Sgt. Testa," the report states, "fired long bursts at another enemy fighter coming in from the rear" whereupon, at a point 100 yards from the U. S. plane, "it peeled off with its engine afire and hit the water."

This quick act on Sgt. Testa's part, according to the report, aided the crew's safe return. The plane struggled home on three engines without loss of a single fighting man. Shortly after he sent the enemy plane down, Sgt. Testa was forced to bail out over his home field. In the Air Corps, that warrants initiation into the Caterpillar Club, the airman's society for those who have been "forced to hit the silk."

Sgt. Testa, who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Celestino Testa of 1816 Palmer Avenue, Larchmont, has been in the service since February, 1941.

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WASHINGTON — Wounded D-Day as he hit the beach at Guam, Staff Sgt. Solomon Blechman, of Mamaroneck, a Marine Corps combat correspondent, died aboard the hospital ship to which he had been evacuated.

Hitting the beach along with the first wave, he was wounded in an area where the fighting was the thickest. His commanding officer, Capt. Raymond Henri, of Yorktown Heights, N. Y., reported, "Sgt. Blechman died of wounds received on the beach as he bravely chose to follow the group having the toughest time of it."

Assigned to the Division of Public Relations as a combat correspondent in September, 1942, Staff Sgt. Blechman had submitted more than 500 stories about Third Division Marines.

Long interested in newspaper work, Sgt. Blechman started his reportorial career during his sophomore year on The Concordian, the bi-weekly paper of Union College, becoming managing editor in his senior year. In addition, he covered college sports news and campus activity news for the Knickerbocker-News and The Schenectady Union Star. After graduation, Blechman went to The Mamaroneck Daily Times as a sport writer, leaving in June, 1942, to enlist in the Marine Corps. He participated in the Bougainville campaign.

The son of Rabbi and Mrs. Nathan Blechman of 330 Palmer Avenue, Mamaroneck, Staff Sgt. Blechman was 23 years old. He graduated from Mamaroneck High School in 1938 and from Union College four years later.

Before going overseas, he received Marine Corps training at the Officers' Training School at Quantico, Va., at Marine headquarters in Washington, D. C., where he received instructions in combat reporting, and at Camp Pendleton, Calif. He was one of the youngest combat reporters in the war.

Surviving, in addition to his parents are two sisters, Ruth of Mamaroneck and Miriam, a student at Skidmore College.

Staff Sgt. Blechman was the third former member of the staff of The Daily Times to lose his life in the service. Second Lt. Vincent L. Roster of 1 Locust Terrace, Dillon Park, died last April in a plane crash at Midland Field, Tex., and Capt. David B. Tarrant of North Pelham was killed June 27 at Balpas. Lt. Roster was a Daily Times mailing room employee and Capt. Tarrant was former district circulation manager in Larchmont.



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