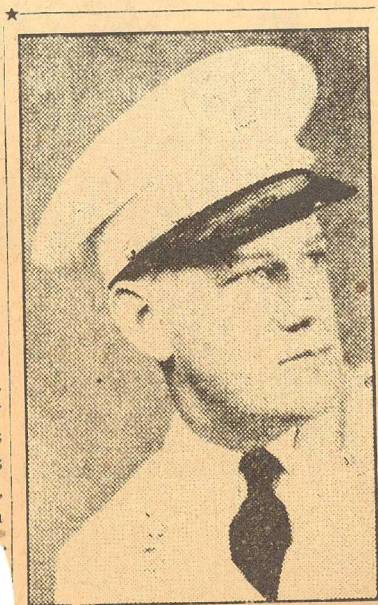


Ramona Man Is Major at 24; Directs Harlingen Air Firing

Joseph E. Habeger Promoted Immediately After Birthday—Is Master of Many Different Planes

Ramona, S. D., June 28.—Promoted to major just a month after his 24th birthday, Joseph E. Habeger, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Habeger of this place, is one of the youngest men in the army to hold this rank.

Stationed at the Harlingen, Tex., army air field, Maj. Habeger is now director of air firing. Under his command are B24 and B26 planes with some 750 pilots, instructors, and gunnery students. He has been



Maj. Joseph E. Habeger

stationed at the same field for two and one-half years.

Commissioned in July, 1941

Maj. Habeger entered training as a flying cadet in November, 1940. He received his wings and commission as a second lieutenant in July, 1941 and then spent seven months as a flying instructor at the advanced flying school at Kelly Field.

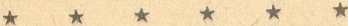
In February, 1942, he was transferred to Harlingen and the same month promoted to first lieutenant. His promotion to captain came in January, 1943, and to major on May 27, 1944.

2,000 Hours Flying Time

Since his graduation in July, 1941, Maj. Habeger has checked out as first pilot on 24 army planes and has logged 2,000 hours of flying time. He is rated first pilot on planes ranging from the fast pursuit to the heavy four-engine bombers, including the P40, P39, B25, B26, the four-engine B17 and B24.

He was married last August to Deloris Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Johnson of Madison.

NATIVE OF RAMONA, LIBERATOR SQUADRON LEADER, DECORATED



The the 15th AAF in Italy, Jan. 6. —Maj. Joseph E. Habeger, 24, in his first month overseas, has command of a Liberator squadron in a heavy bombardment group based in southern Italy, and has been awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in aerial combat.

His wife, Mrs. Doloris Habeger, lives in Madison, S. D., and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Habeger, at Ramona, S. D.

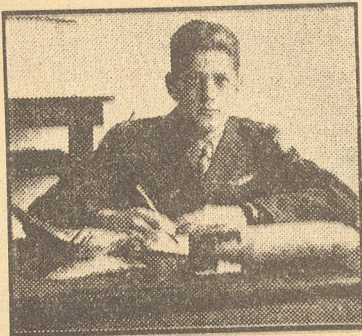
As flight leader of the squadron, he led his first 15 missions against the toughest existent targets in this theatre of operations. These are situated on two vitally important Alpen pass routes, the Brenner pass route in northern Italy and the Tarvisio pass route that runs out of northern Italy through Vienna—both heavily defended at all points.

Maj. Habeger first led his squadron in bombing attacks on viaducts at Bologna and Mezzocorona, vital supply arteries on the Brenner pass route.

Then, he commanded attacks on railroad centers and oil refineries near Vienna on the Tarvisio pass route, and important German escape route from the Balkans, and badly crippled enemy installations there.

Then, his flying armada attacked similar nazi-held targets near Munich, southern Germany, and Yugoslavia, blasting enemy installations centered in these areas.

A 1938 graduate of St. Thomas's high school, he was in his third year at Eastern Normal school when he interrupted studies there to enlist as an aviation cadet in November,



Maj. Habeger

1940. Concurrently with his schooling, he served in the national guards from 1937 to 1940.

He received his wings and was commissioned a second lieutenant when graduated from pilots' school at San Antonio, Tex., in July, 1944. By successive promotions, he achieved the rank of major in May, 1944, at Harlingen Field, Tex., where he was director of flying. He assumed his command in Italy on October 18.

He wears the European, African, Middle-East Theatre ribbon with two campaign stars and is authorized to wear the group's distinguished unit badge with one cluster awarded by two Presidential Citations won for the group's participation in the historic, low-level bombing attacks on the vitally important oil fields in Ploesti, Romania, and the strategic air aid rendered the British 8th army.

RAMONA MAN IS MADE COLONEL

Joseph E. Habeger, 24, Pro- moted From Major at Italy Base

With the 15th AAF in Italy, Feb. 24—Joseph E. Habeger, whose wife, Doloris, lives at Madison, S. D., has been promoted from major to lieutenant colonel at a 15th AAF base in southern Italy, where he is the commanding officer of a squadron of Liberators.

The 24-year-old pilot and formation leader has taken part in 20 missions, bombing nazi war industries and rail communications centers in northern Italy, southern Germany, Austria and parts of Yugoslavia.

A former Eastern Normal school student, Habeger entered the AAF in November, 1940, as an air cadet. He has been awarded the Air Medal with one cluster for his combat flying. The airmen is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Habeger of Ramona, S. D.

Camp Lejeune, N. C.—Marine Corp. Melvin B. Pederson, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Pederson of Winner, S. D., was awarded the Purple Heart here for wounds suffered while with a marine division in the Guam campaign.

Bryant, S. D.—S/Sgt. Arnold H. Nupen has been awarded the Bronze Star medal for "meritorious service in direct support of combat operations against the enemy in the European theatre of operations."

Sgt. Nupen is the ground crew chief of the Thunderbolt fighter-bomber "Lil Herby," which has flown 118 consecutive dive bombing and strafing missions over France, Belgium and Germany in close tactical support to allied ground forces. He is a member of Col. Harold N. Holt's Thunderbolt fighter group of the 9th air force and the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Nupen of Bryant. He entered the service in December, 1939.