

Young Savannah Catholic Among War's First Victims

Staff Sergeant George Gannam Gives His Life Defending Hawaii Against Japanese Assault

Savannah Pays Tribute to Former Benedictine Cadet at Requiem Mass

SAVANNAH, Ga.—Savannah paid tribute to this city's first war casualty as prominent city officials joined with sorrowing parents, relatives and friends at a Requiem Mass offered at the Sacred Heart Church for the repose of the soul of Staff Sergeant George Gannam, of the United States Army, who was among the first to give the last full measure of devotion to his country on a battlefield in Hawaii when Japanese forces launched the attack that involved America in the war against the Axis powers.

As the Mass was being said the pelt of raindrops from a leaden sky reminded those attending the service that the world sorrowed too at the death of the young man who was but twenty-two years of age.

The soft fall of the rain mingled with the tramp of slowly marching feet as the R.O.T.C. units of the Benedictine Military School, from which he graduated in 1938, formed their lines and marched in solemn procession from their armory to the church.

BENEDICTINE CADETS FORM GUARD OF HONOR

Into the church the sorrowing cadets marched in two long lines. The grey of their uniforms blended into the solemnity of the occasion as the boys paid tribute to a comrade who was known to many of them.

The Very Rev. Boniface Bauer, O. S. B., pastor of the Sacred Heart Church, the celebrant of the Mass, consoled the family with the words of St. John: "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends."

Assisting in the sanctuary were the Right Rev. Monsignor T. James McNamara, rector of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist; the Very Rev. James J. Grady, chancellor of the Diocese of Savannah-Atlanta; the Rev. Thomas A. Sheehan, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church; the Rev. James Croke, of the Blessed Sacrament Church, and the following members of the school faculty: the Rev. Gregory Eichenlaub, O.S.B., the Rev. Robert Brennan, O.S.B., the Rev. Norbert McGowan, O.S.B., the Rev. Paul Milde, O.S.B., the Rev. Peter Trizzino, O.S.B., and the Rev. Brendan Dooley, O.S.B.

At the end of the service, Bugler George G. Doerner, of the R. O. T. C. band, sounded "Taps" from the organ loft.

First Casualty From Diocese of Savannah-Atlanta



SERGEANT GANNAM

George K. Gannam, twenty-two-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Karam Gannam, of Savannah, who was killed in action while serving with U. S. Army in Hawaii.

headquarters squadron of the 18th Pursuit group, stationed at Wheeler Field, several miles from Hickam Field.

A graduate of Benedictine Military School, where he made an excellent record in military tactics, Sergeant Gannam enlisted in the army in August, 1939.

Besides his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Karam Gannam, he is survived by three brothers, Michael Gannam and Anthony Gannam, of Savannah, and Nazer Gannam, of the U. S. Navy, Norfolk, Va., and a sister, Mrs. Mary Saraf, of this city.

OFFICIAL SAVANNAH ATTENDS SERVICES

City officials at the Mass were headed by Mayor Thomas Gamble, and included Aldermen Peter R. Nugent, Charles H. Shafer, Daniel W. Brantley, C. F. Holton, B. I. Friedman, J. R. Burney, Louis J. Roos, Charles Wilkins and Joseph F. Griffin; Lewis A. East, superintendent of water department; Robert F. Downing, city marshal; P. J. McNamara, clerk of council; W. G. Logan, supervisor of purchases; Police Chief William M. Hall, Fire Chief Walter S. Blanton, A. S. Goebel, city engineer, Dr. Charles C. Hedges, health officer, and Mrs. Irene S. Grogan, assistant clerk of council.

Members of the Benedictine Military School Auxiliary attended in a body.

A catafalque was placed before the altar, this being used in the service in the absence of the body of Sergeant Gannam, which is temporarily buried in Hawaii.

The parents of Sergeant Gannam have received a message of sympathy from Congressman Hugh Peterson. The congressman said: "It appears that your son, George, has made the supreme sacrifice in the defense of our nation and I deeply sympathize with you and each member of your family in your great bereavement."

CITY HALL FLAG AT HALF MAST

All Savannah paid tribute to the gallant young soldier. The flag at the City Hall was placed at half mast, as was also the flag of the Benedictine School, and that at the Cathedral School. The Rev. John Toomey, vocational director at the Cathedral school, assembled the students and public prayers for the repose of the soul of Sergeant Gannam were said.

Sergeant Gannam was killed in action in defense of Hickam Field, near Honolulu, according to the War Department's terse dispatch received by his parents. He was attached to

Continue top of first page column 2.

Above story runs top to bottom page 32 two left columns of the Southern Cross Diocesan newspaper published Dec. 20, 1943

Below story runs almost top to bottom page 32 in the two middle columns of Southern Cross Diocesan newspaper published Dec. 20, 1943

Father Boniface Pays Tribute to Patriotism of Sergeant Gannam

SAVANNAH, Ga.—In a sermon delivered at a Requiem Mass, offered in the Sacred Heart Church, for the repose of the soul of Sergeant George Gannam, U. S. A., who was killed in action in Hawaii upon the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan, the Rev. Boniface Bauer, O. S. B., said:

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends".

"Last Sunday afternoon the news was flashed around the world, that the United States possessions at Hawaii had been attacked treacherously by the enemy and that many lives had been lost. Those of us who had relatives, friends and acquaintances stationed at the army posts there hoped and prayed that they had not fallen victims to the attack. Several days had passed without news reaching us of the death of any of them and we breathed a sigh of relief, feeling in our hearts that everything was well with them, that they had survived the ordeal.

"Day before yesterday, we received the shocking news that our young and beloved friend, George Gannam had fallen a victim to the enemy's attack. The War Department sent the terse message to the young man's

should serve as an ideal. In him you see exemplified every virtue which should characterize a Benedictine Cadet. Not so many years ago, he had gone through the same course of training through which you are passing now. He met with and overcame every difficulty which you meet in your daily student life. He was studious and conscientious in his class work; obedient and respectful to his superiors; kind and considerate towards those over whom he had come in contact. Keep this ideal ever before you and you in turn will earn the respect and love of your fellowmen, no matter what walk of life you may choose.

"On this sad occasion our hearts naturally turn in sympathy to the parents upon whom God had placed the heavy burden of sorrow. They had made many and great sacrifices in giving their boy an education and in raising him as a useful citizen of his country. Now he has been taken from us while still in the vigor of youth. He had given every promise of a useful and successful life, but God in His unsearchable way had chosen him to become a martyr of duty. Be comforted with the thought that, though his life was short in

family. Regret to announce that your son George was killed in action at Hickman Field, Hawaii, December 7th. This news struck like a bombshell in the peace and quiet of our community. We heard of the first casualty of the war. For the first time we realized that war had been brought home close to us. It had taken from our midst one whom we had loved and respected.

"Only two and a half years ago George Gannam had graduated from Benedictine School. During the four years of attendance at our school he had distinguished himself by his devotion to duty, by his diligent application to his studies, by his soldierly conduct at all times and by his unassuming and affable manner. He was a boy who had endeared himself to everyone who had come in contact with him.

"As a member of the Cadet Corps, his military record was an excellent one, so much so that he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. He graduated from the school with honors.

"Only two months after his graduation he volunteered to the United States Air Corps where his record was no less distinguished than the one he had attained at Benedictine School. He quickly rose to the rank of staff sergeant, a rank he held until he died in the line of duty.

years, it was filled with deeds well done. While his body lies buried in a distant land, his spirit and his soul still lives on in a world where, through the mercy of God, you will some day meet him again. He was a boy with a deep sense of religion; as faithful in serving God, his Creator, as he had been faithful in the discharge of his duties towards his fellowmen and his country. You may rest assured that he has found favor with God. You may carry through life the sweet memory of a dutiful son who was a credit to you, who was respected by all who had known him and who had earned the gratitude of a grateful country.

"As to the rest of us, let us remember in our prayers the soul of our departed friend so that God in His infinite Goodness and Mercy may give him eternal rest and peace. Let us pray also that God, the Ruler of the Universe, may soften the hearts of the men who rule over the destiny of nations, and that He may bring back to the world peace, that precious Peace which the world cannot give, which God alone can give".

"Knowing him as we did, we can imagine him to have maintained the same sense of duty when he went up to engage the enemy in battle, as had been his wont in the Benedictine Cadet Corps. He died the death of a true soldier and we know that he did not flinch from the danger even when the odds were against him, as we may assume that they were. The school is honored in having tutored a boy of the type of George Gannam. He sealed his patriotism with his life's blood. 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends'.
 To the members of the Benedictine Cadet Corps George Gannam

Continue top of previous page, column 2

Purple Heart Awarded Posthumously to Sergeant George Gannam, Savannah

(Special to The Bulletin)

SAVANNAH, Ga.—The Order of the Purple Heart has been posthumously awarded to Staff Sergeant George F. Gannam, of Savannah, who was killed during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Notice of the award was received by Mr. and Mrs. Karem Gannam in a letter from the War Department which advised that the Purple Heart had been decreed for their son who made the supreme sacrifice in the defense of his country.

Sergeant Gannam, a graduate of Benedictine Military School in the class of 1938, was Savannah's first casualty of the present World War, and a photo-montage of him hangs in the Mayor's office of the City Hall.

The Order of the Purple Heart was instituted during the Revolutionary War and was originated by George Washington.

Page 24, same paper

BENEDICTINE SCHOOL OFFERS IT SERVICES

SAVANNAH, Ga.—The Rev. Gregory Eichenlaub, O. S. B., principal of the Benedictine Military School, called on Mayor Thomas Gamble to tender to the municipality and the people of Savannah the services of the corps of cadets of the school for any service which they might be assigned for the protection of the city and its people.

"We consider this a patriotic duty and our young men are eager to respond with any service they can render," said Father Gregory in his talk with the mayor.

Mayor Gamble expressed deep appreciation of this action on the part of the principal and cadets of Benedictine Military School, and in a letter addressed to the Very Rev. Boniface Bauer, O. S. B., pastor of the Sacred Heart Church, regarding the Mass offered for Sergeant George Gannam, Benedictine School graduate killed in Hawaii, wrote that he felt that Savannah would always cherish the memory of the first of her sons to fall in the Second World War.

CHARLOTTE COURT

Page 17, same paper