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FUTURE RELEASE

WAR DEPARTMENT
Press Branch

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For Release August 10, 1944

Future Release

100th BATTALION HAS FOUGHT ON VIRTUALLY ALL FRONTS IN ITALY

The Japanese-American 100th Infantry Battalion, which recently received a citation from Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, U.S. Army, Commanding General of the Fifth Army, has participated in fighting on virtually every front established in the drive through Italy, reports from Fifth Army Headquarters indicate.

Going into action first in the Naples area, the battalion fought its way across the Volturno River and the Rapido River, and was in the front lines for 40 days at Cassino. Later it was transferred to the beachhead at Anzio and took part in the breakthrough to Rome.

The 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, of which it is a part, are composed of Americans of Japanese descent, all of whom volunteered for service. The majority of the soldiers in the 100th are from the Hawaiian Islands.

The mission for which the battalion was cited was accomplished June 26 and 27 in the vicinity of Belvedere and Sassetta, Italy. A strong German center of resistance dominated a vital highway and impeded the advance of an American infantry division. In the face of numerically superior forces of Nazi infantry and field artillery, the battalion fought its way to the defended positions and completely destroyed the enemy flank position, killing 178 Germans, wounding 20, and capturing 73 in the process.

In ten months of almost continuous fighting only two soldiers of the 100th Infantry have been captured by the Germans, while the battalion has taken hundreds of prisoners, killed hundreds more, and destroyed vast quantity of enemy materiel.

More than 1,000 Purple Hearts, 44 Silver Stars, 31 Bronze Stars, nine Distinguished Service Crosses and three Legion of Merit medals have been awarded to members of the unit. Fifteen enlisted men have received battlefield commissions after displaying outstanding leadership in combat. Among them are two company commanders: Captain Mitsuyoshi Fukuda, of 2333 Fern Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, and Captain Sakee Takahashi of Makaweli, Kauai, Hawaii. Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Singles, of Denver, Colorado, a West Point graduate, is battalion commander.

One of the Japanese-American officers, Captain Young O. Kim, 734 Temple Street Los Angeles, California, has received three decorations. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for outstanding gallantry during the breakthrough to the Alban Hills, and also holds the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. Second Lieutenant Allan Ohata, 708 Bannister Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism in killing 50 Germans during one day's fighting in an early battle in Italy.

There never has been a case of desertion or absence without leave in the 100th although there were two reported cases of "reverse AWOL." Before their battle wounds were completely healed in a field hospital behind the lines, two soldiers left the hospital and hitch-hiked back to their companies on the battlefield.

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*For Local News
Development by JHSA*

FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M., AUGUST 25, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIERS NAMED TOJO WANT TO MEET THE JAP TOJO

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY---Corporal Rufus Tojo, formerly of Hollywood, California, and Corporal Tadashi Tojo, of Waiialua, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, are fighting the Germans on the Fifth Army front. They are members of the 442nd Japanese-American Combat Team which was attached to the 34th "Red Bull" Division.

Both soldiers have personal scores to settle with Hideki Tojo of Tokyo, Japan, former Premier of Japan.

Corporal Tadashi Tojo was an eyewitness to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. "I saw them cut down defenseless people, among them a lot of personal friends. I'd like to meet Tojo of Japan--and on the business end of my howitzer," Corporal Tojo from the Territory declared. Since "Tadashi" means "straight" in Japanese, General Tojo might well seek a real hiding place when cannoner Tojo goes into action against him.

Immediately after graduating from the Waiialua High School, he volunteered for the Japanese-American unit in order to get his chance at the Japs. Although he is a bit disappointed at being sent to Europe he reconciles himself with the thought that he may see action against the Pacific enemy sooner than he had first supposed on landing in Italy. "With the Fifth Army moving so fast, it won't be long until we're in Berlin. After that, we might get at the Japs and finish them off too."

Corporal Tojo from Hollywood is realistic enough to know that it was the Jap "sneak" attack on American soil which precipitated the evacuation of all

MORE

persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast. His father and mother are today residents of Heart Mountain Relocation Center in northern Wyoming. His brother, Private James, is a reserve ASTP, Indianapolis, Indiana.

"Because we looked like the Japs who attacked Pearl Harbor, we were placed under suspicion and evacuated," said Rufus Tojo. "Now we're fighting to show the skeptics that we're as good Americans as those of other ancestry. God willing we won't fail."

A machinist in Imperial Valley before being evacuated, Corporal Rufus Tojo volunteered for overseas duty from the Wyoming Center.

Corporal Rufus Tojo, like Corporal Tadashi Tojo, is in the field artillery. He manipulates the gadgets which set the target range. "I've got the sights set for Berlin already but I'm itching for the chance to aim at Tokyo."

Both Japanese-Americans, incidentally, have lots of hair on their heads. The former Japanese premier is almost bald-headed, with only a fringe of hair remaining.

"That 'musubi' head of Tojo's ought to make a swell bull's eye to aim at," reflected Corporal Tojo from the mainland. Corporal Tojo from the Islands nodded agreement. "Musubi" is Japanese for "rice-ball," a term by which Japanese-American servicemen describe him.

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FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE MONDAY A.M., AUGUST 28, 1944

GERMAN AND JAP SOLDIER USE SAME TACTICS
SAYS JAPANESE-AMERICAN OFFICER

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--German and Japanese soldiers are using almost identical tactics in their efforts to stave off defeat, according to the personal, unofficial opinion of Second Lieutenant Richard K. Hayashi of the Japanese-American 442nd "Go For Broke" Combat team which was attached to the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division of the Fifth Army in Italy.

As an enlisted man with an American air force in New Hebrides, Lieutenant Hayashi participated in the New Georgia and Bougainville campaigns, thereby gaining first hand knowledge of the Jap fighter and his methods.

In special competition against all selected personnel, he won the right to attend Officer Candidate School. After his graduation from the Fort Benning, Georgia, OCS, he was assigned to the Japanese-American Combat Team then in training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Now, on the Fifth Army front in northern Italy, he is leading fellow Japanese-Americans against the German foe.

"Chasing Jerry over here is almost like chasing the Japs over there in the South Pacific," he observed, "for both seem to employ about the same tactics and weapons. Both are definitely on the defensive now and use 'hit and run' tactics. They both leave a lot of snipers behind with orders to fight until death."

After trying to flush enemy snipers out of the forests, underbrush, orchards, and farms of northern Italy, where the mountainous terrain resembles that of New Georgia, Lieutenant Hayashi has concluded that both Axis partners are masters of camouflage.

"But," he added, "both get disorganized and confused when their leaders walk out on them, which is often."

He paid high tribute to the fighting qualities of the 442nd "Go For Broke" volunteers in their first battle with the veteran German S. S. troops. Experience with Jap treachery, such as Japs firing after waving a white flag, enabled Lieutenant Hayashi to save his men from German trickery in Italy.

The retreating Germans in Italy use the "reverse hill" idea, just like the Japs in the Southwest Pacific, building up fortifications on the downward or reverse side of slopes and firing on advancing troops as they are silhouetted against the skyline, Lieutenant Hayashi said.

MORE

A hasty comparison of weapons used by the Axis powers, in the opinion of Lieutenant Hayashi, again shows striking similarity. The German machine pistol has its Japanese counterpart. The Jap's knee mortar is comparable to captured Nazi rifle mortars. Soldiers of the 34th Infantry Division have discovered that German light field pieces are just as harassing as Allied infantrymen have found Japan's to be.

"Just as the Japs are now using 16 year-old-boys in the front lines and forcing subjugated peoples like the Koreans to do much of their fighting for them, so the Germans are using teen age kids and conquered peoples in their fighting," Lieutenant Hayashi said. He made it clear, however, that he had met crack German troops.

Lieutenant Hayashi is a former resident of Stockton, California. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he volunteered to serve his country in the best way he could.

His wife, Mrs. Lorraine Hayashi, was relocated along with other persons of Japanese ancestry, from the Pacific Coast. She was sent to the Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado. She has resettled in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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8-21-44

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FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY P.M., SEPTEMBER 1, 1944

TWO "JAP" GERMANS CAPTURED
BY JAPANESE-AMERICANS

*Recd.
non Friday
9/1/44*

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--"They looked like Japs, but turned out to be German soldiers," explained Staff Sergeant Francis M. Yano of Parker Ranch, Hawaii, and First Sergeant James Sakamoto of Salt Lake City, Utah, as they related how two German prisoners had surrendered to them.

In the wake of the Fifth Army's advance in Italy, the Japanese-American 442d Infantry Regiment, then attached to the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division moved up to a new area, which had been a battleground just 24 hours previously.

Sergeants Yano and Sakamoto, both of the 442d antitank company, were digging slit trenches. Sergeant Yano came upon what appeared to be a large gopher hole. Not realizing that it was an air vent of a dugout, he glanced down, and somewhat surprised, saw German military equipment at the bottom of the hole. He called Sergeant Sakamoto.

As the two Japanese-Americans wondered what it was all about, "two guys who looked just like Japs poked out of the dugout and offered to surrender to us. At first we thought they might be a couple of our own boys. But when we saw German eagles on their coats, we didn't know who they were."

Sergeant Sakamoto yelled for his men to bring up rifles and ammunition. Sergeant Hideo Tanabe of Anahola, Hawaii, was the first to rush to the scene, breathlessly carrying a Tommy gun.

While Sergeant Yano watched the prisoners, who stoically waited for the next move, Sergeant Sakamoto dived into the dugout and returned with loaded rifles and identification papers. "To think that those guys had 18 rounds of ammunition with them, almost under our feet," recalled the Japanese-American soldier with the Fifth Army.

It was soon discovered that the two German prisoners were Asiatics. The long campaigns had darkened their features so that, at first glance, they resembled the sun-tanned fighting men of the Japanese-American 442d Infantry Regiment. From attempted conversations with them, the sergeants learned that the prisoners were Turkomans.

None of the troops was aware of the Turkoman organization in the vicinity.

"Those guys really looked surprised when they came out to surrender. But they couldn't have been more surprised than we were," Sergeant Yano declared.

MORE

Corporal Jack Saito, for 15 years an assistant postmaster at Hanapee, Kauai, territory of Hawaii, took charge of the prisoners and escorted them to the Division MPs. Corporal Saito is with the Special Police detachment of the Japanese-American regiment.

Sergeant Yano is the son of Mr. and Mrs. K. Yano of Parker Ranch, Kamehaha, Hawaii. Before he volunteered for the Japanese-American combat team he worked at his parents' ranch. His brother, Private First Class George Yano, U. S. Army, was killed in action two years ago on board a transport off the Islands of Hawaii.

Sergeant Sakamoto is the son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Sakamoto, 45 $\frac{1}{2}$ East Eighth, West, Salt Lake City, Utah. The Sakamotos lived in Hollywood California, before persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the Pacific Coast. His parents resettled in Utah while James, a former fruit market worker, was inducted into the Army.

END

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FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN PATROL BELIEVED FIRST TO REACH PISA

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Members of a reconnaissance patrol of the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team are believed to have been the first Allied troops to reach the historic city of Pisa.

At dusk on July 21, as elements of the 34th "Red Bull" Division pounded toward the city, a 12-man Japanese-American patrol officered by a naturalized Canadian and an American of French extraction entered Pisa to obtain vital information about the enemy defenses.

On the evening of July 20, the commanding officer of the Combat Team which was spearheading the Fifth Army drive northward called for volunteers to go on a reconnaissance patrol and attempt to enter Pisa, then believed to be occupied by Germans in spite of rumors to the contrary. The regiment was at the time deployed along the Colle-Salvetti-Nuova line. Little was known of enemy positions to the north. The terrain to be covered was flat, with little cover or concealment.

Many times the number needed volunteered for the patrol. Finally 12 men were selected. They were Staff Sergeants Hiroshi H. Fujita, Poston Relocation Center, Poston, Arizona; Albert K. Nakama, Kaneohe, Oahu; Privates First Class Jim T. Suzuki, Yasuo P. Fjuino, Ken Higashi, all of the Minidoka Relocation Center, Hunt, Idaho; John M. Naganuma, Lahaina, Maui; Frank K. Miyauchi, Pau, Maui; Privates Sueo Takahashi, Rowher Relocation Center, McGehee, Arkansas; Thomas S. Espineda, Stockton, California; Arthur A. Kaisaki, Lewiston, Idaho; Heichi Oka, Punene, Maui; and Masaharu Okumura, Gila River Relocation Center, Rivers, Arizona.

Two officers attached to the regimental staff, Ontario-born First Lieutenant Norman R. Gilbert, Detroit, Michigan, who received his citizenship papers in 1941, and Second Lieutenant Edward E. Androvette, Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, volunteered to lead the patrol. A partisan endorsed by the 34th Division headquarters was to guide the patrol through the enemy territory. The patrol was given a double mission of entering Pisa, if possible, and returning to its unit before daylight the following morning. They were instructed to avoid combat if possible.

Led by the partisan guide, the patrol left a battalion headquarters about 10 o'clock at night. They proceeded on foot after reaching Vicarello and struck out cross-country northwest to a point near Antifessetto where two more partisans joined the group. The patrol reached highway 67 without contacting the enemy at a point one kilometer east of Podo Ermada.

MORE

At that time, the patrol leaders realized it would be impossible to return at the specified hour unless they turned back at that point. After consultation, it was unanimously agreed that the patrol should proceed on. Three men were sent back to report their findings thus far.

The patrol reached a farmhouse at Podo Garzella at daybreak and decided to hide there during the day.

Several enemy patrols passed the farmhouse, one of them remaining on the first floor of the building for nearly an hour while the members of the patrol remained quiet on the second floor. During the afternoon, the partisans reported that Pisa had either been reoccupied by the Germans or that the enemy had never evacuated the city. The Japanese-Americans were without rations by this time. From their second floor hideaway, the patrol was able to observe several enemy strong points, as well as to locate artillery batteries and certain German demolitions within Pisa.

At dusk the patrol resumed its course toward the city. It reached a point near San Giusto within the outskirts of Pisa and hid in a ditch beside a road. German trucks could be heard moving from San Ermete, to the northeast, toward the patrol's left flank and across its path. Under these circumstances, it was decided that it would be a useless risk of lives to proceed further into Pisa. About midnight the patrol began its journey back to its regimental command post.

Not a single shot was fired by the patrol which penetrated six miles into enemy territory, although targets continually invited them by daylight. At no time was the patrol detected by the Germans, although they ran into numerous enemy patrols.

END

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FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE TUESDAY A.M., SEPTEMBER 12, 1944

AN ACT OF HUMAN TENDERNESS IN THE MIDST OF WAR

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--This isn't an epic of heroism on the battlefield. It's just a simple story of an act of human tenderness in the midst of war.

German artillery was laying down a stiff barrage on an orchard on the Fifth Army front in northern Italy. Shells were carving huge craters in the ground while others were ripping trees into shreds.

Technical Sergeant Kenneth Matsumitsu of the Japanese-American 442d Infantry Regiment was hugging the ground as best he could, hoping and praying that the artillery shells wouldn't burst too near him.

Between shots, he would look up to see how his fighting partners were faring.

During a lull in the shelling, he noticed a little clump of feathers near a crater some 50 feet away. Thinking that it might be a bird knocked out of its perch in the tree by the concussion of the barrage, and possibly needing aid, Sergeant Matsumitsu crawled out to rescue it. Although the shelling began anew, he continued to crawl out toward that bundle of feathers without any thoughts of personal danger from the barrage.

When he reached his objective, he discovered a tiny baby owl, unhurt but stunned and trembling with fright. The Japanese-American soldier stroked its feathers and tried to reassure it. Soon the mass of feathers stopped its trembling and nestled up in the hands of its savior.

"I wonder what owls eat," he asked his comrades at the first opportunity. On being told that mice are their favorite diet, the sergeant grinned and replied: "That's just too bad. There are a lot of rats around here--big ones too--but no mice. I guess the owl'll have to forage for himself."

But the sleepy looking owl was wise enough to know when it had found some friends. It insisted on remaining with the sergeant. The owl is now the mascot of the section.

Its name? The sergeant named it after his own driver, Muto, who is always sleepy.

Before his induction into the service, Sergeant Matsumitsu was a produce market transfer man in Los Angeles, California. His folks were relocated from the West Coast. They were sent to the Rohwer Relocation Center, near McGehee, Arkansas, where they still live. He has three other brothers in the U. S. Army, Private First Class Jimmy in the same outfit with him, Sergeant Tom at Camp McClellan, Alabama, and Private First Class Robert K., who is training at the University of Minnesota.

END

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FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY P.M., SEPTEMBER 13, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIER DIES
URGING OTHERS BE TREATED FIRST

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--In a dark first aid station of the Fifth Army front in Italy one night recently, lay a casualty of the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team.

His outfit at the time was fighting with the 34th "Red Bull" Division. He had been hit while leading an assault on Hill 140, dubbed "Little Cassino" by the men because of fierce German resistance reminiscent of their stand further south.

In the darkness, the medics were calling for the most seriously wounded for treatment. Coming to him, a first aid man asked how he was.

"I'm all right," was his reply. "The others need more help than I."

The medic went on to another patient.

Asked again how he was feeling, the Japanese-American, a corporal in a cannon company, answered, "I'm feeling fine. Treat the others first."

As a result of his repeated assurance, the soldier, whose home before his family had been evacuated, was Los Angeles, California, was among the last to be treated.

Both of his legs had been blown off by a direct hit from a German 88. Evacuated, he died the next night.

The 442d is made up of Americans of Japanese ancestry from Hawaii and the United States.

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F U T U R E

R E L E A S E

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M., SEPTEMBER 15, 1944

COLONEL LAUDS JAPANESE-AMERICANS IN HIS COMMAND

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Colonel C. W. Pence, commanding officer of the 442d Japanese-American Regimental Combat Team, recently praised the officers and men of his command for their accomplishments during their baptism of fire on the Fifth Army front in Italy.

In a memorandum to the Japanese-American soldiers, then fighting with the 34th "Red Bull" Division, Colonel Pence noted that they had been of material assistance in driving the enemy back more than 50 miles during some of the bitterest fighting since Cassino.

He said the unit had never taken a backward step. "You have stood firm under heavy shell and mortar fire and have beaten off every enemy counterattack," Colonel Pence declared. "You have captured and killed many Germans, destroyed and captured much enemy materiel."

Pointing out that the regiment had seen almost a month of continuous service in the Fifth Army front lines, Colonel Pence recalled that on the last day of combat the 34th division commander had complimented the unit for doing "a splendid job."

"Yesterday," he said, "we were privileged to wear the insignia of the division, a division whose long, successful combat record is surpassed by no other division."

Colonel Pence, whose home is in Attica, Indiana, has been the commanding officer of the 442d Combat Team since the volunteer unit, composed of Japanese-Americans from the mainland of the United States and the Territory of Hawaii, was activated at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, February 1, 1943.

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FOR LOCAL NEWS
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FUTURE

RELEASE

FOR RELEASE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN "ONE-MAN MORTAR SQUAD"
BREAKS UP GERMAN STRONGPOINT

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Squatting in no-man's-land under heavy enemy fire, Staff Sergeant Kazuo Masuda recently plunked the tube of his 60-mm mortar in a helmet filled with dirt and singlehandedly broke up a German strongpoint.

Kazuo, who lived at Santa Ana, California, fights with the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, then serving with the 34th "Red Bull" Division on the Fifth Army front in Italy.

The regiment, made up of Americans of Japanese ancestry, was storming the enemy's main line of resistance near the Italian village of Castellina. The Germans, well entrenched on the hill, were pouring steady artillery, machinegun, and mortar fire down on the advancing Americans.

Masuda's six-man mortar squad went into a huddle. Their job was to silence the enemy guns. Out of that group, emerged a lone figure, loaded down with bulging ammunition pouches slung in front and on his back, carrying a mortar tube under his right arm and an extra steel helmet in his left hand. The amazed Germans, suspecting some kind of Yankee trick, uncorked a terrific barrage of self-propelled guns and mortars.

Alternately running and sidestepping like a college halfback, Masuda dashed 25 yards up the slope. Hastily filling his extra helmet with dirt, he buried the mortar barrel in it. Squatted beside this improvised emplacement, he wrapped his legs around the tube. Without sight or bipod, he calculated the deflection and elevation and began firing on the enemy. Though Nazi fire peppered the ground around him, he kept on firing his mortar until his ammunition ran out.

Then, quite unconcerned about German marksmanship, he retraced his steps down the slope and returned with two cases of ammunition. He began pouring shells into the enemy positions again. This was too much for the Germans. They retreated to another position in confusion.

Before the war, Sergeant Masuda operated a truck garden in Santa Ana. His parents and three brothers and four sisters live at 49-11-D, Gila River, Relocation Center, Rivers, Arizona.

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R E L E A S E

FOR RELEASE MONDAY A.M., SEPTEMBER 18, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN BRAVES HEAVY FIRE TO SUMMON AID FOR WOUNDED BUDDIES

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Private Jou Okitsu, who fights with the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team on the Fifth Army front in Italy, recently made his way more than a half mile through heavy artillery, machinegun and sniper fire to get aid for 15 wounded buddies.

Okitsu, formerly of Los Angeles, California, is a messenger in a rifle company. The 442d, made up of Americans of Japanese ancestry, participated in the 34th "Red Bull" Division's drive toward Leghorn.

In the vicinity of Suvereto, Italy, the enemy occupied a high hill commanding the flat ground over which the Japanese-Americans were advancing. German heavy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire sprayed them continuously, pinning down one company of riflemen on the right flank. Okitsu's company was emplaced about 900 yards from the enemy on a small knoll on the left flank. The supporting company, occupying an open area some 2000 yards from the German positions, was being plastered by concentrated artillery and mortar fire.

In the initial barrage, 15 men of the supporting company were injured. These casualties managed to work their way to Okitsu's company under the covering fire of the forward company. He aided the wounded men in finding cover and making them comfortable as possible.

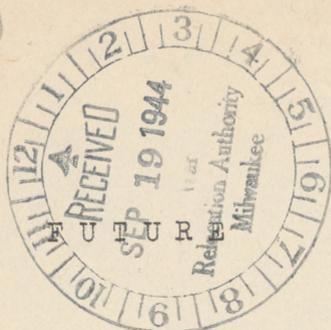
Contact with their battalion headquarters as well as the nearest aid station was lost when enemy shells cut the communication lines between the front lines and the rear positions.

On learning of the predicament, Okitsu undertook to summon the necessary aid. He refused the offer of others to go with him.

Three thousand feet of exposed flat ground, all under observation of the enemy and subject to his constant artillery pounding, lay before him. During the entire course of his trip, Okitsu was subjected to machinegun and sniper fire, intermingled with artillery and mortar fire. At length, by creeping, crawling, and running--halted several times by artillery and mortar barrages which fell perilously close to him--Okitsu finally managed to find the aid station. Summoning litter bearers, medical aid men, and a surge on, he led them back to the wounded men after the enemy fire had subsided.

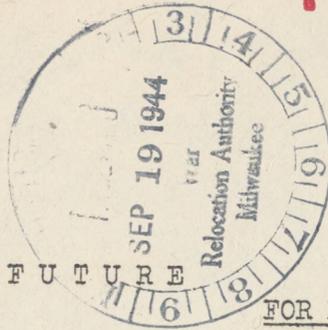
Okitsu was a truck gardener in Los Angeles before entering the Army, March 18, 1941. When persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the Pacific Coast early in the spring of 1942, his parents and his sister were removed to the Colorado River Relocation Center, Poston, Arizona, where they still reside.

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FOR LOCAL NEWS
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RELEASE

FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY P.M., SEPTEMBER 20, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICANS PLAY VITAL ROLE IN BREACHING "LITTLE CASSINO" LINE

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Japanese-Americans of the 442d Regimental Combat Team played a vital role in breaching the "Little Cassino" line.

So designated by the GI because it resembled stubbornly defended Cassino, the line consisted of a series of dominating ridges and high mountain peaks which comprised a major anchor of the main line of enemy resistance barring the Fifth Army's advance north toward Leghorn and Pisa.

Spearheading the 34th "Red Bull" Division's drive to the north, a unit of the 442d had as its immediate objective the village of Il Terriccio and Hills 212 and 277. The Japanese-American mission was to breach enemy lines and destroy their positions or make them untenable.

Taking Il Terriccio without a fight, the 442d moved to the slope of Hill 212, which is densely covered with undergrowth. It afforded good observation for the enemy and forced the attackers, weary from more than a week in the line, to hand-carry their equipment.

"This thing sure gets heavy," muttered Private George Sato, Japanese-American from Minidoka Relocation Center, Hunt, Idaho, "but I guess we'll need the blamed thing when we see Jerry." Sato labored under a 51-pound machinegun tripod.

Early on the Fourth of July the 442d attacked an important ridge in face of heavy fire from self-propelled 105-mm field guns, mortars and machineguns. Shell fragments permeated the entire area in which the 442d moved, forcing the attackers to dig in. From what they came to call "Suicide Hill," the men of the 442d were subjected to devastating artillery fire, and a heavy weapons company replied with highly effective 81-mm mortar fire. Patrols threaded their way forward through the concentration of fire and knocked out several German machineguns.

Supplied with food, water and ammunition hand-carried across four steep, heavily wooded ridges from Il Terriccio 6,000 feet away, the 442d edged forward during the night and the next day. The supply situation was improved during the day when mule pack teams led by Italian partisans came up.

When it was found impossible to bring up tanks, the reserve company delivered heavy rifle fire and the enemy was driven from the ridge by attacks on one flank and the enemy rear.

MORE

Having taken the ridge, the 442d was in a particularly vulnerable position, one company being exposed to effective enemy mortar fire and other elements finding themselves completely devoid of cover or concealment. The Japanese-Americans laid intense fire on nearby enemy installations, including an artillery concentration. One 81-mm mortar fired 1,200 rounds during the day.

"Like in Tennyson's poem," said Private First Class Wataru Kohashi of Hilo, Hawaii, "we walked into the very jaws of death, but most of us came through okay."

Facing a concentration of enemy self-propelled guns, the 442d then took its final objective, Hill 140, on schedule. The 34th Infantry Division artillery pounded the Hill for 45 minutes in preparation for the final assault. At least one German battalion was routed. Avenues to Castellina and the road leading to the town were opened to the attackers.

"It was a notable achievement," remarked Lieutenant Bert N. Nishimura, 442d staff officer from Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii. "The breaching of those lines crumbled their defenses and made the rest of their positions untenable."

"The wounded never complained of pain," said a Japanese-American surgeon from Boston, Massachusetts, "and many of them refused to be treated until their buddies had been taken care of. Their courage was inspiring."

A salvage crew later found in the wake of the advance 121 dead Germans, 22 machineguns, 4 of them heavy, 14 rifles, 2 mortars, 4 75-mm howitzers, 2 bazooka-type guns and mortar and artillery ammunition dumps. It was estimated the Germans had evacuated an additional 350 wounded men and must have buried many of their dead before retreating.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY A.M., SEPTEMBER 21, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN COMPANY IN ITALY
WRITES GREETINGS TO COMMANDER'S NEW DAUGHTER

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Even before she has her first teeth, little Linda Ann Hawkins, baby daughter of Captain and Mrs. Lee B. Hawkins, 309 8th Street, Revenna, Kentucky, has received a greeting from nearly 200 admirers in far away Italy.

The greeting is a letter from the officers and men of the Japanese-American 100th Infantry Battalion from Hawaii, a company which her father commands on the Fifth Army front, telling little Linda that they have just heard that she has been born and they want her to know right away that her dad is "tops."

In addition, the men of the company, all Americans of Japanese descent, took up a collection and sent a money order to the wife of one of the soldiers, asking her to buy a war bond and "appropriate gifts" for little Linda. Captain Hawkins will be as surprised as Linda, for his men have not told him.

"You are too young to understand this now," their letter began, "but we hope that your mother will keep this little note until you can read it for yourself.

"Today, we are somewhere in Italy. We are fighting a terrible foe that you and millions of other children like you may live in peace, security, and dignity, enjoying the blessings of liberty, democracy, and humanity. When you can read this, you shall know the answer to that question which haunts us now: Whether we too shall have fought, and perhaps died, in vain or not. God willing, we shall have won that victory which is so vital to all.

"Most of us are Americans of Japanese ancestry who volunteered to serve our country from the Islands of Hawaii and the Mainland of the United States.

"In the past year, during training and elsewhere, we have grown to love, admire, and respect your father, our Captain Hawkins, because he is more than just a real officer and gentlemen. He personifies to most of us by living example the best of Americanism and the things for which we fight. We are proud to serve under the finest captain in the United States Army.

"We hope that your father is with you today. If he is, you will know why we rate him 'tops.' If he is not, you will know that he died a hero, for men such as he can only die that way. If he has passed on to a soldier's death, we know that he would want his little girl to grow up to be that kind of a lady your mother must be.

"Some day some of us may have the pleasure of meeting you. But, regardless of our fate, we wish you and yours well and trust that this little war bond which we have purchased for you will constantly remind you of your father and of the esteem in which we hold him.

"God bless you and keep you.

"And, in the beautiful language of the Islands, may we wish you 'good luck' with the most expressive and tender thought in all the world--'Aloha!'"

Linda Ann was born on June 3, her father's birthday. Captain and Mrs. Hawkins have another daughter, Sandra Lee, two years old. Captain Hawkins formerly was stationed at Camp Bullis, Texas. His unit has fought with the 34th "Red Bull" Division in Italy.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M., SEPTEMBER 22, 1944

2 JAP-AMERICAN SQUADS KILL 30 GERMANS,
CAPTURE 46 IN ONE AFTERNOON

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY—Two squads of Japanese-Americans of the 100th Infantry Battalion killed 30 Germans, captured 46 others and took large quantities of enemy equipment in an afternoon's fighting on the Fifth Army front in Italy recently.

Enemy material captured by the men, led by First Lieutenant James Boodry, 112 Pine Street, Clinton, Massachusetts, included five machineguns, 38 machine pistols, 13 pistols and several hundred "potato masher" and fragmentation grenades.

Details of the encounter were described by Private First Class Rice Tomito of Puunene, Maui, Hawaii.

On top of a ridge-line road were two houses. Concealed in them were enemy machineguns and snipers. Dugouts and machinegun pits about the house were skilfully covered with straw, and from these positions bursts of bullets were fired at Americans advancing toward the Germans.

Sergeant Eichi Amazaki of Waiialae, Oahu, Hawaii, Private First Class Toshio Sasaki, 1654 Nuuanu Avenue, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, and Private First Class Jesse M. Hirata of Honauuau, Kona, Hawaii, led the two squads toward the Krauts. They sneaked across the road and into a grape field, where they spotted two snipers firing at Americans far down the slope. The rest of the squads remained behind.

The three crept up slowly to within 15 yards of the snipers' foxhole. Sasaki threw a hand grenade. At the same time, he opened with his Tommy gun and caught one German. The other sniper gave up and was taken back to the company command post by Hirata.

Then the men continued advancing toward the first house.

Amazaki and Sasaki entered and investigated, but the Germans who had been firing from the building had disappeared.

Sasaki led the way out of the building and cautiously approached the corner of the house. He saw a dugout next to the other house. Germans were moving within. A machinegun fired from the slit of the dugout, and an officer appeared at the doorway. Sasaki fired four shots, killing the German officer.

Amazaki joined Sasaki with his Garand rifle, and the two fired at the

MORE

machinegunner, who dropped, seriously wounded. Meanwhile, the balance of the squads having caught up, fired from the second story of the first house. Four occupants of the dugout were killed, and two wounded were captured.

The German machineguns and machine pistols snarled, but the soldiers from Hawaii, concealed in the shadow of the house, killed every Kraut they saw about the house and fields.

Amazaki and Sasaki became separated.

Another comrade joined Sasaki, and they circled toward the ravine some 40 yards away from the second house. Sniper shots whizzed at them. They ran to cover in a shell crater.

About half of a squad was deployed on the border of the ravine. They were firing at the Jerries, who were disorganized and were milling about. The men estimated they killed at least ten Krauts.

Sasaki's comrade remained here to fight, but Sasaki moved to the left, following the ravine's edge. He saw a Kraut 75-mm antitank gun being towed by a team of cows. He crept near to the Germans and fired. Two Germans were wounded and the rest gave up.

The two squads were anxious to go further into hostile territory, but Lieutenant Boodry stopped them. "We're fighting in another unit's sector," he said. "We'd better get back before we are mistaken for Krauts and draw artillery fire."

The two squads, suffering only three minor casualties, returned to their company after the fruitful raid which earned them high praise.

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FOR RELEASE SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICANS IN ITALY FULFILL ARMY'S EXPECTATIONS

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Japanese-Americans fighting on the Fifth Army front in Italy are living up to the Army's expectations.

When formation of the special Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team was announced early in 1943, in response to the requests of many loyal American-born Japanese to serve in the Armed Forces, the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, declared: "It is hoped that this Combat Team will become one of the outstanding units in the United States Army."

Activated February 1, 1943, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, the 442d composed of volunteers from the relocation centers to which the Government had sent evacuated persons of Japanese extraction from the Pacific coast set such a high standard in its training that it was cited for its outstanding record.

Arriving in Italy late in May, 1944, it was attached to the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division. The famed Japanese-American 100th Infantry Battalion, already in Italy, and composed of former activated Hawaiian National Guardsmen, was attached to the combat team to serve as the first battalion for the Infantry regiment. Committed to action late in June, the combat team remained in the line until relieved almost a month later. During this period, it distinguished itself, particularly in the bitter fighting for the approaches to Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence.

Crack Wehrmacht SS units tested the newcomers in their initial engagement in the mountainous regions guarding the approaches to key German defenses in northern Italy.

Before the Japanese-Americans were relieved, they had liberated 11 towns and villages--Suvereto, Belvedere, Sassetta, Constagneto, Pastina, Santa Luce, Pieve di Santa Luce, Orciana, Sante Regolo, Luciano, and Colee Saluettii and many other inhabited places. They stormed and took two major hills--Hill 140, "Little Cassino," and Hill 132--and numerous other elevations. Their forward movement enabled other elements of the Fifth Army to move up and capture additional towns and hills.

At the port of Leghorn, they protected the entire flank of the Allied drive and permitted armored and infantry units to enter the city. Japanese-American patrols were the first to penetrate into the historic and pivotal city of Pisa. The unit was relieved after advancing over 50 miles in less than a month.

During this drive, the regiment killed 1,124 Germans, captured 331, and wounded several hundred. These figures do not include dead buried by the Germans nor wounded evacuated by the Nazis.

Among enemy vehicles captured or destroyed were 27 jeeps, 12 motorcycles, one reconnaissance car, eight large trucks, ten Mark IV tanks, and two half-track trucks. Six antitank guns, five self-propelled guns, eight field artillery pieces, seven large mortars, and innumerable machineguns, machine pistols, rifles, carbines, grenades, and bazooka-type guns, were taken or destroyed.

A recapitulation shows that more than 90 per cent of the newcomers won Combat Infantryman Badges for exemplary conduct under direct enemy fire. Four

MORE

hundred wear the Purple Heart for wounds received in action.

The combat engineer group of the outfit was highly praised for its conscientious and methodical work, especially in clearing mine fields. Members of the group cleared and neutralized 51 mine fields, containing hundreds of teller mines and box mines.

They built 31 by-passes, many under enemy fire, so that troops and equipment might continue to move forward. Approximately 100 miles of roadway was probed and cleared of mines and kept open to traffic.

In a single day's operation, they removed 2,000 pounds of demolition charges from three bridges prepared by the enemy for demolition. On another occasion, 48 powder charges and demolition charges of teller mines, piled seven high, were removed from under bridges prepared for demolition.

The engineers built one timber bridge with a span of six feet, one Brockway Steel Treadway with a span of 90 feet, and two 90-foot footbridges. Two bulldozers were kept in constant use, building by-passes and removing dead horses, tanks, and other debris from roadways. In one instance, their bulldozer led a unit of tank destroyers into a town.

During the same period, the field artillery battalion of the outfit established itself as one of the most efficient on the front. In less than a month, it fired 48,938 rounds, an average of 2,000 a day. One day 4,010 rounds were fired. On July 4, one battery knocked out two enemy batteries.

Near Castellina, Italy, 14 Germans were killed by time fire. Of 150 Germans in one area under fire, only 30 escaped, all injured, after a single barrage.

A combat organization which had been in battle since Salerno, commended the Japanese-American field artillery as having given them the finest artillery support they had had so far in the war.

All elements of the Japanese-American Combat Team participated in the Allied advance in Italy.

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY A.M., SEPTEMBER 25, 1944

LOS ANGELES JAPANESE-AMERICAN SACRIFICES SELF FOR COMRADES IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY—Second Lieutenant Kei Tanahashi of the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team died of wounds received in battle on the Fifth Army front in Italy because he insisted that his wounded comrades be treated and evacuated first.

Lieutenant Tanahashi's platoon was attacking Hill 140, near Castellina, Italy, when it was pinned down by intense enemy artillery and small arms fire. The terrain was rough and bushy but there was little cover for the advancing American troops.

Fire from enemy snipers and automatic weapons 400 yards ahead threatened not only the platoon but the entire company. Lieutenant Tanahashi led his platoon forward some 300 yards in order to dislodge the enemy.

In the meantime, another German automatic weapon on their flank caught them by surprise with its deadly firing. Lieutenant Tanahashi, leading his group, was mortally wounded but refused medical attention until every other injured soldier of his platoon was given first aid and evacuated to a place of safety.

Disregarding the serious nature of his wounds, he remained at his post and directed operations against the snipers and automatic weapons until he was evacuated.

He died in a field hospital from the loss of blood and the injuries sustained while in action. Had he permitted himself to be treated earlier and had he been evacuated along with the first group, he might have lived, doctors in the field hospital said.

Lieutenant Tanahashi was well known in Los Angeles, California, where he was the scoutmaster and organizer of the famous drum and bugle corps of Troop 379, Boy Scouts of America, which made a national tour and played at the White House in 1935. He was graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1939. At UCLA, he was president of the Bruin's Club, a member of Scabbard and Blade, and held a reserve captaincy in the ROTC. He won a life membership in the California Scholarship Federation because of his scholarship records while attending Lincoln High School in Los Angeles.

After graduation and until the evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast, he worked as a bookkeeper in his father's cleaning plant. He and his family were evacuated to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center.

He was granted leave to study at the University of Nebraska, where he was working on his Master's Degree in economics when he was commissioned to serve with the Japanese-American Combat Team, composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry, then in training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. After completing a refresher course at Fort Benning, he joined the Combat Team.

Lieutenant Tanahashi was married one week before he was sent overseas to Italy. His widow, Mrs. Joy Kikugawa Tanahashi, resides in Cleveland, Ohio, where she resettled upon leaving the Heart Mountain Center in Wyoming. His father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Soji Tanahashi, are still in the relocation center.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY P.M., OCTOBER 18, 1944

GLENDALE JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIER WINS BATTLEFIELD COMMISSION IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--For demonstrating exceptional qualities of leadership against the enemy on the Fifth Army front in northern Italy, Technical Sergeant Masuo Chomori, formerly of Glendale, California, has been commissioned a second lieutenant.

A platoon sergeant with the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team since its activation in Camp Shelby, Mississippi, in February, 1943, Chomori won his battlefield commission for his exemplary and inspiring leadership during both training and battle periods. He demonstrated his abilities as a field commander under the most adverse conditions in combat.

When his platoon leader was wounded during an attack in the vicinity of Suvereto, Italy, Chomori assumed command. His rifle platoon was counterattacked by enemy forces consisting of one infantry company, three Mark IV tanks, and one self-propelled 88-mm gun. The enemy also had the advantages of commanding ground, initial surprise and superior fire power.

Chomori reorganized his platoon and directed its withdrawal to a more tenable positions. His cheerfulness and efficiency contributed much to the maintenance of morale in his platoon and company.

On another occasion, in the vicinity of Hill 140, near Molino A Ventoabbato, he again assumed charge of his platoon when his platoon leader was wounded. His company had dug in to hold off enemy counter thrusts after capturing its objective. His platoon was entrenched in the center of the company sector on high ground which dominated the fields of fire to the company front.

Toward evening, German artillery laid an extremely heavy barrage on the Japanese-American positions, followed by a concentrated 81-mm mortar barrage. In the face of the extremely difficult and hazardous situation Chomori displayed extraordinary coolness in controlling his men. Several German counterattacks in force were driven back, largely through the effective rifle fire of the platoon under his direction. Though his group suffered ten casualties during this action, he personally supervised their evacuation to safer territory.

Several days later, during the attack north of Castellina, Italy, he assumed command of his platoon in the absence of a commissioned officer. He led his group over dangerous terrain some 1,500 yards and then ordered them to dig in to withstand expected enemy assaults. For more than 48 hours, during heavy enemy artillery shelling concentrated on his platoon sector, he kept his men inspired.

MORE

Early in the morning of the third day, he led his platoon and company in an attack which smashed forward 1,200 yards. His company commander complimented his actions by stating that his platoon executed its difficult part in the attack in perfect tactical manner, as well as the holding action which followed while concentrated sniper, machinegun, machine pistol, artillery, and heavy mortar fire showered around them.

In all subsequent action, for a period of almost three weeks, he remained in sole charge of his platoon in lieu of an officer during some of the bitterest fighting for the approaches of Pisa and Leghorn.

His professional knowledge and the highly competent manner in which he met every tactical situation ably demonstrated his ability to fill the position of platoon leader, his captain stated.

For six years prior to entering the army at Fort MacArthur, California, January 29, 1941, Chomori was a produce truck driver, living at 439 South Pacific Avenue, Glendale. He received his basic training at Fort Ord, California, later being transferred to Camp Crowder, Missouri. He was assigned as one of the cadre for the 442, composed entirely of Americans of Japanese ancestry, on its activation at Camp Shelby.

His wife, Mrs. Elsie F. Chomori, lived in Compton, California, before she was evacuated to the Rowher Relocation Center, Arkansas. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kinsaku Chomori, and four brothers and two sisters live in the Manzanar Relocation Center, California.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY A.M., OCTOBER 18, 1944

110-POUND SANTA ANNA, CALIFORNIA, JAPANESE-AMERICAN
RESCUES 176-POUND COMRADE IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Small, wiry, 110-pound Private Takaji J. Goto, ex-aviation mechanic of Santa Anna, California, rescued a 175-pound wounded comrade and carried him to safety under heavy enemy fire on the Fifth Army front in Italy recently.

The former Santa Anna Junior College student fights with the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, at the time attached to the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division.

Their unit, a flank security detail, was attacked and driven back by a German rifle and machinegun company during the advance up Hill 140 near Molino A Ventoablto.

The unit withdrew 25 yards leaving one dead and one wounded. Goto voluntarily crawled back 75 yards to the wounded man in the face of machine pistol and rifle fire with scant concealment and no cover. Applying a tourniquet to the leg of his 175-pound comrade, and in the midst of small arms fire and hand grenades, he dragged the heavy man to safety.

Elements of Goto's company counterattacked a few hours later and secured the hill.

Before entering the army, Goto, with his mother, was evacuated to Manzanar Relocation Center, in California, from Santa Anna.

His mother, Mrs. Kotsuru Goto, still is at Manzanar.

Enlisted personnel of the 442d is made up entirely of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M., OCTOBER 20, 1944

JAP-AMERICAN ENGINEERS HELP KEEP
FIFTH ARMY MOVING IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--An advance company of volunteer Japanese-American Engineers has been working and fighting with front-line Infantrymen in the Fifth Army's drive over the forested mountains of northern Italy.

They built roads, constructed by-passes and picked up hundreds of enemy mines, all in range of German shell fire--meanwhile knocking off their share of Krauts.

Part of a special regimental combat team activated and trained at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, last year, all members of the Engineer company are Americans of Japanese descent who volunteered for combat duty from Hawaii and relocation centers in the United States.

When they joined the Fifth Army as fresh troops, they were assigned the main road of advance in their sector--one of the toughest jobs on the front.

"From the first day we knew we had a smart, rugged gang," said First Lieutenant Frank Hanten of White Lake, South Dakota, Engineer officer. "They're eager to learn and they cooperate perfectly. They're a good GI Engineer outfit."

Their normal work is routine and laborious. Road gangs swing picks and axes in broiling sun, often missing the noon meal. Sometimes they work 24 hours in one shift, filling up shell holes with rocks and gravel.

One of their most important jobs is constructing by-passes--emergency run-arounds through stream beds where retreating Germans have blown up bridges. Huge, rumbling bulldozers and air drills are used for this work. As soon as the Krauts give up a bridge position, the advance Japanese-American Engineers swarm in to chop down trees around it, grade down the embankments. With every minute counting, the husky little GIs, stripped to the waist, work furiously along the streams so that infantry and vehicles may move up at the earliest possible moment. On three occasions this outfit has opened roads for the first of advancing Fifth Army tanks.

While the road gangs are at work, special crews sweep the area for mines. Swinging electric disc detectors in front of them a few inches above the ground, groups of two explore cautiously about through the dusty weeds along ditches and banks, listening intently for the sharp buzz of their instrument which reveals the carefully hidden trap of explosives. Immediately, skilled fingers "dehorn" the mine and dig it up. Vital areas are literally paved with mines, each of which must be discovered in this painstaking fashion.

MORE

It means hour after hour of tense, dangerous work. But at its completion they can tack up the most familiar and welcome road sign in Italy today: "MINES CLEARED—SIX FEET."

Knowing that the Engineers will immediately appear on the scene, the Germans usually leave snipers behind who guard the demolitions and mined areas, hoping to delay the oncoming troops by shooting up the repairmen. The Japanese-Americans keep their Tommy guns handy and they know how to use them. Their combat record reads like that of Infantrymen: they have killed eight Germans, wounded several others, and captured five. Twelve of their own men have been wounded and one killed.

The company is led by energetic, cordial Captain Pershing Nakada of Mitchell, Nebraska. Having received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Nebraska, he entered the Army immediately upon graduation.

"An officer just couldn't ask for a nicer company of soldiers," declares Captain Nakada. "I've never had to discipline one of them and we've never had a single AWOL. Their morale is excellent and it always will be, because they know they're doing an important job."

Each of the six officers in the company, all of whom are Japanese-Americans, has attended a college or university. In addition to Captain Nakada, First Lieutenants Walter T. Matsumoto of Honolulu and Gilbert D. Kobatake of Hilo, Hawaii, both platoon leaders, studied engineering at the University of Hawaii and were civil engineers in the islands when they entered the Army. Two other officers are graduates of the University of Hawaii—First Lieutenant Yoshiharu Tsuji of Paia, Hawaii, platoon leader, and Second Lieutenant Francis I. Fujita, of Honolulu, administrative officer. The company's liaison officer, Second Lieutenant George Nagai of Almeda, Texas, was graduated from Texas A. & M University.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY A.M., NOVEMBER 1, 1944

LOS ANGELES SOLDIER IS FIRST ARTILLERYMAN IN
JAPANESE-AMERICAN UNIT TO WIN SILVER STAR

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY---First artilleryman in the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team to receive the Silver Star for gallantry in action on the Fifth Army front in Italy is Sergeant Mac M. Motonaga, formerly of Los Angeles, California.

He was decorated for risking his life to establish communication with an artillery observer. His voluntary action enabled the forward observer to direct devastating artillery fire upon enemy positions, silencing their small arms and mortars and permitting American troops to continue an advance.

His citation reads, in part:

"Motonaga was accompanying an Infantry company as a member of an artillery forward observation section when they became pinned down by hostile small arms crossfire from three directions as well as continuous and concentrated mortar and artillery fire. One of the platoons occupied a hill which afforded the only means of observation of hostile positions. This platoon was cut off from the remainder of the company, and the position it held was becoming untenable due to enemy pressure. Motonaga voluntarily went forward to establish communications for the artillery observer. He worked his way forward under heavy hostile fire to the position occupied by the forward platoon, assisted in organizing an observation post and established radio communications, enabling the adjustment of artillery time fire on the enemy positions which completely silenced all small arms and mortar fire coming from the left front.

"The initiative and courageous determination of Motonaga enabled the forward platoon to maintain its position until relieved by another unit."

The combat team's enlisted personnel is composed entirely of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

Motonaga lived at 1825 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, until he was sent to Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming. He resettled in Oklahoma and signed up for overseas service when the War Department called for volunteers for the Japanese-American combat team. He entered service at Durant, Oklahoma.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY A.M., NOVEMBER 2, 1944

LOS ANGELES JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIER SILENCES
GERMAN ARTILLERY IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Neutralizing an 88-mm self-propelled German field gun which was threatening his entire company, Private First Class Kiyoshi Muranaga of Los Angeles, California, recently was credited with saving the lives of many of his buddies on the Fifth Army front in Italy.

As the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team was moving up a narrow, winding valley in the vicinity of Suvereto, northern Italy, it was challenged by strong enemy forces. The Germans were well dug-in in prepared positions and had the additional advantage of initial surprise.

The sudden fire of a German 88 caused disruption of the Japanese-American company's ranks.

Private Muranaga was first gunner of a 60-mm squad. His sergeant called the squad together and ordered them to set up the mortar in position for action. The gun was in a slight depression on the forward slope facing the enemy artillery piece across the narrow valley.

Heavy casualties were being inflicted upon the company and Muranaga volunteered an attempt to neutralize the German weapon. He remained behind while the rest of the squad sought protective cover, manned the mortar and opened fire upon the enemy 400 yards away. The shells were landing close and directly in front of the enemy piece. Meanwhile, the German gun crew, spotting the source of mortar fire, turned the 88 directly upon Muranaga.

In the midst of heavy shrapnel, the Japanese-American soldier continued to fire until the 88 was neutralized and the enemy forced to withdraw.

Son of Mrs. Kikoyo Muranaga, now of the Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado, Muranaga lived in Southern California until all persons of Japanese extraction were evacuated from that area. A truck driver, he volunteered for combat duty from the relocation center and entered service at Fort Warren, Wyoming, May 29, 1943.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY P.M., NOVEMBER 3, 1944

SEATTLE JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIER NEUTRALIZES
FOUR NAZI MACHINEGUNS IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Private First Class Bill Nakamura of Seattle, Washington, member of the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, single-handedly neutralized four German heavy machineguns on the Fifth Army front in Italy recently.

Two platoons of Nakamura's outfit were pinned down by fire from the heavy machineguns near Castellina, Italy. Without awaiting orders, the Seattle soldier crawled across exposed terrain toward the enemy emplacements. His comrades discovered his action and opened up with supporting rifle fire.

When within 150 yards, he fired upon one machinegun nest with his Garand rifle. His accurate fire knocked it out and forced the other three gun crews to retreat in disorder.

Returning to his platoon, Nakamura noticed that automatic weapons fired from a farmhouse were harassing his buddies. Nearest to the farmhouse, he signaled his company to withdraw while he covered their movement. Making his way 75 yards to the left, he fired from the protection of a slight depression, holding the enemy and protecting the withdrawal of his unit.

His squad leader, Staff Sergeant Stanley Serikaku of Kaneohe, Oahu, credited Nakamura with having saved the lives of many of his fellow soldiers.

A student at the University of Washington, Nakamura lived in Seattle, Washington, until all persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the Pacific Coast. He volunteered for the combat team from the Minidoka Relocation Center, Hunt, Idaho.

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M., NOVEMBER 3, 1944

94
JAPANESE-AMERICAN ARTILLERYMAN FROM MCGILL, NEVADA
CAPTURES THREE GERMANS IN ITALY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--First Japanese-American artilleryman to capture an enemy during the Italian campaign was sergeant Kay Ihara, McGill, Nevada, radio operator for a headquarters battery in the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, who recently turned in three German prisoners he took on the Fifth Army front in Italy.

Ihara was a member of a forward observation party attached to an Infantry company at the time. The party was halted by enemy small arms fire on a hill. Noticing unusual movement near a dugout close by the pinned-down troops, Ihara crawled over to investigate. Armed with only a carbine, he returned with three prisoners.

"All I did was creep up to them, and they hollered, 'Kamerad.'" Ihara said. "What else could a guy do but take them prisoners?" His regiment's enlisted personnel is composed entirely of Americans of Japanese descent.

Ihara wears the Purple Heart for wounds received in an earlier battle. He has three brothers in the Army, John, a corporal at Camp Savage, Minnesota; Bob, a private with an Infantry outfit in the 442d; and Jack, a private first class, who is with an engineer outfit, on the European western front.

END

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RELEASE

FOR RELEASE MONDAY A.M., NOVEMBER 6, 1944

LOS ANGELES JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIER RECEIVES BRONZE STAR

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--For successfully bringing medical aid through to wounded comrades with whom contact had been lost, Private Jou Okitsu, formerly of Los Angeles, California, recently was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic achievement. He serves on the Fifth Army front in Italy with the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, whose enlisted personnel is composed entirely of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

His citation reads, in part:

"When 10 and 15 men were wounded by extremely heavy enemy mortar and artillery barrages, the executive officer of Private Okitsu's company was unable to contact the battalion aid station due to severed communications. Private Okitsu upon his own initiative began the journey over approximately 300 yards of open terrain to find aid for his wounded comrades. Almost the entire length of the trip, he was subjected to machinegun and sniper fire. Several times he was halted by artillery and mortar barrages. At length, by creeping, crawling, and running through all the hazards that befell him, he managed to locate the aid station. Summoning litter bearers, medical aid men and a surgeon, he returned his company area. Private Okitsu's voluntary actions and heroic determination enabled the wounded men to receive prompt medical attention."

A truck gardner in Los Angeles before he entered the Army, March 18, 1941, he has been with the Japanese-American combat team since its activation at Camp Shelby, Mississippi early in 1943.

His parents and a sister have lived at Colorado River Relocation Center, Poston, Arizona, since they were sent there in 1942.

END

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY P.M., NOVEMBER 8, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN SOLDIER SETS UP LISTENING POST
IN MINEFIELD AFTER LEADING REPULSE OF GERMAN ATTACK

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--Concluding an all-day race against advancing German infantrymen who attacked after communication with his mortars had been destroyed, Staff Sergeant Charles K. Harada recently spent the night crawling on hands and knees through a mine field to establish a listening post on the Fifth Army front in Italy.

Leader of a mortar squad in the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, enlisted men of which are all Americans of Japanese ancestry, Harada's home is in Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii.

When his section leader was wounded and evacuated during heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire, Harada took over. Enemy shell fire was constantly cutting telephone lines between the observation post and his mortars. Leaving operation instructions with his first gunners, he embarked on a solo patrol of the lines. Though the enemy continued to shell his sector, he traced the lines back and forth from guns to observation post, repairing breaks as he discovered them, an average of three or four to every trip. This he did for several hours.

When the communication system was utterly destroyed, he ordered his gunners to fire into a draw where he had observed a platoon of German infantrymen preparing to counterattack and rushed 300 yards up an exposed slope to assume personally the function of observer. Running between guns and observation post, correcting fire as the enemy shifted, he continued for hours to direct fire on enemy, finally breaking his counterthrust.

That night he was ordered to lead a group through heavily mined areas to establish a listening post. Proceeding on hands and knees in pitch darkness he probed for mines and led his party to its objective.

"It was so dark that we had to follow right behind him. Had he missed a mine or accidentally tripped a wire, all of us would have been blown to kingdom come," said Private First Class Jerry Shigaki, formerly of Los Angeles, California, more recently of Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado. "He was so calm and deliberate, though, that we all had confidence in him and went along without much fear."

Recalling Harada's efforts of the afternoon to maintain communications, Private First Class "Ace" Takayama of Fresno, California said, "It was a wonder Harada wasn't hit. Jerry shells fell all around him and I could have sworn that I saw shells light on him more than once." Takayama formerly was sent from Los Angeles to Colorado River Relocation Center, Poston, Arizona.

Harada was employed by Fisher Corporation and the Star-Bulletin in Honolulu.

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY A.M., NOVEMBER 8, 1944

TWO JAPANESE-AMERICANS LAY TWO MILES OF WIRE
PARALLEL TO ITALIAN FRONT

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY—Corporal Hiroshi Tadakuma, formerly of Los Angeles, California, and the Granada Relocation Center, Amache, Colorado, and Private First Class James Matsunaga of Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii, recently laid two parallel miles of wire on the Italian front to establish communication between two battalions of the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team.

Neither man knew the exact location of the adjacent battalion command post when he started out; but each took two reels of wire, and moved out in the general direction of the neighboring unit, laying the wire in the most concealed places. After hours of bruising, heavy work, both reached the terminus.

After a short rest they started on their return trip. While moving over about 50 yards of open ground the two wiremen noticed a break in the lines, caused by enemy artillery. As they were repairing it, more artillery and small arms fire opened up on them. But they continued their work until they had repaired the break and communications had been restored. Hours later they were able to return to their own post, reaching it without suffering injury.

"That was the worst cross-country run I've been on," said Tadakuma. "Had we traveled too far north off our course, we would have walked right into Jerry."

"We were always afraid some Jerry sniper would spot us when we were laying the wire. I guess we were pretty clumsy with the reels but those awkward spools get awfully heavy," added Matsunaga. "That artillery barrage made us forget how tired we were, though."

Matsunaga's home is at 1924 Home Rule Street, Honolulu. Tadakuma lived in Los Angeles before he was sent to the Granada Center.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY A.M., NOVEMBER 9, 1944

JAPANESE-AMERICAN AWARDED SILVER STAR POSTHUMOUSLY

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY, ITALY--For gallantry in action on the Fifth Army front in Italy, a Los Angeles, California infantryman of the Japanese-American 442d Regimental Combat Team, Corporal Yoshiharu N. Aoyama, recently was awarded the Silver Star posthumously.

Though both his legs had been blown off when he went to the rescue of a wounded companion, Yoshiharu refused medical attention and insisted that doctors look after the other injured soldiers first. He died a day after he was wounded.

His citation reads, in part:

"Corporal Aoyama crawled through heavy mortar, artillery and small arms fire to rescue an artillery forward observer who had been wounded by shrapnel. While rendering first aid to the wounded artilleryman, Corporal Aoyama suffered a direct hit from an enemy artillery shell, and both his legs were blown off below the knees. Corporal Aoyama attempted to render himself first aid and retained control of himself until reached by his platoon leader and a medical aid man.

"He was evacuated to an aid station under cover of darkness, and the aid men asked the more seriously wounded to speak up so that they could be treated first and evacuated to the rear. When asked how he was, Corporal Aoyama replied: 'I'm all right. The others need help more than I do. Treat them first.' He continually refused to accept aid until the others had been treated. Not until the medical aid men started to treat him was the extent of his injuries discovered. Corporal Aoyama died the next day.

"The extreme physical and moral courage of Corporal Aoyama and his concern for his fellow comrades when himself mortally wounded reflect the highest traditions of the military service."

Aoyama volunteered for service with the 442d Combat Team, whose enlisted personnel is composed entirely of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

He sold fruit in Los Angeles, California before he and his family were removed from their home at 131 East Second Street, Los Angeles and sent to the relocation center at Heart Mountain, Wyoming. He studied chemistry for three years at University of California at Los Angeles.

END

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