

442nd COMBAT TEAM



ROME · ARNO · NORTH APENNINES · PD VALLEY

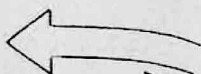
GERMANY.

The Story of the
442ND COMBAT TEAM

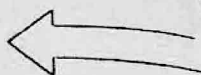
Composed of

- 442nd Infantry Regiment
 - 522nd Field Artillery Battalion
 - 232nd Combat Engineer Company

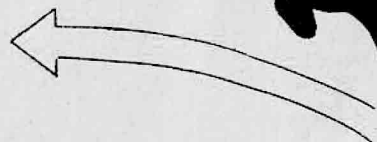
ITALY



FRANCE



ITALY



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COMPILED BY
MEMBERS OF THE 442ND COMBAT TEAM

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Press Censor and may be mailed home.



COLONEL CHARLES W. PENCE

former Combat Team Commander.

COLONEL VIRGIL R. MILLER

present Combat Team Commander.





DEDICATION

To the men and women of every race, color, and creed who have given their lives that the peoples of the earth might live, one with the other, in peace and freedom, this volume is dedicated.

"Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not and never was a matter of race and ancestry."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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THE JAPANESE - AMERICAN CREED

I am proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today. She has given me an education befitting kings. She has entrusted me with the responsibilities of the franchise. She has permitted me to build a home, to earn a livelihood, to worship, think, speak, and act as I please—as a free man equal to every other man.

Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way: aboveboard; in the open; through courts of law; by education; by proving myself to be worthy of equal treatment and consideration. I am firm in my belief that American sportsmanship and attitude of fair play will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.

Because I believe in America, and I trust she believes in me, and because I have received innumerable benefits from her, I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places; to support her constitution; to obey her laws; to respect her flag; to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic; to actively assume my duties and obligations as a citizen, cheerfully and without any reservations whatsoever, in the hope that I may become a better American in a greater America.

INTRODUCTION

In these pages is the battle record of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442d Regimental Combat Team, units of the Army of the United States made up of Americans of Japanese ancestry. This is the story of their part in the battle against the armies of the Third Reich, "destined to last a thousand years." Their missions led them from the beaches of Salerno all the long way up the boot of Italy, then to the deep, shell-scarred forests of the Vosges in Eastern France and to the treeless barren crags of the *Alpes Maritimes* of Southern France. Finally, they were called back to Italy to fire the opening gun in the last great push that saw the Allied armies pour through the valley of the Po in a flood that brought an empire crashing at their feet.

Although it will not again be mentioned in this history, this is also the climax of the Nisei's battle against suspicion, intolerance, and a hatred that was conceived in some dark corner of the American mind and born in the flames that swept Pearl Harbor.

Let it also be understood that this is not a statement of the contribution of America's Japanese-Americans to her war effort. Nisei have fought in every theatre of war, against the Axis enemy and against the Japanese.

This volume proposes only to trace the course of two great infantry units, later to become one, together with their supporting artillery and engineers. Many stories circulated by overenthusiastic correspondents have given rise to a popular fiction that these were supermen. They were not. They could die and be wounded as easily as other men, and were. They had the same weaknesses and shortcomings that other soldiers were heir to. Above all, however, they had the fire, the courage, and the will to press forward that make crack infantry of the line. They would, and often did, drive until they fell from wounds or exhaustion; they were never driven to a backward step in many months of battle against an enemy who counterattacked skillfully and often. More than one commander acclaimed them as the finest assault troops he had ever led.

ACTIVATION and TRAINING

Hawaii had been the first territory of the United States to feel the violence of war when Pearl Harbor and a great part of the Pacific Fleet went up in flames. Therefore, it seems only fitting that the first Japanese-American unit was organized in Hawaii, made up of Hawaiian residents of Japanese extraction. The activation of the Hawaiian Provisional Battalion took place 5 June 1942. Its soldiers came from the many units which had made up the Hawaiian National Guard. Lieutenant Colonel Farrant L. Turner, former executive officer of the 298th Infantry, took command. The day that the official activation took place, the battalion sailed from Honolulu Harbor. One week later the ship docked at San Francisco, and the same day, 12 June 1942, the unit was redesignated the 100th Infantry Battalion (Separate).

The battalion took its basic training at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, moving to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, 7 January 1943 for advanced training and maneuvers. Here the unit first trained with the 85th Division whom they were to meet again under different circumstances in the Italian campaign.

Shortly thereafter, the War Department, continuing its policy of permitting the Japanese-Americans to bear arms in defense of their country, activated the 442d Regimental Combat Team on 1 February 1943. This unit was composed of the 442d Infantry Regiment; the 522d Field Artillery Battalion; and the 232d Combat Engineer Company. Colonel Charles W. Pence was the Combat Team commander.

Consequently, when the 100th Battalion returned from maneuvers 15 June, they found the 442d Combat Team with its complete complement of men and materiel, well into its training program. There was time to renew old friendships. These were many, since most of the troops of the 442d at this time were volunteers from the Territory of Hawaii, although the cadre had come from Nisei then in the Seventh Service Command.

Two months later, 11 August 1943, the 100th Battalion left Camp Shelby, staged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and departed via the New York Port of Embarkation. One battalion was on the way.

The 442d Combat Team continued its training until the end of 1943, when calls for replacements for the 100th Battalion began to come in. The fighting at Cassino and Anzio had used up its available strength and more. Men and officers were shipped out, but training went on. From 27 January to 17 February 1944, the Combat Team participated in "D" Series Maneuvers with the 69th Division in the DeSoto National Forest, Mississippi. The 522d Field Artillery Battalion, which had been on maneuvers in Louisiana, returned to the fold in time to catch the tag end of these problems. As a result of the excellent showing the unit made, alert orders were soon forthcoming.

Since there were not sufficient men left to fill three battalions after the calls that had been made on the regiment for replacements, the 2d and 3d Battalions were brought to strength by further draining the 1st Battalion. Finally, in a haze of waterproofing, crates, shipping lists, and inspections, the Combat Team, less one infantry battalion, left Camp Shelby 22-23 April 1944 for the Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, staging area. The few officers and men who were left in the 1st Battalion furnished the cadre for the 171st Infantry Battalion (Separate) which later trained most of the replacements for the Combat Team. May Day, 1944, saw the men filing up the gangplanks at the Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation. On 28 May, the ships docked at Naples Harbor after a long, thoroughly uneventful voyage.