

Poses With 'Go for Broke' Flag



PENINSULAR BASE HEADQUARTERS, Leghorn, Italy—Major Mitsuyoshi Fukuda, until recently the commanding officer of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the first Japanese American field officer and combat battalion commander in U. S. military history, is shown in front of the standard of the famous 442nd (Japanese American) Regimental Combat Team. Major Fukuda, whose wife resides in Milwaukee, Wis., is now en route to the United States. Major Fukuda is a native of Hawaii and was a member of the original 100th Infantry Battalion.

Nisei Major Commands 100th Infantry for Last Time in Italy

PENINSULAR BASE HEADQUARTERS, LEGHORN, ITALY—Major Mitsuyoshi Fukuda, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and a native of Hawaii, commanded his famous 100th Battalion of the 442nd Japanese American Combat Team for the last time at a formal decorations ceremony and review held here recently.

Outstanding feature of the ceremony and review was the presentation of a second Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation to the 100th Battalion by Brigadier General Francis H. Oxx, Commanding General Peninsular Base Section. General Oxx pinned blue streamers of the guidons of the five companies comprising the Battalion and an Oak Leaf Cluster to the blue Distinguished Unit Badge worn by Major Fukuda, who accepted the highest unit award which the Army confers in behalf of the officers and men of his organization.

This was a fitting climax to the 28 year old former school teacher who came overseas with the original 100th Battalion as a First Lieutenant and worked up to the command of his unit, which General Oxx praised as "one of the most distinguished battalions in the American Army." Major Fukuda is the only remaining member-officer or enlisted man of the original 100th which left Honolulu in June, 1942, for training in the United States. He is also the only person of Japanese ancestry to command a combat battalion in the Army of the United States.

As the youngest of the 12 commanders who have served with the unit since its activation almost four years ago, Major Fukuda has held his post since shortly after the war ended in Italy. He is scheduled to leave the Japanese American Combat Team in the near future and is serving as the Regimental Executive Officer, probably the highest field position ever held by an American soldier of Japanese extraction in our armed forces, while awaiting his orders. The new 100th Battalion Commander is Captain Thomas W. Akins, Dallas, Texas.

Major Fukuda has served successively as platoon leader, company commander, and battalion executive officer, all within the 100th Battalion, before assuming command of his unit.

In October, 1943, shortly after the 100th landed at Salerno, in southern Italy, he was a first lieutenant and led a rifle platoon of Company "E" through the bitter fighting around the Volturno River, the strategic town of Coli and Alife, and towering hill 600. In December of that year, while the 100th was locked in struggle with the German enemy at Cassino, he was given command of "A" Company. He led through the hard fighting at the Anzio beachhead, the march on Rome, and the epic liberation of Belvedere.

It was at Belvedere that he commanded Company "A" in a brilliant strike upon this key town which helped route an entire German SS Battalion. For this action, the 100th received their first Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation while Major Fukuda was decorated with the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

After a series of outstanding deeds, he was selected to return to the United States in July 1944, to see his family which had moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Returning to action when the Japanese American troops were guarding the Franco Italian frontier in the Maritime Alps of southern France, he was appointed Battalion Executive Officer.

In the final spring offensives, which saw the 442nd Combat Team spark the Fifth Army drive which culminated in the unconditional surrender of the German armies in northern Italy, Major Fukuda commanded a Task Force which fought through enemy territory to seize a strategic town, thereby enabling other units to move up on the flank and continue the attack.

He received his gold leaf on May 7, 1945, at Nove Ligure, Italy, and was appointed to replace his long time friend Lt. Col. Jack E. Conley, Honolulu, who was advanced to Regimental Executive Officer, the post which Major Fukuda now fills since Colonel Conley's transshipment to Hawaii for discharge.

Having well over 100 points, more than enough for field grade officers, he will seek discharge after four years of active service. He was commissioned in the Infantry under the University of Hawaii's Reserve Officer Training Corps program in 1939. Major Fukuda will join his wife and 19

months old son, David, who are living at 2457 North 49th Street, Milwaukee.