

# 442<sup>nd</sup> COMBAT TEAM



ROME · ARNO · NORTH APENNINES · PO VALLEY

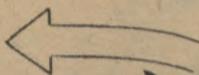
GERMANY.

The Story of the  
**442<sup>ND</sup> COMBAT TEAM**

Composed of

- 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment
  - 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion
  - 232<sup>nd</sup> Combat Engineer Company

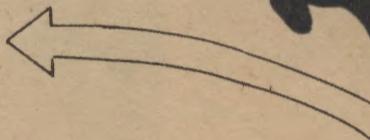
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FRANCE



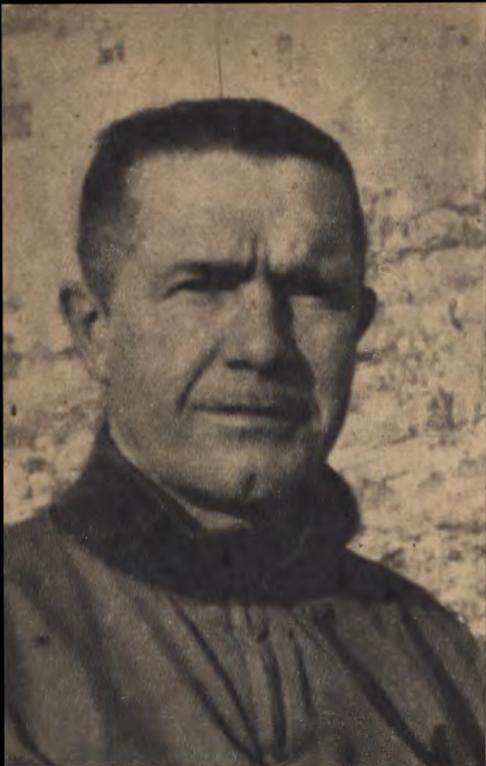
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PUBLISHED BY  
INFORMATION - EDUCATION SECTION, MTOUSA

COMPILED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE 442<sup>nd</sup> COMBAT TEAM

The material in this book has been passed by the Field  
Press Censor and may be mailed home.



COLONEL CHARLES W. PENCE

*former Combat Team Commander.*



COLONEL VIRGIL R. MILLER

*present Combat Team Commander.*



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## DEDICATION

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*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

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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.

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## INTRODUCTION

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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

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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.

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Section II

THE 100<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY BATTALION  
ROAD TO ROME

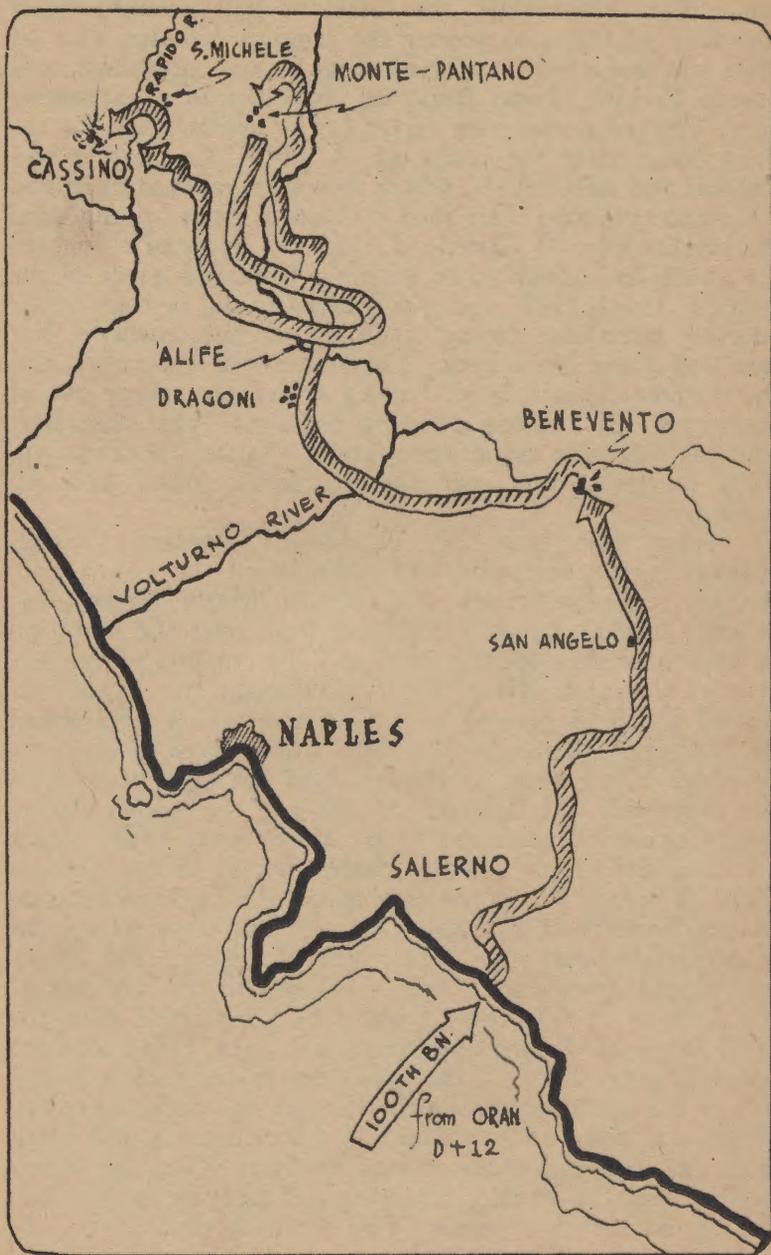
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Fifteen months after the 100th Infantry Battalion had been activated, the men stepped down the gangplank on an alien shore. The port: Oran, North Africa. The date: 2 September 1943. One week later, on the 8th, the battalion was assigned to the already battle-tested 133d Infantry of the 34th Division, victors at Hill 609 in Tunisia. The battalion took the place of the 2d Battalion of the 133d, then acting as security guard for Allied Force Headquarters in Algiers.

Then came the news the world had long been waiting for, the landings on the beaches of Paestum and Salerno on 9 September 1943. On the 22d, D plus 13, the 133d landed at Salerno beach and began the march inland. Immediately, the two extra rifle companies (E and F) which the 100th had been authorized on activation were placed under Fifth Army control to guard airfields and supply dumps. The employment of these extra companies remained a recurrent problem all through the campaign until heavy losses absorbed and deactivated them. After a few days awaiting orders in an assembly area, the 133d, with it the 100th, took off 27 September in pursuit of the retreating enemy. Successively, the battalion occupied Montemarano and, after a short, sharp battle, the important road junction of Chiusano where they set up a road block. Meanwhile, the 10th German Army had been slowly withdrawing to the high ground northwest of Benevento, key road and rail center on the Fifth Army's right flank. Quickly, the other two battalions of the regiment swept ahead and seized the approaches to Benevento, and the 100th was ordered to move up and support the attack. Enroute, new orders shifted them to the left of the 3d Battalion which would assault the town while the 100th swung through to take the heights to the northwest. After a spectacular twenty-mile forced march, both units secured their objectives. The only opposition came from harassing artillery as they

slogged through a pouring rain that turned roads into ankle deep quagmires. Now the 45th Division took up the pursuit, supported by the 133d, until 5 October, when the regiment went into Corps reserve near San Martino. Casualties had been comparatively light: three men killed, and two officers and 29 men wounded or injured. On the 10th, the 100th, in division reserve, had moved up in preparation for the first Volturno River crossing. The initial smash was successful, however, and the division went across around midnight of the following day in the vicinity of Limatola, the 100th Battalion still in reserve.

Mid-month found all units steadily moving forward, with the 100th in the vicinity of Bagnoli. In the meantime, the Red Bull Division was making plans for the second crossing of the Volturno on 18 and 19 October. The 133d was ordered to occupy the central sector of the division layout, assaulting to secure a bridgehead astride the Dragon-Alife road. The 100th would delay its crossing for a few hours to protect the rear of the regiment. The 1st Battalion made its crossing under a smoke screen the afternoon of the 18th and the 100th, after cleaning up the remaining pockets on the south bank, crossed late the following night. They then moved up to the flats south of Alife, sending patrols out to contact the enemy, the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which was defending behind thick minefields and dug-in machine gun nests. The night of 20 October, the 100th moved out to seize the road junction 1,000 yards east of St. Angelo d'Alife. Before the battalion could get into the high ground it was caught in a murderous fire from the German defense perimeter, backed up by artillery and the multi-barrelled "screaming meemies," and casualties soared. The battalion hung on in the face of the concentrated fire while the 1st Battalion swung around to the right flank in an attempt to envelop the resistance. Failing this, the 100th was pulled back to an area that offered more protection, and remained there for two days while the regiment was reorganized under a new commander. The morning of the 22d, with the 100th and 3d Battalions in assault, the regiment renewed the drive on Alife. A and C Companies advanced slowly across the flats and by dark had driven half way to their objectives where they halted in the face of intense machine gun and



sniper fire. Meanwhile, the Germans had brought up a company of tanks to bolster the sagging defenses. One of these was destroyed at 25-yard range by the battalion's tank buster, Private Masao Awakuni, bazooka man extraordinary. The remainder were driven off by artillery fire. Forty-eight hours after the jump off, A and C Companies had stormed and seized Alife, where they were relieved by E and F Companies, who were then ordered to push on and seize the heights west of Castello d'Alife. By 0900 of the 25th, the 100th had advanced to within a thousand yards of the crest of "Castle Hill" and was ordered to dig in there while another battalion swung around on the enemy's left rear and drove them back. The action was successful, and the regiment consolidated, having driven the enemy out of another of his "strong delaying positions" that characterized his defensive tactics throughout the Italian campaign. This particular one cost the 100th 21 killed and 66 wounded.

Four days later, 29 October, Lieutenant Colonel Farrant L. Turner, who had commanded the 100th since the day it was activated, was relieved. Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) James J. Gillespie took over the battalion in time to prepare for the third and last crossing of the serpentine Volturno River. By 1 November, the 133d controlled the high ground near Giorlano which overlooked the Volturno where the battalion would have to make its crossing. The enemy, as always, held the high ground on the other side. At daylight of the 1st, the 100th cleared what opposition remained as far as the river bank, losing 12 casualties to six strafing Messerschmitts in the process. This, of course, was in the days before the *Luftwaffe* started having troubles of its own. The next two days were spent in pre-assault planning. The night of the 3rd, the attack was mounted with the 100th echeloned to the left rear of the division so that contact could be maintained with the 45th Division. Troop opposition was light, being confined to small arms fire, but the inevitable mines took a heavy toll as the battalion struggled through the dark. By 0740 of the 4th, the 100th was astride the railroad 2,000 yards from the river and making good headway when the enemy defense began to harden, requiring stiff fighting to dig them out of the battalion sector. The morning of the 5th, the

1st Battalion of the 133d was counterattacked and driven off Hill 550. A coordinated attack was then planned with the 1st Battalion retaking the hill it had lost while the 100th stormed Hills 590 and 610 on the next ridge line to the northwest. The assault jumped off in daylight in the face of heavy enemy artillery fire and progressed rapidly, catching the Germans off guard. Both objectives having been taken, the battalion rolled on to take Hill 600 near Pozzilli in the face of determined enemy resistance. The enemy tried desperately to retake these heights with assaults from the front and flanks, but was consistently driven back, partly through the efforts of Lieutenant Neill M. Ray and Corporals Katsushi Tanouye and Bert K. Higashi of D Company's mortar platoon. These men remained at an observation post in advance of the line of platoons and directed mortar fire each time the enemy tried to form for a counterattack through the morning of the 6th, even though their position was made almost untenable by constant shelling. They remained at their posts until all three were killed instantly by a direct hit. At the same time, E and F Companies had been moved into line to close the gap between the 34th and the 45th Divisions on the left, thus cutting down the threat from the flank.

Meanwhile, the 45th Division had broken through into Venafro and the enemy began another withdrawal, enabling the battalion to pull back for a short rest on the 11th. Casualties had been heavy: three officers killed and 18 wounded; 75 men killed and 239 wounded; one man missing. These losses, together with the endless rain and fog and cold, combined to lower the spirits of the men. Then, to cap the climax, the battalion was recommitted in the vicinity of Colli-Rochetti the day before Thanksgiving, relieving elements of the 504th Parachute Regiment. Immediately, the battalion was ordered to attack the hills to its front to secure a Line of Departure for the 133d in a general assault which was to take place 1 December. The 34th had been ordered to attack down the Coli-Atina road, which ran east and west, and seize the high, difficult terrain around Atina. Such a move would flank the Liri Valley and force the Germans to abandon their Cassino defenses where the high command anticipated they would make their winter stand.

Early, the morning of 29 November, the battalion jumped off against Hills 801, 905, and 920. Resistance was fierce, and the enemy threw artillery, mortar, and nebelwerfer in an effort to stall the attack. The riflemen of A, B and C Companies who had moved up the reverse slopes of all three mountains hung on grimly, and on the 30th, with the troops moving behind heavy artillery concentrations, the high ground was taken. There the battalion stayed for nine days while the other battalions of the regiment tried to push through on the right and break the stalemate, but to no avail. Finally, 9 December, the 100th came down from the hills and counted its losses: two officers and 43 men killed; five officers and 135 men wounded or injured; six men died of wounds; two men were missing. E and F Companies had both been disbanded to fill the ranks, but fighting strength remained low. Lieutenant Colonel Gillespie, the commanding officer, had been lost through illness, and was replaced temporarily by Major Alex E. McKenzie, then by Major William H. Blytt of the 133d. On the 10th, the 100th went back to Alife, where they rested and trained until the 30th. In that area, Major Caspar Clough, Jr., formerly with the 1st Division, took over the battalion.

New Year's Eve of 1944 saw the 100th close into the Presenzano area under control of the veteran II Corps. The next few days were spent in reconnaissance to the front and flanks, preparatory to joining the 1st Special Service Force near the Radicosa Hills on the 6th. The night of 7 January, the battalion engaged in an attack on Hill 1109, one of a series of mountains overlooking Cassino. The objective was taken against light resistance and held until the 11th when the 100th jumped off against the last barrier, meeting heavy fire from artillery and mortars as well as from carefully laid out defensive positions. Finally, the Special Service Force executed a coordinated attack, sending its 1st Battalion down the ridge while the 100th attacked to the front behind a thunderous demonstration of fire power. On the 13th, Hill 1270 fell. Two days later, led by Lieutenant Harry I. Schoenberg's A Company, the battalion struck out for San Michele, situated on the bluffs below Hill 1270 and looking across the valley at Cassino. The town fell by 1930 hours and for the next six days, after