

442nd COMBAT TEAM

ON JANUARY 28, 1943, the War Department issued a call for 4,500 volunteers to form the 442nd Combat Team which was to be composed, according to the announcement, of men of Japanese descent who qualified for military service. In April, the full complement had been achieved by enlistments from Hawaii and the mainland, and the unit began training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. It included the 442nd Infantry, the 522nd Artillery Battalion, and the 232nd Engineers Company.

The great majority of the mainland volunteers enlisted from the ten relocation centers where they had been living since the spring of 1942, when all persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the West Coast by order of the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command. Many of them left fathers and mothers, or wives and children, living in the centers.

At Camp Shelby, the men of the 442nd Combat Team quickly won the unanimous respect of the officers who commanded them. They trained hard and were alert to learn the duties and obligations of an American fighting man. Like all top-notch units in the United States Army, the 442nd was strong both in physical stamina and in intelligence. "Good soldiers" was the term invariably used to describe the Nisei volunteers by the military men who knew the record of their accomplishments.

For a slogan they chose a slang phrase, common in Hawaii, "Go For Broke," meaning that they had pledged themselves to go all out for their country—

the United States. They would withhold nothing. They were "shooting the works." This was the spirit that they carried through a year of training at Camp Shelby; it was the spirit that sent them eagerly, confidently to a port of embarkation, in April, 1944. They were heading for the battlefields of Europe to join the 100th Infantry Battalion, which had already won high praises for valor and fighting ability.

Early in July, reports from Italy began to tell about the exploits of the 442nd Combat Team in action against the enemy. Four days after entering the front lines, these Americans with Japanese faces had advanced some 50 miles. Some of them had fought almost around the clock, averaging as little as 2½ hours of rest each night. Some had got so far ahead of the supply lines that they had been 24 hours without food.

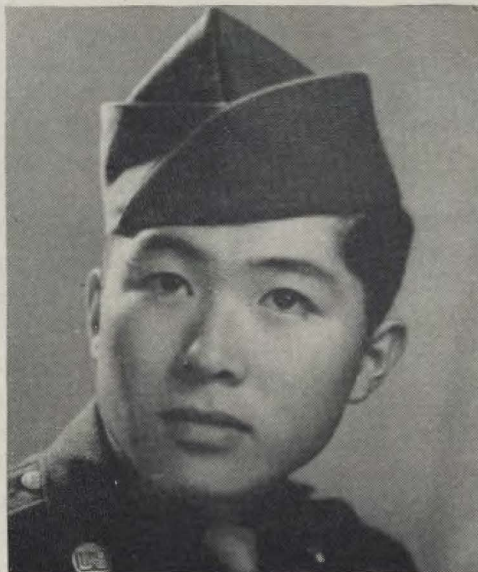
They had paced the thrust, dispatches said, of American troops that "knifed through fiercely defended German lines" in the battle for the important seaport of Livorno. When the city fell on July 19, they were among the first to enter it.

War correspondents reported on the apparently fearless courage and excellent morale of the men. They told of the dismay of German prisoners on learning that they had been captured by Japanese Americans. There could be no doubt, as the fighting record of the unit unfolded, that at last the 442nd Combat Team was showing on the battlefield the real meaning of its slogan — "Go for Broke!"

Three members of the 442nd Combat Team, who are now fighting the Nazis in Italy—Howard Uyehara, Sam Sasaki and David Ito. All native-born Americans, they were evacuated from their West Coast homes in 1942 to relocation centers where they were living when they enlisted during 1943.



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