

Pfc Masashi Araki

Born 1923 - Died June 4, 1944



Masashi Araki, formerly of Selma, California, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Choemon Araki of 27-7-D Gila Relocation Internment Center in Rivers, Arizona. He was a 1941 graduate of Selma High School and the first Gilan to be killed in action in the Italian war front. While in Canal camp he set marks in weight lifting in the continental clean and jerk 230 lbs., and two hand snatch lift, 160 lbs.

Araki (SN 39914769) joined the first group of volunteers that left Rivers, Arizona on May 24, 1943, to join the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT). He trained with the all Nisei segregated 442nd RCT at Camp Shelby, Mississippi for about 10 months.

He was assigned to the famed 100th Infantry Battalion in Italy in March 1944 as a replacement in Company C. As the 100th Infantry Battalion battled from Anzio to Rome with the badly needed replacement, the unit spearheaded the Allied forces drive, in a crucial two day battle near Lanuvivio and La Torretto. The 100th Infantry Battalion earned six Distinguished Service Crosses and one Silver Star but their casualties included 15 killed, 63 wounded. In the days to follow, Allied troops were able to march through to Rome.

He was awarded the Purple Heart Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, American and European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

Pfc Masashi Araki was killed in action in the battle near Lanuvivio and La Torretto, Italy on June 2, 1944.

He is interred at the Mt. View Cemetery in Fresno, California. He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Choemon Araki, two sisters, and four brothers.

Pfc. Masashi Araki, the first Japanese American from the Gila River Relocation Center to die in combat in Italy, was honored at an impressive ceremony on July 20, 1944 at the Canal High School's auditorium. In tribute to the Nisei soldier who died in Italy on June 2, 1944, rites were conducted by the Buddhist church and attended by more than 700 persons, who stood at attention as the Military Police troops posted the national colors, saluted and retired.

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