



Headquarters Gang, Civitavecchia 1944
L-R standing: Akiyoshi Kuriyama, Hidenobu Hiyane,
James Horikoshi, James Oki, David Suzuki;
Kneeling: Albert Oki, Isaac Akinaka, Edward Saito

Battle of Belvedere and on to the Arno

For nine days since their arrival on June 11 at the 34th Division's rest area outside Civitavecchia, the men of the 100th sought out brothers, relatives and friends in the 442nd to tell them of their experiences. They passed on information at these informal meetings about the way the enemy operated. This was valuable intelligence for the rookie soldiers, if nothing else to familiarize themselves with the enemy's tactics and to learn the art of survival.

After Rome, the pressure had definitely eased. At the 34th Division's rest camp, the troops enjoyed good food, movies, other entertainment and time to release the tensions from the recent fighting. The men also received 24-hour and 10-day passes. At a ceremony, the division commander, Gen. Ryder, presented the Distinguished Service Cross to Pvt Masao Awakuni, the 100th's tank killer. The general also presented Silver Stars to two officers and four enlisted men of the 100th. This was another proud moment for the Nisei unit.

The long deserved rest was thoroughly relished by the men, but there was still unfinished business on the battle front where other units were taking their turns in repulsing the enemy. On June 21, the 442nd with the 100th now a part of it, was on the march northward again with the 34th Division to a forward bivouac near Grosseto. The 442nd stayed there for two days. Then the 34th Division passed through Gravassano to an assembly area near Suvereto.

The advance up to now had been rapid because the enemy did not want to put up much resistance until it reached the hills where it would have an advantage of terrain. The Germans were retreating north on Highway 1 along the coast and via Highway 2 further inland. Resistance began building up north of Grosseto where the relatively flat land began giving way to hills.

At this point, the 34th Division relieved the 36th Division shortly after midnight on the 26th of June. Preparing for battle, Gen. Ryder ordered the 442nd Regimental Combat Team to operate in the center of the divisional line, with the 133rd Regt. on the left flank and the 168th on the right flank. For the 442nd, this was the initial commitment to battle. Col. Charles W. Pence, regimental commander, called on the 2nd and 3rd Bns. to lead the way, and kept the 100th in reserve. By mid-day the 442nd was engaged in battle and took its first heavy shelling from the enemy. The Germans counterattacked against the left flank and pushed it back, pinning the men in an exposed area.

It was evident the 2nd and 3rd Bns. were not making any progress in their first taste of combat and Col. Pence ordered the 100th to attack at noon. Hastily assessing the situation with his officers, Col. Singles ordered B Co. to move up the hill in single file in an enveloping movement, bypassing the enemy observation post. A Co. served as the backup and the rest of the battalion was in reserve. The mission was to get in the back of the enemy position, take Belvedere and cut off the main road out of Belvedere that ran north to Sasseta.

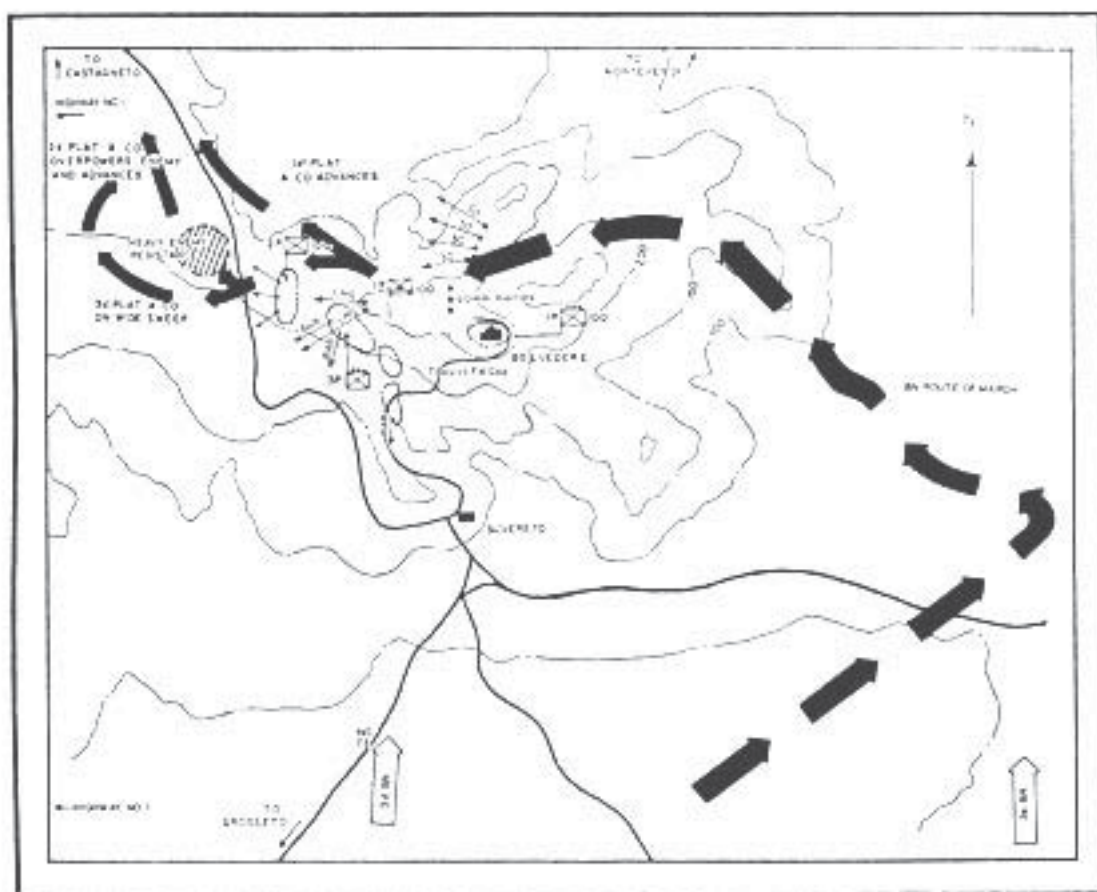
The August 25, 1944 issue of *Yank*, the Army weekly, gave this account of what happened: "Capt. Takahashi, B Co. commander, sent S/Sgt. Yeiki Kobashigawa of Waianae and his 1st Platoon to take Belvedere, 2nd Platoon leader Lt. James Boodry and his men to move on the main road leading out of town and cut it off, and Lt. Walter Johnston of New York to have his 3rd Platoon cover the northern position of the company."

Kobashigawa split his platoon into three squads, with two encircling the town like a pincer,





Artillery battle near Elia



Action at Belvedere.

and he took the third into town to get at the enemy holed up in several buildings. They fought house to house using grenades. His platoon took the town within an hour. The 2nd Platoon came upon the four German 155mm artillery that had been giving the 442nd such a hard time. With mortar support, they killed 18 of the enemy and silenced all four of the 155s. Takahashi ordered the 3rd Platoon to cover the 2nd's flank and told the rifle platoons to hold their fire until the Germans made a break. They held their fire until 17 enemy amphibious jeeps loaded with troops drove out of the olive grove headed toward Sasseta. Once on the road, the three platoons let go with a barrage that knocked out all 17 jeeps. Two light machine guns manned by Sgt. Ken Yoshimoto of Eleele, Kauai, and Sgt. Mickey Nakahara of Waipahu, did most of the damage. The next half hour was a rout. Four German trucks filled with men broke out of another olive grove to escape the 100th. The first two made it around the disabled jeeps but the last two were knocked out of action.

When a report reached Takahashi that a tank was leading a German counterattack, he sent a patrol to check it out. Sgt. Grover Nagaji of Waipahu, and Pfc Taneyoshi "Slim" Nakano of Kaimuki spotted the tank followed by a half track and German troops. Nakano found a good spot to get a bead on his quarry and put one shell from his bazooka in the tank's belly. He needed a second shot to knock it out, and in the confusion the enemy troops began retreating. Many of them were hit by sharpshooting riflemen of B Co. Nakano was awarded a Silver Star for his part in the rout.

When B Co. reported it was running low of ammunition, the battalion commander ordered A and C Cos. to take the initiative. By this time, Capt. Mits Fukuda was leading A Co. toward Sasseta and cleaning out enemy resistance to prepare the way for the 34th Division's advance. On the road to Sasseta, Pfc Takeo Takahashi of Liliha crawled unseen to surprise five guards and captured a motor pool where he found seven trucks, a personnel carrier

and five motorcycles. Pfc Takahashi also won a Silver Star for his one-man performance.

During this highly successful operation, the 100th destroyed "completely the right flank positions of a German army," according to the official Army document that recommended the Presidential Unit Citation for the 100th. The enemy dead totaled 178, with 20 wounded and 73 captured. This action by the 100th forced "the remainder of a completely disrupted battalion to surrender approximately 10 kilometers of ground, and in addition, large quantities of weapons, vehicles and equipment were captured or destroyed," according to the document.

By the end of the day, the 100th was on the heights overlooking Sassetta where the 2nd and 3rd Bns. rejoined the 100th. The next day, the 100th led the attack on Sasseta with the 3rd Bn. along side. By the end of the day, Sasseta was in their hands. In this action since marching up the hill back of Belvedere, the 100th suffered four killed and seven wounded.

For this highly successful two days of battle in which the 100th pushed the superior forces of the enemy in disarray out of Belvedere and Sasseta, the Fifth Army headquarters of Gen. Mark W. Clark recommended a Presidential Unit Citation for this remarkable unit.

"The fortitude and intrepidity displayed by officers and men of the 100th Infantry Battalion reflect the finest traditions of the Army of the United States," the citation said. It credited the 100th for helping the 34th Division continue its rapid advance.

That victory was sweet, but there were more battles to be fought, and the 34th Division kept pressing the enemy backward. On July 1, the 133rd Regt. captured Cecina, the next big objective up the coast. By the next day, the 442nd was perched north of Cecina, and the Red Bull Division got the command to push to the Arno River.





*Taneyoshi "Slim" Nakano
(mis-identified in Yank
Magazine as Pvt Henry
Nakamura)*



The Battle of Belvedere

In this January issue, a battalion of 340 men fought a battle that was the last for the Fifth Army's combat Japanese-American soldiers.

By Sgt. JAMES E. GILBERT

1945 Staff Correspondent

When the Japanese soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion fought a battle that was the last for the Fifth Army's combat Japanese-American soldiers, they were fighting for a cause that was as noble as any that has ever been fought. They were fighting for the freedom of their fellow Japanese-Americans who had been interned in the United States during the war. They were fighting for the freedom of their fellow Japanese-Americans who had been interned in the United States during the war. They were fighting for the freedom of their fellow Japanese-Americans who had been interned in the United States during the war.

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Slim and his bazooka

The 442nd was in the middle, the 168th Regt. on the right flank and the 135th on the left as the division surged forward. The Germans were retreating and opposition was relatively light at this point. The 100th and 2nd Bns. led the way for the 442nd, with the 3rd in reserve.

Col. Pence sent in the 3rd to relieve the 100th the next day because Gen. Mark Clark ordered him to send representatives of the unit to participate in the review honoring Secretary of War Henry Stimson the following day – the Fourth of July – outside of Cecina. Pence picked Capt. Sakae Takahashi and his B Co. to serve as a color guard unit to represent the 100th. Dressed in clean uniforms the next day, B Co. was trucked to Cecina for the ceremony. They were standing at attention as the command jeep carrying Secretary Stimson, Gen. Clark and Gen. Ryder came slowly down the line to give Stimson time to review the troops. The jeep stopped in front of the 100th's B Co. Takahashi, company commander, stepped forward and saluted smartly. Gen. Ryder, patted Takahashi's shoulder and proudly said, "Mr. Secretary, this is my best outfit."

"The War Dept. records show that the 100th hasn't had a single man missing in action," Stimson told Takahashi. "You should be proud of that." Takahashi replied, "Thank you, sir," and with a salute returned to his comrades. It was Gen. Clark who had insisted that the 100th be represented at this ceremony. He had grown fond of this AJA outfit which no other commander wanted in the beginning. Clark had agreed to take it under his wing. The 100th won his confidence early in the Italian campaign with its courageous fighting ability.

While the 100th was in reserve, the 2nd Bn. captured Hill 140 in tough fighting. The 100th was back in action soon after midnight on July 7, relieving the 2nd Bn. and immediately moving to take the high ground north of Castellina, which had proved to be a more difficult target than first estimated by another unit. At dawn, Lt. Takeichi Miyashiro of Honokaa, led a squad of C Co.'s 2nd Platoon to take a farm-

house from which machine gun fire was harassing his platoon's flank. The squad took the farmhouse, killing one and wounding another. The men repulsed three counterattacks with Lt. Miyashiro almost single handedly holding off the enemy charges with his Browning automatic rifle and carbine. He earned a DSC for his bravery.

Later that morning, B Co. was moving east on the road to Castellina when scouts spotted three German tanks approaching from the town followed by soldiers. Pfc Richard Okazaki of Honolulu jumped into a ditch with his bazooka and waited for the lead tank to approach where he could get a clear shot. When the tank got within range, Okazaki fired and knocked it out, which then blocked the two other tanks in the back from advancing further on the narrow road. The enemy quickly began retreating toward Castellina. A sniper, Pfc Masaichi Miyashiro, brought down 10 of the enemy at 300 yards and hit several more as they made a hasty retreat. Both Okazaki and Miyashiro were later awarded Silver Stars for their part in this action.

The following day, the 100th was stopped in its tracks along the Castellina-Rosignano Road where the Germans were putting up strong resistance from an old castle. A Co.'s Pfc Kiichi Koda of Waipio volunteered to lead a squad to take the castle. Koda got to the castle and threw grenades through the open windows. Then he led the way into the castle but was hit by an enemy grenade and killed. However, his comrades killed 10 of the enemy and took three prisoners. Koda was posthumously awarded a DSC for his courageous leadership.

It was this kind of slow advance that the troops encountered; yet the Allied units pushed the enemy back mile by mile. The 100th was one of the early units to enter Leghorn, the port city, on July 19. The city lay in ruins from the fighting and the enemy had retreated to the north. One thing the men of the 100th remember to this day about Leghorn is the





Leghorn, 1944



*L-R Standing: Bob Sato, Joshimitsu Kondo, Oscar King
The soldier kneeling is believed to be Masaru Imoto*



Resting in Leghorn



Resting & Peeing in Leghorn



Gen Mark Clark pins a medal on Mitsuru Doi



*Battle Streamers, awarded by a Presidential Unit Citation,
wave above Standards of the 100th, July, 1944*



*Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson greets Capt. Sateae Takahashi
of the 100th's B Co, Honor Guard for the Secretary, July, 1944*



*General Mark Clark & Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal
inspect the 100th, August, 1944*



*Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson
and Lt. Masano Otake, August, 1944*

brewery they discovered intact with stores of great German beer. Needless to say, they enjoyed the brew as one of the spoils of war.

Following this campaign, the 442nd moved south to Vada to the 34th Division's rest camp. It was here that Gen. Mark Clark attached the blue streamer of the Distinguished Unit Citation on the colors of the 100th. At the same time, he presented a DSC to Lt. Allan Ohata of Kalihi for his part in the fighting near Cerasuolo eight months previous. Ohata had received his battle field commission together with others after the Cassino fighting and was among the first of the 100th to be so honored. Clark then decorated Capt. Fukuda of Honolulu with a Silver Star for his leadership at Belvedere. The announcement was made that the 100th Infantry Bn. (Separate) had been redesignated the 100th Bn., 442nd Regt. Now the 100th was officially a part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. However, it

was authorized to maintain its designation as the 100th Infantry Bn.

There were some quick changes in assignment in the days that followed, and the 100th was detached from the 442nd and assigned to the 107th AAA Group of Task Force 45. The 100th was moved east of Pisa to patrol the area south of the Arno River. On September 1, the 100th crossed the waist-deep Arno River without incident, followed later by heavy equipment after a bridge was put in place by the engineers. A big push was being prepared against the Gothic Line that protected the Po Valley.

Suddenly, the 100th was pulled out of that sector and trucked to Piombino. There the troops boarded the ship *John Holmes* which departed for Naples on September 10. The 100th rejoined the 442nd, and on September 27 the Combat Team left Naples aboard the *U.S.S. Samuel Chase* for Marseille, France, to join the 7th Army.



Gen Mark Clark pins the Silver Star on Pfc. Masaichi Miyashiro

