



Remembrances



100TH INFANTRY
BATTALION
50TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION
1942 - 1992

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Cover

In this far-away view of Cassino taken from the floor of the Rapido River Valley, the bare saplings in the foreground frame the Benedictine Monastery atop Monte Cassino. Castle Hill, to the lower right, and the town itself which lies at the base of the mountain, is lost in the photographic haze. It is in this area that the 100th Infantry Battalion fought some of its bitterest battles of the war.

Cassino became the battleground for one of the greatest and most prolonged struggles of World War II as the German Tenth Army and the Allied Fifth Army fought for five months, January through May 1944, for control of this southern gateway to Rome a hundred miles to the north.

The picture was taken by a member of the 100th whose identity has been lost. Although it was taken only in the first month of battle, the already-denuded landscape, the result of continuous mortar, artillery and rocket bombardments and withering clashes between enemy and Allied tanks and self-propelled guns, attest to the ferocity of the struggle for the strategic town.

The 100th landed at Salerno beach on September 22, 1943, entered combat on the 29th, then battled its way up through the towns of the Volturno River valley and over the mountaintops of the lower Apennines. In January when it came to Cassino it had already gained fame among Allied troops and respect from enemy forces for its tenacious fighting spirit.

And despite its already reduced strength, the 100th continued to fight with uncommon valor, sustaining further losses as it made several attempts to scale the rugged heights of Monte Cassino in an effort to capture the castle and the monastery. It did not attain its objective – not for lack of fighting spirit but only for want of manpower.

In recognition of that distinctive and remarkable display of soldiery, its fellow warriors in the Fifth Army bestowed upon it the supreme accolade: "Purple Heart Battalion."

Ben Tamashiro

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