Lt Kenneth Elvin Eaton

August 25, 1910 - January 10, 1944

Kenneth Elvin Eaton was born August 25, 1910 to Edward W and Dora E Eaton in Indian Valley, Idaho. Kenneth Eaton was married to Carol A Eaton on November 2, 1938 in Vancouver, Washington and they had two children. Census investigation shows Kenneth Eaton living in Oregon in 1930 employed as an engineer at a sawmill. Photo shown was taken September 1942 and extracted from John Tsukano’s BRIDGE OF LOVE.

Kenneth Eaton [O-1289709] entered service November 22, 1933 and was assigned to the 100th Infantry Battalion consisting of Japanese Americans from Hawaii at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. The former 298th National Guard unit from Hawaii were shipped to the mainland and activated as the 100th Infantry Battalion at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. The 100th trained from June to December at Camp McCoy in the summer heat and winter snow. In February 1943, the 100th Infantry Battalion was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi and attached to the 69th Division and went through advanced combat training maneuvers in Louisiana. By June 1943 the 100th had finished their combat readiness training and returned to Camp Shelby, Mississippi to find the 442nd Regimental Combat beginning their training.

In August 11, 1943, the 100th shipped out of Camp Shelby, Mississippi and landed in Oran, Africa on September 1943 and attached to 34th Red Bull Division. After a beachhead landing at Salerno, Italy on September 26th, 100th fought their way into military history books, to become known as the “Purple Heart Battalion” as they battled the German Military Machine, such terrible casualty causing weapons as the “Screaming Menies) 6 barrel rocket launchers, “Bouncing Betties” (S Mines) 88’s, machine guns and machine pistols, defensive lines and battles, as the Salerno. Gustav Line, Cassino, Volturmo River, Rapido River, and Anzio.

1st Lt Eaton endured with his men, all the misery of war, being shelled, the minefield, the snow, freezing cold and wet, going without rice, as they fought their way from Salerno to near the Rapido River and the Cassino. The One Puka Puka boys were truly living up to the name as the Purple Heart battalion as they suffered heavy casualties. Lt Eaton was killed January 10, 1944 as the 100th Infantry Battalion was flanking the Cassino. 1st Lt Kenneth Elvin Eaton was killed in action on January 10, 1944 in Italy fighting with the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion from Hawaii with the 34th Infantry Division.

The Caucasian officers who trained these National Guard men from Hawaii at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, at Louisiana, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and at Tunisia deserve special mention for their loyalty to the boys from Hawaii and to their country as they overcame racism and distrust, and to die alongside these Japanese Americans that they trained, lived and fought with for over two years, 1st Lt Kenneth Elvin Eaton was survived by his wife Carol A. Eaton and son, Kenneth James. (Carol A. Eaton, wife remarried a Marine Sgt 9/9/44), Edward Lester, brother and Ethel E, sister. His parents were both deceased.

1st Lt Kenneth Elvin Eaton was first buried at Marzanello Nouvo Cemetery in Italy next to Hideyuki Hayashida and was returned to the United States to be buried at the IOOF Cemetery in Eugene, Oregon.

ABMC Info
Dept of Army, US Army Human Resources Command, Alexandria, VA, Burial data FOIA Roger Eaton
Bridge of Love by John Tsukano
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