

Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa

August 17, 1921 - October 20, 1944



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Tatsumi Furukawa, son of Mrs. Fuji Furukawa, was born August 17, 1921 in Concord, California. He had two sisters and three brothers. When the War broke out, his family was sent to the relocation center at Gila River, Arizona, and two of his brothers were in the Army. His brother Sam was with the 100th Battalion, Company C, and brother Kayno was in Company I, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The Furukawa family endured a hard life as they had lost their father.

Tatsumi enlisted in the Army in February 1941 (Serial No. 39 076 171) and trained at Camp Roberts, CA and Fort Lewis, WA. Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa was transferred to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Camp Shelby, Mississippi and received combat training. In February 1944, Pvt. Furukawa volunteered to join

the 100th Infantry Battalion as a badly needed replacement and was shipped to Italy and assigned to Company A. Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa joined Company A, 100th Infantry Battalion, 34th Division at the Anzio beachhead in March 1944. After two months of furious and bloody fighting with tremendous casualties, the 5th Army was able to break through the beachhead, spearheaded by the 100th Infantry Battalion, and drive the Germans north. As the 100th Battalion spearheaded the breakthrough and were but 7 miles from Rome, the 1st Armored Division was allowed to pass the Nisei outfit to receive the honor of leading the victorious 5th Army headed by General Mark Clark into Rome. For his performance of bravery and courage during this campaign, Pvt. Furukawa was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart for having been wounded.

He fought in three major campaigns in Italy and France—Anzio to Rome, Rome to Arno, and Rhineland—and was wounded in one of the them.

The War Department announced on November 16, 1944 the awarding of a Bronze Star to Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa, a member of the 100th Infantry Battalion, for courageous action in Italy. The citation declared:

TO: TATSUMI FURUKAWA, Private Infantry, RFD 1, Box 27, Concord, California.
FOR During intense enemy shelling of one of our mortar positions on May 10, 1944, in Italy, one shell threw hot fragments which set fire to a cache of mortar shell increments which in turn set fire to the camouflage net over the mortar pit. Though enemy shell continued to land in the immediate vicinity, he and other infantrymen, with utter disregard of their own personal safety, left their cover and pulled the burning net from the gun pit. This prevented the blaze from reaching 40 rounds of high explosive shell which were in the gun pit. Their initiative and quick thinking saved valuable ammunition and preserved the safety of the mortar crew and others who were in close proximity to the ammunition.

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team arrived in Civitavecchia, north of Rome on June 15 less the 1st Battalion, and the 100th Battalion was to join the 442nd RCT as the 1st Battalion, but retained the name of 100th Infantry Battalion. Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa underwent his second campaign, the Rome-Arno Campaign with the newly formed 100th/442nd RCT continuing their heroic and costly struggle with huge casualties. On the first day of this all Nisei fighting unit, the 100th Battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their action in the Belvedere-Sassetta victory.

On October 15, 1944, the 100th/442nd was shipped to France. Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa was in his third campaign, the Rhineland Campaign in the Vosges forest. Following the liberation of the French town of Bruyeres on October 18, 1944, the Germans mounted a furious counterattack on October 20, but the Nisei units were able to repel the Germans after suffering high casualties. Pvt. Tatsumi Furukawa was killed on October 20, 1944, during the Battle of Bruyeres Campaign in which there were three days of intense fighting in the dense Vosges Mountains of northeastern France to liberate the town of Bruyeres.

In addition to the Bronze Star, Pvt. Furukawa was awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, American Defense Service Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medals, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Pvt. Furukawa is interred at the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, California.