

2nd Lt. Lewis A. Key

Killed in action December 5, 1943

Second Lieutenant Lewis A. Key (O1291375) entered the service from Tennessee. He joined the 100th Infantry Battalion as they trained for combat at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and later at Camp Shelby, Mississippi and in the swamps of Louisiana.



Lt. Lewis Key, a platoon leader, was fighting with the famous 100th Infantry Battalion (Sep) in Company A, which was a segregated fighting unit consisting of all Japanese American enlisted men from Hawaii. The 100th Infantry Battalion was attached to the 34th Infantry Division where they gained their fame as the “Purple Heart Battalion”.

Upon completion of combat training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi the 100th Infantry Battalion was shipped overseas, landing in Oran, Africa in August 1943. They then joined the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division, commanded by General Ryder, in the landing at Salerno, Italy. In combat they earned their reputation as a hard-fighting, courageous and intrepid unit as they battle their way from the Salerno area, south of Naples, crossing the Volturno River, and onto the assault on Monte Cassino.

2nd Lt. Lewis A. Key was awarded the Silver Star, Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Purple Heart among his decorations. See the GO below.

Lt. Lewis A Key was killed in action in the Italian Campaign on December 5, 1943. He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Edward Key of Hartville, Tennessee.

He is interred in Plot F, Row 9 Grave 213 at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery, Nettuno, Italy.

HEADQUARTERS 34TH INFANTRY DIVISION GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 6 January 25, 1944 AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR (POSTHUMOUSLY)

Lewis A. Key, 01291375, Second Lieutenant, Company A, 100th Infantry Battalion (Sep). For gallantry in action on **November 1943, in the vicinity of **** Italy. Lt Key and his platoon were called upon to act as a point for the battalion in an attack on a hill. He went ahead with his scouts and located an extensive enemy minefield that was directly in the point of advance. Fully realizing the danger involved, Lt Key marked off the minefield and then, without mine detecting equipment, successfully cleared a path through the field so that his battalion could pass through. Lt. Key's courage, initiative and efficiency was exemplary and a credit to the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from: Hartsville, Tennessee. Next of kin: Mrs. Edward M. Key (Mother), Route Number 2, Hartsville, Tennessee.

By command of Major General RYDER NORMAN E HENDRICKSON.
Colonel, GSC, Chief of Staff

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