

## Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi

*October 4, 1914 - May 29, 1947*



Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi (#30105534) was born on October 4, 1914 in Hawaii. Rokuro attended high school and was known as a great basketball player. Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi was one of the 2500 selected of the 10,000 Hawaii Niseis that volunteered to join the newly formed segregated 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry. On March 25, 1943, Pfc Rokuro was inducted into the army and was shipped to the mainland to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for their training. After training with the

442<sup>nd</sup> RCT for almost a year as the Nisei Unit was shipped to Italy, Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi was assigned to Company A 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in June 1944.

On the first day of battle of combat on June 26, 1944 for the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, the veteran 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion became the 1st Battalion of the 442<sup>nd</sup> retaining their unit designation as the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion Separate, in a sensational slashing breakthrough attack in the Battle of Belvedere was to be awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation. The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> RCT continued to push forward to the Arno River taking high casualties as the Germans fought back tenaciously making the Nisei Unit pay for every gain. The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> proved to the Fifth Army and General Mark Clark of their bravery and fighting ability as the Nisei Combat Team earned the respect of other fighting units especially the 34th Division.

On September 6, 1944, the 100/442<sup>nd</sup>RCT was relieved after the Allied forces were able to cross the Arno River. The 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> RCT were transferred to the Seventh Army in France as the Southern France landing and subsequent drive up the Rhone valley and into Germany had slowed as they entered the Vosges Mountain. From climbing the mountains in sunny Italy the 442<sup>nd</sup> RCT now encountered terrain of forest and the weather turned cold, wet, and windy. The men were not equipped with proper clothing and shoes and the Germans used the trees to barrage the American units lobbing artillery and mortar shells into the trees causing a rain of casualties as the shells exploded as it hit the trees sending hot fragments of shrapnel raining down onto the Nisei unit.

Drusilla Tanaka of the Sons and Daughters asked an A Company veteran at the clubhouse if he remembers Rokuro Moriguchi. The veteran knew Rokuro before he went into the army as a great basketball player and brother of Goro. Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi, Pvt Kaname Matsunaga and Tech/Sgt Mitsuru Miyoko of Salt Lake City of Company A were among the many casualties of October 15, 1944. Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi was one of the 19 men who that were wounded that day. Records are vague as to what transpired after that day. Although the exact day is not clarified, it is assumed that Pfc. Moriguchi may have died during the months of hospitalization that followed.

Rokuro was hit on the spine which left him paralyzed from the waist down. Pfc Rokuro returned to Hawaii paralyzed from the waist down bitter about his state, not wanting the pity of his family and friends chose to isolate him. Rokuro was looking forward to a

surgery which would restore the use of his legs. Rokuro reportedly said that if the surgery does not work, he would rather be dead. It appears that Rokuro Moriguchi's was a casualty that October 15, 1944 in the Vosges Forest as the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team opened their battle to liberate the French town of Bruyeres.

Pfc Rokuro Moriguchi was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Purple Heart, and Bronze Star Medal.

The AMBASSADORS IN ARMS book originally published in 1954 shows that Rokuro Moriguchi as a World War II decedent and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, Distinguish Unit Citation, Combat Infantry Badge and the Bronze Star Medal. The book also shows that he was originally buried at the Diamond Head Cemetery, but his current records indicates that he is buried at Punchbowl the National Cemetery of the Pacific (section V site 102) in Honolulu, Hawaii.

*Profile by Mits Kojimoto, Drusilla Tanaka, 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Veterans.*