

Pfc. Sadao Munemori

August 17, 1922 - April 5, 1945



Pfc. Sadao Munemori

Sadao “Spud” Munemori, son of Kametaro and Nawa Masuda Munemori, was born on August 17, 1922 in Los Angeles, California. He was one of five siblings—Yuriko Tamura (deceased), Isao Munemori (deceased), Yaeko Yokoyama, Sadao Munemori (KIA), and Kikuyo Munemori (deceased). Sadao attended Fletcher Drive Elementary School and graduated from Lincoln High School. He liked to tinker with automobiles and took automotive courses at Lincoln High School. He continued his training at the former Frank Wiggins School toward his goal of becoming an auto mechanic.

Then the War broke out, and Sadao volunteered so that his older brother, who was head of the family after their father died, would not have to go into the service. Sadao was inducted at Eagle Rock, California in February 1942 (Serial No. 39 019 023). He briefly served at Camp

Grant, Illinois and Camp Savage (MIS), but volunteered for combat duty overseas and received his basic training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. He wrote to his mother and family interned at Manzanar Relocation Center, “. . . Only a small percentage of soldiers die in combat, Mom. The bullets will not be marked for me, I know. Please don’t worry . . .” On May 8, 1944 Pfc. Munemori joined the 100th Battalion, Company A to serve in the Anzio to Rome Campaign and the Rome to Arno Campaign in Italy. In France he served in the Battle of Bruyeres, Lost Battalion Rescue, Vosges Mtn. to St. Die, Champagne Campaign, and then back to Italy for the last push in the Po Valley Campaign, where Pfc. Sadao Munemori made the ultimate heroic sacrifice on April 5, 1945 for which he was posthumously awarded the **Medal of Honor**, the nation’s highest honor for valor in combat for heroism and which was presented to his mother Mrs. Nawa Munemori at a ceremony on March 7, 1946.

Recipient of the **Medal of Honor**—**Private First Class Sadao S. Munemori** distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism while serving with Company A, 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Combat Team on 5 April 1945. Private First Class Munemori fought with great gallantry and intrepidity near Seravezza, Italy. When his unit was pinned down by grazing fire from the enemy’s strong mountain defense and command of the squad devolved on him with the wounding of its regular leader, he made frontal one-man attacks through direct fire and knocked out two machine guns with grenades. Withdrawing under murderous fire and showers of grenades from other enemy emplacements, he had nearly reached a shell crater occupied by two of his men when an unexploded grenade bounced on his helmet and rolled toward his helpless comrades. He arose into the withering fire, dived for the missile and smothered its blast with his body. By his swift, supremely heroic action Private First Class Munemori saved two of his men at the cost of his own life and did much to clear the path for his company’s victorious advance.

Pfc. Sadao Munemori was also awarded the Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman Badge and is interred at Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles, California.

PFC. SADAO S. MUNEMORI, CMH

KIA APRIL 5, 1945

In a quiet ceremony on March 7, 1946, the frail mother of Sadao S. Munemori accepted her son's Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award the United States gives to its military heroes.

Sadao S. Munemori was born in Los Angeles on August 17, 1922. He grew up loving everything about America. He excelled at sports, loved baseball, and attended Lincoln High School. When Sadao was only 16, his father died and his brother, Isao, became the head of the family. When WW II broke out, Sadao volunteered so that his older brother would not have to go to the service. He was inducted at Eagle Rock, California.

He served in various Army Camps, including a short stint with the Military Intelligence Service at Camp Savage, Minnesota. He eventually joined the original 442nd Regimental Combat Team at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, as a volunteer, and was sent to the 100th Battalion as an early replacement. He joined Company A, 100th Battalion during the breakout from the beachhead at Anzio, Italy, in 1944. He survived savage combat in Italy and France.

On the first day of battle, April 5, 1945, after the 100th/442nd RCT returned to Italy, Company A, 100th Battalion was assigned to take a key hill, "Georgia" peak, near Seravezza. This position had resisted the Allied advance for five months. A heavy artillery barrage preceded Company A's race uphill to reach the top before the Nazis could recover. The Germans answered with heavy small arms fire pinning down the advance. A grenade fragment felled Munemori's squad leader and Sadao took over. Collecting six grenades from his squad members, he crawled forward alone. When he was within fifteen yards of a machine gun position holding up the advance, he tossed the grenades and knocked it out. As the explosions fell silent, the squad moved forward again.

A second machine gun opened fire and Munemori, attacking alone again, knocked out this gun. As he was crawling back to the safety of a shell crater occupied by two of his men, a German grenade bounced off his helmet and rolled to the bottom of the hole. Munemori dived for the missile and smothered the blast with his body. By his swift, supremely heroic action, Private First Class Munemori saved the lives of his two men at the cost of his own. His actions helped clear the path for his company's victorious advance.

(continued)

The only Japanese American recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor during WW II, Munemori's citation reads "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." With his award, the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team became the most decorated unit of its size in World War II. In addition to Munemori's Medal of Honor, the Nisei earned forty-seven Distinguished Service Crosses, many of these citations are being considered for upgrading to the Medal of Honor, three hundred and fifty-four Silver Stars and more than three thousand six hundred Purple Hearts. No one could ever again question their loyalty or courage.

Sadao S. Munemori is also named and honored as follows:

The U.S. Army Transport-S.S. Munemori.

Sadao S. Munemori Interchange

Junction of the 105 and 405 Freeways, Los Angeles, California

Sadao Munemori American Legion Post 321

Sadao Munemori Memorial Scholarship Fund

Sadao Munemori Hall U.S. Army Reserve Center

Los Angeles, California

Sadao Munemori Memorial

Evergreen Cemetery-Los Angeles, California

Veterans Memorial Wall-Glendale, California

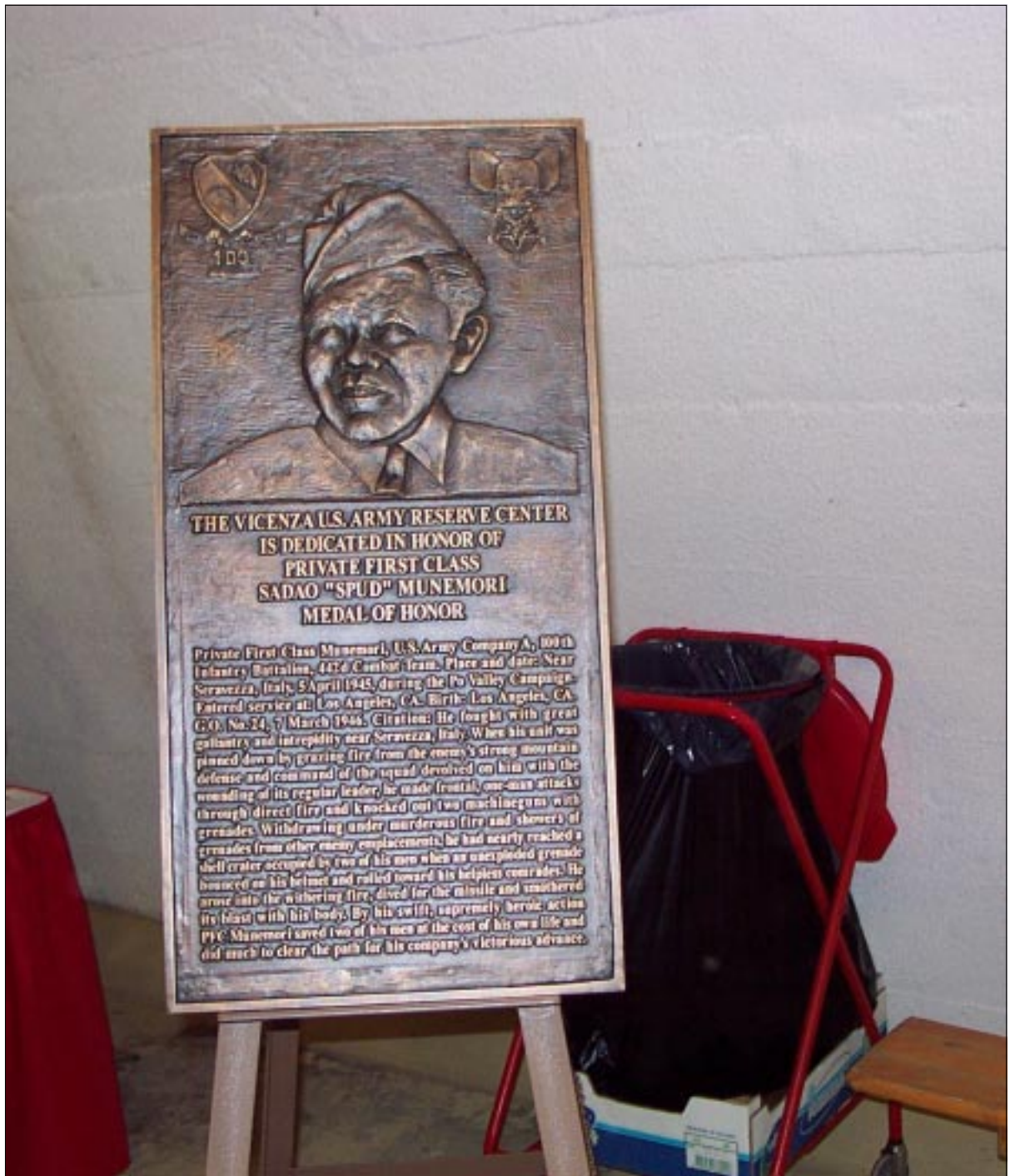
Sadao Munemori bronze figure

Symbol of sacrifice by Allied soldiers.

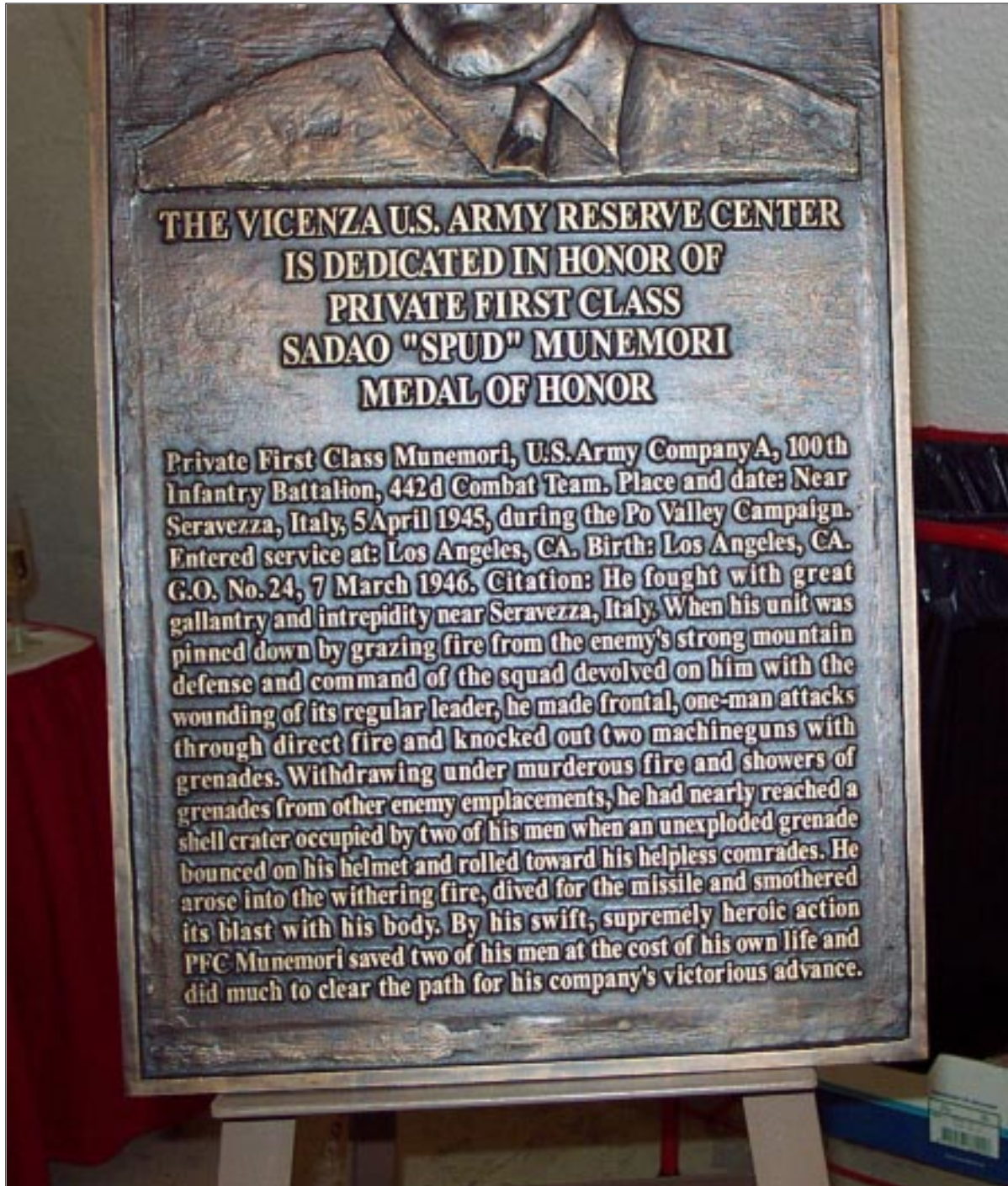
To be dedicated in Pietrasanta Italy - April 25, 2000



Sadao Munemori Memorial
Pietrasanta, Italy
April 25, 2000



Vicenza Army Reserve Center Dedication Ceremony
in honor of Pfc. Sadao Munemori
Longare, Italy
May 30, 2003



Vicenza Army Reserve Center Dedication Ceremony
in honor of Pfc. Sadao Munemori
Longare, Italy
May 30, 2003



PFC Sadao "Spud" Munemori Army Reserve Center
Longare, Italy
May 30, 2003