

Lt. Francis J. Perras

Born 1913 - Died November 29, 1943



Lt. Francis J Perras was born in 1913. He enlisted October 15, 1940 from Glen Falls, New York and served with the New York National Guard.

In the after-math of the Pearl Harbor attack; in June, 1942 approximately 1400 Japanese-American soldiers in Hawaii's 298th and 299th Infantry Regiments were ordered to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin to form the 100th Infantry Battalion. Following combat training at Camp McCoy, the 100th was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi in February 1943 for advanced unit training including participation with the 69th Division for maneuvers in the swamps of Louisiana.

The unit was then returned to Camp Shelby for a short reunion with the recently formed segregated Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team in June 1943.

In August, 1943 the 100th Infantry Battalion was dispatched overseas and assigned to the 34th Infantry Division. Following the beachhead landing at Salerno on September 26, 1943, the 100th Battalion impressed the War Department with their battle performance. The 100th acting as point unit faced strong enemy resistance over difficult terrain and suffered heavy casualties. In spite of their high casualty losses they continued to advance forward and routed the stubborn enemy from Salerno northward, crossing the Volturno River three times while exposed to minefields, rockets, mortars, machine guns and field artillery support. Even with the German Luftwaffe with its Messerschmitt strafing the battlefield, the 100th Infantry Battalion pushed on. They were truly the Purple Heart Battalion. As rapidly the replacements came in, they could not keep pace with the casualty rate. Following a brief rest and retrofit period, the 100th led a frontal assault on the approaches to the Monte Cassino.

2nd Lt. Francis J. Perras, platoon leader of Company A, 100th Infantry Battalion was killed in action as he cut a path through wire entanglements and automatic gun fire leading his platoon to safety on November 29, 1943.

2nd Lt. Francis J. Perras was awarded the Silver Star, Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Burial site for 2nd Lt. Francis J. Perras is not known. Probably in New York

AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR (POSTHUMOUSLY)

HEADQUARTERS 34TH INFANTRY DIVISION

UNITED STATES ARMY GENERAL ORDERS 31 APRIL 29, 1944

FRANCIS J. PERRAS (01301535), *Second Lieutenant, Infantry, Company A 100th Infantry Battalion (S) United States Army. For gallantry in action on 29 November 1943, in the vicinity of Cerasuola, Italy. When his platoon was stopped by wire entanglements and heavy fire in an attack, Lt. Perras with utter disregard for his own personal safety, crawled forward under heavy enemy machine gun and grenade fire and cut a path through the entanglements. Then throwing hand grenades, he led his platoon forward through the path he had made and engaged the enemy. The platoon, inspired by their leader, quickly took and held the position, Lt Perras superb leadership and courage under fire was an inspiration to his men and a distinct credit to the Armed Forces of the*

United States. Entered military service from Fort Edward, New York. Next of kin: Frances Perras, 36 River Street, Fort Edward, New York.

Americans – Orville C. Shirey

Citation from NJAHS National Japanese American Historical Society of San Francisco

GO FOR BROKE – Chester Tanaka

Bridge of Love – John Tsukano

2ND LT. FRANCIS J. PERRAS

Footnote:

Replacement of Officers and Enlisted Men for the 100TH and 442ND

In most cases replacement of officers for the 100th and the 442nd tended to be Caucasians. There was no depot or source for Japanese American officers. In the early days there was reluctance to field promote Japanese Americans to be officers. Officers were received from the 34th and 36th Division Officers Replacement Depots.

As casualties increased and need for immediate replacement of officers became apparent, only then officers were commissioned and qualified men sent to Officer's Training School overseas. In the same token, replacements for Japanese American enlisted men were only available from the replacement ranks of the 171st Battalion at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and later from other training centers such as Fort McClellan, Alabama, Camp Walters, Texas, and Camp Blanding, Florida. Early replacements for the 100th were only available from the mainland ranks of the 442nd RCT.

After the reintroduction of the Selective Service replacements were made available from every army center.