

1st Lt. Neill M. Ray

September 21, 1918 - November 8, 1943



1st Lt. Neill M. Ray was born on September 21, 1918 and entered the service from Jasper in Marion County, Tennessee.

Ray (SN 01289802) was one of the officers that joined the segregated Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion from Hawaii at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. Lt. Neill Ray trained with the 100th Battalion in Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and Camp Shelby, Mississippi with maneuvers in Louisiana before going overseas in August, 1943.

The 100th Infantry Battalion was dispatched overseas landing in Oran, Africa in September 2, 1943. From Oran, the 100th became attached to the battle-hardened 34th Infantry "Red Bull" Division, as they fought from the beachhead at Salerno, Italy northward to the Volturno River. They encountered numerous German weaponry consisting of the various and devious mines, artillery of 77's and 88's, "Screaming Meemies", which were a six-barrel rocket launcher, tanks, machine guns and machine pistols. The 100th Infantry Battalion performed courageously and with bravery, facing terrible obstacles with heavy casualties.

Lt Neill M Ray, as forward observer, directed his 81 mm mortar fire, countering the Germans from regaining their lost position.

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR POSTHUMOUSLY 34TH INFANTRY DIVISION UNITED STATES ARMY General Order Number 6 January 25, 1944.

*NEILL M. RAY, 01289802, First Lieutenant, Company D, 100th Infantry Battalion (Sep) is awarded as follows: For gallantry in action of 6 November 1943, in the vicinity of ****Italy, Lt. Ray, forward observer for an 81mm mortar platoon, was in position at an OP located on the crest of a hill, forward of the advance infantry elements. The OP was almost untenable because of intense and continuous enemy artillery fire. During the course of the morning the enemy launched two counter-attacks, preceded by an artillery barrage. Lt Ray, however, remained in his position and coolly adjusted the fire of the mortars, although his position was being constantly shelled. Both times the enemy, estimated at two companies, was repulsed by mortar fire directed from his OP. Each time he observed the enemy forming for a counter attack, Lt Ray directed as many as forty mortar shells on them, breaking up their columns. He maintained this position all morning, directing effective fire until he and his assistants were killed by a tree burst of an enemy shell. His coolness under fire and his courage and bravery in the face of almost certain death was an inspiration to his men and a credit to the Armed Forces of the United States. He entered military service from Jasper, Tennessee. Next of kin: Mrs. Mabel H. Ray, (Wife), General Delivery, Jasper, Tennessee.*

By command of Major General Ryder: Norman E. Hendrickson, Colonel, GSC Chief of Staff.

1st Lt Neill M. Ray was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge.

Lt Neill M Ray is buried at Plot B Row 7 Grave 23 Sicily-Rome American Cemetery, Nettuno, Italy.

Prepared for WWII Memorial Alliance by: Roger Eaton, Mits Kojimoto, and Lisa Terao Blum Resource: Photo – Bridge of Love by John Tsukano and copy of *Citation from* National Japanese American Historical Society-San Francisco. Final proof editing by Russell K. Shoho, JA Living Legacy

