

Lt Kurt E Schemel

April 15, 1920 - November 4, 1943



Kurt E Schemel was born April 15, 1920 to Anna Schemel and Karl Leppert in Freiburg, Breisgau, Germany. Kurt's parents separated and mother changed her name to Anna Sabatelelli and immigrated to Brooklyn, New York in 1934. The father remained in Germany. Kurt Schemel was married to Mrs. Vicki Schemel of Brookfield, Missouri where he enlisted in the army at Brookfield, Missouri. Kurt's mother passed away in New York in 1942.

This picture of Lt. Kurt Schemel is included in a group picture taken of Company F, 100th Infantry Battalion in book, *Bridge of Love by John*

Tsukano.

Lt Schemel ASN (01290619) trained with the 100th at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin and took part in maneuvers in Louisiana, and concluded their training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi as the 442nd Infantry Regiment was beginning their training. The 100th Battalion marched in final review at Shelby and headed for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and disembarked from Staten Island in New York harbor on August 21, 1943 arriving in Oran, Algeria September 2, 1943. The One Puka Puka boys were attached to the 34th Red Bull Division which began their association as they entered the battle at Salerno, Italy on D plus 12 and fought their way into history books as they endured the weather and tragedies of war, to prove that the Japanese Americans were willing to shed their blood for their country led by such men as Lt. Kurt Schemel.

The 100th Battalion incurred many casualties from booby traps, mines, artillery fire and machine gun fire in the third crossing of the Volturno River with incidents of bravery and courage, of the first heroic banzai bayonet charge. By midnight of November 4, forty-two men had been wounded and eight killed, including Lt. Kurt E Schemel of 100th Battalion, Company E, the first battalion officer to die. Lt. Kurt Schemel was killed when he was hit by shrapnel in the chest in the vicinity of Venafro, Italy.

Schemel was one of the officers sent to the 100th after it arrived on the U.S., mainland for training. At first he had been stunned by his assignment to this unique battalion, but a warm friendship and understanding had grown between him and the "buddhaheads". Like the Nisei, Schemel's parents had been born in an enemy country (Germany) but were living in the United States. And, like the Nisei in the Pacific, he would be fighting against his ancestral country. *Drusilla Tanaka reported that Seitoku Akamine, who was in the "original" 100th Battalion, served under Lt. Schemel. He so admired Lt. Schemel, that he named his son "Kurt." In a recent tour of Europe, Seitoku and Shizu and their son Kurt visited Lt. Schemel's gravesite. Seitoku relates that Kurt Schemel felt that because he was born in Germany and even though he was in the Army of the United States, he was still being "watched." In actuality, the entire 100th Battalion was being watched.*

2nd Lt Kurt E Schemel was survived by his wife, Mrs. Vicki Schemel of Los Angeles and his father Karl Leppert in Martenburg, French Zone, Germany. He is interred at the American Military Cemetery at the Sicily-Rome Cemetery at Carana, Italy Plot No. M. Row No. 31, Grave No. 1668.

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Picture from Bridge of Love by John /Tsukano Company F

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