

2ND Lt. Edward H. Sweitzer

Killed In Action January 10, 1944



Edward R. Sweitzer (01313179) entered the service from Maryland. He joined Company B, 100th Infantry Battalion, composed of Japanese-American soldiers from Hawaii. The 100th Infantry Battalion received combat training at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, and then transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for advanced training, and participated in maneuvers in the swamp environment of Louisiana.

In August, 1943 the unit was dispatched overseas disembarking in Oran, Algeria. Shortly thereafter the 100th Infantry Battalion was attached to the 133rd Regiment of the 34th Red Bull Division as they made a landing at the Salerno beachhead on September 26, 1943. The Japanese-American 100th Battalion initially was led mostly by haole officers proved their loyalty and courage battling alongside General Mark Clark's Fifth Army. The unit became known as the Purple Heart Battalion as the Hawaii AJAs battled the Germans who seemingly appeared to have an impregnable defense as they had every advantage. The 100th and the Allied Forces were strafed by the German Luftwaffe who commanded the skies as they pushed their way crossing the Volturno River into minefields including S mines ("Bouncing Betties), Tellers, or plate-shaped mines, interlocked, crisscrossing machine gun fire, German field artillery, rocket, and mortar. The Japanese-Americans fighting unit sustained a very high casualty count for the advances made. The Purple Heart Battalion fought relentlessly in almost insurmountable conditions with nature's element--the bitter cold and steep slopes, freezing cold with snow, mud, and inadequate winter clothing. It was difficult under the circumstances to keep the troops supplied with food and ammunition as they battled their way to the Monte Cassino.

2nd Lt. Edward H Switzer was killed in action on January 10, 1944 as the 100th Infantry Battalion was attacking the Major Hills near the Monte Cassino. He was awarded the Purple Heart and is buried at Florence American Cemetery, Florence, Italy. Plot F Row 12 Grave 36

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