

## ***1st Lt. Boon E. Takagi***

*July 29, 1919 - July 12, 1944*

Boon E. Takagi was born on July 29, 1919 in Asheville, North Carolina. He was the son of Rokujiro and Lulu Belle Takagi. Rokujiro was born in Japan and Lulu Belle was Irish-born in Rochester, New York. The family moved around quite a bit and eventually settled down in Jamestown, New York. The family had a restaurant at 11 E.3<sup>rd</sup> Street. In addition to Boon, the couple had three daughters and two other sons, Yozo, older brother and younger brother, Toyozo.

Takagi was very popular at Jamestown High School. He belonged to the Hi-Y, Honor Society and Swimming Club and was elected as Class Treasurer. He graduated Jamestown High School in 1937. He was well known in the city and was an exceptional swimmer and gymnast. He was actively associated with the YMCA serving as a volunteer under Franklin B. Demarest and was a member of the swimming team. He was employed at the Jamestown Electro-Plating and Jamestown Sterling prior to going into service.



On January 12, 1942 Takagi (SN 32200906) was inducted in the army at Ft. Niagara, Youngstown, New York while a resident of Chautauqua County, New York. He took his basic training at Camp Croft, S.C. and worked his way through the ranks to be commissioned at the Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA. Lt. Takagi (O1309484) wrote to friends from the School of Special Service at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Va. Taking out of context, Boon wrote "Nathan Hale was sorry that he had but just one life to give for his country. Nathan Hale died because he believed that this country was worth dying for--."

Takagi was married to Winifred on the first day of January 1944 in Arkansas where he was assigned to the 58<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at Camp Robinson. Boon was shipped overseas in February, 1944.

In April, 1944 Lieutenant Takagi met his younger brother Sgt. Toyozo Takagi at the Anzio beachhead. Ushijima recalls seeing Lt. Takagi couple months prior when he was a replacement officer of Caucasian-Japanese descent reared in the mainland. Ushijima describe him as 6 ft. burly and husky fellow with a ruddy complexion who had a body built like pro football player.

The Nisei 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion (Separate) earned the respect of the Allied forces for the display of bravery and patriotism as they fought the Germans with the 34<sup>th</sup> Division of the American Fifth Army from Salerno, Cassino and Anzio. On June 15, 1944 the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion was then integrated into the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team (RCT) becoming the First Battalion but retaining their original designation in recognition of its distinguished fighting record. The term (Separate) was dropped. On June 26, 1944 the 100<sup>th</sup>/442<sup>nd</sup> RCT was committed to battle. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn moved out to its line of departure. The 100<sup>th</sup> Bn was kept in reserve. Before the

day was over, both leading battalions met fierce resistance and stalemated. Orders were issued for the 100<sup>th</sup> Bn to take over the attack. The battle-tested men of the 100<sup>th</sup> with their combat-savvy officers executed the attack in a skillful fashion, maneuvering between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> battalions would rout the enemy from Belvedere and Sasseta while exacting a heavy toll in men and material. For this brilliant military feat, the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion received its first Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation.

Takagi was awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, Distinguished Unit Badge, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and World War II Victory Medal.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Boon Takagi was wounded by sniper fire on July 12, 1944 near Rotini, Italy. He died at the First Aid Station as he was being administered by Capt. Dahl assisted by Mitsugi Moto, Kiichi Kohashi and Shigeru Ushijima. Chaplain Yost then went on his knees and offered a silent prayer.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Boon E. Takagi was interred at Florence National Cemetery, Florence, Italy. He was later returned to stateside and has a marker in Sunset Hill Cemetery in Lakewood where Daniel and Audrey Briggs discovered a Japanese American from Jamestown died fighting in WW II in Italy with the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, aka "Purple Heart Battalion"

#### Credits:

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*Jamestown Post Journal*  
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