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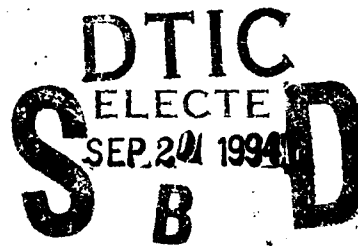
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**Nisei Soldiers in World War II: The Campaign in  
the Vosges Mountains**

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This study is about the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) during World War II as it assisted VI Corps in the push through the Vosges Mountains in Northern France. The 442nd RCT was composed mostly of Japanese-Americans, or nisei, who volunteered to join the U.S. Army. Behind their contributions were U.S. government policies which precluded Japanese immigrants from citizenship and land ownership, and culminated in the relocation of more than 110,000 Japanese-Americans from the West Coast of the United States. This study briefly examines the Japanese in America, the formation of the 442nd RCT, and its exploits. Its involvement in the campaign through the Vosges Mountains began with its attachment to the 36th Infantry Division (ID) on 13 October and ended on 9 November 1944. This study examines the four battles during the campaign to take Bruyeres, Biffontaine, the Rescue of the "Lost Battalion", and the follow-on mission. This study examines the combat and environmental conditions in the Vosges Mountains. It shows military decision-making from the corps level to regiment level and, in some cases, to company level. It provides a balanced review of events to promote historical accuracy.

Japanese-Americans, Nisei, 442nd Regimental Combat Team,  
100th Infantry Battalion, 36th Infantry Division

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NISEI SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR II:  
THE CAMPAIGN IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

JONI L. PARKER, LCDR, USN  
B.A., University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida, 1977  
M.B.A., University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida, 1978

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## ABSTRACT

### NISEI SOLDIERS IN WORLD WAR II: THE CAMPAIGN IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS by LCDR Joni L. Parker, USN, 110 pages.

This study is about the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II as it assisted VI Corps in the push through the Vosges Mountains in northern France. The 442nd RCT was composed mostly of Japanese-Americans, or nisei, who volunteered to join the U.S. Army. Behind their contributions were U.S. government policies which precluded Japanese immigrants from citizenship and land ownership, and culminated in the relocation of more than 110,000 Japanese-Americans from the West Coast of the United States.

This study briefly examines the Japanese in America, the formation of the 442nd RCT, and its exploits. Its involvement in the campaign through the Vosges Mountains began with its attachment to the 36th Infantry Division on 13 October and ended on 9 November 1944. This study examines the four battles during the campaign to take Bruyeres, Biffontaine, the Rescue of the "Lost Battalion," and the follow-on mission.

This study examines the combat and environmental conditions in the Vosges Mountains. It shows military decision-making from the corps level to regiment level and, in some cases, to company level. It provides a balanced review of events to promote historical accuracy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my husband for his patience and assistance in researching this thesis. Not only did he take care of routine tasks during this time, but he also was my research assistant, chauffeur, critic, reader, motivator, and computer operator. Without his cooperation and support, this project would not have been completed. I also wish to express my gratitude to my committee members who were enthusiastic and encouraging. The members provided guidance and focus. This thesis would not have been complete without the brave soldiers who were in the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. My uncle, Meiji Hayashi, was one. This thesis is dedicated to his memory and for my mother, Nobuko Hayashi Doi, who passed away while I was trying to complete this thesis and did her part in the progress of Japanese-Americans.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
APPROVAL PAGE . . . . .	ii
ABSTRACT . . . . .	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iv
CHAPTER	
ONE. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
TWO. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	11
THREE. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY . . . . .	51
FOUR. ANALYSIS . . . . .	56
FIVE. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	104
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST . . . . .	110



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis concentrates on the events of World War II from 13 October to 9 November 1944 involving the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT). This is the time period which covers the Seventh Army's drive through the Vosges Mountains in northeastern France. This study focuses on the activities of the 442nd RCT and its association with the 36th Infantry Division (ID).

#### The Research Question

How was the 442nd RCT used to break through the stalemate in the Vosges Mountains for the 36th ID during World War II?

#### Subordinate Questions

What events led to the stalemate in the Vosges Mountains? What leadership decisions and dilemmas were involved? Was the 442nd RCT pushed too hard to complete the assigned missions of the 36th ID? How were the other regiments of the 36th ID used? Was the rescue of the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment, called the "Lost Battalion" a suicidal mission?

#### Context of the Problem and the Research Question

Within a short time after entering the war, the 442nd RCT developed a reputation as a crack fighting unit. The 442nd RCT was a

different sort of regiment as it was made up almost exclusively of Japanese-Americans who had been interned in relocation camps or were from Hawaii. They had been subject to racial and ethnic hatred from all levels of society. Their desire to serve in the military and to prove their loyalty to the United States was so strong that a special battalion was formed, the 100th Infantry Battalion; and later a complete regiment was formed, the 442nd RCT. These units were separate units and did not belong to any specific division. The 100th Infantry Battalion was formed first from volunteers in Hawaii. It was attached to the 34th ID in Italy and later became part of the 442nd RCT when it was sent to Italy.

In Italy the team proved time and again that it was a reliable, loyal and tough unit of fighters. General Mark Clark, commander of Fifth Army, was sorry to see it detached from his Army to participate in the invasion of southern France. This invasion began with the controversial Operation Anvil, later known as Operation Dragoon, and included three divisions, the 3rd ID, 45th ID, and the 36th "Texas" ID.<sup>1</sup> The 36th ID had also fought in Italy under Clark and performed admirably, although its leaders did not always agree with Clark's decisions. In particular, their crossing of the Rapido River<sup>2</sup> caused such high casualties that Clark's decision to cross the river was the subject of a Congressional inquiry after the war. The 36th ID and the 442nd RCT were to contribute firepower and toughness to the invasion and subsequent push through France. In August the 36th ID landed on the beaches in southern France and by September had reached the edge of Vosges Mountains.<sup>3</sup>

The 45th ID was to take Bruyeres and the 36th ID was to take St. Die. The Vosges Mountains were covered with thick forests and few roads. The weather was wet and cold. The drive began to stall.<sup>4</sup> On October 13th, the 442nd RCT was formally attached to the 36th ID. The 442nd RCT was to begin this campaign with more than a thousand soldiers in the hospital<sup>5</sup> and a strength of about 3,000 soldiers. After several days of intense fighting, the 143rd Regiment of the 36th ID and the 442nd RCT took Bruyeres. As soon as the town was taken, the 442nd RCT received follow-on orders to take Biffontaine several miles farther to the east. Again, it met heavy fighting and stiff resistance, but the 442nd RCT prevailed and took Biffontaine.

Sent to become the division reserve, the 442nd RCT was led to believe it would get to rest, but within two days, Major General John Dahlquist, 36th ID Commander, ordered the unit into further action to rescue the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment, 36th ID. This unit had advanced so far ahead of the rest of the division that the Germans were able to cut off the only route back to the division. This battalion became known as the "Lost Battalion." As many as 700 Germans were estimated to be between the "Lost Battalion" and any friendly divisional forces.<sup>6</sup> By the time the 442nd RCT had been called, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 141st Regiment, 36th ID, had tried and failed to reach their sister battalion. Major General Dahlquist ordered the 442nd RCT to rescue the battalion "at all costs" and it conducted frontal attacks on German positions, resorting to bayonet charges to destroy the Germans and reach the "Lost Battalion." The 442nd RCT reached the battalion on 29 October after four days of intense combat.<sup>7</sup>

The "Lost Battalion" started with 275 men but had 64 casualties and was down to 211. Its supplies had run out. The 3rd Battalion, 442nd RCT, which led the charge, numbered about 200 and had 169 casualties. Other 442nd RCT battalions also encountered significant losses during this campaign although not as devastating as the 3rd Battalion. The 442nd had 814 casualties in addition to many non-battle injuries, especially trench foot. Major General Dahlquist stayed at the front and had to be pulled down several times by 442nd RCT soldiers to keep him from being shot.<sup>8</sup> Division artillery provided essential artillery support to the continued movement of the 442nd RCT.

This research question began to emerge as the 36th ID had lost the momentum, and with the addition of fresh forces was able to take its own objective as well as the objective of a different division. Without the 442nd RCT, the drive through southern France may have floundered, and may not have met with the northern drive from Normandy. Yet, the question remains why the 442nd RCT had to be driven so relentlessly to the point it was rendered combat ineffective. Were all the regiments of the 36th ID driven the same way? Why was only the 442nd RCT told to rescue the "Lost Battalion" at all costs? The 442nd RCT had been in battle 25 out of 27 days while attached to the 36th ID and pushed very hard by its commander. Perhaps it was pushed too hard.

#### Definitions

There are a few terms that may be unfamiliar to many readers. A regimental combat team is no longer commonly used in the U.S. Army.

but during World War II and before, it was a major form of organization for the Army. The regiment <sup>9</sup> was the first infantry structure for U.S. forces after the Revolutionary War. The number of active and reserve infantry regiments has varied from time to time; and, during World War II, the infantry expanded to 317 regiments. As defined by Webster's Dictionary, a regiment is a military unit, usually consisting of three battalions and service and administrative units; it is normally commanded by a colonel and is the basic component of a division. There was little information to explain the difference between a regiment and a regimental combat team. One member of the 442nd RCT, First Sergeant Jack Wakamatsu, recalled an explanation provided by Lieutenant Colonel Keith Tatom:

. . . what a Combat Team was and why we were the first such unit in the Army at this time. He stated that the concept of using a smaller, more highly maneuverable group, with strong fire power, was a new idea for the Army. That it might be successful in the Blitzkrieg concept of battle.<sup>10</sup>

The 442nd RCT was not the first nor the only ethnic minority regiment. In 1864, the first Negro regiment was formed, and four Indian regiments were also recruited at that time. The team structure for the 442nd RCT had to be expanded slightly to accommodate 4,000 volunteers. The team included a headquarters and headquarters company, three battalions including the 100th Infantry Battalion, an antitank company, cannon company, medical detachment, a service company, an engineer company, a field artillery company, and a band.<sup>11</sup> The 442nd RCT was attached to Fifth Army while in Italy and Seventh Army in France.

Two other terms which might be unusual are these two Japanese words, issei and nisei.<sup>12</sup> The last three letters of both words are "sei" which means generation, so for the purpose of this thesis issei will refer to the first Japanese who migrated to this country in the early 1900's. Migration to the United States from Japan did not begin until after 1885 due to laws in Japan forbidding emigration.<sup>13</sup> Most isseis did not come to the United States permanently and intended to return to Japan at some time in the future.<sup>14</sup> By the 1920's, immigration from Japan was stopped by the U.S. and a rising anti-Japanese sentiment began to appear. Farmers in California were so incensed by this "yellow peril" that laws were passed to prevent isseis from owning land.<sup>15</sup> In addition, they were not allowed to become naturalized citizens of the U.S.<sup>16</sup>

The children of the issei were called nisei. They were generally raised in small Japanese communities in the United States or Hawaii but attended American schools. This background became a mixed blessing as many were steeped with old Japanese traditions and new American philosophies which often caused great turmoil for the individual as well as the group.<sup>17</sup> Most members of the 442nd RCT were nisei.

#### Limitations

At first, the scarcity of written material on the subject was a concern. However, with persistence, more information was found. There is a lack of biographical information on Major General John E. Dahlquist. However, this did not cause a significant problem in

completing this thesis. Another problem was the fact that these incidents occurred about 50 years ago. The memories of most interviewees seemed reliable, and each was more than willing to provide the name and phone number of one or two other veterans. Each interview provided a small segment of the battle, and there simply was not enough time to interview all.

### Delimitations

The activities of the 442nd RCT from the period 13 October to 9 November 1944 were considered the bloodiest period for the team and contained elements of controversy. The 442nd RCT was in combat for 25 out of 27 days and reached its culminating point by the end of this period. It needed to be regenerated with replacements, with four months of training and small scale activity in the "Champagne Campaign" in southern France<sup>18</sup> until redeployed to Italy for the final attack in the Po Valley. The campaign in France represented the unit's toughest test.

### Significance of the Study

This study has significance in many ways. First, it will introduce many readers to the 442nd RCT. Many Americans are still not aware of the accomplishments of the 442nd RCT or even how or why the unit came into existence. Still fewer may know much about the push through the southern and eastern part of France, concentrating on the push through northern France from Normandy Beach. In addition, this thesis will also give the reader an opportunity to look at

aspects of battlefield leadership, tactical planning, lines of communications, and the overall difficulty of fighting a ground campaign against a stubborn enemy in difficult terrain and bad weather. Indeed, almost all basic course subjects taught at the Command and General Staff College can be applied to this thesis.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith, Riviera to the Rhine, Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993), 37.

<sup>2</sup>The 36th Division Pictorial History Team, A Pictorial History of the 36th Texas Infantry Division, (Nashville, Tn.: Battery Press, 1989), 50.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Army, Report of Operation Seventh Army, 359.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>5</sup>Bill Hosokawa, Nisei The Quiet Americans, (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1969), 405.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Army, General Orders Number 317, (HQ Seventh Army, 1945), 1.

<sup>7</sup>Chester Tanaka, Go For Broke. A Pictorial History of the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, (Richmond, Ca.: Go For Broke, Inc., 1982), 95.

<sup>8</sup>Thelma Chang, I Can Never Forget, (Honolulu, Hi.: Sigi Productions, Inc., 1991), 44.

<sup>9</sup>James A. Sawicki, Infantry Regiments of the US Army. (Dumfries, Va.: Wyvern Publications, 1981), 1.

<sup>10</sup>Jack K. Wakamatsu, Silent Warriors, (Los Angeles, Ca.: JKW Press, 1992), 57.

<sup>11</sup>Orville C. Shirey, Americans The Story of the 442nd Combat Team, (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), 107.

<sup>12</sup>Hosokawa, Nisei, xiv.

<sup>13</sup>Wallace H.R. Kuroiwa, The Internment of the Japanese in America During World War II: An Interpretation According to the Ethics of Character, (Ann Arbor, Mi.: UMI Dissertation Information Service, 1983), 160.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>18</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 106.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The amount of written literature devoted to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) was relatively small. Most historical accounts of World War II made little mention of the 442nd RCT and, in fact, it was not unusual for it to be left out altogether. Within the scale of the war, a unit of 4,000 men was small. In addition, many historians did not include the Battle for Bruyeres and the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" in their accounts, as these were only two in several thousand battles fought in World War II. The rescue of the "Lost Battalion" was selected by the Secretary of the Army as one of the ten major battles of the U.S. Army.<sup>1</sup> The fighting in this war was tough, no matter where assigned, so to stand out in any way was an accomplishment.

The 442nd RCT was unusual because it was composed mainly of niseis with white officers and it became the most decorated unit of the war. Many of the men maintained an unspoken code of silence about their accomplishments, perhaps not wanting to brag, but this resulted in a gap in information. There was also a desire to forget the past and move on, and only now are there efforts to compile this information for the future generations. In addition, the soldiers realized that they

were aging and many were dying so there was a renewed urgency to get the story out.

There are three categories of information presented. These categories are based on three themes which lead up to October and November 1944 when the 442nd RCT was in France. The first category focused on the experiences of Japanese-Americans, especially during the relocation during World War II. With one-half of the unit recruited from the relocation camps, it had a profound effect on the attitudes and motivation of the soldiers. It also affected the Japanese-Americans from Hawaii who empathized with their mainland brothers once they learned the situation. The second category dealt with the unit itself and included its origins, training, and combat experiences. The unit did not exist until the war. It was the only Japanese-American unit, which presented both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages included the cohesiveness and comradery developed among its members which was harder to accomplish in many other units. Many of the soldiers were members of the same family and community so they knew each other well. Its greatest disadvantage was the promotion and reinforcement of racism. The unit was so successful that there are some who would think it better to keep the Army segregated. Another disadvantage to the formation of this unit was the destruction of an entire generation of some families when all of the sons were killed. The third category concerned the background and combat experiences of the 36th ID while assigned to the Seventh Army in France. This category included up to and through the Battle of Bruyeres, rescue of the Lost Battalion, and withdrawal of the 442nd RCT from the 36th ID.

### Relocation

The relocation issue was an important background piece to the 442nd RCT. This was the logical beginning to research the 442nd RCT. More than half of the Japanese-Americans who eventually served in the 442nd RCT were from relocation camps. The relocation was ordered by President Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942 in Executive Order 9066.<sup>2</sup> The relocation order was hardly an isolated event and culminated years of racial hatred and discrimination. The difficulties for the early migrants, the isseis, began shortly after they arrived in the United States and Hawaii.

In the United States, the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed in 1882. In 1885, Japanese laws were changed to allow migration.<sup>3</sup> These two events allowed the migration of Japanese citizens out of Japan to the United States or Hawaii. The Chinese Exclusion Act was the result of a rising fear of the "yellow peril" from the increasing numbers of Chinese migrating to the United States. The Japanese were initially seen as replacements for cheap Chinese labor.<sup>4</sup> Some Japanese left to work on the plantations in Hawaii, and many settled along the West Coast, employed mainly as farm hands or seasonal workers. By 1910, about 72,000 Japanese were in America. While some farmers welcomed the cheap labor, many Japanese were met with anti-Chinese sentiments and a backlash of hostility and violence.

About 87 percent of the Japanese lived on the West Coast in California, Oregon, and Washington.<sup>5</sup> They settled in these areas because they spoke little English, had little money, and they could be around other Japanese people. In addition, most did not come to the

United States with the idea of permanent settlement. The immigration of Japanese became an issue to groups who wanted to purge the Japanese from American shores, from the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West and the Asiatic Exclusion League,<sup>6</sup> to labor unions who felt the Japanese were undermining existing labor standards,<sup>7</sup> and lastly, to the media.<sup>8</sup> The Collier's Weekly and the Sacramento Bee were two publications involved in the anti-Japanese campaign, but the most influential newspaper chain that was decidedly anti-Japanese was the Hearst Press.<sup>9</sup> This company owned a chain of newspapers throughout California and published inaccurate and biased articles against Japanese. Indeed, the paper went so far as to use retouched illustrations of the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and distortion of a translation of a book called "The Japanese Military Association" to fabricate a story about an impending Japanese invasion of the United States in 1915.<sup>10</sup> Also, the media reported that the Japanese were taking over agriculture on the West Coast, and they were buying up all the prime farm land. In fact, they were buying the marginal land left but farmed it so well, they were more productive.<sup>11</sup> By 1941, Japanese farmers were producing 42% of the truck crops in California.<sup>12</sup>

These sentiments resulted in the enactment of four laws, specifically directed against the Japanese. In 1906, in San Francisco, the Board of Education passed a resolution to segregate all Chinese, Korean, and Japanese children to a separate school.<sup>13</sup> In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt entered into the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 which curtailed all immigration of Japanese who wanted to reside permanently. This remained in effect until 1924.<sup>14</sup> The Alien Land

Law of 1913 in California restricted ownership of land and basically excluded Japanese from owning land or passing land already owned to their children.<sup>15</sup> The last law was the Exclusion Act of 1924 which declared that Japanese were not eligible to be naturalized citizens of the United States and eliminated any further migration of Japanese to the United States, except in extreme cases.<sup>16</sup>

In response, the Japanese sought assimilation through their children and developed a deep loyalty to their new home and government despite the laws and attitudes against them.<sup>17</sup> The children were brought up with very traditional Japanese values but with an American education. The children were equal to their white counterparts in intelligence levels and were models of decorum and respect for their teachers. Still, the Japanese kept to themselves, socially and geographically. They created little "ghettos" or communities made up of only Japanese. This pattern of settlement was common for most ethnic groups who settled in America, but for the Japanese, it fostered suspicion and accusations of "fifth column" activity to aid and support to the enemy.<sup>18</sup>

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The story is well known and will not be repeated. What it did for the Japanese living in the United States and in Hawaii was to fuel anti-Japanese sentiment. Rumors abounded on the West Coast and in Hawaii that the Japanese in America had aided in the bombing and were helping Japan to plan an attack on the West Coast. A voluntary resettlement program was implemented, but most Japanese did not have the finances to move. Internment was also discussed. Internment of

the Japanese had been contemplated as early as 1939 by the American Legion, so it was not a knee-jerk reaction to a bad situation.<sup>19</sup> When President Roosevelt signed the Executive Order, the Japanese community cooperated and moved. About 110,000 Japanese were evacuated and resettled twice without any major incidents. There were ten relocation camps established, and the last camp was settled on 6 October 1942, only seven months after the order was given.<sup>20</sup>

The Japanese were first moved into temporary quarters which in most cases were stables for animals. For instance, the Santa Anita racetrack horses were removed, and the area was used as a staging area for the relocation. The relocation camps were set up on marginal land in California, Arizona, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Arkansas. They had rows of barracks, surrounded by high barbed wire fences. Guard towers were manned by soldiers with machine guns. Spotlights circled the camps at night. Families were kept together but were crowded into small living spaces.<sup>21</sup> In general, the internment process had occurred peacefully. There were incidents, however, including some violence. Some decided to return to Japan rather than live in these camps but these were a small minority. On the other hand, some volunteered to join the military to defend the country that locked up their families, in order to prove their loyalty and to somehow find a way to release their families. The consequences of the evacuation to the Japanese included the destruction of the economic position of the group, disruption of families, and loss of homes and businesses. Yet, in the end, there were also some advantages. It resulted in the upward mobility of the group by removing them as farm



workers. When they moved back into the workplace, it was as workers and technicians, which increased their incomes and changed the patterns of employment. This made their cultural expectations more congruent with America.<sup>22</sup>

A lingering question is why the Japanese on Hawaii were not interned. About 1,000 were taken from the islands and placed in a relocation camp, but for the most part the Japanese in Hawaii were not disturbed. They were still confronted by hostility and suspicion, but they were not sent away; their businesses were not destroyed, and their homes were not lost. One reason was the large size of the population. Almost a third of the population of the islands was Japanese, so internment was not as easy. A proposal to use an entire island for relocation was scrapped. Relocation may have destroyed the economy of the islands if it had occurred. Another reason may have been the G-2 of the Hawaiian National Guard, Colonel Kendall J. Fielder, opposed putting Hawaiian Japanese-Americans in relocation camps and convinced his boss, Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, not to.<sup>23</sup> In particular, he assured the general that the Japanese-Americans in the National Guard had been recruited properly, and it would be extremely dangerous to mishandle them. On May 12, 1942, Lieutenant General Emmons suggested that the Japanese-American troops in the Hawaiian National Guard be organized into a battalion and sent to the mainland.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps if someone had persuaded Lieutenant General John DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command in San Francisco, in a similar manner, the relocation may not have happened.

There were several books concerning the Japanese-American relocation and culture, and those considered most useful were included in this review. The relocation was important to the men of the 442nd RCT and did much to shape the driving force behind their success.

One of the more useful works was a dissertation by Wallace Hisashi Ryan Kuroiwa in 1984 where he examined the character of the Japanese in America and gave some valuable insight into the background of these people. The purpose of his dissertation was to try to "assess and clarify" the response of the Japanese in the United States to the order to relocate. To do this, he began their story from the time before any Japanese were allowed to migrate to the United States and how a typical Japanese would have been reared in Japan. The effect of the samurai and other Japanese traditions all were taught to the isseis before they migrated. After migration, it was these same traditions and characteristics that the issei passed on to the next generation, the niseis. Although many of the traditions have lost their impact now, the nisei were subject to a kind of tug of war between the old and the new and their choice was the new. The old traditions were not dropped or forgotten but less emphasis was placed on them as they tried to assimilate into American society after the war.

Harry H.L. Kitano examined the evolution of the Japanese-American subculture from the very beginning stages through World War II to the present. He began with the premise of the success of the Japanese-American subculture and attempted to explore the roots of this success. Mr. Kitano was born in San Francisco, California in 1926, and as a member of this subculture was eminently qualified to write about

it. He noted that income and education levels of the Japanese-American ethnic group was high. In California, Japanese income was higher than any other group except white and the Japanese were also the best educated of all groups. In addition, the Japanese had the lowest rates of crime, delinquency and mental illness. Many of his findings for this success also related to the success of the 442nd RCT.

Another nisei examining his own culture is Bill Hosokawa. He was born in Seattle and graduated from the University of Washington in 1937. He was working in Singapore and Shanghai and returned to the United States five weeks prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He was consequently relocated to one of the ten camps. During the war, he was released and was placed with the help of the War Relocation Authority in Des Moines. This program enabled many young niseis to get out of the camps before the war ended. The only stipulation was they could not go to the West Coast. He moved to Denver in 1946 and worked on the Denver Post. His book reviewed the life of the Japanese in America and documented the success of the nisei after the war. He also covered the formation and accomplishments of the 442nd RCT, even including the events of the Battle of Bruyeres and the "Lost Battalion".

Michi Weglyn in her Years of Infamy examined the Japanese-American experience and reflected into the issues of the internment and loyalty. She was born in Brentwood, California and was interned as a teenager in the Gila Relocation Center in Arizona. By profession, she was not an author and wrote this book as a result of her own desire to satisfy her curiosity. This book provided excellent reference materiel although it was sometimes a little emotional. The book also raised

issues not well known or discussed before. In particular, she pointed to investigations done before Pearl Harbor into the Japanese issue and the results indicated that there was no threat to national security by persons of Japanese ancestry. Yet, the relocation order was given and all previous investigations ignored.

President Carter initiated a commission to study the wartime relocation and internment of civilians during World War II. The commission conducted 20 days of hearings from July to December 1981 and more than 750 people testified. The report was published in December 1982 under the title Personal Justice Denied. An entire chapter was devoted to the military service of the nisei, citing the interpreters, the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd RCT, and other nisei service during this time. An interesting description of an experiment conducted by a professor at Stanford University was also included.<sup>25</sup> A group of male college students who had a history of being law-abiding citizens was placed in a mock prison. Half the group became prisoners and half were the jailers. The experiment was terminated in less than a week because it ceased being a simulation and took on all aspects of a real prison. A sense of helplessness was evident, some broke out in psychosomatic rashes, and some evidenced genuinely disturbed mental functioning. Those Japanese-Americans who were in relocation camps were like these male college students; they had not been convicted of a crime.

Jan Ken Po The World of Hawaii's Japanese Americans by Dennis M. Ogawa provided an insight into the Japanese-American community in Hawaii. There were many similarities between the Japanese community

in Hawaii and on the mainland. For instance, the concept of giri was common. This very formalized procedure required repayment of kindness with more kindness. The repayment process would go on for generations in Japan and was a strong influence on the issei. Guilt was a common way to create conformity and discipline and avoid shame because actions had consequences on the entire family. In addition to the family image the need to overachieve was prevalent. A Japanese-American family could not be average, run of the mill or mundane. The family members had to be the best at whatever they attempted.<sup>26</sup> Japanese-Americans in Hawaii were often more friendly than their mainland cousins and were able to laugh at themselves and not take themselves seriously.<sup>27</sup> This attitude towards life was to cause initial difficulties between the Japanese-Americans from Hawaii and the mainland during basic training.

A booklet issued in 1987 by the National Japanese-American Historical Society in San Francisco provided a timeline of events involving Japanese-Americans during World War II. It included several blocks of information and statistics on this ethnic group and some information on the 442nd RCT.

### Unit Background and History

The second category of information dealt with the unit itself. The 442nd RCT was formed in two stages. First, in Hawaii, the 100th Infantry Battalion was formed of nisei volunteers who wanted to serve and to prove their loyalty. Most of these soldiers had been members of the Hawaiian National Guard and had been summarily discharged because

they were of Japanese descent.<sup>28</sup> This battalion was sent secretly to the mainland for training in June 1942 as recommended by Lieutenant General Emmons. Landing in Oakland, on about 12 June, the Hawaiian Provisional Infantry Battalion was officially named the 100th Infantry Battalion.<sup>29</sup>

They were first sent to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The Army was uncertain what training should be done, because it wasn't sure how it would use this unit. The unit had superior marks in all training exercises. In February 1943, the 100th Infantry Battalion was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for more training.<sup>30</sup> Once again, the unit did extremely well in field exercises and was eventually a deciding factor in the eventual restoration of the draft for all Japanese-Americans.<sup>31</sup>

In February 1943, President Roosevelt approved the formation of a Japanese-American unit and the 442nd RCT was activated.<sup>32</sup> The officers were almost all Caucasian and the rest of the unit was composed of nisei. In the initial composition of the unit, 3,000 volunteers came from Hawaii and 1,500 came from the mainland. Most of those from the mainland were from relocation camps, established to remove the Japanese population from the West Coast of the United States. In addition, some of these mainland volunteers also included nisei who were already in the Army before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Prior to Pearl Harbor, about 3,500 Japanese-Americans had been drafted into the military and were in service. Once Pearl Harbor was bombed, these soldiers had their weapons taken from them, were eyed with suspicion and, in many cases, they were discharged.<sup>33</sup> There were many confrontations

between the Japanese-Americans from Hawaii and the mainland. At one point it was so bad the officers of the regiment considered disbanding the unit. Finally, some of the Japanese-Americans from Hawaii visited a relocation camp in Rohwer, Arkansas and saw for themselves the conditions the mainland Japanese community were experiencing. After that, there were no more problems.<sup>34</sup> The 442nd RCT was composed of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Battalion, 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, 232nd Combat Engineer Company, Cannon Company, and the 206th Army Band. The 1st Battalion was an undermanned unit that was to be left behind at Camp Shelby to provide replacements for the 442nd RCT.

In August 1943, the 100th Infantry Battalion deployed to the European Theater, after completing more than a year of training.<sup>35</sup> It joined the 34th ID in Oran, Algeria, and left for Italy in September 1943. The 100th Infantry Battalion saw action from Salerno to Rome and was a key part of the attack on Cassino. The outstanding performance of this battalion was proof enough for the Army that the nisei could fight well and were loyal to the United States. The 442nd RCT completed its training in April 1944 and finally joined the 100th Infantry Battalion at Anzio on 10 June 1944.<sup>36</sup> The 100th Infantry Battalion was allowed to keep its designation because of its exemplary performance, and it became one of the three battalions in the 442nd RCT. In September 1944, the 442nd RCT was sent to France to participate in the invasion of France. In March 1945, the 442nd RCT returned to Italy to be a key part of the last battle in the Italian Campaign at the Po Valley.

In 1946, Orville Shirey compiled one of the first works documenting the accomplishments of the 442nd RCT called Americans The Story of the 442nd Combat Team. Using data from the regimental journal and operations log along with personal diaries and accounts, Shirey and his staff compiled an outstanding documentary on the unit. His book began with the formation of the unit, its training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and its campaigns of the war. Shirey's compilation of the Battle for Bruyeres and the "Lost Battalion" was excellent. Clearly written and well documented, the events read factually and objectively. Since the book was written just after the end of the war, it did not include an up-to-date listing of all medals, and by Shirey's own admission, his staff did not have sufficient time to "evaluate carefully and fully the contribution of the 442nd Combat Team."<sup>37</sup>

It was 1982 before a Japanese-American, Chester Tanaka, wrote about the experiences of the unit. He was a member of the 442nd RCT and one of the few members to have made it through all five major campaigns.<sup>38</sup> He wrote and edited the manuscript for the book and designed, produced, and supervised the printing. His Go For Broke Publishing Company also established the National Japanese American Historical Society. His book, Go For Broke, provided an excellent and objective documentary of the 442nd RCT in combat. Tanaka's list of awards showed why the unit was known as the most decorated. More than 18,000 individual awards were presented including one Medal of Honor and more than 9,400 Purple Hearts. This book has become a catalyst for projects to preserve this unit's history and the history of Japanese-Americans in the United States for future generations.



After 45 years, the former first sergeant of the 442nd RCT's Company F, Jack K. Wakamatsu, completed a solemn pledge to Technical Sergeant Abraham Ohama to write a book to tell the world why the 442nd fought so determinedly. His book called Silent Warriors was published in 1992. Although his book was published in Los Angeles, it was never sold. It was given as gifts to other members of Company F and to other selected individuals. His primary source was his daily log which he kept to keep track of his men. He also included incidents related to him by other members of the unit and took care to exclude some names due to negative circumstances. His book was as colorful as his conversation. A short telephonic interview extended to an hour. His memory was excellent. Company F was one of the lead units during each assault phase of the battles in France. Wakamatsu's recollection of events was a great addition to this research and thesis.

In 1983 a woman journalist from Japan, Masayo Umezawa Duus, became fascinated by the unit and conducted extensive research, publishing her work in serialized form in Japan.<sup>39</sup> These works were then compiled and released in the United States in book form. While her book was informative and easy to read, she tended to include too much emotion in her work and her prejudices were easily seen. She felt so strongly for the 100th Infantry Battalion that when the 442nd RCT was formed later with some mainland Japanese-Americans, she expressed her dislike for the mainlanders. Even though most of the initial 442nd RCT was made up of Japanese-Americans from Hawaii, she berated the mainlanders as the cause for discord and fights between the two groups. This attitude led to a question of her objectivity. She

also concentrated on the much of her attention of one officer, Lt. Kim, a Korean-American who joined the unit. She put him on a pedestal. Her book did provide some valuable insights into the background and characteristics of the unit, but care was needed not to color events with too much of her emotion. Duus began her book with the capture of Bruyeres and ended it with the rescue of the "Lost Battalion". Her research indicated that the other Texas regiments were not applied to the rescue efforts and sat by while the 442nd RCT fought on.<sup>40</sup>

In 1991, Thelma Chang was honored by the Hawaii State Legislature for her work in presenting the history of the 442nd RCT.<sup>41</sup> Her book compiled a series of interviews with 442nd RCT veterans and included many comments concerning the rescue of the "Lost Battalion". Although the veterans fought to save the battalion, many questioned the order in hindsight.<sup>42</sup> The book was easy to read and provided an objective reporting of events by the author. It was not very thorough, but did provide reactions and opinions of the soldiers involved.

The Yankee Samurai by Joseph Harrington was about the nisei translators used in the Pacific theater to intercept messages and interrogate prisoners during World War II. Many of these interpreters came from the ranks of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd RCT. Harrington included some insight into the formation of the all Japanese-American Combat Team, especially the 100th Infantry Battalion.<sup>43</sup> Harrington, retired from the U.S. Navy, was mainly a naval historian. His biography stated that he has written a book strictly about the 442nd RCT, but the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) was not able to locate a copy. Harrington contended that the

100th was kept in mothballs (at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin) "until some way could be found to explain their panicked expulsion from Oahu." <sup>44</sup> In addition, he believed the 100th Infantry Battalion was taken off the islands because admirals and generals were concerned about 1,400 armed and trained "Japs" free on Oahu.<sup>45</sup>

Senator Daniel K. Inouye from Hawaii was a member of the 442nd RCT. In his book, Journey to Washington, he reviewed his experience as one of the 10,000 who volunteered to join the 442nd RCT when its formation was announced.<sup>46</sup> He was at first rejected because of his status as a medical student, but he quit school in order to join the unit. He saw action in World War II but was not present at the Battle for Bruyeres or the rescue of the "Lost Battalion." At the time of these battles, he was awarded a battlefield commission and had been taken out of action temporarily to get a physical. Senator Inouye was 42 when he wrote his book and expressed some hesitation in writing an autobiography at such a young age.

The War Relocation Authority published a small pamphlet in 1944 called Nisei in Uniform. Its real significance was that it was published before the war ended and its audience was probably the Japanese-Americans in relocation camps and the American public to prepare them to accept the release of those in the camps. The book provided a general summary of the development of the 100th Battalion and 442nd RCT beginning with the relocation of all Japanese-Americans from the West Coast of the United States. An explanation of the formation of a distinctively Japanese-American unit in the Army was provided by representatives of the War Department:

If your strength were diffused through the Army of the United States as has already been done with many other Americans of your blood, relatively little account would be taken of your action. You would be important only as manpower - nothing more. But united, and working together, you would become a symbol of something greater than your individual selves and the effect would be felt both in the United States and Abroad. All other Americans would long remember what you have done for the country, and you would be a living reproach to those who have been prejudicial against you because of your Japanese blood. <sup>47</sup>

There was only one study of the 442nd RCT located during this research, an individual study project done by Colonel Hiroaki Morita, USAR, in 1992 at the Army War College. His project seemed to mainly focus on the accomplishments of the 442nd, conducted a cursory glance at the reasons for success, and then related the use of the 100th and 442nd as models for today's reserve forces.<sup>48</sup> His project was not well focused and tried to do too much in the short space he had. The most valuable portions of his project were two separate interviews with Senator Daniel Inouye who served in the unit.

The Harry S. Truman Library provided a copy of a small number of articles from the papers of President Truman as well as Philleo Nash concerning the exploits of the 442nd and the Japanese-American Citizens League (JACL). A copy of an article published in the American Mercury attempted to document the success of the 442nd in Italy and France.<sup>49</sup>

The Eisenhower Library had copies of unit histories and records for the 442nd RCT and the 36th ID. While not complete, these were extra copies of files from the National Archives. All the information had been declassified. There was a marked difference between the quality of records kept for the 442nd RCT and the 36th ID. The 36th

ID is spotty, with the majority of the records on file administrative in nature. It was possible that the more substantive reports are in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.. There was a near complete file of G-2 reports, but after reviewing the documents one would wonder where the G-2 must have been. There was very little fighting noted throughout the time period mentioned, with reports of fighting intensifying only during the rescue period. The G-3 diary was more detailed, but did little more than list event by event what happened each day. The most beneficial part of the 36th ID file were copies of award recommendations for the 3rd Battalion and 100th Battalion of the 442nd RCT. Unit records for the 141st, 142nd and 143rd Regiment were also on file. An examination of these records reveals little. The 141st Regiment file had copies of the S-3 reports and a summary of operations from 22 October to 7 November 1944. The 142nd Regiment had a copy of an order written on 28 October 1944 and the 143rd Regiment had no useful information on file. This was in stark contrast to the records for the 442nd RCT which were very complete and in great detail. It appeared that the 442nd RCT took record keeping very seriously and kept records meticulously. Of particular note were the journals kept for the regiment. These journals note time of day and who said what to whom. One imagined a company clerk sitting diligently at his typewriter typing down every possible word spoken through the day. Also included were unit histories and narrative of events day-by-day and month-by-month. Once again, these were well documented and meticulously prepared. The Story of the 442nd Combat Team published by the Information-Education Section of the U.S. Army was also

included in these files. This booklet contained the battle record for the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd RCT. This sort of booklet was also published for other divisions and must have been a common practice. Unfortunately, no publishing date is included. The 442nd RCT records also included copies of many award submissions, both personal and unit. Copies of unit citations were made but there were too many personal awards included to have copies of each one. In addition, only those unit citations for this timeframe were copied at this time. In total, 642 pages were copied for this research.

The National Archives in Washington, D.C. has 12,000 pages of the 442nd RCT on file but none in the form of microfiche that would allow CARL to purchase a copy. The Eisenhower Library was the main source of documents; however, a copy of eight special court martials was received from the Archives. These court martials included five for "sleeping upon his post", two for leaving their post before being properly relieved, and one for absent without leave for two days. While these offenses would not be handled at court martial level today, these incidents did occur during a wartime situation and were deemed more serious. These offenses occurred in Italy prior to departure to France.<sup>50</sup>

The VFW magazine provided names and phone numbers of several 442nd RCT veterans. The editor, Gary Blumfield, was himself a third generation Japanese-American. Hiro Takusagawa was one of the first volunteers for the 442nd in the Gila River relocation camp in Arizona. He assisted in setting up the Japanese-American National Historical Society in San Francisco and the monument for the 442nd RCT

at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. He was anxious to tell his story and more importantly, to spread the word about the 442nd. He sent a copy of the private issue book by Jack Wakamatsu and his phone number. He was in Company F with Jack Wakamatsu and was in Bruyeres. He was wounded shortly after taking Bruyeres when a shell hit a tree causing what was called a tree burst which spread shrapnel of metal and wood all around. He was only hurt in the forearm but his buddy who died had 17 pieces taken from his leg and another had a piece in his cheek.<sup>51</sup>

Jack Wakamatsu, First Sergeant of Company F, was also a willing interviewee and granted permission to use his book in this thesis. He was now 75 years old and remembered the events of the war clearly. He stated that the 442nd RCT lost more than 250 men taking Bruyeres and, overall, the 442nd RCT lost over 2700 men during this period. Some losses were due to non-disease battle injuries like trench foot, but the majority were due to enemy fire. Mr. Wakamatsu added that at the time of the liberation of Bruyeres, there was little recognition by the local people that they had been liberated by the Americans and in particular the 442nd. The ceremonies now held in Bruyeres commemorating this event came much later. He also stated that when Company F entered the town, he met the mayor who immediately began to threaten to turn in the Americans to the International Red Cross for indiscriminate bombing. Before he had a chance to tell the mayor that he would invite the Germans back, the Germans opened up with another artillery barrage. The mayor ran away and was not seen again. Mr. Wakamatsu said he never saw any

Frenchmen fighting for their country. They only came out after the Americans had secured Bruyeres to hunt out any sympathizers. He told them to leave town. On the 36th ID, Mr. Wakamatsu stated that Major General Dahlquist was not a very good commander. He said that the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment had run out of gas after Montelimar and had not received good replacements. He did not feel they were really cut off and if it had been any unit of the 442nd RCT, they would have fought back.<sup>52</sup>

Jun Yamamoto was willing to be interviewed but, by his hesitation, gave the impression he had little to add. He was in Company L and a PFC in the Headquarters platoon. He landed with the rest of the 442nd RCT at Anzio a few days after the beachhead was established. It was then that the 442nd joined up with the 100th Battalion. The 100th Battalion acted like big brother to the 442nd and quickly passed information to them about fighting the Germans. The 100th warned against using Japanese on the radio because many German officers had trained in Japan and were fluent. In addition, they cautioned against losing radios. Mr. Yamamoto was in communications, went on intelligence patrols, and substituted as an artillery spotter. He added that for artillery, the spotters would relate directions to geographic points on one of the Hawaiian Islands, but he could not remember which island.

Mr. Yamamoto was also responsible for writing up citations for awards and would interview each platoon and squad during rest periods to find out what extraordinary event occurred. He said it was at first difficult to determine what was "beyond the call of duty" until he was



in combat a few times. It became much easier after that. He said that several Japanese-American soldiers had been written up for the Medal of Honor and was disappointed that only one, Sadeo Munemori, received it. He sounded apologetic that he had not written a strong enough citation for more to be so honored. As for the rescue of the "Lost Battalion", his company, Company L, was on the flank of Company K and went past to secure the opposite hill. Company L was one of the strongest companies left with 60 men. He said he had a picture which was stolen when the men assembled in the snow on 13 November for General Dahlquist, he remembered thinking the regiment looked more like battalion-size than a regiment. When the 442nd RCT was pulled from action and sent to Southern France, they thought they would be going home. When they arrived at Marseilles, they were met by a large replacement group from Florida and realized they would not be going home. Mr. Yamamoto was transferred from the unit when he broke out in a rash. He was allergic to the dye used for the wool, and the sun. He was transferred to Fifth Army, then to Second Army, and then home.<sup>53</sup>

Eric Saul, curator of the Presidio Army Museum, spoke to a recent convention of 442nd RCT VFW members. His speech cited the achievements of the 442nd RCT in being the catalyst to overturn racist laws in the United States. He has been studying the 442nd RCT for about 15 years.

On June 11, 1963, several members of the House of Representative entered the accomplishments of the 442nd into the Congressional record. The occasion was the commemoration of the 20th

anniversary of Japanese-American service in World War II on 2 June 1963, with ceremonies conducted at Arlington National Cemetery. In particular, the Congressmen gave credit to those Japanese-Americans from their states who fought in World War II with special mention of Sadeo Munemori, the Medal of Honor recipient. Tributes from President Kennedy, General Jacob Devers, and Congressman Spark Munemori were also included. Senator Daniel Inouye was praised for his heroic action during the war.

In other related works, a few magazine articles were found concerning the battle for Bruyeres and the 442nd RCT. Newsweek reported in October 1944 about the battle for Bruyeres but made no mention of the units there, only that this was some of the roughest action GIs had run into. The London Times on October 23, 1944 equated the fighting in the Vosges Mountains to the fighting in the jungles of Burma. Once again, no mention of the units involved was made. Two other more recent articles were from the Pentagram in May 1992 and the World War II Dispatch for the summer of 1993. Both articles summarized the 442nd RCT's activities during the war and give it credit for an outstanding job.

There were also two documentary videos on the 442nd RCT called "Yankee Samurai," not to be confused with the book of the same name, and "Nisei Soldier." This first video covered the reunion of members of the 442nd RCT with the community of Bruyeres.<sup>54</sup> The video was poignant and the reunion was emotional for all involved. The city of Bruyeres honored the 442nd RCT as its liberator and regarded them highly as soldiers and gentlemen. One soldier interviewed who led

the remnant of Company I thought that General Dahlquist would have been fired had the "Lost Battalion" not been saved. He said that he thought the general was only looking after for himself. If the 442nd RCT didn't get his "Lost Battalion" out, he would have lost his command. He added that since the soldiers were Japanese-American, they were expendable.<sup>55</sup> The second video documented the 442nd RCT from the relocation to the end of the war. It also provided some insights into the battle in France and some interview material.<sup>56</sup> In this video, Eric Saul, Director, Presidio Army Museum was interviewed and stated that Eisenhower personally asked for the 442nd to lead the attack.<sup>57</sup> This attack was the rescue for the "Lost Battalion."

The exploits of the 442nd RCT resulted in a Hollywood movie with Van Johnson as 2ndLt Grayson who was a platoon leader in the 442nd RCT. The film lacked much in the way of showing the combat effectiveness for which the unit was known and seems to try to deal more with the hypocrisy of racial discrimination. The film included the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" but made it appear to be a relatively simple task. The film did not do justice to the 442nd RCT and gave the impression that the 442nd RCT sang its way through the war. There was also at least one inaccuracy in the film. In it, the Japanese-American soldiers spoke Japanese over the radio when communicating with other 442nd RCT units. However, in interviewing Jun Yamamoto, who was in the headquarters platoon for Company L, said they spoke pidgin English, not Japanese. The radio operators of the 100th Battalion found this out very early in the Italian campaign when they were communicating over the radio and heard a strange voice

say "bakatari" in Japanese, which translated means stupid. They figured out that many German officers had been trained in Japan and spoke fluent Japanese. When the 442nd RCT joined the 100th Battalion, the 100th Battalion made sure to pass the word.<sup>58</sup>

#### Operations in France

The third category of information dealt with the overall operations in southern France and the role of the 36th ID. The invasion of southern France was one of the most important Allied operations in World War II, but it has remained one of the most controversial.<sup>59</sup> It was planned to follow Operation Overlord and was deemed unnecessary by several prominent leaders including Churchill, and was cancelled twice.<sup>60</sup> Eisenhower felt there was still a need for the operation, however,<sup>61</sup> and it was approved for July 1944. Once again, it was postponed to August. Churchill still tried to persuade Eisenhower to cancel the operation as late as four days prior to the start.<sup>62</sup> The operation was initially named Operation Anvil and started on August 15, 1944. Another name for the same assault was Operation Dragoon. This reflected some of the confusion and disagreements about this invasion.

The three divisions involved in the amphibious assault were the 3rd ID, 45th ID, and the 36th ID. Even though the 36th ID had seen considerable action in Italy, Major General Lucian Truscott, VI Corps Commander, considered it his least experienced unit and gave it a defensive mission.<sup>63</sup> Another factor was that the 36th ID commander, Major General John E. Dahlquist, had no combat experience and had the

difficult task of changing the division from its reputation as the "hard luck" division.<sup>64</sup> The landing went smoothly for the most part except for the landing of the 142nd Regiment, 36th ID. Rear Admiral Spencer S. Lewis, who was in charge of the landings, felt that the beach for the 142nd Regiment, 36th ID was too dangerous and changed the landing to another beach.<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately, the admiral was unable to reach any Army leadership to inform them of the change ahead of time. The change resulted in fewer casualties for the regiment, but changed and slowed operations considerably. Major General Truscott criticized the decision because he felt it caused a delay of nearly a day.<sup>66</sup> Truscott was furious over the change and threatened to relieve Dahlquist if he was the one who ordered it. When he found out what happened, Truscott calmed down but exploded again when he found out that Dahlquist, when finally reached, had agreed with the decision.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the overall landing was a success.

The problem with the landing was the action to be taken afterwards. The Seventh Army had no firm plans for the campaign following the seizure of the beachhead and Toulon and Marseilles in early August. Since planners believed it would be November before the Seventh could control the Rhone, there was no immediate concern.<sup>68</sup> As German forces were noted to have withdrawn on 11 August 1944, only four days before the landing was to begin, two courses of action were finally proposed.<sup>69</sup> The first was a move north from the beachhead, leaving only a minimal force at Marseilles. The second was a strike in a general northerly direction towards Grenoble. Both the Seventh Army Commander, Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch and

Major General Truscott liked the second plan. Task Force Butler would be the exploitation force and would lead the VI Corps north. The 36th ID would support the task force.<sup>70</sup>

Task Force Butler was a brigade size unit, headed by the VI Corps chief of staff, Brigadier General Frederick B. Butler. He had the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, the 753d Tank Battalion, the 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th ID, Company C, 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 59th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and support forces.<sup>71</sup> The task force was directed to take Sisteron and continue reconnaissance north. The 36th ID was to prepare to start for Grenoble. On 19 August, Major General Truscott ordered Major General Dahlquist to send at least one regiment to the task force, and the task force was to wait for the 36th ID to arrive. Unfortunately, Brigadier General Butler never received the message to wait.<sup>72</sup> Task Force Butler proceeded to Montelimar where it engaged the enemy in an eight-day battle. When Major General Truscott finally arrived at Montelimar, he met with the chief of staff for the 36th ID and left a letter for Major General Dahlquist, expressing his displeasure with the performance of the 36th ID. His letter was angry but clearly stated that the mission of the 36th ID was to block the Rhone Valley.<sup>73</sup> While he understood that the reason the 36th ID arrived late to Montelimar was due to fuel shortages, he gave control of the region to the 45th ID.<sup>74</sup>

Major General Truscott ordered the 36th ID Commander to block off the road north from Montelimar. He even called at 0200 on 23 August to remind Major General Dahlquist of this order.<sup>75</sup> Still, Major General Dahlquist showed little urgency in moving his division.

Perhaps he was concerned that he would be sending his division into a German noose.<sup>76</sup> On 24 August, Major General Dahlquist began moving his troops but there was still no sense of urgency and great confusion. In fact, the general issued no less than four orders to the 143d Infantry Regiment, 36th ID in less than six hours which were contradictory.<sup>77</sup> On 25 August, Major General Truscott called Major General Dahlquist to once again remind him of his mission to block the German escape. Major General Dahlquist assured him that his troops were "physically on the road." Unfortunately, his information was incorrect.<sup>78</sup> On 26 August, Major General Truscott arrived at the 36th ID headquarters fully intending to relieve Dahlquist. He did not do so, but remained unhappy with the general's performance.<sup>79</sup>

Seventh Army continued to advance north. By 9 September, VI Corps had travelled 300 miles in 26 days. Battle fatigue was noticed among the troops.<sup>80</sup> To compound the fatigue factor, the weather was bad; the terrain was increasingly hilly and wooded. Casualties began to affect the corps, as it was short about 5,200 men.

Major General Truscott expressed his desire not to go through the Vosges Mountains to Lieutenant General Patch. He had faced enough combat in the Italian mountains and had no desire to repeat the experience.<sup>81</sup> Lieutenant General Patch and Lieutenant General Devers also had misgivings, but the two other routes were too narrow and too dangerous without more troops.<sup>82</sup> No one relished the thought of a battle of attrition in the mountains.<sup>83</sup> On 20 September, VI Corps started its offensive through the Vosges. The objective was St. Die, an industrial, road, rail, and communications center.<sup>84</sup> Leading to it

was the city of Bruyeres. The 45th ID and the 36th ID were to take Bruyeres and Brouveliers. The 36th ID was to assist the 45th ID in clearing Bruyeres from the south. Major General Truscott began the attack on 1 October and hoped to have it over by the 8th.<sup>85</sup>

Unknown to the American forces, Hitler had personally ordered the German forces to hold the Allied forces west of the Vosges foothills.<sup>86</sup> Consequently, the Germans were well entrenched in the Vosges Mountains. Initially, they were caught off guard and the American drive moved forward. However, as the American drive slowed, the Germans sank into their strongholds to try to hold out the winter.<sup>87</sup>

Battle fatigue became an increasing problem for the American forces. Major General Dahlquist noted that all corps units were experiencing desertions, especially among the line infantry companies in combat and the straggler phenomenon was commonplace. At the beginning of the campaign into the Vosges, commanders realized the need for the troops to get rest. For a while, no regiment expected to have more than two battalions at the front at any given time.<sup>88</sup> All three regiments of the 36th ID were exhausted. A rotation was set up to allow three days of rest at small division rest camps.<sup>89</sup>

The fighting in the Vosges was compared to fighting in the jungle. The dense forest made it impossible to tell the direction a unit was headed. Still, despite fatigue, bad weather, thick forests, mountainous terrain, and a deeply entrenched enemy, the American forces began their drive through the Vosges.



The Report of Operations, the Seventh United States Army provided a clear and concise report of the entire timeframe from the landing on the Riviera to Berlin. The battles involving the 442nd RCT were also provided in detail and provided a broad and objective report of operations. The report clarified that although press reports stated that the "Lost Battalion" was cut off, the battalion was never actually surrounded by Germans and was not heavily engaged. This report also provided a description of events in light of other units in the area so the perspective was much broader.

The Center of Military History for the U.S. Army provided an excellent review of the push through eastern France in The European Theater of Operations Riviera to the Rhine, completed in 1993. This book examined this part of the drive through Europe beginning with the amphibious assault on the Riviera and without which the northern drive might have been less successful. This book balanced the emphasis always given to the northern push through France and highlighted the crucial logistical contributions of the southern French ports. The book was intended to provide how the accomplishments of this part of the war fit in with the whole.

Another book from the Center of Military History, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations Cassino to the Alps, was completed by Ernest F. Fisher, Jr., in 1989 and provided the history of the 442nd RCT prior to and after the battles in France. It was in Italy where the 442nd RCT gained its reputation, and where after its campaign in France, it fought its last battle of World War II. This

book was useful as additional background material but did not include the battles in France.

The Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century by Larry H.

Addington did not provide any specifics about the 442nd RCT but did provide an overall view of the war. He explained that the reason Operation Anvil had two names was because Winston Churchill claimed that he had been "dragooned into accepting the invasion of Southern France instead of the Balkans."<sup>90</sup> In response the landings at Normandy beach on D-Day, Addington stated:

The Allies were inside the Normandy beachhead with a strength of twenty-five divisions, launched break-out efforts on July 25. In the western end of the beach-head, General Omar Bradley's Third Army led the way; the Anglo-Canadian armies of Montgomery's Twenty-First Army Group attached from the eastern end of the beachhead. When (Field Marshal) Kluge foresaw that both efforts would succeed and that the rest of his forces on the perimeter of the beach-head would be threatened with encirclement, he urged Hitler to allow him to order a retreat before it was too late. Instead, Hitler insisted on making an armored counterattack. Warned by Ultra of Hitler's strategy, Bradley's army group had time to deploy properly to meet the threat. The last German assaults were beaten back by the night of August 7, but Hitler refused to allow a general retreat until General Jacob Devers's Sixth Army Group, consisting of the U.S. Seventh Army and the French First Army, launched Operation Dragoon against the French Mediterranean coast. Kluge relayed the withdrawal order just before his relief as OB West by General Walther Model. The order came too late to save all the German forces in western France.<sup>91</sup>

This quote clearly reflected that the Germans were in retreat as a result of Operation Dragoon which probably justified the decision to finally execute the plan. The 442nd RCT was in Seventh Army which was part of Sixth Army Group. By October and November 1944, the main attack on the German frontier fell to the American Sixth and Twelfth Army Groups. This was during the time frame of this thesis

and indicated the need for the Allies to secure the southern border area quickly. Twelfth Army Group was thinly strung out along the northern part of the German border while Sixth Army Group was along the southern part to the Swiss border.<sup>92</sup> The weakness of Twelfth Army Group was not missed by the Germans who launched a major counteroffensive in December at Ardennes<sup>93</sup> which became known as the "Battle of the Bulge".

The 36th ID was involved in Operation Dragoon (Anvil) on 15 August 1944. This was an amphibious landing in southern France. The follow-on campaign met up with forces involved in Operation Overlord to carry the campaign to Germany. Hidden Ally covers the operations in southern France with U.S. forces, the French resistance, and special operations forces. The book followed the operations up to Lyons. Although it did not cover the period covered in this thesis, it provided valuable background material on the condition of the 36th ID by the time it reached Bruyeres.

Another review of the Allied landing in southern France was Operation Dragoon, in which the involvement of the 36th ID was explored. According to this book, this invasion was the one of the largest operations of its kind in the European Theater, involving 1,000 ships, 3,000 aircraft and eventually a million troops. Operation Dragoon was controversial, with some Allies wanting it and some stating it was unnecessary. This was the fourth reference about this operation and should ensure the clarity and objectivity of the information.

Only one history of the 36th ID documented any relationship with the 442nd RCT and it included a short review of the rescue of the "Lost Battalion". This book also was the only one to include a short biography of Major General John E. Dahlquist. This biography was only ten lines long.

Oral histories in CARL were not exceedingly useful. Two had some information related to the operations in France. One was between General Mark W. Clark and Lieutenant Colonel Forest S. Rittgers. In this, General Clark described his involvement in Operation Anvil/Dragon. He was originally in charge of the operation but later found himself to committed to the Italian campaign and was able to convince General Marshall to tell General Eisenhower to use someone else.<sup>94</sup> The second oral history on General Paul D. Adams discussed Bruyeres and the Japanese-American unit. He was in the 36th ID and expressed considerable respect for the Japanese-Americans. He also added that he did not understand the mission of the "Lost Battalion." He stated that there was no reason to believe there "was open country or could be open country, under the circumstances of what was all around there and some of the fighting that went on, both with them and on either side of where they were."<sup>95</sup>

A smattering of short references to the 442nd RCT was in several other books. Most of these references were not about the battles in France and were useful background pieces and did not end up in the final thesis. Of note in one book, Lee Kennett discussed the Japanese-Americans in one paragraph and the fact that their unit was

segregated. He added that there were other "ethnic" units for Americans of Austrian, Norwegian and Greek extraction.

A book providing background material was written by a member of the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division, Homer Ankrum. The 34th ID<sup>96</sup> was the only division willing to take the 100th Infantry Battalion when it was first sent to North Africa as explained earlier in this chapter. From that point on, the 34th ID and the 100th Infantry Battalion, and later the 442nd RCT, fought side-by-side and had deep respect for each other's fighting abilities. When the 442nd RCT returned to Italy in March 1945, the 34th ID expressed its deep regret that the regiment was assigned to the 92nd ID. The feeling was obviously mutual as the 442nd RCT retained the "Red Bull" patch throughout the war.

Three other books documenting the relationship with the 442nd RCT and the 34th ID concerned the history of the 34th ID. In each case, the relationship was positive and respect mutual.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hiroaki Morita, Col., The Nation's Most Decorated Military Unit, the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, Interview with Senator Dan Inouye, (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1992), 34.

<sup>2</sup>Wallace H.R. Kuroiwa, The Internment of the Japanese in America During World War II: An Interpretation According to the Ethics of Character, (Ann Arbor, Mi.: UMI Dissertation Information Service, 1987), 219.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>12</sup>Harry H.L. Kitano, Japanese Americans The Evolution of a Subculture, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 20.

<sup>13</sup>Kuroiwa, Ethics of Character, 177.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 179.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 182.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 204.

- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., 225.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., 226.
- <sup>22</sup>Kitano, Subculture, 8-9.
- <sup>23</sup>Masayo U. Duus, Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and 442nd, (Honolulu, Hi.: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 19.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 20.
- <sup>25</sup>Joan Z. Bernstein, Personal Justice Denied, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1982), 298.
- <sup>26</sup>Dennis M. Ogawa, Jan Ken Po The World of Hawaii's Japanese Americans, (Honolulu, HI: Japanese American Research Center, 1973), 42.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 159.
- <sup>28</sup>Chester Tanaka, Go For Broke. A Pictorial History of the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, (Richmond, Ca.: Go For Broke, Inc., 1982), 13.
- <sup>29</sup>Duus, Liberators, 22.
- <sup>30</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 16.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., 16.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., 17.
- <sup>33</sup>Bill Hosokawa, Nisei The Quiet Americans, (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1969), 402.
- <sup>34</sup>Morita, Most Decorated, 30.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., 24.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., 51.
- <sup>37</sup>Orville Shirey, Americans The Story of the 442nd Combat Team, (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), 15.
- <sup>38</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, back cover.

- <sup>39</sup>Duus, Unlikely Liberators, front insert.
- <sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 201.
- <sup>41</sup>Thelma Chang, I Can Never Forget, (Honolulu, Hi.: Sigi Productions, Inc., 1991), back cover.
- <sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 38.
- <sup>43</sup>Joseph D. Harrington, Yankee Samurai, (Detroit, Mi.: Pettigrew Enterprises, Inc., 1979), 53.
- <sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 103.
- <sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.
- <sup>46</sup>Daniel K. Inouye with Lawrence Elliott, Journey to Washington, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1967), 76.
- <sup>47</sup>War Relocation Authority, Nisei in Uniform, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1944), 12.
- <sup>48</sup>Morita, Most Decorated, 1.
- <sup>49</sup>Blake Clark and Oland D. Russell, "Japanese-American Soldiers Make Good", The American Mercury, (New York: Lawrence E. Privak, Publisher, June 1945), 698.
- <sup>50</sup>U.S. Army, Special Court Martial Orders, Headquarters 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 24 October 1944.
- <sup>51</sup>Hiro Takasugawa, Interview on 2 February 1994.
- <sup>52</sup>Jack K. Wakamatsu, Interview on 5 February 1994.
- <sup>53</sup>Jun Yamamoto, Interview on 5 February 1994.
- <sup>54</sup>"Yankee Samurai", MPI Home Video, [1988].
- <sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup>"Nisei Soldier," Vox Productions, Inc., 1983.
- <sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup>Jun Yamamoto, Interview on 5 February 1994.



<sup>59</sup>Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert R. Smith, Riviera to the Rhine, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1993), 3.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 117.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>67</sup>William B. Breuer, Operation Dragoon The Allied Invasion of the South of France, ( Novato, Ca.: Presidio Press, 1987), 174.

<sup>68</sup>Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 84.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>73</sup>Arthur L. Funk, Hidden Ally The French Resistance. Special Operations and the Landings in Southern France, 1944, ( New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 187.

<sup>74</sup>Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 152.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 155.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 195.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 232.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 252.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 252.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 273.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 250.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 251.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 272.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 292.

<sup>90</sup>Larry H. Addington, The Patterns of War since the Eighteenth Century, (Bloomington, In: Indiana University Press, 1984), 213.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>94</sup>Mark W. Clark, Senior Officers Debriefing Program, Conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Forest S. Rittgers, Jr., (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, 1972), 104.

<sup>95</sup>Paul D. Adams, Senior Officer Debriefing Program, Conversation with Colonel Irving Monclova and Lieutenant Colonel Marlin Lang, (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, 1975), 10.

<sup>96</sup>Duus, Unlikely Liberators, 88.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The historical method was used as the basis for this research. It enabled the researcher to conduct an examination and comparison of events as recorded in reference material, books, unit histories and personal interviews. In addition, analysis of the background of these events was just as critical to understanding the motivation and character of the 442nd RCT.

#### The Research Topic

Focusing the topic was the most difficult stage. Initial exploration of the topic seemed to present a myriad of topics to be researched. Many people indicated that there had been many projects already done, but in fact little had been published. Only one individual study project had actually been done on the 442nd RCT. As the research progressed, a specific campaign and specific timeframe emerged, representing the fighting spirit of the 442nd RCT.

#### The Research Method

The resources of CARL were the main source of reference materiel for this research. At first there appeared to be a scarcity of research materiel, but with each day more sources were found. Small vignettes about the unit are scattered through many other books, and

each book that had any reference to the 442nd was reviewed. There were also oral histories at CARL with many comments concerning the invasion of southern France which were useful. CARL was also able to borrow books from other libraries that were referenced in bibliographies. This process was slightly more time-consuming but made available more reference material. The Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas maintained copies of unit histories that were sent from the National Archives. These histories included an excellent record of the 442nd RCT and, to a lesser degree of completeness, histories on the 36th Infantry Division (ID), 141st, 142nd and 143rd Regiments of the 36th ID. The National Archives had a great deal of information, but none is on microfiche which CARL could purchase. The Government Book Store in Kansas City, Missouri, provided several books for use as references.

A private source for reference material on the relocation camps was provided by this research committee chairman. Mrs. Norma Donlon of Leavenworth was born in a relocation camp in Jerome, Arkansas. She provided the phone number for the National Japanese-American Historical Society in San Francisco. The Society had oral histories on file but withdrew its offer to extract parts of the oral history for this research for unknown reasons. The Society did provide information on a new book on the 442nd RCT written by Lynn Crost, a journalist who followed the unit.

Other sources of information included friends and relatives who provided access to personal documents. In one case, display pictures used during hearings on the Japanese relocation were given and in

another, an unpublished book was also given. An interviewee provided a copy of a published book that was written by the First Sergeant of Company F and given to members of the company and other selected individuals. It was never sold and only 1,000 copies were made.

Two newspapers, the Honolulu Star and the Hawaii-Tribune Herald, published articles commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 442nd RCT and copies were ordered but still not received as of the close of this research project. A request to VFW magazine for assistance in locating members brought forth names and phone numbers from which to begin.

#### Interview Methodology

The interviews were conducted using the following as a guide:

- (a) Biographical data (name, age, rank, unit).
- (b) Enlistment data (where and when joined; why joined and for how long?)
- (c) Experiences in Battle of Bruyeres and rescue of the "Lost Battalion" from 13 October to 9 November 1944 (relationship between 442nd RCT and 36th ID, support from 36th ID, rescue of the "Lost Battalion," conditions in the Vosges Mountains, leadership actions, condition of unit before and after).

In general, the interviews were interesting and colorful. They usually provided a small piece of information which was of interest. In addition, the interviewees were willing to provide names and phone

numbers of other veterans. In each case, they were willing to talk and share their experiences.

### Timeline

The time for research began in July and has continued to February 94. The first major hurdles were the prospectus and the proposal. This was one of the most difficult periods as suspense dates were very early in the school year and requirements for 15 and 30 page documents were unrealistic. In fact, the requirements were scaled back to shorter lengths and could have been reduced to more standard lengths. Rough drafts of chapters one through three were completed in December and were refined and expanded up to the final draft.

Seminar groups early in the second semester served to assist in re-motivation as well as serving as another set of eyes to look and listen to the research. Research collection and interviews continued into February and rough drafts on the remaining chapters were submitted in early March 1994 and in final draft by April 1994. Completion of the final product was completed and submitted on time.

Many of the research lectures in the beginning were useful and helped to clarify the requirements of the thesis and research. Some were less helpful and served the lecturer more as an opportunity to present his latest ideas and own research. These could have been eliminated in order to provide research time. The research time provided in the second and third terms, while useful, is after most research has been completed. Time was the most valuable asset that could be provided for writing but most of the writing had to be done

by early April 1994. The rest of the time was useful in making corrections and preparing for a thesis defense and oral boards.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The overall course of action of VI Corps was to take St. Die and proceed into Germany. St. Die was an industrial, road, rail and communications center that VI Corps needed to take if it was to succeed through the Vosges Mountains.<sup>1</sup> VI Corps assigned the main thrust of the operation to the 45th ID, taking Brouvelieures and Bruyeres. The 36th ID was the supporting effort, advancing from the south with the mission of keeping the German defenses busy and assisting in clearing Bruyeres.<sup>2</sup> The 45th ID would advance from the northeast about nine miles to Bruyeres and the 36th ID would advance northwest about eight miles. The offensive to take Bruyeres was to begin on 1 October 1944 and conclude by 8 October at the latest.<sup>3</sup> From Bruyeres, VI Corps was to head to St. Die with 3rd ID spearheading the drive.

The actual battle did not go as planned by VI Corps. The drive by the 45th ID and 36th ID stalled short of Bruyeres and remained virtually static until 15 October. The 45th ID had been forced into defensive positions by a German attack and needed time to regroup. For the 36th ID, the advance was measured in yards.<sup>4</sup>

The VI Corps plan to take St. Die would have followed all nine principles of war if the terrain, environment, and personalities had not



been a concern. The nine principles of war are objective, offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, and simplicity.<sup>5</sup> All operations should meet these criteria to be successful. The objective must be clearly defined, decisive and attainable. The offensive was designed to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. The effects of overwhelming combat power at the decisive place and time was mass. Forces must be employed to use all combat power available in the most effective way possible. Maneuver was the flexible application of combat power to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage. Unity of command and unity of effort is needed for every objective. Security procedures will prevent the enemy from acquiring unexpected advantage. The enemy should be hit when he was least prepared. Finally, all plans should be clear and uncomplicated. The operations in the Vosges Mountains met most of these criteria. Three U.S. infantry divisions and the French II Corps provided plenty of firepower and mass to the attack. The offensive maneuver was simple and provided for an economical use of forces as they were to attack in the same direction from three avenues of approach to one objective. The command was unified under VI Corps without any conflict. VI Corps believed that the move through the Vosges Mountains would have surprised the enemy because it had not been done before. Unfortunately, it was the terrain, the thick forest, and the weather that made maneuver difficult to achieve. Flanking movements were virtually impossible because the enemy was well dug in and hard to see in the forest. The weather was wet, cold, and damp and the roads were poor. Consequently, movement by vehicle was

difficult, and armor was ineffective. Since the U.S. forces had not fought in this sort of environment before, it was the Americans who were surprised by the elements and caught off guard. Fighting was much more difficult than anyone had imagined. There was some conflicting guidance released by the division and corps, but in general this was minimal.

Early in this campaign, the most dreaded disease to all foot soldiers became nearly epidemic. This disease was known as trench foot. It plagued the 442nd RCT as it did most other U.S. infantry units in the war. It did not help that the government issued combat boot was not adequate for the infantryman.<sup>6</sup> Trench foot was a painful and potential crippling disease. Jack Wakamatsu, First Sergeant of Company F, developed a serious case of the disease and provided this description:

I was fortunate, because our Battalion Surgeon, Captain Cal Ushiro, made me go to the Field Hospital at that time. The outcome was, I nearly lost all of my toes from both feet. I know that if I had remained for a few more days in the field, I would have lost both of my feet to trench foot. It is deceiving at first because, other than a burning sensation and some swelling, trench foot symptoms are not that pronounced. However, after a few days the first real pain starts. At this time, the toes and forward foot begin to swell. The bottom of the foot starts to turn dark blue. As the symptoms progress, the toes may start to run like a bad burn. At this time, the pain becomes unbearable. In my case, the pain was great enough to prevent any sleep. I was sleepless for nearly 10 days . . . .<sup>7</sup>

As the campaign unfolded, it was divided into four stages of operation. Each stage has its own objective and story to tell. These stages were not pre-planned segments of the VI Corps plan but emerged as a result of hindsight and research.

### The Battle for Bruyeres

On 27 September 1944, the 442nd RCT left the Italian Campaign for France.<sup>8</sup> On 29 September, it arrived at Marseilles and finally reached land by 1300.<sup>9</sup> October was the start of France's rainy season,<sup>10</sup> and the unit was met by rain and more rain. The unit was relatively fresh, considering the situation. It had been pulled out of the front lines on 6 September and had received 675 replacements from the United States in late September.<sup>11</sup>

By the 13th of October 1944, neither the 45th ID nor the 36th ID had taken Bruyeres. Bruyeres was a rail and road hub on the way to St. Die, the major objective for the Seventh Army and VI Corps.<sup>12</sup> It was also on the key road to the east that led through the Vosges Mountains to the Rhine Valley.<sup>13</sup> Because of its strategic location, 50 miles from the German border, the Germans had turned it into a garrison town. The German command realized that the fall of Bruyeres meant an open road to the German border and ordered that Bruyeres be held at all costs. Bruyeres also became a center for French resistance activities.<sup>14</sup> The 442nd RCT was to augment the 36th ID which faced a serious shortage of foot soldiers.<sup>15</sup>

Major General Dahlquist noted the exhaustion of his own soldiers and that disciplinary problems were plaguing VI Corps with desertions in line infantry units at 50-60 per division.<sup>16</sup> In addition, other commanders noted the poor quality of replacements.<sup>17</sup> Combat fatigue and skin infections were common.<sup>18</sup> Into this environment, the 442nd RCT joined the division on the 13th.<sup>19</sup> The 442nd RCT had arrived in Marseilles on 30 September and, by train and truck, the

regiment finally reached assembly area about four kilometers west of Bruyeres. <sup>20</sup>

Bruyeres had good natural defenses. To the southwest was the Vologne River which ranged from 20 to 35 feet wide with a marshy valley floor, restricting movement to the roads. Secondary roads were easily be blocked by trees. Buildings along the road had already been made into strongpoints or were mined or booby trapped. The high ground northeast and west of Bruyeres was strongly held by German infantry that had emplaced pillboxes, antitank guns, automatic weapon sites, minefields, and road blocks.<sup>21</sup> This combined with the mountainous terrain, thick forests, and bad weather did not bode well for American forces entering the battle.

On 15 October 1944 at 0800, the attack on Bruyeres finally began.<sup>22</sup> This attack followed six weeks of heavy shelling. More than 15,000 shells fell on Bruyeres and it was considered the most viciously contested town by the Seventh Army.<sup>23</sup> The plan for the 442nd RCT was to attack two battalions abreast with the 100th Battalion on the left and the 2nd Battalion on the right and the 3rd Battalion was in reserve.<sup>24</sup> Bruyeres lay in a valley surrounded by hills on three sides. The hills were labeled A, B, C and D. The 100th Battalion was to take the northernmost hill, Hill A, and the 2nd Battalion was to take hill just north of the town, Hill B.<sup>25</sup> In order to get to those hills, the two battalions had to take the valley below.

The 100th and 2nd Battalions advanced about 300 yards before they ran into stiff enemy resistance. Two hours later, they had advanced another 500 yards.<sup>26</sup> Heavy enemy artillery, mortar, and

machine gun fire stopped their advance for that day. The next day the two battalions started their attack again and finally moved into the valley below Hills A and B.<sup>27</sup>

The Germans mounted a counterattack<sup>28</sup> on the second day against the 100th and 2nd Battalions. With artillery, self-propelled guns, tanks mortars, and heavy automatic arms fire, the Germans pinned down the battalions for that day. With artillery support from the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, the 100th and 2nd Battalions were able to hold off the German attacks.<sup>29</sup> On 16 October, Company F, 2nd Battalion had occupied a smaller hill, Hill 555, just 1000 yards northwest of Bruyeres before another counterattack began.<sup>30</sup> The enemy was driven back using six bazooka teams against enemy armor.<sup>31</sup> The weather was turning cold and light rain began to fall.<sup>32</sup>

By 18 October the two battalions finally cleared the valley leading to the hills they were assigned to take. The 36th ID moved up forty 37mm antitank guns south of Bruyeres, and tanks shot smoke into Bruyeres.<sup>33</sup> The attack on the hills began with a 30-minute artillery barrage by five battalions.<sup>34</sup> The 3rd Battalion was pulled from the reserve. The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 143rd Regiment, 36th ID were also pulled into the battle and were to attack from the south.<sup>35</sup> The 100th Battalion took four hours to secure Hill A and the 2nd Battalion took seven hours for Hill B.<sup>36</sup> As soon as Hill B was taken, Company L pushed into Bruyeres from the north and met up with elements of the 143rd Regiment, 36th ID that had entered the town from the south.<sup>37</sup> By nightfall the town was under American control.<sup>38</sup>

In the town, the Germans constructed two massive concrete roadblocks<sup>39</sup> and small pockets of enemy resistance remained to be routed out house-by-house.<sup>40</sup> The Germans suffered 130 casualties and 134 were taken prisoner.<sup>41</sup> On 19 October, the Germans bombarded Bruyeres almost continuously.<sup>42</sup>

General Paul D. Adams provides his explanation for the reason why the fight at Bruyeres was so difficult:

I think the reason the fight was so hard was that we had gotten into too much daylight stuff again. Too much 8 o'clock in the morning attacking. The Germans figured if they didn't attack at 8 o'clock today they probably are going to attack 8 o'clock tomorrow and be plenty ready. We mentioned this several times, asking, why can't we attack some other time? Heck one o'clock in the afternoon, anytime, rather than the same old time every morning. But Bruyeres was rather strongly defended and they had . . . there was a sunken road that the Germans had used rather effectively to, well, cover 88's. They could put tanks back in it and move them to the other side of town. Well, they could launch a pretty good little counterattack on you without really being too much exposed.<sup>43</sup>

The 2nd Battalion was cited for its action in the capture of Bruyeres on 19 October 1944. The citation reads:

The 2d Battalion executed a brilliant tactical operation in capturing Hill 503, to expedite the forward movement beyond Bruyeres, France and to erase the German threat from the rear. While two companies pressed forward against a formidable enemy main line of resistance, other elements of the battalion struck the enemy paralyzing blows from all directions, practically eliminating an entire German company and destroying numerous enemy automatic weapons.<sup>44</sup>

An interesting sidenote to this battle came from the First Sergeant of Company F, 2nd Battalion, Jack Wakamatsu who relayed his observations of the beginning of the battle and of nisei soldiers as they overran enemy machine gun nests.

As 0800 hours arrived, I told our lead platoons to start the attack to capture the town of Bruyeres. Incidentally, the Top Secret Report on the Estimate of the situation in the Bruyeres/St. Die area was as follows: the general activity of the German forces in this area is now considered quiet, with no real enemy activity. We, f experience, took no great heed of these reports. We always made our own reconnaissance and/or Estimate of Situation. Yes, the entire area was too quiet without any apparent enemy activity at all. Old combat men can just feel what is waiting for them in their bones. . . . I don't know why our higher Headquarters people never informed about the actual strategic situation on this front, and, as usual, we found out the hard way. . . . The German soldiers had been chained to their machine guns. In one instance, a nisei soldier reported that he came across an enemy soldier, chained to his gun, who did not fire a single shot.<sup>45</sup>

In taking Hill A, the 100th Battalion had 823 enlisted men and 36 officers who started the operation. When completed, 12 had been killed in action and 86 wounded. It faced a depleted enemy infantry regiment and one machine gun battalion.<sup>46</sup> The 100th Battalion was cited for its outstanding performance during this time and was awarded battle honors for this operation. For the Battle of Bruyeres, this citation read:

Jumping off in the attack on the morning of 15 October 1944, the 100th Battalion fought an almost continuous four-day firefight in freezing and rainy weather, through jungle-like forests, to wrest the strongly fortified hill "A", dominating Bruyeres, from a fanatically resisting enemy. When, during the course of the attack, the progress of an assault company was delayed by a strongpoint consisting of fifty enemy riflemen and an SP gun, a second company of the battalion swept in on the enemy force from the flank and completely routed it. To attack hill "A" proper, the battalion was forced to cross one hundred and fifty yards of open terrain covered by seven enemy machine guns and heavy automatic weapon fire. Following an artillery barrage, limited because a draw lay between the two high hills, the battalion, with one company acting as a base of fire, launched a frontal attack. Covered by friendly tank fire, waves of platoon after platoon zigzagged across the open field into a hail of hostile fire. So skillfully coordinated was the attack that the strongly fortified hostile positions were completely overrun, numerous casualties were

inflicted on the enemy, and the capture of the town was assured.<sup>47</sup>

Taking Bruyeres was the first crack in the Vosges Mountain defense for the Germans. The slow advance of the 45th ID was balanced by the surprisingly rapid advance of the 36th ID on the corps' right wing.<sup>48</sup> Major General Truscott also became concerned that the difference in rates of advance between the two divisions would cause a gap in his line of attack. He ordered 3rd ID to move up in between the two divisions to maintain his line.<sup>49</sup> This movement and the successful attack of the 3rd ID was unexpected by the Germans. The momentum was beginning to swing to the Americans.

With Bruyeres taken, the 36th ID's mission turned east towards a drive to the Meurthe River. The Division's mission as published in the operations instructions 221400A October 1944 was:

36th Infantry Division reinforced, continues the attack in conjunction with 3d Infantry Division on left. Seizes high ground north of La Houssiere, protects south flank of Corps by preventing enemy advance west of line Biffontaine-Les Poulieres-Jussarupt-Rehaupal-LaForge, employing minimum forces; maintains contact with elements of II French Corp and liaison with 3 DIA on south.<sup>50</sup>

#### Action at Biffontaine

The new objective for the 442nd RCT was to clear the northern part of the Domaniale de Champ Forest and then assemble in reserve at Belmont.<sup>51</sup> First, the 442nd RCT had to complete taking the hills near Bruyeres. Hill D fell to the 2nd Battalion on October 19th and Hill C to the 100th Battalion on the 20th.<sup>52</sup>



After moving a mile beyond Hill D, 2nd and 3rd Battalions traversed a minefield toward a railway embankment. On reaching the embankment, the battalions learned that Hill D had been retaken by the Germans. Companies F, H, and L were sent back. Company F led the charge up the hill after one of the men in the company was killed on a litter.<sup>53</sup> The story as described by the First Sergeant of Company F, Jack Wakamatsu, was as follows:

At about noon, T/Sgt. Abe Ohama was hit by an enemy sniper, while leading his 2nd Platoon. As he lay in an open area, some of his men tried to assist him. These men naturally drew enemy fire. Aid men and litter bearers, under a white flag of truce, moved out to assist Sgt. Ohama. These men also drew fire. . . .T/Sgt Ohama was shot, mortally wounded, while on the litter. . . .The effect on us of Sgt. Ohama's death was unbelievable. Never had the men of our Company been so shaken and angered by the death of a comrade. . . . After Abe died, our company began to move with a single purpose: to punish those responsible for his death. Company F mounted a charge up hill 503 with fixed bayonets and a cry for vengeance. . . .We charged up that hill and a great many enemy soldiers died with 20 minutes of fierce hand to hand combat. . . . Sgt. Akira Hamaguchi was one of the leaders of that charge, called "Banzai Hill" . . . . I believe the enemy forces were completely overwhelmed by our screaming charge. Those not killed scattered and ran for their lives. Men of Company H of our battalion also assisted our men. We defeated a greater force which had position and advantage over ours, but lacked our anger and resolve.<sup>54</sup>

The name "Banzai Hill" was particularly appropriate as 2nd Battalion charged the enemy line with the war cry of "Banzai".<sup>55</sup> This war cry was actually a Japanese war cry, made famous by Japanese soldiers in the Pacific. There were several banzai charges made by the 442nd RCT during the war. According to Webster's dictionary, it means "May you live ten thousand years." This was indeed a strange cry to be shouting at your enemy as you try to kill him.

The rest of the battalions was still at the railway embankment at La Broquaine. Germans counterattacked with tanks and artillery. Two tanks threatened to breakthrough but SSgt Fujiwara, under intense machine gun fire, knocked out one tank with a bazooka and forced the other to withdraw.<sup>56</sup> The embankment was taken.

On the road from Belmont, an enemy armor column was spotted heading toward 2nd Battalion's left flank. A Thunderbolt fighter squadron dispatched the armor threat before the rest of the 442nd RCT could respond.<sup>57</sup>

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions reached the edge of the Belmont woods where they were stopped temporarily by a minefield and small arms fire. In addition, Company K found a complete set of enemy defense plans on the body of a dead German soldier.<sup>58</sup> Using these plans, the 442nd RCT formed Task Force O'Connor, made up of Companies F and L. The Task Force penetrated deep into enemy lines and attacked the enemy from the rear.<sup>59</sup> By late afternoon on 21 October, 2nd and 3rd Battalions had met up with Task Force O'Connor and sent the Germans into retreat.<sup>60</sup> The operations of Task Force O'Connor were more clearly explained by Jack Wakamatsu, First Sergeant, Company F:

Our Regimental Commander, Col. Pence, decided to form a special Task Force composed of Companies F and L, under the command of Major Emmet O'Connor, the 3rd Battalion Executive Officer, with staff from the Regiment and the Third Battalion. The plan was to move this unit, under cover of darkness, and make an end run around Hill D, the enemy's left flank, and attack their forces at the railroad embankment from the left rear position. At dawn on the 21st, this unit attacked the enemy forces down the west slopes of the wooded ridge of the Foret Domaniale de Champ. Their security forces were totally surprised and captured. The Task Forces then captured the

enemy garrisoned houses, which afforded clear observation of the terrain behind the enemy mainline at the railroad embankment. 1300 hours, the main forces of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacked the enemy mainline of defense as our task force struck from the rear. The enemy now was caught in this pincer, and those not killed by our small arms fire and heavy artillery concentrations fled. Our task force, due to the element of surprise, suffered light casualties.<sup>61</sup>

The 100th and 3rd Battalions picked up the drive to Biffontaine. The 2nd Battalion was held in reserve. The 100th Battalion seized the high ground above Biffontaine, cut the road from Belmont and forced the Germans out of Belmont.<sup>62</sup> A special detachment of German bicycle troops attacked along the right rear flank of the 100th Battalion. The 2nd Battalion was quickly called up from the reserve to fight off this mobile attack.<sup>63</sup> The 2nd Battalion was cited for its action in securing Biffontaine as follows:

Attacking strategic heights of Hill 617 near Biffontaine, France, on 28 October 1944, the 2d Battalion secured its objective in a two-day operation which eliminated a threat to the flanks of two American divisions. In the face of intense enemy barrages and numerous counterattacks, the infantrymen of this battalion fought their way through difficult jungle-like terrain in freezing weather and completely encircled the enemy. Methodically, the members of the 2d Battalion hammered the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties upon the defenders and wrestling this vital feature from the surviving Germans.<sup>64</sup>

The 100th Battalion positioned its companies in a semicircular defensive position around three sides of Biffontaine. The enemy launched a counterattack and firefights were soon raging on all three sides. The enemy did not have sufficient strength to make good its attack, however. The 100th Battalion was reaching a culminating point of its own as its ammunition was almost depleted, water was in short supply, and evacuation facilities were inadequate.<sup>65</sup> The Division

Commander ordered that Biffontaine be taken on 23 October.<sup>66</sup> The 100th Battalion was able to move into Biffontaine, but it took two days of house-to-house fighting to take the town. Once the 100th Battalion attacked the town, the Germans re-formed outside the town and counterattacked.<sup>67</sup> There were approximately 200 Germans in the town.<sup>68</sup> The battle raged back and forth for three hours. On the second day, the Germans made their third and final attempt to retake Biffontaine. They mounted a bayonet charge but did not penetrate the 100th Battalion's line of defense.<sup>69</sup> On 23 October, the 2nd Battalion was sent back into reserve status in Belmont. On 24 October, the 100th and 3rd Battalions were relieved by the 141st and 143rd Regiments, 36th ID, and were pulled back to Belmont for some well deserved rest.<sup>70</sup>

The 100th Battalion began the attack on Biffontaine with 820 men, of which 9 were killed, 36 wounded and 20 missing in action.<sup>71</sup> The citation for battle honors for the 100th Battalion also included the fighting for Biffontaine:

During the three day operation, beginning on 21 October 1944, that resulted in the capture of Biffontaine, the 100th Battalion fought two miles into enemy territory as a self-contained task force. On the third day of the attack, the battalion launched an assault to capture the isolated town. In the first surprise onslaught the battalion captured large quantities of supplies and ammunition which it turned against the enemy. Counterattacking enemy troops and tanks approached and fired point blank into their positions. Shouting defiance in the face of demand for surrender, the men of the 100th Battalion fired their rifles and threw captured hand grenades at the enemy tanks. During this action the battalion captured forty prisoners, killed or wounded forty of the enemy and destroyed or captured large quantities of ammunition and enemy materiel.<sup>72</sup>

On 25 October 1944, word reached the 442nd Regimental command post that the 141st Regiment, 36th ID was being counterattacked and needed reinforcements. The 2nd Battalion was alerted for battle the following morning. The battalion moved out at 0300 on 26 October to relieve the 3rd Battalion of the 141st Regiment. After relieving the 3rd Battalion, the 2nd Battalion moved out about 200 yards and met strong enemy resistance. It dug in for the rest of the night.<sup>73</sup>

On 26 October, the 100th and 3rd Battalions were ordered to assist in the rescue of the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment, 36th ID.

#### Rescue of the Lost Battalion

On 23 October 1944, Major General Dahlquist ordered the 141st Regiment to send a patrol of company or battalion strength "to work along a trail through the Foret Domaniale de Champ, east of Bruyeres, and to secure the heights north of the village of La Houssiere."<sup>74</sup> The 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment was assigned this mission and may have been guided by French resistance volunteers.<sup>75</sup> The ridge began near Biffontaine and ended in a fingerlike projection into the valley between Gerardmer and St. Die. By nightfall, the battalion had lost contact with the regiment as the Germans had overrun the battalion command post.<sup>76</sup> The 141st Regiment reported this part of the operation:

The 36th Division Operations instruction of 22 October contemplated the relief of the 442d Infantry Regimental Combat Team and the passage through that Regimental Combat Team by the 141st Regimental Combat Team while the remainder of the divisions continued a series of holding attacks aimed at keeping the enemy occupied and covering the action of the 141st through the Foret Dominale de Champ. A series of motor and foot movements brought the 141st Infantry

Regimental Combat Team from the area Lapanges-Deyciment-Xamontarupt to the eastern entrances of the Foret Dominale de Champ with the 1st Battalion passing through the 442d Infantry Regimental Combat Team in the early afternoon of 23 October. The night of 23-24 October found the 141st Regimental Combat Team with its 1st Battalion in the vicinity of Hill 624, the 3d Battalion at the eastern entrance to the Foret Dominale and the 2d Battalion preparing to move from Xamontarupt....The attack was continued the next day with the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, advancing against increasing resistance, the 3d Battalion, 141st Infantry at 0600 had followed the 1st Battalion to point where it then moved north to protect the flank of the division. The 2d Battalion had moved to forward assembly areas at the entrance of the Foret Dominale. It was at this period that the episode of the "Lost Battalion" occurred. The rapid advance of that battalion had so separated it from the other elements of the 141st Infantry Regimental Combat Team as well as the division that German troops infiltrating and moving up the many draws north of L'Epexe, were able to establish road blocks on the trail controlling travel on the main road leading to the Division objective of B de La Bourse. German combat patrols operating under cover of the heavy woods overran the Battalion command post and severed the communications to the rear as well as destroying the battalion command group. It should be noted that the dispositions of the 141st Infantry Regimental Combat Team and the 442d Infantry Regimental Combat Team were such that no coordinated movement of either was of easy accomplishment. The 442d Infantry Regimental Combat Team was in process of relief or had been relieved by elements of the 143d Infantry Regimental Combat Team and 141st Infantry Regimental Combat Team and the 2d Battalion was just entering the Foret Dominale de Champ.<sup>77</sup>

On 25 October, the 2nd Battalion, 141st Regiment, tried to open a supply route but could not get any closer than 1,200 yards. The enemy had stopped the forward movement of the 1st Battalion and then filtered in behind it. The approximate strength of the enemy was one battalion, about 700 men, occupying vantage points on hills and concealed positions in the dense forest. Enemy morale was good.<sup>78</sup> The "Lost Battalion" was ordered to fight its way back but could not do so.<sup>79</sup> The 1st Battalion appeared to be cut off except for radio communication with a forward artillery observer.<sup>80</sup> The 1st Battalion,

141st Regiment was nine miles away. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 141st had made several attempts but could not reach the 1st Battalion.<sup>81</sup>

The 141st Regiment summary continued:

This, probably unintentional, stroke by the Germans prolonged for several days the costly battle of the Foret Dominale. The 1st Battalion, without armor, lacking centralized control and with no supply line was incapable of aggressive action which was the only solution to its position. The plight of the battalion brought into play a series of uncoordinated piece-meal attacks, all designed to reach the battalion rather than to gain a necessary terrain feature. Armor had been ordered forward, but due to faulty coordination and hesitance on the part of the armored personnel to commit their vehicles off safe trails, there was no effective use of armor during the operations of the 3d Battalion, 141st Infantry near Crebefosse or in the movement forward by the 2d Battalion, 141st Infantry. The rapid advance by the 1st Battalion had surprised the Germans, however, by cutting the battalion off and delaying the relieving forces the enemy was, through excellent observation from the south for artillery fire and by using the good approaches into the forest from the south, enabled to build up a strong defense by artillery fire, defended road blocks, and entrenched positions along the main terrain features leading toward the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry.<sup>82</sup>

The 100th and 3rd Battalions moved out at 0400. It was so dark that men were forced to hold onto the man's pack in front. As they moved slowly, they came up against heavy arms and mortar fire. On the 27th, the enemy struck the 3rd Battalion using a Mark IV tank and a half-track. The tank was destroyed by bazookas, and the enemy counterattack failed.<sup>83</sup>

The next day, 28 October, the 100th Battalion moved out chasing some Germans across a draw into a trap.<sup>84</sup> The 100th Battalion was caught in an artillery barrage that lasted an hour and wounded 20 men. <sup>85</sup> The 3rd Battalion went down the middle and ran into a series of enemy roadblocks. The roadblocks were primarily antitank barriers

and manned by a company of infantry. The 2nd Battalion went around to attack from the west. The 2nd Battalion thinly spread out one of its companies to simulate an attack by a battalion while two other companies circled behind the enemy and waited for dawn to attack.<sup>86</sup>

On 28 October, Major General Dahlquist ordered the 442nd RCT to make contact with the Lost Battalion at all cost. The battalion was becoming desperate and airdrops were not working in the dense forest. Artillery was used to shoot candy bars into the unit. The battalion was short of all supplies especially medical, food, and water.<sup>87</sup> On 29 October, the 100th and 3rd Battalions moved out along the ridge. The ridge was only wide enough for two companies, I and K, 3rd Battalion. The 100th Battalion was on the right flank and the 2nd was on the left rear flank. There was no room to maneuver on the ridge and only a frontal attack was possible.<sup>88</sup>

In the rear, the 2nd Battalion had thoroughly surprised the enemy and Hill 617 was taken quickly. The two lead companies of 3rd Battalion on the ridge continued to move forward. By 30 October at 1400, Company I finally reached the "Lost Battalion." The 141st Regiment completes its version the rescue:

The operations of the next six days were marked by repeated uncoordinated attempts on the part of the 141st Regimental Combat Team and 442d Regimental Combat Team to open the ridge road to the 1st Battalion. Battalions were employed, relieved and employed again, each time with a lessened power and effectiveness. There was no coordinated definite objective given to the command as a whole. Side attacks to the south and north depleted a possible moving of forces with the result that the operation became a series of company attacks. The most important part of this phase of the operation was the neutralizing of the hostile artillery through air and ground observation and the supply of the "Lost Battalion." Independent FFI workers infiltrated behind the



enemy lines and through radio gave the location and type of enemy artillery. Air observation reported massed batteries with the result that by the end of the operation, hostile artillery had lost a large measure of its effectiveness....The 1st Battalion was relieved on 30 October by the 442d Infantry Regimental Combat Team operating in conjunction with the 141st Infantry Regimental Combat Team following which a concerted plan for ending the operation was employed using the 142d Infantry in a wide movement on the north flank. This part of the operation terminated the battle of Foret Dominale de Champ.<sup>89</sup>

The 100th Battalion entered the rescue with 651 men. It lost eight killed in action, 99 wounded in action and one missing in action.<sup>90</sup> Battle honors for the 100th Battalion included the following narrative of the events:

On 27 October 1944, the 100th Battalion was again committed to the attack. Going to the rescue of the "lost battalion", 141st Infantry Regiment, it fought without respite for four days against a fanatical enemy that was determined to keep the "lost battalion" isolated and force its surrender. Impelled by the urgency of its mission, the battalion fought forward, risking encirclement as slower moving units left its flanks exposed. Fighting yard by yard through a minefield the battalion was stopped by an enemy strong point on the high ground which he had made the key to his defense. As the terrain precluded a flanking movement, the battalion was forced to the only alternative of a frontal attack against a strongly entrenched enemy. Attacking in waves of squads and platoons, and firing from the hip as they closed in to grenade range, the valiant men of the 100th Battalion reduced the enemy defense lines within a few hours. Between fifty and sixty enemy dead were found at their automatic weapon emplacements and dugouts. On the fourth day, although exhausted and reduced through casualties to about half its original strength, the battalion fought doggedly forward against strong enemy small arms and mortar fire until it contacted the isolated unit.<sup>91</sup>

The 3rd Battalion also was recognized for its action during this battle and was awarded battle honors as well. The 3rd Battalion began the operation with 692 men and suffered 144 wounded in action and 25

killed. This award is only for the period 27 October to 30 October 1944 and reads as follows:

On 27 October the 3d Battalion, 442d Regimental Combat Team was committed to battle after one-and-a-half days in a divisional reserve. One of the battalions of another unit which had been advancing deep into enemy territory beyond the town of Biffontaine was suddenly surrounded by the enemy, and separated from all friendly units by an enemy force estimated at seven hundred men. The mission of the 3d Battalion was to attack abreast with the 100th Battalion and four other battalions and relieve the entrapped unit. The mission was more difficult than it first appeared for the enemy had reoccupied the thickly wooded hills situated within the two and one-half miles separating the "lost battalion" from our front lines. For four days the Battalion fought the stubborn enemy who was determined to stop all attempts to rescue the besieged battalion. Several roadblocks skillfully reinforced by machine guns had to be destroyed while under heavy artillery fire. On 29 October the Battalion encountered a well defended hill where the enemy, one hundred strong, held well dug-in positions on the hill and would not be dislodged. After repeated frontal assaults had failed to drive the enemy from the hill, Companies "I" and "K", then leading the attack, fixed bayonets and charged up the slope, shouting at the enemy and firing from their hips, while the enemy fired pointblank into their ranks. In spite of the effect enemy fire the determined men pressed the assault and closed in with the enemy. Nearing the enemy machine gun and machine pistol positions, some of the men charged the gun emplacements with their Thompson sub-machine guns or BARs killing or seriously wounding the enemy gun crew, but themselves sprawling dead over the enemy positions they had just neutralized. Completely unnerved by the vicious bayonet charge, the enemy fled in confusion after making a desperate stand. Though seriously depleted in man-power, the Battalion hurled back two determined enemy counterattacks, and after reducing a heavily mined roadblock, finally established contact with the besieged battalion.<sup>92</sup>

The 141st Regiment also offered its own lessons learned and conclusions of the operation. In the area of lessons learned, air drops were considered unsuccessful due to poor visibility and the failure of the aviator to locate the correct dropping ground. It also noted, however, that the pilot must take care not give the friendly troop position away. The supply effort by artillery shells was fairly

successful. In this, candy bars and other small supplies were loaded into artillery shells and shot into the "Lost Battalion." The conclusions of the 141st Regiment were:

The operation of Foret Dominale de Champ was characterized by piecemeal action both on the part of the regiments involved and on the part of the higher command. The initial phase of failing to keep the 141st Infantry closed up and all battalions within supporting distance could have been remedied to a certain extent by a Division directive to the 442d Infantry and 143d Infantry of keeping the ridge road open until secured by the 141st Infantry. There was a very evident lack of any clear cut plan either on the part of the regiment or the Division in the initial phase. This was illustrated by the absence of orders to the 442d Infantry and 143d Infantry to effect coordination and maintain liaison. The action of the 141st Infantry in not closing all battalions in forward assembly areas the first day of the operation is not understandable as there was no scarcity of motor transportation or hindrance by division. Many phases of the operation were characterized by such sweeping suggestions to unit commanders that often movements were begun without coordination, reconnaissance or proper planning. At one time in a regimental command post the Corps Commander and the Division Commander both made suggestions as to methods of operation that were completely unrelated. The latter phases of the operation were more on the plan of a Division operation than was indicated in the secondary stages. The fault of discounting an enemy's capabilities was very evident in the circumstances that gave rise to the isolation of the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry. The major supply routes of the Germans were more available to the south flank than to the north and instead of sending the 3d Battalion to the north if it had followed closely the 1st Battalion, there would have been sufficient strength to meet the enemy reinforcements coming from the south. The north flank was formidable in terrain only. The use of armor was at best haphazard and at no time were explicit instructions given to the armor-infantry team for coordinated action. True in several instances, armor gave evidence of an unwillingness to engage in close combat. The major derelictions of armor were more the fault of infantry in not understanding and planning with armor than it was in a lack of aggressiveness on the part of armor. The one instance when armor was really employed as armor was a joint operation by 2d Battalion, 442d Infantry and 2d Battalion, 141st Infantry, west of Les Huttes, wherein armor got into rear areas and completely routed well dug in infantry. No mention of this operation can be complete without words of praise for the splendid work of the Japanese American (442d Infantry)

Regimental Combat Team. The spirit of cooperation with the units of the 36th division, the aggressive, determined and relentless drive of the 442d Regimental Combat Team was in a large measure responsible, not only for the relief of the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry but, for the success of the entire operation.<sup>93</sup>

This recounting of the rescue was written with the perspective of hindsight. Since the 141st Regiment relieved the 442nd RCT of its duties and then passed through the unit, it was only with great hindsight that the 442nd RCT and the 143rd Regiment should have stayed on duty keeping the ridge road open until the 141st Regiment was secured.

Six battalions were involved in the action to rescue the "Lost Battalion." These were the 2nd Battalion, 442nd RCT, 3rd Battalion, 141st Regiment, 36th ID, 3rd Battalion, 442nd RCT, 100th Battalion, 442nd RCT, 2nd Battalion, 141st Regiment, 36th ID and 2nd Battalion, 143rd Regiment, 36th ID. The main action was in the center with the 100th and 3rd Battalions, 442nd RCT. The 3rd Battalion had the most difficult job as it was counterattacked more often. It was positioned over the main battle area and was the spearhead of the attack. In addition the pressure from the right by the 2nd Battalion, 141st Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 143rd Regiment with the pressure from the left by 3rd Battalion 442nd RCT and 3rd Battalion 141st Regiment, helped to jar the enemy loose.<sup>94</sup> This was significant in that the six battalions were against one German battalion that was dug-in very well. Due to the narrow nature of the front line, however, it could accommodate only two companies abreast so Companies I and K of 3rd Battalion, 442nd RCT took the brunt of the attack.

The question of whether or not the "Lost Battalion" was really cut off could not really be determined but a significant and often neglected part of the rescue effort involved the 111th Engineer Combat Battalion and Company C, 232nd Engineer Combat Company (attached). The 111th Engineer Combat Battalion had 525 men and the 232nd Company which was part of the 442nd RCT had 150. There were 12 killed and 45 wounded in this action.<sup>95</sup> From this narration, it was clear to see the impact of the weather and poor roads in the Vosges Mountains. The narration of events included the following recounting:

The 1st Battalion continued forward...but at 241830A October a furious German counterattack coming up the draw and directed at the supply route behind the Battalion, overran the Battalion command post and drove a wedge between the 1st and 3d Battalions, 141 Regimental Combat Team. This powerful stroke cut off the 1st Battalion and left it isolated...At this time the trail was supplying three Infantry Battalions plus a tank company. Rations and ammunition were driven up the steep trail that rose one thousand feet above the valley floor...One platoon of Engineers with the battalion that now became known as the "lost" Battalion had fought their way back to our lines during the initial enemy assault. They had removed many mines during the advance and patched the trail with rocks and brush where necessary....The initial packing of rock and gravel that had enable jeeps to pass, either disappeared under the heavy treads of the tanks or turned up between the ruts to damage undercarriages of small vehicles....all available engineer trucks were set to hauling timber from every known saw mill in the Division area to the top of the road and a plank floor with planks laid perpendicular to the road was constructed....Daylight hours were few with continuous heavy traffic, necessitating night work...Working at night was extremely perilous since the heavy forest was extremely dark and noise drew enemy artillery fire as well as enemy ambush patrols....The Germans determined the location of the road and constantly harassed it with artillery fire....As the road grew longer enemy snipers infiltrating behind our lines caused casualties...Some engineers engaged these Germans in fire fights...Labor on the road never stopped....The "lost" Battalion was finally contacted at 301600A October 1944....At this time there were seven Battalions of Infantry, 3 companies of tanks, one company of Anti-Aircraft Artillery and one

medical evacuation unit using the road which was now 4 1/2 miles long.<sup>96</sup>

#### Follow-on Mission

From 30 October to 2 November, all units assumed defensive positions. On 3 November, the enemy attempted to breakthrough the 3rd Battalion's line but they were driven off by the remnants of Companies I and L. The Division Commander, Major General Dahlquist, then decided that the 442nd RCT must clear the ridge down to the valley floor. Once achieved, this would cut off the Germans in St. Die from those in Gerardmer.<sup>97</sup>

While the 3rd Battalion had remained in defensive positions on top of the ridge, the Germans had developed their own defensive positions along the slopes of the hill, in a semicircular formation. When the 3rd Battalion resumed the offensive on 5 November, the Germans fired up the hill.<sup>98</sup> In addition, artillery barrages and mortar fire poured in almost incessantly until dark. The companies advanced only 200 yards at the most and suffered heavy casualties. The men were pulled back at nightfall.<sup>99</sup>

On the following day, the offensive began again. The 752nd Tank Battalion assisted the infantry in driving the enemy from the slope. In three days of intense fighting, the Germans were forced to retreat. The 232nd Engineer Company stopped road maintenance operations to become another infantry company to work with the 100th Battalion. Two platoons of the anti-tank company also became infantrymen and joined Company F. The Germans dropped more than

2,000 artillery rounds over the next two days on the 442nd RCT, but it held on.<sup>100</sup>

On 9 November 1944, the 442nd RCT was relieved from the front.<sup>101</sup> The 442nd RCT was called back to the front temporarily on the 13th of November and was finally relieved on the 17th. The Germans had begun a withdrawal of forces on the 15th as observers noted large fires in St. Die and Corcieux. The Germans were setting fire to everything left that could be of use to the Americans.<sup>102</sup> On 13 November, Major General Dahlquist expressed his gratitude to the 442nd RCT and it was only then that he realized the devastation to the unit. He at first berated the commander for allowing so many to be on pass when he had requested all be present. When the commander, 442nd RCT, explained that was all the men left, the division commander was visibly stunned.<sup>103</sup> On 19 November, the 442nd RCT was detached from the 36th ID and headed for southern France.

#### Analysis of Campaign

Initial research of the 442nd RCT in these four battles in France seemed to point to some misuse of the unit. The unit was pushed almost continuously and almost constantly in the heat of battles. Most of the unit was lost due to injury or disease. There appeared to be little sense to this drive and it almost appeared as if the 442nd RCT was being sacrificed so the division could take the credit. Indeed, racism seemed a logical answer for this. Japanese-Americans had faced considerable amounts of discrimination at home and were looked on with

suspicion. It was natural to suppose the 36th ID looked on them in the same light.

More research tended to point in an opposite direction. While racism may have existed, it did not seem to be the motivating factor for the tough missions assigned to the 442nd. What seemed to have been the driving force behind the decisions made during this time include such mundane items like the replacement policy, disciplinary problems, combat fatigue and unit cohesiveness. These were not problems unique to the 36th ID and the 442nd RCT, but were commonplace throughout the European Theater during the war.

As stated previously, division commanders complained about the poor quality of replacements. Most were draftees who may not have any real motivation to serve. There was little time for training and even less time to build a cohesive fighting team during wartime. In addition, many of the officers were pulled to build other units. Most units faced high turnover of personnel due to injury and disease.

Discipline also started to break down, especially after Operation Anvil/Dragoon. Desertion was common and averaged 50-60 per division. Stragglers were common. These problems may have been partly due to the heavy officer and NCO casualties sustained by units both in Italy and France. This contributed to a decline in leadership and discipline as enlisted men often received battlefield commissions to fill in the gaps. These men usually had no training as an officer.<sup>104</sup>

Combat fatigue also was a noted problem for the 36th ID as well as other divisions. The three divisions, 3rd ID, 45th ID and 36th ID, had been on the move constantly since the 15th of August in combat of



some form or another during a good portion of the time. The division commander of 3rd ID, Major General John E. O'Daniel, had noted a decline in aggressiveness of his infantry units. He did not accept the explanation that his troops were wet and tired and were developing a sense of caution, feeling the war would be over soon.<sup>105</sup> The 45th ID also noted an increase in combat fatigue cases as well as an increase in the number of skin infections due to the wet weather and shortage of bathing facilities. The commander of the 143rd Regiment, 36th ID, noted an almost alarming mental and physical lethargy among his troops. Even Major General Dahlquist felt that he had been driving his troops too hard. This was behind the development of rest camps for his troops.<sup>106</sup> The leadership recognized that it took about three days of rest to get men of this age back into shape.

The 442nd RCT was not immune from any of these problems. Officers in the unit were replaced quite frequently and often by enlisted men receiving battlefield commissions. In general, however, the average age when the unit was formed was 24.<sup>107</sup> The majority of the soldiers were high school graduates with an average IQ of 103 (110 was required for officer training).<sup>108</sup> Consequently, the average enlisted Japanese-American soldier tended to be older and more mature than the draftees in a regular unit.

Another very important factor with the Japanese-American soldier was motivation. In the beginning of the formation of the unit, all were volunteers. Later, when the draft status was reinitiated for Japanese-Americans, they were a combination of draftees and volunteers. Their main desire was to prove their loyalty to America.

It was also a matter of family pride that the son did not disgrace the family by not doing his best. Many felt that despite the relocation, they owed America something for allowing them to have a good life prior to the relocation. The motivation was strong to fight hard, fight well and die if necessary.

The 442nd RCT had its share of disciplinary problems as well although not as severe as most other units. The cohesiveness of the unit was strong in comparison to most others. There was more peer pressure not to deviate from the rules and regulations. Discipline problems included offenses such as sleeping on watch, improper watch relieving procedures, and AWOL or absent without leave. The problems with desertion and stragglers experienced by other divisions did not seem present in the 442nd RCT which did not affect the unit's morale.

Replacements for the 442nd were also different from most other units. When a Japanese-American man was drafted, he already knew what unit he was going to. He probably knew someone who was already with the unit. The replacements trained as a unit and were sent in large groups rather than on an individual basis. The replacements were usually quickly assimilated into the unit as the veterans took the fresh recruits under their wing immediately. When the 100th Battalion first went to Italy, it used Company E for replacements rather than waiting for new replacements to arrive. The unit was robust anyway so this procedure made sense.

At the beginning of this campaign, the 442nd RCT was the freshest and most fully manned unit in the Vosges Mountains. The replacements received prior to departure from Italy and the month off

from combat did much to rejuvenate this unit. The unit was still below authorized strength, probably close to 75%, but the other units were marginal at best. Battle fatigue became a problem for the 442nd RCT by the end of the campaign, but by then, its job was done.

The last factor may have been the ability of the 442nd RCT to function with little direct supervision from Major General Dahlquist. The unit was used to operating on its own with little interference from the division commander. Major General Dahlquist was often in the front lines giving instructions and micro-managing his units. The 442nd RCT was not used to this method and some soldiers expressed their resentment that he was in the front lines. In fact, his presence in the front often made for a good target, and the 442nd RCT soldiers had to pull him to the ground to protect him. The attachment of the 442nd RCT to the 36th ID may have been the only time when Major General Dahlquist had to give an order and it would have been followed to the letter. This may have been part of the reason for his shock when he reviewed the troops at the end of the campaign and found so few left. When he ordered the 442nd to rescue the lost battalion at all costs, he perhaps did not expect them to really do so.

Casualty reporting was a difficult subject to verify. Official records of the 442nd RCT during October 1944 showed 117 killed in action, 657 wounded or injured in action, and 40 missing in action or 814 total casualties.<sup>109</sup> In November, 44 were killed, 225 wounded or injured in action, and three were missing for a total of 272 casualties.<sup>110</sup> These numbers added up to 1,086. In addition, there were non-battle disease injuries mainly due to trench foot which do not

appear in these records. The strength figure for the 442nd RCT at the beginning of October was 3,506 and at the end of the month was 2,368, a decrease of 1,138 for the month.<sup>111</sup> The difference between this and the 814 total casualties for October could be attributed to these other non-battle injuries. In this case, the difference was 324. The numbers for November were not as easy to calculate since the 442nd RCT received a large number of replacements after being relieved from the front lines. The confusion began as other sources cite other figures not confirmed by the 442nd RCT's own reports. Chester Tanaka cited a casualty list of almost 2,000 with 140 men killed and 1,800 in hospitals.<sup>112</sup> Jack Wakamatsu believed that some 2,700 casualties were suffered by the 442nd RCT.<sup>113</sup>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert R. Smith, Riviera to the Rhine, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1993), 273.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 284.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Army, FM-100-5 Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 14 June 1993), 2-4 to 2-6.

<sup>6</sup>Jack K. Wakamatsu, Silent Warriors, (Los Angeles, Ca.: JKW Press, 1992), 142.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 142-143.

<sup>8</sup>Masayo U. Duus, Unlikely Liberators: The Men of the 100th and 442nd, (Honolulu, Hi.: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 159.

<sup>9</sup>Wakamatsu, Warriors, 135.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>11</sup>Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 313.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>13</sup>Wakamatsu, Warriors, 140.

<sup>14</sup>MPI Home Video, "Yankee Samurai," [1988].

<sup>15</sup>Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 313.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 291.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>19</sup>Chester Tanaka, Go For Broke. A Pictorial History of the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, (Richmond, Ca.: Go For Broke, Inc., 1982), 74.

<sup>20</sup>Orville Shirey, Americans The Story of the 442nd Combat Team, (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), 51.

<sup>21</sup>The Seventh United States Army, Report of Operations, Volume I, (Nashville, Tn.: The Battery Press, Inc., 1988), 364.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 365.

<sup>23</sup>MPI Home Video, "Yankee Samurai."

<sup>24</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 365.

<sup>25</sup>Shirey, Americans, 51.

<sup>26</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 76.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>28</sup>Shirey, Americans, 55.

<sup>29</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 77.

<sup>30</sup>Wakamatsu, Warriors, 143.

<sup>31</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 365.

<sup>32</sup>Wakamatsu, Warriors, 142.

<sup>33</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 366.

<sup>34</sup>Shirey, Americans, 56.

<sup>35</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 365.

<sup>36</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 81.

<sup>37</sup>Shirey, Americans, 56.

<sup>38</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 366.

<sup>39</sup>Shirey, Americans, 57.

<sup>40</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 366.

<sup>41</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 81.

42The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 366.

43Paul D. Adams, Senior Officers Debriefing Program, Conversation with Colonel Irving Monclova and Lieutenant Colonel Marlin Lang, (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army Military History Research Collection, 1975), 11.

44U.S. Army, Fifth Army, General Orders number 89, 17 July 1945, 1.

45Wakamatsu, Warriors, 139-148.

46U.S. Army, Headquarters 442d Regimental Combat Team, Citation, 7 May 1945, 7-8.

47U.S. Army, Headquarters, Seventh Army, General Orders number 360, 1-2.

48Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 318.

49Ibid., 319.

50U.S. Army, Headquarters 36th ID, Citation, 7 August 1945.

51Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 321.

52Tanaka, Go For Broke, 82.

53Ibid., 82.

54Wakamatsu, Warriors, 151-152.

55U.S. Army, 2nd Battalion, 442nd RCT, Unit History, 38.

56Tanaka, Go For Broke, 83.

57Ibid., 84.

58Ibid., 84.

59Ibid., 85.

60Ibid., 86.

61Wakamatsu, Warriors, 155-156.

- <sup>62</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 88.
- <sup>63</sup>Ibid., 89.
- <sup>64</sup>U.S. Army, Fifth Army, Citation, 17 July 1945, 1.
- <sup>65</sup>Shirey, Americans, 61.
- <sup>66</sup>Ibid., 61.
- <sup>67</sup>Ibid., 62.
- <sup>68</sup>U.S. Army, Headquarters 442nd RCT, Recommendation for Citation of Unit, 8.
- <sup>69</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 89.
- <sup>70</sup>Shirey, Americans, 62.
- <sup>71</sup>U.S. Army, Recommendation, 7.
- <sup>72</sup>U.S. Army, General Order number 360, 2.
- <sup>73</sup>Shirey, Americans, 63.
- <sup>74</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 374.
- <sup>75</sup>"Yankee Samurai," MPI Home Video.
- <sup>76</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 374.
- <sup>77</sup>U.S. Army, 141st Regiment, Operations in Foret Dominale de Champ, 2-3.
- <sup>78</sup>U.S. Army, Recommendation, 4.
- <sup>79</sup>Shirey, Americans, 63.
- <sup>80</sup>The Seventh U.S. Army, Report, 374.
- <sup>81</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 92.
- <sup>82</sup>U.S. Army, 141st Regiment, Operations, 3.
- <sup>83</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 92.



- 84Ibid., 92.
- 85Ibid., 94.
- 86Ibid., 94.
- 87Ibid., 95.
- 88Ibid., 98.
- 89U.S. Army, 141st Regiment, Operations, 4.
- 90U.S. Army, Recommendation, 7.
- 91U.S. Army, General Orders number 360, 2.
- 92U.S. Army, General Orders number 317, 1-2.
- 93U.S. Army, 141st Regiment, Operations, 5-6.
- 94U.S. Army, Headquarters 36th Infantry Division, Comments on Recommendations for Citation, 15 March 1945, 2.
- 95U.S. Army, Headquarters, 36th ID, Citation of Unit, 7 August 1945, 3-4.
- 96Ibid., 3-4.
- 97Shirey, Americans, 68.
- 98Ibid., 68.
- 99Ibid., 69.
- 100Tanaka, Go For Broke, 103.
- 101Shirey, Americans, 71.
- 102Ibid., 72.
- 103Hiroaki Morita, Col., The Nation's Most Decorated Military Unit. the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1992), 33.
- 104Clarke and Smith, Riviera, 291.

105Ibid., 291.

106Ibid., 291.

107Duus, Liberators, 41.

108Ibid., 26.

109U.S. Army, Headquarters, 442nd RCT, Monthly Historical Report, 15 November 1944, Exhibit A, 1.

110U.S. Army, Headquarters, 442nd RCT, Monthly Historical Report, 15 December 1944, Exhibit A, 1.

111U.S. Army, Monthly Historical Report, 15 November 1944, 2.

112Tanaka, Go For Broke, 103.

113Wakamatsu, Silent Warriors, 164.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Answers

The research question asked how the 442nd RCT was used to break the stalemate in the Vosges Mountains for the 36th ID during World War II. The U.S. forces in the Vosges Mountains had been stuck in virtually the same position for nearly two weeks before the 442nd RCT showed up. Assigned to the 36th ID on 13 October 1944, the 442nd RCT was the freshest unit on the line with probably the best manning. In addition, the unit was aggressive and determined to fight. The 442nd RCT was immediately committed to the front lines of the 36th ID to take Bruyeres, Biffontaine and further. This created new momentum for the 36th ID and enabled VI Corps to bring the 3rd ID up through the gap between the 36th ID and the 45th ID to surprise the Germans and send them in retreat.

The first subordinate question asked what events led up to the stalemate. This was important because the fighting in the Vosges Mountains did not occur in isolation from the war and tied into some leadership decisions and dilemmas that were made along the way that affected the campaign. Major General Truscott could have decided to go around the Vosges Mountains and meet with the northern drive through France. He had his experience in Italy in the mountains in winter to

draw from but chose to go through the mountains anyway. In addition, Major General Truscott intended to relieve Major General Dahlquist on at least one occasion but did not. This decision would probably have been a double edged sword as a new commander would have been an unknown quantity and may have been worse than the incumbent. Indeed, the quality of replacements may have had an impact on this decision as well.

Pushing the 442nd RCT was not a difficult task. The unit was self motivated and the 36th ID only had to keep them pointed in the right direction. The commander of the 36th ID found a unit that was well disciplined and could complete any assigned mission no matter how tough another unit found it. He took maximum advantage of the unit while he had it until it could no longer function as a viable combat force. He also took advantage of the fact that this unit was only an attached unit and not organic to the division. He may have taken more care of his own units knowing he would have to answer to the American population for his unit, but not for the Japanese-Americans. Major Lovell, Executive Officer for the 442nd RCT gave his opinion of whether the unit had been overused:

They could have used other troops but they wanted to get the job done and the 100th/442 had always done their job. And I think they were thrown into some of these jobs, for instance, the rescue of the lost battalion that was a task that took a greater toll than the number of men who were actually saved. This just looks like somebody was thrown in there to do a job and they used only the people they thought could do the job. This gives you the idea these men were expendable, if we lose them, they're gone but so long as they are doing the job we're going to keep using them.<sup>1</sup>

Other regiments of the 36th ID were involved in the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" as supported by numerous references in unit histories which responds to the last subordinate question presented. The allegation that no other 36th ID infantry regiment was involved in the rescue cannot be substantiated.

Was the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" a suicidal mission? It was the intent of the commander of the 36th ID that the battalion be rescued as quickly as possible. Whether or not he really intended for the 442nd RCT to rescue them at all costs, meaning a suicide mission was hard to say. It was possible that he felt the unit was expendable since they were not his organic unit and they were Japanese-Americans. This cannot be conclusively answered without knowing what was in the mind of Major General Dahlquist.

#### Discoveries

While knowledge of some issues may have been well known to many more versed in military history, there were many discoveries or revelations made during this research project. The most important part of the process was to remove some of the "myth" from the 442nd RCT. These were no serious distortions but included such beliefs that there were no disciplinary problems, the rescue of the lost battalion cost the 442nd RCT 800 casualties to save 211 and the 442nd RCT liberated Bruyeres without assistance and so on.

There were other facets of the relocation of Japanese-Americans that were not well known. The relocation was actually a culmination of anti-Japanese laws, sentiments and events and was not a hasty decision

made by a government panicked by bombing of Pearl Harbor. The exclusion of Japanese isseis from becoming citizens by law and owning land was incomprehensible in this day and age. Even the ACLU did not come to defend them. In addition, the fact that the isseis and niseis would still be loyal to America and want to stay was amazing. The fact that the niseis would go on to fight in the war was difficult to understand without understanding the Japanese background from which they came.

The formation of the unit was usually treated as a single event when it actually involved two separate events. The formation of the 100th Battalion in 1942 was well before any permission was sought and received to form an all Japanese-American unit. It was not until February 1943 that President Roosevelt authorized the formation of a Japanese-American combat team. What the U.S. Army intended for the 100th Battalion was not really clear. The formation itself was also something unique because it was not like other Regimental Combat Teams. It was expanded in structure. Company S was assigned to the 442nd RCT which were the nisei interpreters working in the Pacific.

The treatment of those Japanese-Americans who were already in the Army and National Guard prior to Pearl Harbor was considerably different after Pearl Harbor. Attitudes immediately changed when on one day, they were trusted loyal soldiers and the next they were under suspicion. Most were discharged. Japanese-Americans of draft age were given a 4C status or enemy alien. No one complained and no one sued.

The indecision and poor planning involved in World War II was contrary to most preconceived notions of this war. Once this was combined with a poor replacement system and an increase in disciplinary problems, it was almost a wonder that the Allies were still able to win the war. Perhaps more accurately, the Germans had reached their culminating point, lost their motivation and collapsed. Some of the German forces continued to be aggressive but the fact they had to chain their men to their machine guns as soldiers of Company F, 442nd RCT found was indicative of serious morale problems. The indecisiveness and political bickering over Operation Anvil/Dragoon was also interesting. The confusion over the name of the Operation, the lack of a plan after taking Marseilles and the postponing of the Operation several times made one wonder if they really expected to take the beaches as easily as they did.

The campaign in France for the 442nd RCT reflected the great difficulty in fighting in a hostile environment, not only for the soldier but for the logisticians as well. The area was mountainous with thick forests and very poor roads. The weather was wet with rain and sometimes, snow and it was cold. Boots were not made for the conditions which caused soldiers to be susceptible to trench foot. Trench foot caused serious problems for the soldiers and was a disease which caused great pain and could be debilitating. The building of a road of wooden planks for four-and-a-half miles in less than a week's time was a significant accomplishment and done at great danger to the engineers. This was the only way to get the heavy vehicles and tanks to the "Lost Battalion." The rescue itself was a six battalion operation

and involved forces of the 141st and 143rd Regiments in addition to the 442nd RCT. Several sources suggested that the 442nd RCT acted alone.

Casualties were extremely heavy but once again, sources conflicted. The unit history for the 442nd RCT lists 1086 casualties for the months of October and November but eyewitness reports reflected much higher casualty numbers. Since non-battle injuries did not appear on the casualty report, it was possible that the difference was due to those injuries, especially trench foot.

### Conclusions

The 442nd RCT was an excellent fighting unit in World War II. Not only did it distinguish itself in action in Italy but in France as well. Its attachment to the 36th ID in France although brief, was one of the most interest periods, marked with intense fighting and heavy casualties. It was easy to pull the unit out of context of the war and examine its actions in a vacuum. Unfortunately, this led to many misleading assumptions. It gave the impression that the 442nd RCT operated independently and did not work in conjunction with other units. This research has shown that while the 442nd RCT was an excellent unit, it fought beside and with other American units.

Taken in isolation, the 442nd RCT appeared to have won the campaign in France alone. In fact, the entire campaign was a team effort although not very well coordinated or planned by the division. The 36th ID did minimal planning, if any at all, to attack through the Vosges Mountains. To its credit, this seemed to be more the norm



rather than an aberration or deliberate attempt to destroy a unit. After the amphibious landings during Operation Anvil/Dragoon, there was no plan after the capture of Marseilles. All plans developed as the corps advanced. The only known was the final objective, Berlin and the defeat of the German army.

The difficulties of the campaign through the Vosges Mountains was the result of poor intelligence. Not only was the German Army present in force in the area but they were well dug in. The German Army was in retreat in the rest of France. If the Seventh Army had gone around the Vosges Mountains, it probably would have encountered less resistance and may have trapped the Germans in the Vosges Mountains. There was a reason why armies in the past had avoided these mountains. In World War I, the Maginot line did not extend through these mountains because the area was too difficult for fighting.

It was interesting to note that the very nature of the unit, an ethnically segregated unit, gave rise to much of its success. By being segregated, the unit was not subject to the Army's replacement policy to include the poor quality and training of new replacements. In addition, the upbringing of the Japanese-American soldiers was similar which gave them a sense of commonality and unity once they overcame the initial difference of being raised on Hawaii versus the mainland. This upbringing also emphasized shame and guilt as a controlling behavior to ensure positive action and compliance to the norm. Combined with a strong desire to prove loyalty to America in light of the bombing on Pearl Harbor, the motivation of these soldiers was particularly strong. They joined the war with an agenda. They had to

prove to the American government that they were loyal and they could be trusted. The replacements for the 442nd RCT were of the same stock and upbringing. In most cases, they were friends or relatives of those already in combat. They were trained in the 1st Battalion, 442nd RCT, which remained behind at Camp Shelby, Mississippi as the cadre to train replacements.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese-American soldier also tended to be older than the norm, averaging age 24 and most had finished high school and some even had higher degrees. Their training was intensive, especially for the first group of volunteers, the 100th Battalion. They were first activated in June 1942 and did not see combat until August 1943.<sup>3</sup> Of significance the unit trained as a unit and later deployed as a unit and this was very important to its later success.<sup>4</sup> The 442nd RCT was activated in February 1943 and deployed June 1944.<sup>5</sup> Once again, a long and intensive training period which the Japanese-Americans took very seriously and trained hard.

The 442nd RCT was also a victim of its own success. While many combat teams complained due to the lack of action, the 442nd RCT saw its share and then some. Once assigned a mission, the 442nd RCT saw the job to the end. This was why General Mark Clark called the Japanese-Americans the best soldiers he had ever had<sup>6</sup> and General Eisenhower asked for them specifically to join the French Campaign.

The success of the 442nd RCT seemed to promote notions of segregation. The real reasons for success included the background of Japanese-Americans and the strong desire to prove their loyalty, both individually and collectively. This gave the unit purpose and

motivation. The records of other segregated units did not stand out during this war.

### Recommendations

Since this thesis only covered a two month period in France, there was still much of the participation of the 442nd RCT that was not covered. The action of the 100th Battalion alone was impressive and could present an interesting study. Its relationship with the 34th ID may present an interesting angle. The main battle in this part of the 442nd RCT's history was at Monte Cassino. The 100th Battalion led the 34th ID up the mountain several times but had to be called back when other supporting units could not meet up with them.

Little is written concerning the Po Valley Campaign at the end of the Italian Campaign and the end of the war. The 442nd RCT was returned to Italy in secret and was to be used as a diversionary tactic. Once committed, the team scaled a 3,000 foot vertical mountainside to surprise the Germans positioned on top. That would surprise anyone.

Another area of study was discipline among the U.S. forces in World War II. Many sources cited an absence of any discipline problems in the 442nd RCT and the only instances of AWOL were from hospitals to the front lines. There are actual cases when this occurred, but there were still some discipline problems in the 442nd RCT. The unit may have had less of a problem but to say there were no problems is a myth. The problem of desertion, stragglers and other disciplinary problems in other units of World War II was beginning to affect the

morale of the units along the front lines. This could also be a subsegment of a study of combat leadership as a whole.

Leadership was also an issue. The division commander of the 36th ID had no combat experience; officers are routinely pulled out of units to make new ones; and discipline was beginning to break down. Was it necessary to have combat experience to lead troops into battle? Was it necessary to have a solid base of officers in a unit to build cohesion? How did these factors affect discipline?

The Battle of Montelimar was also a little known battle in southern France, but tied up the 36th ID for eight days of fighting. There were a series of problems with communications and decisionmaking which had an effect on the entire campaign. The 36th ID reacted poorly to specific instructions and allowed the Germans to escape. The leadership qualities displayed were reminiscent of the Battle for St. Vith.

Some other recommendations do not deal with topics but with other sources and resources a researcher could use if more time was available. There are several locations which tremendous resources that this researcher could not make use of due to the shortage of time. First was the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The Eisenhower Library was able to provide a limited amount of unit histories while the National Archives had the complete set, not only on the 442nd RCT but also on the other units involved. Another location that would have been useful would have been the Japanese-American Historical Society in San Francisco. The society maintained a library of oral histories on file which can be reviewed at the society. A third location was the

University of Hawaii library where many of the books that were specially ordered were on the shelves. In addition, the library maintains tape recordings of interviews and presentations as well as many special articles on the 50th Anniversary of the 442nd RCT. There were other organizations in Hawaii studying Japanese-American issues, like the Japanese Research Center, that could have provided valuable information. The 442nd RCT has become an Army Reserve unit in Hawaii and maintained its own unit history. Even Camp Shelby, Mississippi has a monument and display dedicated to the 442nd RCT. As seen in the video documentary, Yankee Samurai, Bruyeres has also erected monuments in honor of the 442nd RCT as its liberator in World War II. Finally, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW, has several posts on the West Coast made up of mostly members of the 442nd RCT. Each year, a convention has been held in February and an invitation to one of these would be a boon to any researcher.

Several books were in print but unavailable to this researcher as of this writing. Eric Saul of the Presidio Army Museum stated that there was an excellent book by Pierre Moulin called Samurai in Bruyeres. This book detailed the actions of the 36th ID in Bruyeres almost minute by minute. He used data from the National Archives to compile this data. It was self published in late 1993 and not widely available. Another book was written by Lynn Crost and was scheduled to be released in Fall 1993. As of the closing dates for this thesis, the book has not yet been released. Lynn Crost was a reporter who followed the 442nd RCT during the war. One report of a preliminary reading of the transcript indicated this is an excellent book.

This study of the 442nd RCT has been most enlightening. Even with as much time as was available, there was more that could have been researched and could have been added. There were so many possibilities to explore that it was necessary to make arbitrary choices to concentrate the effort. The research process has been both a frustration and an exciting discovery.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>"Nisei Soldier," Vox Productions Inc., 1983.

<sup>2</sup>Hiroaki Morita, Col., USAR, The Nation's Most Decorated Military Unit, the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1992), 6.

<sup>3</sup>Chester Tanaka, Go For Broke. A Pictorial History of the Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, (Richmond, Ca.: Go For Broke, Inc., 1982), 24.

<sup>4</sup>Morita, Most Decorated, 21.

<sup>5</sup>Tanaka, Go For Broke, 50.

<sup>6</sup>"Yankee Samurai," MPI Home Video, [1988].

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