

out the grenade so that the smoke would explode just as it topped the tall trees.

Overshot Mark

With their first tries, both the planes and artillery overshot their mark. Visibility was lousy.

"We were just praying, that's all," said Ssgt Howard Jessup, Anderson, IN. "We just sat in our foxholes, listening hard, not saying a damn word...and we just prayed."

On the afternoon of the fifth day, the food-loaded shells and the belly tanks of medical supplies and rations and batteries all began hitting the target at the same time.

Via walkie-talkie, some doughfoot radioed a P-47 pilot saying, "Thanks to our pals in Air Corps, we eat today for the first time."

Twenty-seven 12th TAC pilots dropped off 61 bundles. Two planes were lost; one pilot is still missing. But the important thing was that 90% of the drops were successful and the battalion received much more stuff than it asked for.

They could loosen their belts now, but **they** couldn't relax. They were still **completely** cut off; they were still a lost battalion.

On the morning of the sixth day, Lt. Higgins was writing a letter to his wife when he suddenly signed off, "Time out for a while, Marge....I've got work to do."

It was more than work. It was the strongest attack the Germans had made. As a prelude, they dumped a terrific artillery barrage on the area. They rushed one sector of the defensive circle.

Fortunately, the Krauts picked the one spot where the battalion had concentrated most of their heavy machine guns. The guns were shooting single fire until the Krauts came close. Then they cut loose with everything. All the machine gunners had been told not to fire until they were sure they had something in their sights.

"Collecting"

"We weren't firepowering; we were collecting," Higgins explained.

Their collection was wonderful. In the fringes of small brush, just where the forest ended, there were dozens and dozens of dead Germans. And the artillery collection was wonderful too. Spraying the whole wooded area with tree bursts, the artillery accounted for a concentrated pile of 250 Krauts.

On the afternoon of the sixth day, Sgt. Edward Guy, of New York City, was on outpost when he saw somebody. He strained his eyes looking and then he raced down the hill like crazy yelling and laughing and grabbing the soldier and hugging him. The other guy just looked at him with a lump in his throat and the first thing he could think of to say was, "Do you guys need any cigarettes?"

Hours later, at a bivouac area just behind the lines, the boys of the battalion were getting new clothes and doughnuts and plenty of water to wash with, and a looney announced to the battalion, "We're going to have flapjacks for breakfast tomorrow, golden brown, with butter,"

George Oiye's Group Cited

Sixth Army Group, France -- Still the great killer of the enemy and at the same time the protector of its own infantry, a field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd Japanese-American Regiment is dropping accurate, sustained and concentrated fire on German personnel, defenses, and other targets in the French Alps along the Franco-Italian border.

As part of Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers 6th Army group, the battalion is providing protective fire for infantry patrols working their way through the mountain passes into German positions by demolishing enemy resistance and attempted ambushes. One member of this battalion is SSgt. George Oiye of Logan, Mont., son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Oiye.

In the treacherous mountain terrain, forward observers have a grave and tough responsibility. They must spot enemy concentrations, machine gun emplacements, mortars, road-blocks, and anything else that might hinder the advancing patrols. Then they must request and direct artillery fire upon those objectives, regulating the accuracy and amount of fire.

The accuracy of the battalion's fire is second to none. In the Italian campaign, during the battle for a strategic hill near the "Little Casino" line north of Rome, the battalion accounted for more than 75% of the enemy casualties. An artillery officer visited the battalion ground later and found more than 120 dead Germans, all killed by artillery, within a circle of 200 yards. Other experts described it as "the best firing we have ever seen."

Carrying its well-established reputation from Italy to France, the battalion contributed much to the 442nd's rescue of the now-famous "Lost Battalion" of the 36th Division. Not only did it support the infantry continuously, but its forward observers also played a big part in the dramatic rescue. One observer led a platoon of doughboys up a heavily defended slope and helped rout the Nazis from that key position. Two other forward defenders were among the first to reach the Lost Battalion.

The Field Artillery unit has fired more than 75,000 rounds since going into action.

Reunion - More on Dachau

A Talmudic proverb says that if a person saves one life it is as if he had saved the whole world. We were reminded of this recently when we attended a bagels and sushi breakfast thrown by San Francisco's Oral Holocaust Oral History Project to honor the Charlie Battery of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, an all Japanese-American battalion, which liberated Dachau.

Eric Saul, a historian who helped organize the event, explained to us that the 522nd was part of the legendary 442nd (Go For Broke) Regimental Combat Team, the most decorated regiment in the history of the American military and the one with the highest casualties: it received an average of three medals per man and spearheaded some of the war's harshest battles. "The nisei - the second generation of Japanese

in America - talk only among themselves and only very vaguely about their accomplishments," Mr. Saul said. "We keep finding out little secrets about the battles they won, the people they saved." The breakfast was shortly to be held in the Project's offices, on the second floor of an old brick building south of Market Street, and the office walls were covered with photographs of Japanese-American soldiers sitting in jeeps, or eating their C-rations, or pulling on helmets, or just goldbricking. Tool Okazaki, who was one of a dozen enlistees from the Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming, showed us a picture of his younger self, peering out from a group on the back of a transport truck. He told us that the soldiers who were from Hawaii liked to hand out nicknames. Leaning closer to a row of pictures, he pointed out Sluggo and Sharkey, then matched the photographs with white-haired men standing on the other side of the room. His own nickname, he said, had been Slack-Ass, but that was a comment on the fit of his pants rather than his work habits.

Mr. Saul said that the Japanese-American soldiers had been ordered by the Army never to reveal that they were the ones who liberated Dachau, and he speculated that the government hadn't wanted men of Japanese descent to be seen getting credit for the liberation. "They were threatened with a court-martial if they told anyone, so most of them never did," he said. "Besides, many of the nisei had been brought up to observe the ancient customs of their parents: never bring shame on your family, never tell a lie; and never brag about what you do."

Rudy Tokiwa, who was only sixteen when he left Poston, Arizona, Camp Two to join the 442nd, and was consequently one of the few men present whose hair was still black, explained, "When the government asked for volunteers, many of us got together and talked about joining the Army. We said that if we want to live in this country -- and it is the only country we know -- we had better show that we're as loyal as anyone else. If there are no volunteers, it will give the President a real good reason to say, 'It's a good thing we put them there. See -- they're not loyal.' So we joined." Mr Tokiwa added that his father, a WW I veteran who had subsequently been denied American citizenship because he was Asian-born, was ridiculed by other internees when his son enlisted.

By ten o'clock, several hundred guests had arrived -- among them some forty survivors of the Holocaust -- and were sitting in rows of folding chairs to listen to the morning's program. A round of applause was offered for the men of Charlie Battery, and they stood up shyly. Another was offered for the Holocaust survivors, and they rose, too. Twenty or so people spoke of their experiences in the camps, European or American, and many of them remarked on the irony of one interned people's freeing the another. George Oiye, who helped organize the Charlie Battery reunion, remembered standing outside Dachau soon after the liberation. "When we got there, it was snowing," he said. "And we saw what looked like lumps in the snow. But they weren't lumps. They were the dead bodies in striped suits."

Janina Cywinska, a sixty-two year old Catholic woman who had been interned in Dachau when her family was caught smuggling weapons to Jewish resisters, sat behind the lectern throughout the proceedings, dabbing her eyes and occasionally clutching Mr. Oiye's hand. When it was her turn to speak, her voice faltered. She told the crowd that she tried not to think back on her experience at the camp -- she tried to put the horrors she'd witnessed out of her mind -- but she would never forget the day the Japanese-American soldiers handed her back her freedom. "I was standing with a blindfold on, waiting to be shot, but the shot didn't come," she explained. "So I asked the woman next to me, 'Do you think they're trying to make us crazy so we'll run and they won't have to feel guilty about shooting us?' She said, 'Well, we're not going to run. We'll just stand here.' So we stood and stood, and suddenly someone was tugging at my blindfold. He tugged this way and that way, and then he jumped up, because he was short, and he pulled it off. I saw him, and I thought, 'Oh, now the Japanese are going to kill us.' And I didn't care anymore, I said, 'Just kill us, get it over with.' He tried to convince me that he was American and wouldn't kill me. I said, 'Oh no, you're a Japanese, and you're going to kill us.' We went back and forth, and finally he landed on his knees, crying, with his hands over his face, and he said, 'You are free now. We are American-Japanese. You are free.'"

After the speeches, the group turned its attention to two rows of tables that stretched the length of the room: one held bagels and cream cheese, lox,

vast mounds of flaked smoked fish, and four kinds of sushi; the other was heavy with cakes and cookies and the sticky-sweet red punch served at barmitzvah receptions everywhere.

We waited our turn behind Ernest Hollander, another survivor of Dachau. A few minutes earlier, Mr. Hollander had told the stories of his brothers' and his father's murder in a flat, rapid, manner, almost as if he were talking about people he didn't know. Now, as I stood before the buffet, he was smiling. "I feel like I got something off my heart by being able to say thank you to some of these people I never knew for giving me a second chance at life," he said. "I feel better."

Veterans Affairs Information

Information from Senator Daniel K. Inouye

I am pleased to share with you that the US Congress approved two important initiatives for Hawaii's veterans. The President recently enacted the measure into law.

The Veterans Administration has been provided \$2 million to establish the Pacific Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and War Related Disorders on the Island of Hawaii. I believe that it was important that such a Center be located where a significant number of veterans in need reside. It would be unfair and unproductive to locate such a Center in Honolulu which would require

Big Island veterans to travel to Oahu to receive care. The Center will provide education, training, and counseling; it will develop specialized and culturally sensitive treatments for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander veterans in need of care. It will also, hopefully, provide relief for those veterans suffering from extreme stress disorders who have sought refuge in the Islands' forests and mountains.

I am very proud that this Center will serve as a national model, and that the National Center for PTSD will be directly involved in its establishment and success in serving our comrades in arms. I am hopeful that once established, it will be possible to transfer the treatment models to each of the Vet Centers on the other islands to uphold our commitment that treatment and care be brought to the veterans, and not the other way around.

Additionally, \$300,000 has been approved to develop a new irrigation system for Punchbowl, the National Cemetery of the Pacific. This is an important step in overhauling the entire system which is estimated to cost approximately \$4 million. Once the plans are completed, please be assured of my support to secure the remaining \$2.7 million to complete the project, and to ensure the Punchbowl has lush and welcoming surroundings for years to come.

With the end of this year's funding cycle, I am looking ahead and planning for the needs of Hawaii's veterans for the coming year. I will be consulting with both the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Department of Defense to ensure that their negotiations are proceeding appropriately, and that

we will be prepared to request design funds, in the amount of \$12-\$15 million, as scheduled next year. This is a commitment I made to you, to the veteran's community, and to Spark.

Please be assured that I will carry through on my promise, and will keep you informed of my progress in this matter of supreme importance to Hawaii's veterans. In the interim, if I can be of any service to you, please do not hesitate to let me know.

100th/442nd/MIS World War II Memorial Foundation

Y.B. "Buddy" Mamiya, Treasurer of the 100th/442nd/MIS World War II Memorial Foundation has announced that his group has now received over \$500,000 in their efforts to raise funds for the construction of a Japanese-American WW II Veterans Memorial in downtown Los Angeles.

"We have received contributions from all over the United States and we have received funds from England and Japan. People have really shown solid broad-based support for our project."

The plan is to construct a memorial that will honor over 150,000 Japanese-Americans who served in combat during WW II.

The Memorial is designed by architect Roger Yanagita, A.I.A. of Los Angeles. He won the nation-wide contest sponsored by the Foundation in early 1991.

His design represents the taking of a hill during combat.

It resembles a half-circle, 40-feet in diameter. Starting at ground level it will reach as high as 8 feet.

The names of the J.A. vets being listed on the honor roll will be engraved in black granite. Centered at the low side, will be an eternal flame and the American flag.

Mamiya said, "We are very fortunate to be able to build this memorial in the First Street Plaza Project."

The Plaza will include the new Japanese-American National Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art, federal offices, and City Hall annex.

He continued, "Usually memorials of this sort are located outside of downtown areas because of the cost of the land. We expect to get lots of foot traffic once the memorial is completed because it is centrally located in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, just adjacent to the little Tokyo section of the city.

"It's up to use to be sure that the story of the Japanese-American experience during World War II is told and not forgotten.

"If we don't help tell this story, then who will?"

Mamiya closed by saying, "The memorial will serve as a reminder to our country and to future generations that discrimination should not be suffered by any minority group because of their ancestry."

For information, contact the Memorial Foundation, PO Box 476, Gardena, CA, 90247.

Department of Veteran Affairs Questions and Answers

-I am a Veteran receiving benefits under VA's Improved Pension. I am supporting two of my grandchildren who live with me and my wife. May I claim my two grandchildren as dependents for pension purposes?

No. But it would be possible if you adopted your grandchildren.

-May a surviving spouse's pension benefits be terminated based on an "inferred marriage," even though the state in which the spouse resides does not recognize "common law" marriages?

Yes.

-My father was exposed to radiation while on active duty in the early 1950's and later died of leukemia. Is my mother entitled to any VA benefits?

Possibly. If your father developed the disease within 40 years from his discharge, exposure to radiation during military service is confirmed, and the disease is determined to be service-connected by VA, your mother would be entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

-I am a World War II veteran and I would like to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. I was told that only certain veterans are eligible to be buried there. What are the requirements?

Arlington National Cemetery, which is under the jurisdiction of the Army - not VA, has a more limited eligibility policy than other national cemeteries. For more information, you should write to: Superintendent,

Arlington National Cemetery,
Arlington, VA 22211, or telephone
(703)-695-3250.

-My husband died from an illness that
was related to his military service. Does
VA pay for burial expenses?

If a veteran's death is service-
connected, VA will pay a burial
allowance up to \$1,500. VA also will
pay the cost of transporting the remains
of a service-disabled veteran to the
national cemetery with available grave
space nearest his or her home. The
person who bore the veteran's burial
expenses may claim reimbursement.

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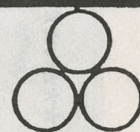
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