

BATTLE CAMPAIGNS

Extraced from "Ambassador in Arms: The Story of Hawaii's 100th Battalion by Thomas D. Murphy

Cassino to Anzio Campaign Part I January 17, 1944 - February 22, 1944

D Day for the amphibious assault was set for 22 January, 1944.

17 January - X Corps would attack across the Garigliano River on a line extending along that stream from the sea to S. Ambroglio. Three days later the 36th Division would push across the Rapido River and establish a bridgehead in the S. Angelo area. On the right of the 36th the 34th Division would make a demonstration to keep German reserves in the Cassino area, and would hold itself ready to move across the S. Angelo bridgehead against Cassino or to pass through the 36th and up the Liri Valley to the northwest. These plans contemplated a breakthrough south of Cassino's defenses.

Though X Corps had established a bridgehead across the Garigliano by the end of January, it breached only the outer works of the Gustav Line, and the 36th Division's attack in the S. Angelo sector.

20-22 January - Had been a costly failure. As a result it was now planned that the 34th Division should cross the Rapido River in an attempt to break through the German defenses north and west of Cassino. In this area the Rapido cut across the eastern edge of the Liri Valley, flowed southwest from S. Elia and just east of Cassino, and joined the Gari River four miles below that city. West of the Rapido, the Gustav Line ran roughly southwest from Mt. Marrone to Belvedere Hill (720 meters) and then south to Monastery Hill (516 meters) on the summit of which sat the ancient and famous Abbey of Montecassino, a great rectangle of buildings dominating the Liri Valley and Highway 6, the road to Rome. Fifteen hundred feet below and east of the monastery lay the gray stone city of Cassino, straggling awkwardly along the steep sides of a lower hill which sloped east to the Rapido. Cassino's peacetime population was about 20,000, but the Germans had converted the place into a fortress and the inhabitants had fled.

As it crossed the Rapido above Cassino, the 34th Division would send a column down the road which entered the city west of the river. Other elements would push into the mountains about Mt. Castellone to the northwest, take high ground dominating Cassino, and debouch southwest to Piedmonte, cutting Highway 6 and pocketing German forces in the area thus enveloped.

While the high brass plotted battles yet UN won, the dogfaces of the 100th rested near S. Michele, making only reconnaissance and combat patrols.

16-22 January - The first patrol established contact with the French at Portella on the north, and with the 2nd Battalion of the 135th on the south nearer. Later missions scouted enemy defenses on the east bank of the Rapido River, looked for a likely crossing place, and engaged enemy outposts.

They reported that the Germans had damned the river, which, diverted from its normal course, flooded the plain directly west of the battalion's positions to knee-depth. Its dried-out channel was about seventy-five feet in width and about fourteen feet deep; its east bank was of cement topped by a retaining wall which rose above the ground level to heights varying from seven to twelve feet; its west bank was of dirt and very steep. To reach the Cairo-Cassino highway the battalion would have to cross in succession a submerged road, flooded farm land, two irrigation

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ditches about three feet wide and four feet deep, a more shallow ditch about two feet wide and one foot deep, a muddy cornfield sown with circular, picket-type mines, and another irrigation ditch five feet wide and six feet deep. After crossing these obstacles the men would have to scale the retaining wall on the east side of the river bed, cross the channel, clamber up the dirt bank on the other side, and force their way onto the road through a double apron of mined barbed wire. Steep, barren slopes, probably mined, rose abruptly west of the highway, and on these were German machine-gun emplacements covering the whole approach area, which had been carefully cleared of brush and trees to secure an unobstructed field of fire.

During one of the 100th's daylight patrols two scouts were surprised from the rear, and one was captured. The Jerries yelled to the other to surrender. As he hesitated, a hand grenade came toward him. It missed. He replied with two fragmentation grenades. As his foes scattered he ran for a nearby irrigation ditch, dived in, swam three hundred yards south with the swift current, and returned to the patrol assembly point. Pfc Sueyoshi Yamakawa later received a Silver Star for his athletic versatility. The next day, however, only ten of a fourteen-man patrol returned from a German ambush. A lieutenant had been captured and three enlisted men had been killed.

Our KIA losses for 23 January, 1944

100 C	Pfc. Hamamoto, Seiichi	Waimanalo, HI
100 C	Sgt. Nakamura, Henry Y	Honolulu, HI

24 January - The battalion moved into position for attack. The 133rd regiment would lead the 34th Division's assault across the river and into the hills, its objectives the southern portion of the Cassino-Cairo road, the Italian military barracks at the hamlet of Mt. Villa where the highway turned northwest toward the village of Cairo, Hill 56 farther north, and Hill 213 south of Cairo. After the 133rd had taken these points the 168th Infantry would pass through

The officer, who had won a battlefield commission for gallantry in the fighting near Pozzilli, was questioned by Japanese and German military officers while he was prisoner in Germany. The Japanese asked whether the American Army gave the AJAs equal treatment with other troops. They had heard about the 100th's battle record, were interested in the allegiance which these men from Hawaii bore to the United States, and seemed surprised at the number of years of schooling the lieutenant had received. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin, July 2, 1945; Pacific Citizen, July 28, 1945.

To seize Mt. Castellone, S. Angelo Hill, and Albaneta Farm, all northwest of Cassino. On the 168th's left and within this outer encircling movement the 135th Infantry would cross the Rapido and drive into the northern end of Cassino.

From 11:30 P.M. to midnight, jump-off time, five battalions of artillery sent from 11:30 P.M. to midnight, jump-off time, and five battalions of artillery sent a cascade of fire at 100th Battalion the German positions. The three battalions of the 133rd then moved ahead abreast, the 1st on the right, the 3rd in the center, and the 100th on the left, south of the barracks. Men of the ammunition and pioneer platoon cleared paths through the mines for Companies A and C, which led the 100th's advance. Sergeant Calvin Shimogaki, his mine detector disabled by a bullet, crawled in the mud, searching with his hands for trip wires, and cleared a path five feet wide and fifty yards long.

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By 5:00 A.M. Companies A and C had reached the east bank of the river channel. Though the Germans had been shelling the approach area, casualties had been relatively light. During the morning enemy guns pummeled the river line, but there was good cover behind the retaining wall of the east bank.

On the 100th's right the 3rd Battalion, under heavy fire from the direction of the Italian barracks, had placed only a few men along the river bank, and the 1st Battalion had been stopped after 200 yards by a mine field, through which a tank battalion was now trying to clear lanes of advance. Shimogaki, who won a Silver Star for his action, was one of the forty AJAs, who had been accepted into the Hawaii National Guard before October, 1940. He had been a member of the band. Company B of the 100th was ordered forward to join A and C companies in preparation for an attack across the dry river channel. The men advanced across the flats under a smoke screen, some of them carrying ladders for use in scaling the embankments. When they were halfway across the wind changed, blowing away their cover, and they were stopped by a hail of machine-gun, mortar, and artillery fire from the hills across the road. Only the company commander, two other officers, and eleven enlisted men reached the east wall. Those of the company who could still move sought cover in irrigation ditches or dug into the mud. Companies A and C were told to push across the river bed and road into the hills between the barracks and Cassino, but German fire was so intense they were unable to pass the west bank of the river channel. Major Clough was wounded in the arm, and Major Dewey, executive officer of the 133rd took temporary command of the battalion. That night Company B was pulled back from the flats. When Captain Fukuda of Company A returned from the river bank to the battalion command post he was asked what he thought of the situation. Fukuda said he thought the battalion could probably push its way into the hills, but that when it got there it would not have enough men left to hold on. Dewey had orders, however, that the battalion should attack in the morning. Fukuda now led Dewey, Major Jack Johnson, a messenger, two wiremen, and a litter crew back toward the river wall, where a new command post was to be set up. As the group moved across the flats a German machine gun opened up from the hills ahead, spraying the area at random. Dewey and Johnson were badly wounded. Johnson, as he crawled for cover, exploded a mine and caught it full force. He died a few hours later at the aid station. Major Clough again took command of the battalion, and in the early morning hours Company C was pulled back from the river bank.

Our KIA losses for 24 January, 1944

100 C	Pfc. Fujii, Yutaka	Lihue, HI
100 C	Cpl. Motoyama, Susumu	Honolulu, HI
100 C	Pfc. Muronaka, Mitsugi	Papaikou, HI
100 B	Pvt. Nakai, Hitoshi	Papaikou, HI
100 C	Cpl. Yoshida, Edward Y	Naalehu, HI

During the next day the 1st Battalion and elements of the 3rd failed in an attempt to get across the highway and onto Hill 213, and at dark they were, like the 100th. In defensive positions along the river bank, during that afternoon the elements of a company of the 1st Battalion, 135th Infantry, crossed the Rapido on the left of the 100th. And reached the outskirts of Cassino, but flooded ditches, wire, mines, and machine-gun fire prevented further advance. That night Company A of the 100th was ordered back from the river; elements of the 1st and 3rd battalions took over its position; and the 100th went into reserve at S. Michele. The 1st and 3rd battalions held a line of departure for the 168th Infantry, which passed through and attacked at 7:30 the next morning,

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and then they too moved back across the flats, and the 133rd went into divisional reserve. Tanks preceded the 168th.

Our KIA losses for 25 January, 1944

100 Hq Mjr Johnson, John A	Honolulu, HI
100 B Sgt. Furukido, Kenneth K	Honolulu, HI
100 Hq Pfc. Goda, Hiroshi	Hilo, HI
100 Hq S/Sgt. Komatsu, Katsuto	Hilo HI
100 C Pvt. Noda, Sueo	Spreckelsville, HI
100 Hq Pfc. Nozawa, Alfred S	Honolulu, HI
100 D Sgt. Ogata, Masayoshi	Hakalau, HI
100 C Sgt. Oishi, Teiji	Hilo, HI
100 D Cpl. Okumura, Toyokazu	Pepeekeo, HI
100 A Pvt. Sasano, Toshio	Honolulu, HI
100 B Pvt. Tanaka, Jack M.	Pahala, HI
100 D Sgt. Teruya, Herman T.	Ninole, HI

Our KIA losses for 26 January, 1944

100 C Cpl. Ikehara, Henry S	Wahiawa, HI
100 C Pfc. Tonai, Taro	Waikapu, HI

28 January - A few soldiers had climbed part way up Hill 213 but were later forced to withdraw. Two platoons had dug in midway between Cairo and the Rapido. By dark on 29 January, the 168th had gained the lower slopes of Hills 56 and 213, and by dawn of 31 January, despite heavy casualties, it had captured these hills and had occupied Cairo. Farther north, elements of the French Expeditionary Force had taken Belvedere Hill and Abate Hill.

Our KIA losses for 28 January, 1944

100 C Pvt. Miyoga, Tsuyoshi	Lawai, HI
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29 January - The 133rd moved back into line to take over the defensive positions of the 135th Infantry, which now swung to the right and moved between the Italian barracks and Hill 56 for an attack against Mt. Castellone and Majola Hill. On 1 February, the 135th took these objectives and pushed south and southwest, while the 168th remained on Hills 56 and 213.

31 January - The 133rd had finished mopping up in the barracks area, and on 1 February it sent the 3rd Battalion south against Cassino along high ground west of the road as two platoons of the 756th Tank Battalion trundled down the highway and the dry river channel. Stopped on the first day by heavy enemy fire.

2 February - Tanks and infantry secured a toe hold in the northern outskirts of the city, but by evening they had been pushed back up the road.

3 February - The 3rd Battalion angled to the right, away from the road, and captured Hill 175, just northwest of Cassino, but heavy fire from Hill 193, directly south of 175, stopped further

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advance. Called "Castle Hill" because of the ruins of an old fort on its summit, Hill 193 presented an almost vertical cliff on its north face. Here and on the other heights in the sector the Germans had dug or blasted concrete and steel emplacements, some of which were large enough to contain living quarters for several troops. They were strong enough to withstand direct shell hits and were connected by trenches studded with steel-topped igloo-like machine-gun emplacements. The Todt engineers had done their work well.

The same day some tanks pushed into the northwest corner of the city, and the 1st Battalion forced its way into the northeastern outskirts and dug in under heavy counterattack. Many of Cassino's stone houses had been made into miniature fortresses inside which the Germans had built concrete and steel antitank and machine-gun emplacements which commanded the narrow alleys. The bigger guns stopped the attacking tanks cold and machine-gun and sniper fire mowed down attacking infantrymen.

In the hills to the northwest the 135th Infantry reached the slopes of S. Angelo Hill on 4 February, but could not push the Germans off its summit. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 135th were able to advance only a few hundred yards to the southwest against Hills 593 and 445. On 6 February two battalions of the 168th moved into action, attacking unsuccessfully against Monastery Hill (516), and on the same day the 2nd Battalion of the 135th took and, with great difficulty, held Hill 593.

Our KIA loss for 4 February, 1944

100 A Pfc. Shimabukuro, Hideo Honolulu, HI

5 February - All but L Company of the 3rd Battalion of the 133rd had moved from Hill 175 into the northwest corner of Cassino. That day the 1st Battalion relieved Company L which joined the rest of the 3rd Battalion. The 1st Battalion took up the attack against Castle Hill (193) but gained little ground, and the 3rd Battalion inched a little farther into Cassino's northwestern corner.

Our KIA loss for 5 February, 1944

100 A Pfc. Kawamoto, Haruo Kailua, HI

6 February - The 36th Division was relieved by the 2nd New Zealand Division, which took over the sector south of Cassino, and the 36th swung north and to the right of the 34th Division to the Mt. Castellone area. It was intended that as the 36th jumped off for an advance southwest toward Piedmonte the 34th Division would simultaneously make another attempt against Hill 593, Monastery Hill (516), and Cassino. Possibly this time there might be a breakthrough to Highway 6.

The 135th Infantry of the 34th would attack in the vicinity of Hill 593, protecting the right flank of the 168th Infantry, which would make the main effort, another assault up Monastery Hill. If the 168th took the Abbey it would then drive toward Highway 6. Within these outer encircling movements the 133rd Infantry would push southwest, in a tighter arc, to hem Cassino's defenders from the west. In the 133rd's pivoting movement, the 3rd Battalion in Cassino would serve as anchor, while the 1st Battalion farther west and the 100th on the outer rim of the arc swept south and then east against the town.

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Our KIA loss for 6 February, 1944

100 D Pfc. Ikeno, James S. Captain Cook, HI

8 February - Three hours after the 168th Infantry had moved against Monastery Hill, each of the 133rd's, battalions swung into action under smoke cover and with support by elements of the 760th Tank Battalion. Company C led the 100th down from the barracks area, climbed across ravines to a spot west of Castle Hill (193), and then turned south to climb through more gullies to Hill 165. Under smoke cover the battalion had suffered only a few casualties, but when the wind changed, lifting the smoke, machine-gun and mortar fire poured down from enemy positions on Monastery Hill to the right and from Castle Hill to the left. Several soldiers were killed; many more were wounded.

Major Lovell (whose return from the hospital on 29 January, just in time to take the 100th back into action, had been greeted with a joyous "The Major is back!") was injured and again forced out of action. Pinned down by rifle fire at the edge of a gully, he had piled up a rock shelter for his head and the upper part of his body, but had received a bullet in the chest and three in his exposed legs. Sergeant Gary Hisaoka, who had already been recommended for a Silver Star for his work in clearing mines on the Rapido's banks, started to dig a shallow ditch toward the wounded officer from his own slit trench eighteen yards away. After having burrowed eight yards he disgustedly threw down his shovel. "Hell, I'm going now." He dashed the rest of the distance, grabbed Lovell under the arms, and dragged him to safety.

A German assault gun appeared from some buildings behind the Castle, and began to pump shells down at the men on Hill 165. Rifle grenades couldn't reach it, so the same bazooka man who had ruined a German tank at Alife was called forward from a support platoon. He snaked across rocky terrain to a point within thirty yards of the gun and fired. His first shot hit one of the treads, and as bullets rattled around him he aimed again, and this time his rocket pierced the tank's armor and exploded inside. Tank-buster Masao Awakuni then crawled behind a boulder and sweated it out under sniper fire. In the dark, ten hours later, he returned to his outfit, a self-applied bandage around a wounded arm. He later received a DSC.

While the 100th had been feverishly seeking shelter on Hill 165, the 2nd Battalion had had to dig in on the northwest slopes of Castle Hill, and the 3rd Battalion had been able to push only a few hundred feet into Cassino.

For the next four freezing days the men of the 100th deepened their holes and barricaded them with rocks and earth. Communication lines were constantly being cut by shellfire, and two Headquarters Company men, Pfc Akira Ishikawa and Pfc Satoshi Nakauae, later received Bronze Stars for their hours of repair work under fire. Technician Robert Oda and Sergeant Edward Saito volunteered to carry a radio from the battalion intermediate command post to the front lines about a mile forward. On the way the instrument was damaged by sniper fire and shell fragments. Dazed and bruised from being hurled among boulders by shell concussions, the men returned to the command post, secured another radio, and delivered it. They, too, received Bronze Stars.

8-10 February - The 168th Infantry failed to take Monastery Hill, and suffered tremendous losses. On the northern slopes of Hill 593 the 135th was forced to fight furiously just to hold on.

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Our KIA losses for 8 January, 1944

100 A	Pfc. Funai, Stanley K	Kawailoa, HI
100 C	Pfc. Komeda, Fred H	Honolulu, HI
100 C	Sgt. Nakanishi, Masao	Halaula, HI
100 A	Sgt. Sakamoto, Uichi, W	Honaupo, HI

Our KIA losses for 9 February, 1944

100 A	S/Sgt. Hayashi, Donald S	Honolulu, HI
100 B	Pfc. Higa, Masao	Kahakuu, HI
100 A	Pfc. Yoshimura, Minoru	Honolulu, HI

11 February - II Corps mounted another attack. This time the 36th Division would try to break the German defenses along the line from Hills 593 to 374, and the 34th Division would make another try against Monastery Hill and Cassino. The 36th failed to dent the enemy defenses, and suffered heavy casualties. The 168th Infantry, so depleted in manpower that headquarters and supply personnel had to be used as reserve units, failed to gain ground on Monastery Hill, and the 135th and 133rd regiments held their ground with difficulty. From now on all units held defensively while the New Zealand Corps prepared to take over from the exhausted II Corps units.

12 February - The 100th withdrew from its exposed position on Hill 165 and went into regimental reserve north of Hill 193 and behind the 1st Battalion. From this point Company B was sent into Cassino to aid the 3rd Battalion. For four days and nights one of its squads held an ancient church which was gradually being ripped apart by enemy shells. The gray sky could be seen through a dozen holes in the roof. One shell which ripped through the floor of the loft brought down parts of skeletons which evidently had been resting comfortably for years, and bounced skulls and assorted leg and arm bones on the pavement below.

Much of the fighting inside Cassino was being done with hand grenades. A newspaper correspondent, who wanted to -see the battle close up, visited Company B, remarked facetiously that he had heard that the Japanese were good baseball players, and asked about the 100th's grenade technique. He received the weary reply: "Mister, all you gotta do is trow straight and trow first. Dat's da numbah one theeng, trow first."

Our KIA losses for 12 February, 1944

100 C	Cpl. Shiyama, Henry M	Onomea, HI
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15 February - As thousands of soldiers watched with fascination and awe, 255 Allied planes dropped tons of bombs on the venerable Abbey atop Monastery Hill, and heavy guns hurled shells into its slowly disintegrating walls. During the next three days, English, Indian, and New Zealand troops tried to capture Monastery Hill and Hill 593, but failed.

Our KIA losses for 17 February, 1944

100 C	Pvt. Ishii, Richard H	Honolulu, HI
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22 February - When elements of the 6th New Zealand Brigade relieved the 133rd Infantry, the Germans

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still held Cassino and the mountain defenses above it.*

In the fighting at the Rapido and around Cassino the 100th had lost four officers and forty-four enlisted men killed, twelve officers, 122 men wounded, and three officers and eight men injured. An additional seventy-five men had been hospitalized for trench foot or other ailments. When the battalion had entered Italy at Salerno it had numbered 1,300 men, and on 1 January, before its casualties in the fight through the Majo Hill mass and down to the Rapido Plain, it had had an effective strength of 832 officers and men. Before Major Lovell had led the battalion back into the fight for Cassino, the 133rd's commander had told him, "*I hate to have to do this, Major; they've been hit hard already, but I've got to use your fire eaters in this attack.*" The 100th's effectives now totaled 521.

Please note that the 100th Infantry Battalion was an oversized battalion until it merged with the 442nd Regimental Combat team.

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