November 1, 194

WARDEPT
13 NOV 1944
ASST SEC

... Gerhardt
... to Ass't. Sec. of War
... 886, Pentagon Bldg.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel Gerhardt,

The so-called "rescue mission" was completed. The trapped first battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment was evacuated yesterday to the rear when the 3rd battalion and the 100th Battalion reached their area on the late afternoon of the 30th.

The story is one of heroism and tragedy, especially for the 442. There are so many interesting details involved in the whole episode that one cannot report it in full. Yet this particular mission has in it the best of our efforts to date that somehow I want to give you the details as I have picked them up.

On or about the 24th of October, our regiment was relieved by the 141st. We were a happy lot to get a rest after breaking the Jerry resistance in the push of this sector. We had anticipated a good rest, but an emergency in the division called our 442 into action only after two and a half days of rest. The first battalion of the 141st, which had earlier replaced the 3rd battalion of 442, was completely cut off by the enemy on the first day of our rest.

Two days later the second battalion of 442 was pulled into line to start the rescue mission. The next day, the third and 100th went into action for the same purpose. It was soon evident that the enemy was resisting every inch of our push. With determination and courage, the third and the 100th abrest of each other, being commanded by the General, pushed as never before to gain ground.

The concern for the trapped battalion grew more intense with each passing day. The Major General was personally anxious to have us establish contact. For two days, he risked his personal safety, stood behind the infantrymen to urge them on for greater gain. The men of the third battalion and the 100th pushed with all available courage and speed, ignoringthe mounting casualties.

On the 29th, company I and company B, pushing together came upon strongly prepared defenses. Machine guns were set on commanding ground to stop our attack. The Major General saw the companies pinned down. He walked between the doughboys, urged them to move forward. He continued commanding our men to push on.

In spite of the strong resistance, our two assault companies charged forward. The brave soldiers moved straight into the deadly machine gun fire. Many fell to the ground, but others moved on like the ceaseless waves of the boundless sea.

ASW 342.18 J. A. Yamada, Masao

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When the hill was taken, about half of those that assaulted were found to be casualties. The regiment, however, continued to move forward. Enemy resistance lessened and the began to withdraw. By late afternoon of the following day, between 1500 and 1600, the 100th and the third entered the area of the first battalion of the 141st.

The meeting of the AJA's with the doughboys of the first battalion was a touching moment. The troops had been cut off for seven days. They had little ammunition or medical supplies and no food for five days. Rations were flown in on the sixth day. They were able to dig in, and the Jerries did not attempt to challenge them directly.

Some twenty or more of the trapped battalion were wounded and their faithful aid men kept watch over them. Two or three of the wounded died during that period. Trench foot also set in, and many more were incapacitated by swollen feet. In all, approximately seventy were under medical care during their trying period.

When the 442 appeared close to their area, there was some difficulty of identification. Some of the able and watchful soldiers of the first battalion fired at our men. Fortunately there were no casualties. Soon, identification was established, and firing ceased.

Word was passed from mouth to mouth among the first battalion men that fellow GI's had come to their rescue. The troops jumped out of their fox-holes spontaneously, smiled heartily at the AJA's, and, for a moment, forgot the ugliness of war. Many shook hands with our boys and said with down-right sincerity, "You are our life-savers. If it weren't for you, only God knows what would have happened to us."

Our AJA's in this particular rescue mission had approximately 350 wounded in action. Two of our assault companies have only a platoon and a half left in strength. Over fifteen were killed or reported missing. The cost to the 442 is relatively high. Yet, when those that pushed met the once-trapped troops, their weariness, their discomforts, and their efforts seemed all worthwhile.

The comments among various people are reflective of the whole episode. Some say it is strange that the other two battalions of the 141st did not push so vigorously as the 442 did. Our K company men saw some of the 141st men run during a counterattack by the Jerries, thereby exposing them to danger. Others say that the first battalion could have fought their way out with additional supply of ammunition. In many ways, they were in better condition than our own battered battalions, for they have had less casualties and more officers and men.

We need not worry ourselves as to what could have happened. I'm glad of the realistic fact that our 442, our AJA's, were called upon to do something that we could always remember as a "brotherly act" in this war. I hope that a human story as such would bring a deeper understanding of the AJA's spirit.

Sincerely yours,

Masao Yamada

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