

ANNEX NO. 1

Proposed Citation, 100th Battalion,  
442d Regimental Combat Team

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Regimental Combat Team.

## HEADQUARTERS 92d INFANTRY DIVISION

JEW/saj

AG 200.6-AD

APO 92, US Army  
26 September 1945

SUBJECT: Citation of Unit (Oak Leaf Cluster)

TO: Commanding General, MTOUSA,  
APO 512, US Army

1. Under the provisions of Circular Number 333, War Department, 1943, it is recommended that the 100th Battalion, 442d Regimental Combat Team, be cited in War Department General Orders for outstanding accomplishment in combat during the period 5 and 6 April 1945, near Seravezza, Italy.

2. The 442d Infantry attached to the 92d Infantry Division was ordered to attack in the Ligurian Coast sector of the 5th Army front on 5 April 1945. The division objective was the naval base at La Spezia. The sector assigned to the 442d Infantry Regiment was the mountain sector commanding the coastal plains overlooking the cities of Massa, Carrara, Sarzana, and La Spezia. This high ground if secured would necessitate a German withdrawal on the coastal plains. The object of the attack (made 11 days prior to the jump off of the balance of the 5th and 8th Army troops in Italy) was to cause the enemy to divert reserves from the Po Valley sector to the Ligurian Coast sector and thus weaken the Po Valley sector and prepare it for assault by other elements. As shown by later developments, the success of the attack affected a feint which contributed to the overwhelming "breakthrough" of the 5th and 8th Armies on the opposite Po Valley Sector of the Italian Front.

In the 442d plan the 100th Battalion was to make a frontal attack from our MLR on hill Florida on the formidable ridge running from Rippa north to Mount Felgorita, composed of hills called Georgia, Ohio's 1, 2, 3, and Rocky Ridge. The long prepared enemy defenses on this 1500 to 2000 foot ridge had resisted numerous attacks by other elements and had prevented the advance of the 5th Army front in this sector for some 5 months. The positions were composed of reinforced and inter locking trench systems, 12 built-up rock pill boxes, mutually supporting machine gun emplacements, caves with embrasures covering all approaches, and a very large bombproof dugout used to shelter the enemy during barrages. Heavily-laden enemy minefields covered the entire forward and reverse slopes of hill Georgia and all probable avenues of approach were especially concentrated with hostile mines. At the time of the attack these positions were manned by 1, 2, 3, and 5 companies of the 1st Battalion, 285th Regiment, and some elements of the 148th Fusilier Battalion. Enemy artillery on the coastal plain, including naval coastal defense guns at Punta Bianca, had unlimited observation and direct fire on the battalion sector.

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Though the terrain in the sector dictated that an envelopment movement could be accomplished on the right side of the ridge, it would be possible to envelope from the valley on the left flank. However, it was decided by the battalion to attack along the top of the ridge with supporting fire from hill Florida and the coastal plains held by our troops. The companies were assigned their objectives. When these objectives were gained, the companies were to establish a base of fire; and the next company was to work its way under cover of fire through the left flank to the next objective. These tactics were to continue until the battalion's hold on the ridge was widened and other movements were made possible. Enemy observation from Rocky Ridge and the Ohio's were to be smoked and kept continually under fire.

Under cover of darkness on the night of 3 April 1945 the 100th Bn moved into the town of Vallechia and remained under cover during daylight of the following day. At 1800 hours, 4 April, the 81mm Mortar Platoon of Co D, 100th Bn worked their way up to their initial gun position, behind a long ridge 1500 yards northwest of Vallechia, and registered on their present principal targets--Georgia, the Ohio's, and Rocky Ridge. During the night of 4 April the remainder of the battalion moved up to the ridge Florida; relieved the 3rd Bn, 371st Infantry Regt; and set up a base of fire with the machine gun platoons of Co D, plus 2 platoons of 371st Inf, supported by the 81mm mortars of Co D, 100th Bn and Co M, 371st Inf. Co B, 100th Bn, was placed on the line of departure, and Co A was poised to jump off at H hour. This movement and relief were so skillfully executed that they were not detected by the enemy. The battalion established 2 OP's which covered the battalion area with excellent observation for the first phase of the attack.

At 0430 5 April two platoons of Co B were deployed on the crest of Florida hill to give fire support as Co A passed through. At 0455 hours an intensive artillery barrage composed of division artillery, attached TD's, and the AT guns and 81mm mortars of the 100th Bn, 3rd Bn (442d Inf), and 371st was laid on Georgia, Rocky Ridge, and the Ohio's for a period of ten minutes. At 0500 the enemy retaliated with artillery and mortar fire in the valley on the left flank, running up the draws toward the ridge and returning, stopping short of the ridge. In planning this, the battalion had foreseen the probability of this enemy counter barrage in these positions and had displaced the troops so that no damage was done by this enemy shelling.

At 0505 hours, the assault platoons of Company A jumped off and passed through the left platoon of Company B. With two platoons abreast, one on each side of the north-south ridge mass, Co A started for Georgia hill and worked its way for a distance of some 150 yards through a very thick minefield. When the leading elements were almost to the crest of the hill, an enemy mine was tripped, informing the enemy as to the direction of our attack. In the ensuing few minutes, seven more men tripped mines and became casualties. On detonation of the first mine, the enemy reacted with 6 machine guns, supported by a considerable number of machine pistols, rifles, and grenades against the attacking company. The 3rd platoon on the left flank crawled under the heavy fire and deployed against the enemy positions. The first squad, under the



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cover of fire from the other two squads, made a flanking movement to the left. By creeping slowly through the heavy fire and minefield, they worked their way to within grenade throwing distance of the first machine gun position. Under the covering fire of the squad, the scouts closed in on the gun position and knocked out the enemy guns by using "tommy guns" and grenades. After silencing the first gun position, the scouts continued forward and in the same manner neutralized the second machine gun position. The lead squad then closed with the remaining two enemy gun emplacements, which covered the approaches to the objective, under the cover of fire from the remainder of the platoon. With the effective use of all weapons, they successfully knocked out these positions. The remainder of the platoon, after an intensive firefight with the enemy lodged near the peak of the crest, succeeded in reaching the peak. Meanwhile, the 1st platoon on the other side of the ridge mass worked their way through the minefield and moved up rapidly to the crest of the hill; and by 0530B hours, A co had completely occupied the hill mass of Georgia, up to the crest.

The enemy, from well entrenched positions on the northern slopes of Georgia, laid down a wall of small arms fire with automatic weapons, grenade launchers, and bazookas on the crest of the hill and stopped the advance of Co A. Subsequently, the enemy laid down a very heavy concentration of mortar and artillery fire, which made further advance too costly. When Co A reached the crest of the hill, Co C was ordered to attack through the left flank of Co A to secure and occupy Ohio 1 and Rocky Ridge. At 0600 hours, Co C passed through 3rd platoon of Co B and worked through the left flank of Co A. In executing this flanking movement, Co C was subjected to intense mortar and artillery fire and several casualties were sustained. Automatic fire and grenades from an extension of Georgia in the rear (north) and fire from interlocking machine gun positions between Georgia and Ohio 1 stopped Co C almost parallel to Co A's forward advance positions. Attempts to maneuver to the flanks of the resistance resulted in heavy casualties from antipersonnel mines. In conjunction with the 3rd platoon of Co A, the 1st platoon of Co C made repeated frontal attacks on enemy bunker positions. Each assault resulted in heavy casualties from automatic fires and mines. The extensive minefields prevented the use of more than one platoon in frontal assaults and made flank movements too costly. Squad and platoon actions against these caves and emplacements were launched time after time, but but the attacking companies were unable to gain much ground. Hand to hand cave and trench fighting ensued, during which time grenades were thrown back and forth by both sides. Requests were made to higher headquarters for engineer teams to blast these bunkers and emplacements, but no help came. Flame throwers were also requested to aid in digging the enemy out of their positions, but it was not until very late in the afternoon that two of these flame throwers were made available for use. In the fierce hand to hand fighting two of the bunkers were captured and neutralized.

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Throughout the day the 81mm mortar platoon of Co D gave very close and effective support to the attacking companies. Starting with their preparatory barrage in conjunction with the artillery, they engaged their principal target then shifted their fire, as Co A moved into the attack, from Georgia to the Ohio's and Rocky Ridge, where numerous machine guns were inflicting heavy casualties on the attacking companies. More than 1040 rounds of HE were fired before they displaced to a new position on the rear slope of Georgia hill at about 0930 hours. Stubborn strongpoints blocking the advance of the battalion from Georgia to the Ohio's were constantly barraged by very close 81mm fire. Each time the OP called for fire, two mortars fired concentrations of nine rounds each. This continued through the day and night in addition to their harrassing fire missions. The other two mortars were laid on a road leading south into the valley on the left, and all night long searching concentrations were fired at 30 minute intervals. During the first day HE shells were fired at the rate of 50-75 rounds per hour.

Numerous patrols were sent out by both attacking companies during the day and night, and valuable information was gained; but heavy casualties were sustained. Throughout the day intensive artillery fire was received from the coastal plains, as the attacking unit in that sector was unable to gain ground.

At 2200 hours, a platoon of Co C made a night infiltration attack to knock out the series of bunkers and emplacements, but this attack was repelled by heavy automatic fire and mines. However, two prisoners were captured, and valuable information regarding the effects of our mortar and artillery fire was gathered from them. The battalion dug in and continued to patrol heavily.

Casualties of the 100th Bn: 14 KIA, 53 WIA

Casualties of the enemy (est): 14 KIA, 2 captured, unknown WIA

That night a new plan of attack was formulated by the battalion commander and company commanders to overcome the strongpoints on the northern slope of Georgia.

At 0530B hours, 6 April, one platoon of Co B, reinforced by a section of light machine guns, started a wide flanking movement through the left of Co C along a covered trail toward the rear of the enemy bunkers. This platoon moved cautiously over the heavily mined area and reached a point almost to the rear of the enemy positions without being detected. Two squads were deployed with one squad and the LMG section as a base of fire to cover the advance of the rest of the platoon. As the attacking squads began to work their way up to the enemy bunkers, their presence was detected by the enemy; and they were subjected to very heavy fire from small arms, rockets, and grenades. With excellent use of fire and movement, the platoon worked itself into position and closed with the enemy, methodically destroying the machine gun emplacements and bunkers. Their use of fire and movement was so effective that they overran all of the positions and captured 14 prisoners, killed 4, and wounded 7. After cleaning up all the resistance in that area, the platoon



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then swerved sharply to the left toward Ohio 1 and engaged another machine gun position which had opened fire upon them. Using the same tactics of fire and movement, they silenced the guns, captured 11 more prisoners, and killed 3 more of the enemy. These enemy positions were guarding a large supply dump, and the platoon captured enough food to feed a company for one month. Large stores of small arms ammunition, grenades, several machine guns, radio sets, and rocket ammunition were also captured in adjacent caves dug into the side of the mountain. By 0900 hours, the entire hill mass of Georgia was cleared of the enemy.

During this attack, periodic concentrations of HE and smoke were placed on the Ohio Ridges and the high ground to the north to screen their movements. During the early morning hours, the smoking of the hills was very effective and kept enemy observation down to a minimum. By midmorning the wind velocity had increased and had rendered the smoke screening quite ineffective. The enemy immediately laid down a very heavy concentration of artillery and mortar fire on the forward positions on Georgia and on the approaches to the Ohio hill which made any advance impossible. From well dug in embrasures and bunkers, the enemy threw very heavy fire with machine guns and other automatic weapons. Evidently, they had brought in reserves and had formed a strong defensive line running on the high ground from Rocky Ridge to the Ohio hills. The enemy fire became so heavy that all advance was halted.

The battalion immediately called for close air support and at 0830 the first wave of planes came over to blast the enemy strongpoints. The battalion commander personally directed the planes through the regimental headquarters and the XXII TAC Liaison Officer, who was in radio contact with the attacking planes. On the first bombing run the planes came too close to our attacking troops, and the battalion commander called them off target. He then fired one smoke shell on the target to assist the planes. On the next run the planes were on target, and they bombed and rocketed the targets expertly. They flew three such bombing and rocketing runs on targets on Rocky Ridge, the Ohio's 1, 2, and 3 and later returned to strafe enemy positions. The air support was expertly rendered with continuous communication between the battalion commander and the planes.

Immediately following the air force mission, 2 battalion of 155mm laid a ten minute barrage on the same targets. In the wake of this preparation, Co B on the left and Co C on the right began their attack, Co B attacking Rocky Ridge and Co C attacking Ohio 1. The barrage was followed so closely that some casualties were suffered from our own artillery.

Co C stormed up Ohio 1 so rapidly in the wake of the barrage that they were able to capture a completely surprised enemy post of 40 men. The 3rd platoon of Co C advanced rapidly, leaving mopping up operations to the remainder of the company, and stormed up Ohio 1 and proceeded to advance toward Ohio 2. In the mopping up operation on Ohio 1, four of our men were wounded by snipers. With one platoon of Co C consolidating ground gained on Ohio 1, the remaining platoon was immediately sent to advance to the left of Ohio 3 to aid the 3rd platoon. Meanwhile, the 3rd platoon had

veered to the right of Ohio 2 and had engaged enemy positions there. In a brief but fierce firefight, they captured these positions together with 8 prisoners. The 2d platoon coming up from the left engaged positions there and knocked out all enemy resistance. The advance was so rapid that very little resistance was met. The 2d platoon then immediately set out for Ohio 3 while the 3rd platoon consolidated on Ohio 2. Maneuvering swiftly the 2d platoon overwhelmed three machine gun positions on Ohio 3 and captured 14 more of the enemy after a fierce firefight. Between the hours of 1100 and 1230, in the mopping up on all the Ohio hills, 22 more of the enemy were captured.

Meanwhile, Co B had moved out towards Rocky Ridge following a covered route in the draw between Georgia and the Ohio ridges, but their advance was slowed due to the heavily mined areas in their path of advance. Casualties from mines amounted to 3 KIA and 4 wounded. Threading carefully through the minefield, Co B succeeded in getting close to the ridge. From a point about 200 yards from Rocky Ridge, the 2d platoon was sent to attack up the ridge toward Ohio 1 and the 3rd platoon down the ridge toward Rocky Ridge. The 2d platoon was fired on from a bunker while working their way through a minefield; but with excellent use of cover, the platoon succeeded in closing with the enemy emplacement and, after a fierce firefight, destroyed the position, captured 7 prisoners, and killed 2. They continued to advance up the ridge and subsequently captured large stores of ammunition including one light mortar, one 20 mm AT gun, 3 rocket launchers, and a large number of mines without further resistance. In the meantime, the 3rd platoon had moved down the slope towards the rocky crag where they encountered a very well camouflaged minefield. While attempting to skirt this minefield, they were fired on by a series of four enemy machine gun nests. Using rifle grenades and all of their firepower, the platoon closed in on the enemy positions. The squads, having split into three different teams, then advanced on the enemy by leap frogging and forced the enemy to relinquish their bunkers after a firefight lasting approximately one hour. In all, six bunkers were captured. 17 of the enemy were captured, 2 killed, and 2 wounded. One of those killed was the officer in command of defenses there. The platoon, however, suffered 5 killed and 8 wounded from mines and small arms fire. By 1130 hours the entire mass known as Rocky Ridge was securely in our hands. Co B then formed a defensive line on the ridge and tied in on the right flank with Co C on the western slopes of Ohio 1. During the remainder of the day, small isolated groups of the enemy came up to surrender.

During this final assault on the Ohio's, the 81 mm mortars of Co D fired powerful concentrations of some 600 rounds of HE during the preparation for the attack in conjunction with the artillery and, during the attack, giving close support to the attacking companies in addition to continuing their harassing missions.

In the meantime the 3d Battalion, in accordance with the Regimental plan of attack, executed an enveloping movement on the battalion's right flank, seized Mt Folgorito, and sent Co L to Mt Cerreta to disrupt the enemy's rear and contact the forward elements of the 100th Battalion. At 1500 hours, a combat patrol from the 2d platoon of Co C was sent to Mt Cerreta to contact Co L. This patrol met only scattered resistance and made contact with Co L at 1900 hours. While working its way up Mt Cerreta prior to making contact



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with Co L, they encountered and captured a supply of food and ammunition meeting only slight resistance.

At 2000 hours a concentration of enemy was detected forming for a counterattack in the vicinity of Strettoia, west and below Rocky Ridge. Immediately, an intensive artillery and mortar concentration was ordered for the area. All four 81mm mortars of Co D were laid on the designated area in conjunction with the artillery turned the enemy assembly area into a mass of dust and explosions. The threat of an enemy counterattack was eliminated. The battalion was ordered to defend their hard won ground. Protective fire was laid, and the first phase of the general offensive was completed. Casualties for 6 April amounted to 9 KIA and 33 WIA. In all, at a cost of 23 KIA and 86 WIA, the 100th Battalion pierced in to days some five kilometers of the strongest kind of defense a stubborn and fanatical enemy could offer. During this period the 100th Battalion captured 131 prisoners killed 24, wounded an unknown number, and captured 3 supply dumps, 15 machine guns, light mortars, large numbers of small arms, and a large stores of ammunition and food.

The Gothic line on the Ligurian Coast had been pierced, and the 442d controlled the commanding ground. This breach in the line resulted in the complete breakdown of the entire line. By the end of the week the 442d had pushed some 12 miles over difficult mountain terrain liberating the large communication center of Massa and the city of Carrara.

Due to the rugged nature of the terrain and the disposition of the enemy, only one narrow, winding trail was available for the purpose of bringing up supplies by mule train to the LD. On the night of 5 April the mule train was taken as far forward as the former LD, and rations and ammunition were hand-carried by parties from the line companies from that point to the forward positions. During the process of transferring the supplies from the pack train to carrying parties, enemy artillery opened up killing several mules, wounding three men, and scattering the supply train. The dispersed mules were rounded up, and the supplies delivered.

On 6 April, the lengthening of the supply route and the hazardous conditions under which the supply train must travel made the problem of supply even more difficult. The tactical situation found the companies spread out in three different directions--the location of two of the rifle companies being such that they were inaccessible by mule train. This necessitated carrying by pack train as far as possible and then handcarrying the balance of the way by parties furnished by the AT Co, 442d Inf, AT platoon, 100th Bn and A&P Platoon, 100th Bn over narrow winding trails through heavily mined areas. Again on the night of 6 April, the supply train was disrupted by enemy shellfire, and two more mules were lost by mines when they became frightened and stepped off the trail. The distance from the supply point



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to the farthest company was approximately five miles, and the carrying parties were accompanied by a combat patrol for protection.

Throughout 5 and 6 April 1945, the carrying parties were kept moving day and night in order to keep the supply of ammunition available whenever it was needed. Keeping the 81 mm mortar platoon supplied with ample ammunition was a difficult task in itself, as some 3000 rounds were fired in these two days of hard fighting.

3. Overlay and a sketch showing dispositions of troops cited and general terrain features attached.

4. The following information is submitted:

- a. Nature of terrain: Mountainous and rocky
- b. Enemy morale: Excellent
- c. Morale of our troops: Excellent
- d. Weather: On 5 April 1945, slightly cloudy in the morning, bright and clear in the afternoon. On 6 April 1945, cloudy and cool.

5. Information on Battalion Personnel:

- a. Number of men present who took part in actions:  
4 April 1945, 40 officers and 832 EM; 5 April 1945, 38 officers and 775 EM; 6 April 1945, 37 officers and 724 EM.
- b. Number of casualties suffered by unit cited:  
5 April 1945, 14 KIA and 53 WIA  
6 April 1945, 9 KIA and 33 WIA
- c. Approximate strength of troops adjacent and in support, and character of support rendered by other units: 3d Bn, 442d RCT, on right, executed enveloping movement and seized high ground on battalion's right flank. One battalion of 370th Inf attacked along the coastal plain on left flank, gaining approximately 1000 yards before it was stopped. (2d Bn, 473d Inf relieved the 370th on left flank on 7 Apr 45). 599 FA Bn (which was in direct support of the 442d RCT), Cannon Co, 442d RCT; one plt of B Co, 84th Cl Mortar Bn and 1st plt, B Co 894th TD Bn, supported the attack by firing on targets as called for by the Bn Commander. AT Co, 442d RCT, two platoons were employed for evacuating casualties and carrying supplies. 57th Fighter Gp, XIII Tactical Air Comd., supported the attack by bombing and strafing hostile strongpoints as called for by the Bn Commander.
- d. Exact date and time of attack:
  - (1) "Georgia": Attacked at 0500B 5 April 1945, occupied at 0532B, 5 April 1945, completely secured 0900B, 6 April 1945.
  - (2) "Rocky Ridge": Attacked at 0930B, 6 April 1945 (this was final assault) and secured at 1130B, 6 April 1945.
  - (3) "Ohio's 1, 2, 3": Attacked at 0930B, 6 April 1945 (final assault), secured at 1230B, 6 April 1945.

6. Information on enemy:

- a. Approximate strength of enemy: 1st, 2d, 3d and 5th Companies, 1st Bn, 285th Regt, and elements of the 148th Fusilier Bn. Total strength of these companies with attached units is estimated to have been 1050. A company of 11 tanks manned by 1048th TD was believed to have been in the Massa-Sarzana area.
- b. Character of enemy fire and observation: Small arms, automatic weapons, grenades, mortars, SP's and heavy artillery. Observation: Excellent.
- c. Apparent enemy intention or objective: To hold high ground at all cost to prevent breakthrough.
- d. Losses suffered by the enemy: 24 enemy known killed, 131 captured, an undetermined number wounded, 3 ration and ammunition dumps, one radio set, fifteen machine guns, a light mortar, a 20 mm AT gun, and a large number of small arms captured.

7. I have personal knowledge of the action cited and confidence in the details of statistics known.

8. PROPOSED CITATION: The 100th Battalion, 442d Regimental Combat Team, is cited for outstanding accomplishment in combat during the period 5 and 6 April 1945 near Seravezza, Italy. When the Combat Team opened the Fifth Army's spring offensive against the long-prepared enemy defenses known as the Gothic Line in Northern Italy, the 100th Battalion made a frontal assault against a key enemy strongpoint. The first objective, a ridge peak, was taken in thirty minutes. However, the battalion was then stopped by extensive minefields covered by the interlocking fire of machine guns from bunkers, tunnels, and caves. Though subjected to this fire and intensive mortar and artillery barrages from the flanks that killed 14 and wounded 53, the battalion fought forward and reduced, one by one, several of the twelve bunkers, each armed with machine guns. Twelve of the enemy were known killed. Early the next morning, following an aerial and artillery preparation, the battalion, with two assault companies supported by a third, making a coordinated attack, stormed the enemy strongpoints in four hours of stiff fighting. After thoroughly beating the enemy down, the battalion established contact with another battalion of the Combat Team to complete the breakthrough. This was quickly exploited, and within a week a 12 mile wedge was driven into the enemy defense line. This drive liberated many towns, including the city of Carrara, and the important communication center of Massa. In achieving the two day breakthrough, the battalion inflicted losses on the enemy of 24 known killed, 131 captured, three supply dumps, 15 machine guns, 1 20mm AT gun, 1 light mortar, and large supplies of food and ammunition and small arms captured. At the cost of 23 killed and 86 wounded, it broke through an enemy defense line that had resisted attacks by other elements for a period of five months, breaking the stalemate and opening

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the way for a drive up the coast of Italy. The extraordinary determination, courage, and esprit de corps of the 100th Battalion reflect honor on the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States. The 100th Battalion was activated on 5 June 1942 at Schofield Barracks, Territory of Hawaii.

J. E. WOOD  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding.

- 4 Incls:
1. Sketch
  2. Overlay
  3. Unit Roster
  4. Casualty Roster