



GO FOR BROKE  
1943 ★ 1993



# LEGACY IN AMERICANISM



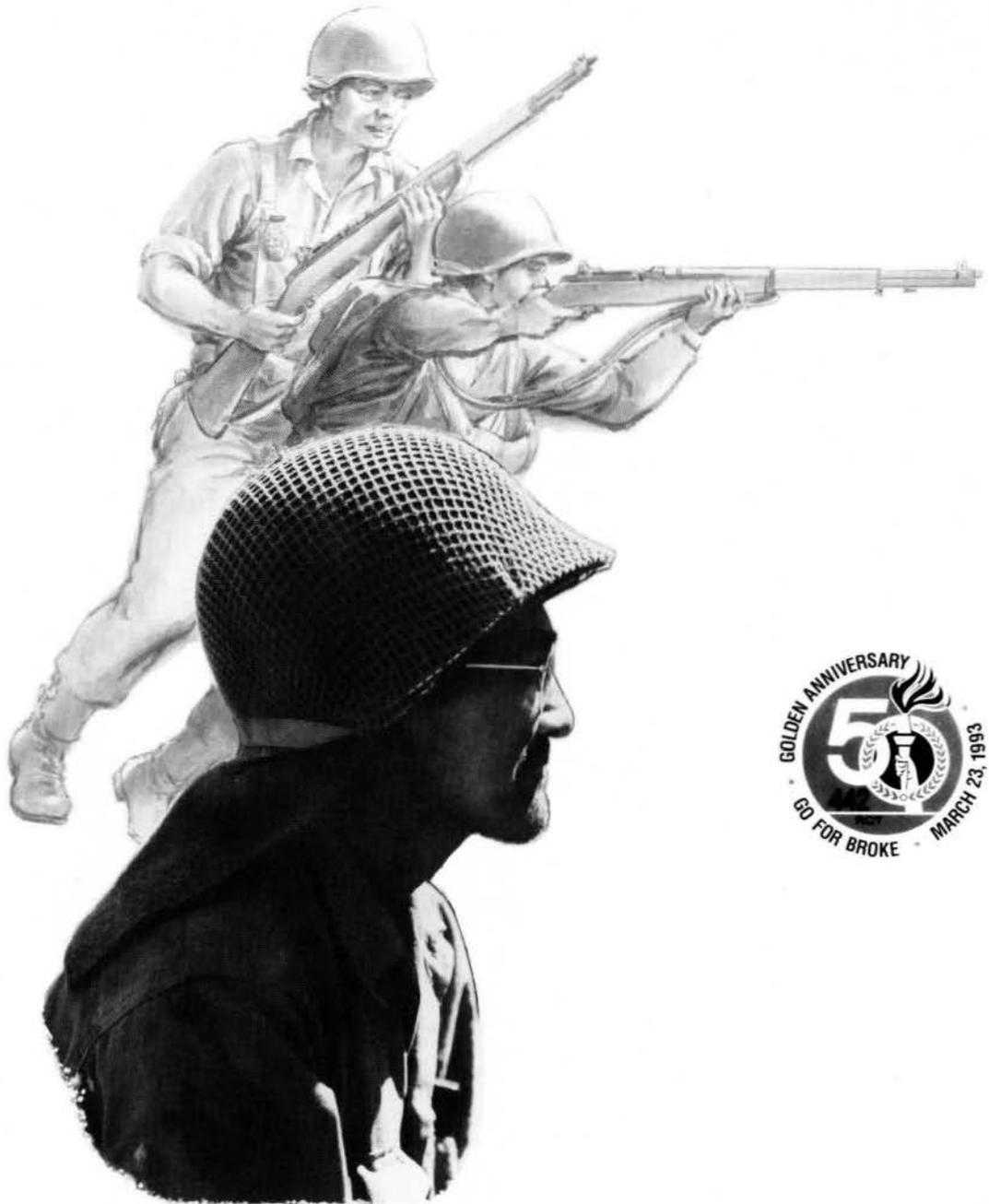


## DEDICATION



We, the veterans of the 442nd dedicate this booklet to the Sons & Daughters of the 442nd and the generations to follow.

We anticipate their ability to carry our torch and protect their inherent legacy in Americanism . . . to fight all discrimination, to perpetuate freedom and equality for all races. And in the spirit of "Go For Broke" inspire all of us to span the bridge of friendship throughout the world.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEST WE FORGET — George Nakasato . . . . .	6
POEM: GO FOR BROKE — Virginia L. Hess Fear . . . . .	9
ORIGINS OF THE 442ND — Ted Tsukiyama . . . . .	11
A SALUTE TO "THE ONE PUKA PUKA" — Ted Tsukiyama . . . . .	17
THE 442ND STORY: From A Kotonk — Shiro "Kash" Kashino . . . . .	21
THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE — Chester Tanaka . . . . .	24
ECHOES OF THE PAST — Lyn Crost . . . . .	29
UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIPS: The French Connection — John Tsukano . . . . .	33
50 YEARS: Summing Up — Major Orville C. Shirey (Ret.) . . . . .	43
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 442ND — A.A. Smyser . . . . .	47
SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE 442ND — Arnold Hiura . . . . .	51
HONOR ROLL . . . . .	53
BROTHER IN WAR AND PEACE:	
The 100th Infantry Story — Raymond Nosaka . . . . .	58
MEDICS — Herbert Akamine . . . . .	60
ANTI-TANK COMPANY — Masato Doi . . . . .	62
SERVICE COMPANY — Alex Oka . . . . .	64
CANNON COMPANY — Tooru Kanazawa . . . . .	66
2ND HQ COMPANY — Bert Nishimura . . . . .	68
EASY COMPANY — Shigeyuki Yoshitake . . . . .	70
FOX COMPANY — Ronald Oba . . . . .	72
GEORGE COMPANY — Harold Fukunaga . . . . .	74
HOWE COMPANY — Jackson Morisawa . . . . .	76
3RD HQ COMPANY — Ernest Uno . . . . .	78
ITEM COMPANY — Mino Suzumoto. . . . .	80
KING COMPANY — Joe H. Shimamura & Eichi Oki . . . . .	82
LOVE COMPANY — Yoshiji Aoki . . . . .	84
MIKE COMPANY — Tadao Beppu . . . . .	86
522ND FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION	
ABLE BATTERY — Harry Tokushige . . . . .	88
BAKER BATTERY — S. Don Shimazu . . . . .	89
CHARLEY BATTERY — Ed Ichiyama . . . . .	92
232ND COMBAT ENGINEERS — Walter Matsumoto . . . . .	94
232ND ENGINEERS AND 206 BAND — Hichi Matsumoto . . . . .	95
THE 171ST STORY — Iwao Yokooji . . . . .	97
442ND LIVORNO — Henry Kuniyuki . . . . .	99
KANSHA . . . . .	101
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	102
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO THE HAOLE OFFICERS . . . . .	104



BY GEORGE NAKASATO



This booklet commemorates the observance of the 50th Golden Anniversary of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), and attempts to highlight the Go for Broke tradition of the men of the 442nd. These articles, centered on military and community services of the 442nd, portray small, but important, slices of the history of the Americans of Japanese ancestry (AJAs) in Hawaii and on the mainland. Time and timeliness of our anniversary observance limit the coverage of other equally important community groups, who also fought issues of racism and bigotry at home. Their role and contributions to the betterment of our AJA community is fully recognized and reported by many.

The late U.S. Senator Spark M. Matsunaga, a veteran of the 100th Battalion, wrote these words in Chester Tanaka's book, *Go for Broke*, published in 1982:

"Because memories are short and the lessons to be learned so valuable, I believe that the story of the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team should be told again and again.

"In the sacrifices made by the veterans of the all-Nisei Combat Team, in their courage and loyalty, we can find the strength and determination to continue our endless battle against discrimination and injustice — to make ours a greater nation."

His reference to faded or short memories is a valid one.

Today, we are again faced with issues of continued violation of human and civil rights; of bigotry and racism in various forms. The recent Bruce Yamashita case and the Marine Officers Training School, Nisei families in California intimidated periodically as an outcome of "Japan bashing," the Rodney King case that wounded the community, the Los Angeles riots that followed and exposed Black-Korean conflict, and Neo-Nazi uprisings in Germany to persecute Jews and foreign refugees are but some of the rising signs of anti-ethnic racism, xenophobia of the highest order in our society and elsewhere.

The late Senator Matsunaga's words and thoughts remind us of the need to continue our efforts in our twilight years. As Matsuo Takabuki, (L Company and a Bishop Estate trustee), said at

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the 1990 Nisei Veterans Reunion, " . . . it is to fight this kind of racism and bigotry . . . (and) to carry the torch to support the weak and unprotected. . . (and) to achieve our American dream of tolerance and justice to all . . . it may be our 'last hurrah.' "

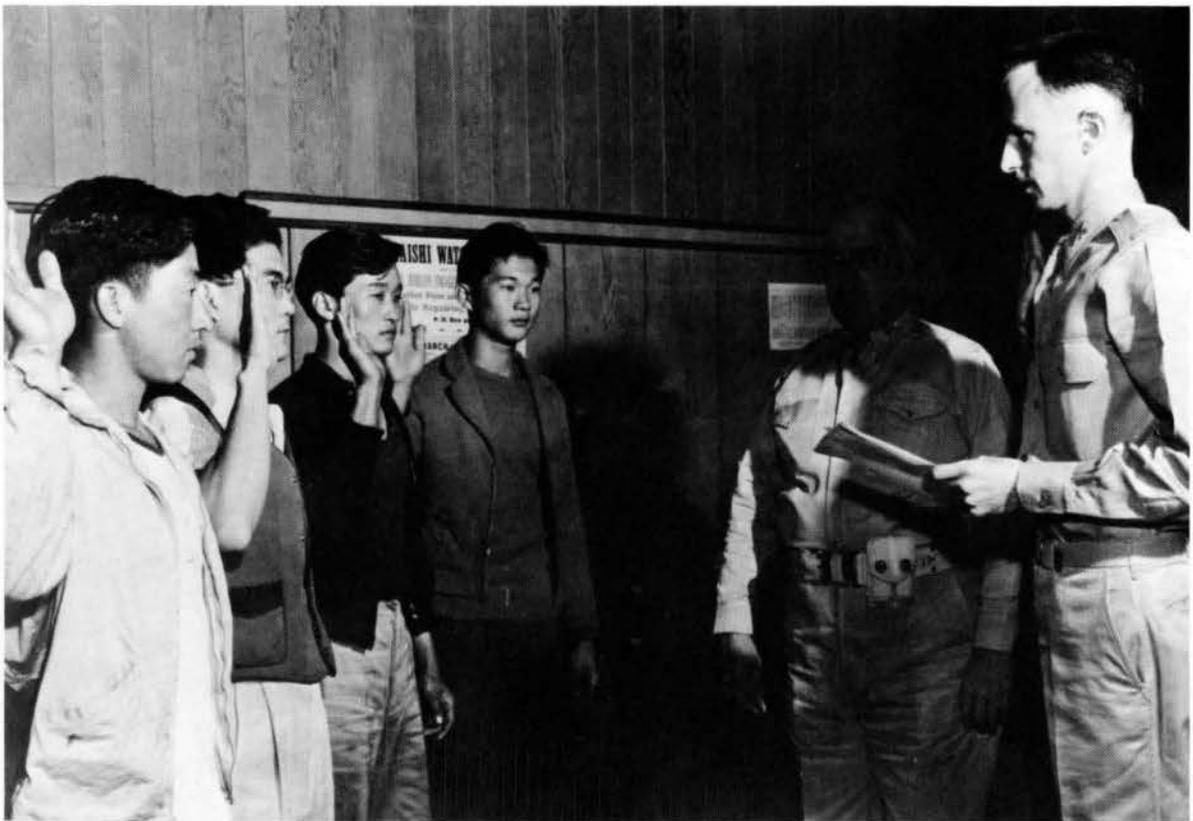
For this commemorative booklet, a series of articles — thoughtful, insightful, and academic — provide a sharper "slice" of our 442nd RCT history. A majority of the authors are veterans or close associates of the 442nd RCT. The Chapter stories and timely pictures add depth and dimension seldom heard among men of the 442nd. They describe their early life experiences on the plantation or at relocation centers, as well as battlefield experiences in which these relationships molded them into a close-knit team. Humor and heroics played an important role in building these memories.

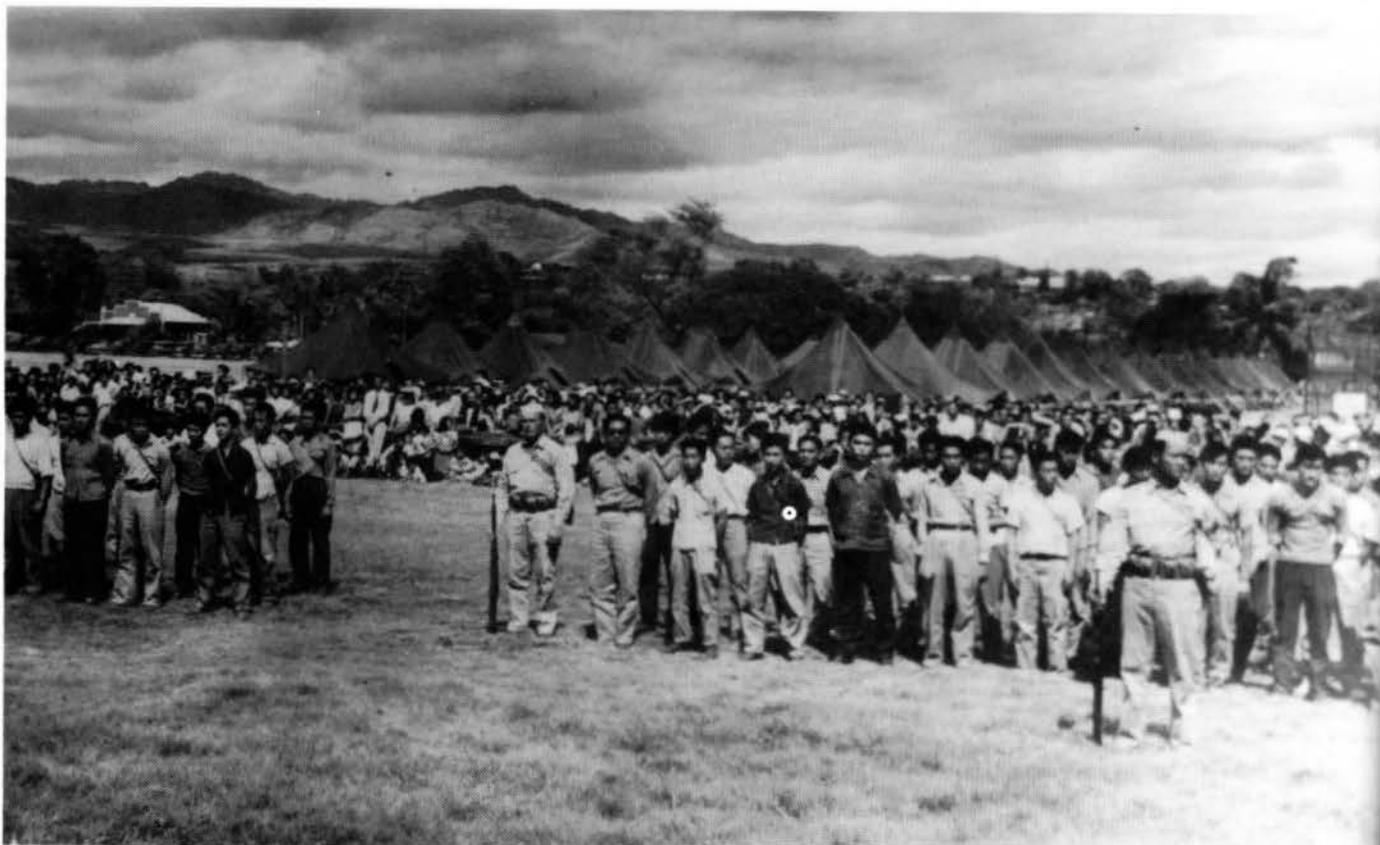
In addition, selected writers were invited to present papers on specific story ideas about the 442nd RCT. All of them are well-known writers of the 442nd and their contributions "as they saw it" are truly appreciated.

Finally, as we look forward into the horizon, we see an active group of loyal "drummers" coming along; our Sons and Daughters who reverently pledged to uphold and perpetuate the Go for Broke spirit of the 442nd RCT. Truly, a legacy of Americanism marches on.

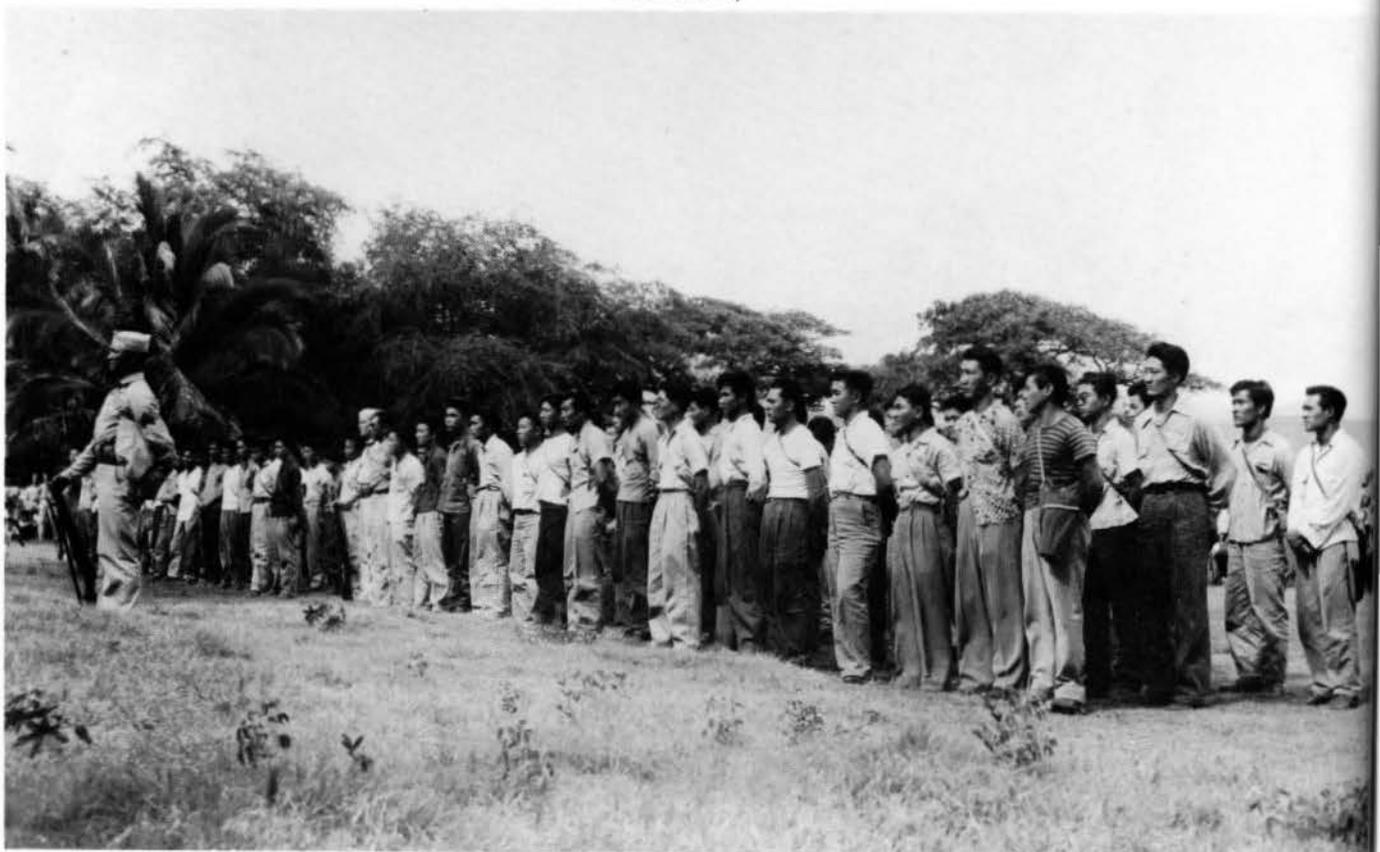
To them, we dedicate this booklet, commemorating our 50th Golden Anniversary of the 442nd RCT.

*Volunteers*





*The round up*



## GO FOR BROKE

BY VIRGINIA L. HESS FEAR



"Go For Broke" was the slogan of  
a **very special** group  
The most decorated unit  
Always a fresh news "scoop"

By other oft called "buddah heads"  
For purely ethnic reasons  
These others soon showed them respect  
Thru fighting they were seasoned

They made their country feel **so** proud  
For the 442nd now  
Was a well-trained, brave, and fighting machine  
Before no foe would bow

The men and boys of Hawaii  
Joined kin from the U.S.A.  
Brought fear to the foes who faced them  
Are remembered yet today

Our "budda heads" charged the "Kraut heads"  
Drove Fascists from Italy  
For wherever help was needed  
There 4-4-2 would be

Now "Go For Broke!" is a phrase which means  
"Hey man, give it all you've got"  
We'll "Go For Broke" to win this war  
Surrender? We will not!

*Virginia L. Hess Fear was a 4th grade teacher at Poston Camp I during the war. Mrs. Hess is a winner of many awards.*





BY TED T. TSUKIYAMA

## ORIGINS OF THE 442ND

Several months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, a fearful and distrustful America barred its Japanese-American citizens from military service, altering their draft status from 1-A draft eligible to 4-C "enemy



alien." The story of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team must really begin with the Nisei's fight to regain their right to fight for their country in its hour of peril. How did the 442nd get its start?

"The earliest mention of an all-Nisei combat unit was made by Colonel Moses W. Pettigrew in early 1942, according to Brigadier General John Weckerling, former G-2 head of the Assistant Chief of Staff:

'In the spring of 1942 Colonel Pettigrew formally proposed the organization of a Nisei combat unit. The Commanding General in Hawaii (Emmons) endorsed the plan from the beginning and declared his belief that the Nisei would prove to be an excellent combat soldier. However, opinion was divided . . . concerning the use of the Nisei as a front-line soldier . . . It was even seriously suggested that the Nisei should not be used at all or limited to non-critical installations in the Zone of the Interior.'

Colonel Pettigrew pursued his plans determinedly, and they were finally approved by the Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. John J. McCloy."

Considering the hysterical fear, distrust and prejudice against all Japanese following the Pearl Harbor attack, Colonel Pettigrew displayed remarkable foresight, conviction, and courage to even suggest that U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry be organized into an American fighting unit. Then Roger Daniels, in his book, *Concentration Camps, USA*, mentions that in May 1942 McCloy sent a memo to General Eisenhower stating he favored permitting the Nisei to serve in military service.

In this darkest period for the Japanese Americans, another ray of hope gleamed when Hawaii's Military Governor, General Delos C. Emmons, rather than discharge all pre-war Nisei draftees, retained them in the 298th and 299th Infantry to guard Hawaii. On May 29, 1942, he assembled them into an all-Nisei provisional battalion and dispatched them to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, for combat infantry training . . . the origin of the legendary 100th Infantry Battalion as the first all-Nisei fighting unit in the U.S. military history!

On June 26, 1942, the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, received a memorandum on

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the subject of "Military Utilization of United States Citizens of Japanese Ancestry," recommending that a board of officers be appointed to study "the advisability of utilizing a small token force, composed of United States citizens of Japanese ancestry . . . as combat troops in the European Theater." On July 1, 1942, a special five-man military board was appointed to study the question.

On July 9, 1942, four witnesses testified before the Board, one Colonel Haas stating "he did not trust them" and recommended negatively, but three others, Colonel Moses Pettigrew, Colonel Rufus Bratton, and Thomas Holland, representing Dillion Meyer of the WRA, recommended positively. Colonel Pettigrew stated:

"The great majority of second-generation citizens of Japanese ancestry was unquestionably loyal. (He recommended) that a Division of these men be formed in the Army of the United States for combat duty in the theater of war where they would not have to fight Japanese . . . that if such a Division were formed, he would be willing to serve as one of its officers."

Other opinions solicited by the Board included that of Secretary of Navy Frank Knox who opposed the enlistment of Japanese-Americans in the Navy, and that of General John De Witt who favored such enlistment of Niseis if limited to assignment "in service units only, unarmed, in the continental U.S."

On July 15, 1942, U.S. Fleet Chief Admiral Chester Nimitz recommended the induction of 10,000 Japanese Americans from Hawaii for service outside the Pacific Area, but on July 21 the War Department advised Admiral Nimitz it would not accept Japanese-Americans for enlistment or induction.

In a report dated September 14, 1942, the special Board studying "The Military Utilization of United States Citizens of Japanese Ancestry" recommended:

"a. That, in general, the military potential of United States Citizens of Japanese ancestry be considered as negative because of the universal distrust in which they are held.

b. That certain individual United States citizens of Japanese ancestry be used for intelligence or for other specialized purposes."

In a memorandum on *Policy Towards Japan* issued September 14, 1942, Edwin O. Reischauer, then a professor at Harvard University, with re-

markable prescient understanding and foresight, stated:

"There are probably many methods by which the Japanese Americans can be made an asset rather than a liability, but among the most effective methods would be to encourage them to join the armed forces, and to give them training in political thinking and for specialized services, military or civilian, they can render during and after the war. If they knew they were wanted and that opportunities for advancement were open to them, large numbers of young Japanese would certainly be glad to volunteer. **A special volunteer unit of Japanese Americans and other Americans who desire to serve with them could easily be formed for combat service in the European or African zones, where it would probably be as effective as any other unit and where it would cause no special disciplinary or organizational difficulties**". (Emphasis added)

Yet, on that same date, September 14, 1942, conforming to the recommendation of the special board, the War Department ordered all commands:

"1. Individuals of Japanese ancestry are in general considered unadaptable to the military service of the United States during the present war. They will not be commissioned, enlisted, inducted, enrolled, or ordered to active duty in the AUS, WAAC, ASC, or the ROTC Advance Course, except as noted below:

2. Certain individuals of Japanese descent who are citizens of the United States may be enlisted for intelligence or for other specialized purposes with the approval of the War Department in each case."

On October 2, 1942, Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information, wrote to President Roosevelt the following:

"For both Mr. (Milton) Eisenhower and myself, I want to recommend that you take two actions designated to improve the morale of the American-citizen Japanese who were evacuated from the Pacific West Coast:

1. Two bills in Congress — one aimed at depriving the Nisei of citizenship and the other proposing to "intern" them for the duration of the war — have heightened the feeling that this may after all be a racial war and that, therefore, the evacuees should be looked upon as enemies. A brief public statement from you, in

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behalf of the loyal American citizens, would be helpful. I think WRA and the Justice Department would concur in this recommendation.

**2. Loyal American citizens of Japanese descent should be permitted, after individual test, to enlist in the Army and Navy.** It would hardly be fair to evacuate people and then impose normal draft procedures, but voluntary enlistment would help a lot.

This matter is of great interest to OWI. Japanese propaganda from Philippines, Burma, and elsewhere insists that this is a racial war. We can combat this effectively without counter-propaganda only if our deeds permit us to tell the truth. Moreover, as citizens ourselves who believe deeply in the things for which we fight, we cannot help but be disturbed by the insistent public misunderstanding of the Nisei: competent authorities, including Naval Intelligence people, say that fully 85 percent of the Nisei are loyal to this country and that it is possible to distinguish the sheep from the goats. "

A draft of a letter from Secretary of War Stimson to President Roosevelt dated October 14, 1942, indicated that both Stimson and General Marshall favored permitting Japanese Americans to enlist in the U.S. armed services. Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy had gone on record favoring the use of Japanese Americans in the Army through his memorandum to Secretary Stimson of October 15, 1942, which stated:

"I also believe that loyal American citizens of Japanese descent should be permitted, after individual test, to enlist in special units of the Army and the Navy. I believe the propaganda value of such a step would be great and I believe they would make good troops. We need not use them against members of their own race, but we could use them for many useful purposes. There is a current report by a board of officers which is adverse to these views. I have asked General McNarney to hold it up pending an opportunity for me to express my views before final action is taken.

In short, I agree with both of Mr. Davis' suggestions as contained in his letter to the President."

Stimson himself, in a personally handwritten memorandum to the Chief of Staff (General Marshall) dated October 14, 1942, wrote:

"I am inclined strongly to agree with the views

of McCloy and Davis. I don't think you can permanently proscribe a lot of American citizens because of their racial origins. We have gone to the full limit in evacuating them — That's enough (signed) HLS."

Predictably, Secretary of Navy Knox, on October 17, 1942, responded adversely to any enlistment of Japanese Americans in the U.S. Navy. But McCloy further urged Stimson to adopt a military policy utilizing Japanese Americans in the armed forces. In a memorandum dated October 28, 1942, he argued:

"The all-Japanese unit appears to offer greater possibilities from both propaganda and service viewpoints. The assembly of Japanese, either by recruitment or induction, into one unit would enable the unit to manifest en masse its loyalty to the United States, and this manifestation would provide the propaganda effect desired.

As a beginning, it is suggested that a regiment of infantry might be recruited and organized. This regiment would have all American officers and would be organized as a separate infantry unit. It could be assigned a station initially not in or contiguous to a theater of operations or defense zone. Such an organization would, in a measure, be a challenge to the Japanese protestations of loyalty and the personnel of such an organization would, it is believed, go to great lengths to demonstrate that loyalty. Certainly the experiment would be worth the trial, and I am not prepared to say that, provided the officers are carefully selected, the regiment would fail to develop into a highly effective combat unit which could be employed as a corps d'elite in an African or European theater."

When asked to estimate the number of Nisei from Hawaii who would volunteer, General Emmons cabled his reaction back to the War Department on November 5, 1942, stating:

"I hope project will receive approval as it will mean so much to this Territory. Am confident that these men will give an excellent account of themselves in an European theater."

Pursuant to a request by McCloy to submit a study on "the formation of combat units composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry," on November 17, 1942, Colonel Moses Pettigrew submitted an extensive rationale which concluded with the recommendation:

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"That there be activated on April 15, 1943, for use in the European Theater, an infantry division with enlisted personnel composed of American citizens of Japanese ancestry."

On the same date, Colonel Pettigrew wrote McCloy emphasizing that officers selected to lead the proposed Nisei Division must be "thoroughly in sympathy with this project" and offered his own name to command this unit, saying:

"The initial conception of the formation of a Nisei combat unit I honestly think was mine. I have consistently believed and advocated that the overwhelming majority of the Nisei are unquestionably loyal, and that they would make the finest type of combat soldiers."

On December 17, 1942, Brigadier General I.H. Edwards, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, issued a secret memorandum on the subject "Enlistment of loyal Americans citizens of Japanese descent into the Army and Navy" which concluded:

"G-3 recommends initial organization of a combat team to be composed of volunteer citizens of Japanese ancestry whose loyalty is unquestioned. Further recommends that this unit be employed in active theater — other than one where they would be required to fight Japanese — as soon as their training warrants."

On December 18, 1942, a memorandum issued from Personnel Division, G-1, WDGS on the subject "Organization of a Military Unit to be Composed of American Citizens of Japanese Descent," stated:

"Recommend the immediate organization of a combat team, to consist of one regiment of Infantry, one battalion of Field Artillery, and one company of Engineers, all at a 15 percent over-strength, is authorized."

Sometime in December, 1942, when Assistant Secretary of War McCloy was inspecting military defenses on Oahu, Colonel Kendall J. Fielder of General Emmons' staff assigned Hung Wai Ching, a member of the Military Governor's Emergency Service Committee, to accompany McCloy on the inspection. Ching escorted McCloy to Kolekole Pass in Schofield Barracks where they found the Quarry Gang of the Varsity Victory Volunteers hard at work breaking rocks into the rock crusher. The VVV gang included Wally Doi, Dick Uyemura, Ryoji Namba, Hiroshi Kato, Wally Nagao, and Shiro Amioka who later volunteered for the 442nd.

Ching related to McCloy the story behind the

VVV, composed of Nisei University of Hawaii students who forfeited their education and volunteered to form a labor battalion as a gesture of loyalty in spite of exclusion from U.S. military service. History will note that this is the very same period in which the War Department's critical decision to organize an all-Nisei combat unit was formulated.

General George Marshall, Chief of Staff, approved the recommendations of G-3 for the formation of an all-Nisei combat unit on January 1, 1943.

On January 2, 1943, McCloy convened a conference of top brass in the War Department plus Navy Intelligence representatives on the subject "re: use of Japanese in Army," the memorandum minutes prepared by Colonel W. E. Crist, General Staff, MIS, stating in part:

"Mr. McCloy opened the meeting by stating that there was a paper in the War Department relative to the use of Japanese in combat troops, **upon which a decision had already been reached.** He stated that in arriving in this decision three main points were considered, namely: (1) their fighting qualifications; (2) the propaganda value; and (3) the impact on Asia." In his book *They Call Me Moses Masaoka*, Mike Masaoka writes:

"McCloy, more than any other single person, was responsible for the Army's decision to give Nisei any opportunity to fight for their country."

On January 14, 1943, Brigadier General I.H. Edwards, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, sent a memorandum to McCloy on the subject "Status of the Japanese Regimental Combat Team," stating:

"The Army Ground Forces have been directed to activate the following units, to be composed of Japanese citizens, at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, on or about February 1:

- 1 Infantry Regiment
- 1 Field Artillery Battalion
- 1 Engineer Company

Cadres will be obtained from Japanese already in the military service. Selective Service has been requested to call 4,500 men, 1,500 of whom are to come from Hawaii."

On January 28, 1943, General Emmons publicly announced the Army's Nisei combat unit project and issued this call for volunteers:

"Once in a great while an opportunity presents itself to recognize an entire section of this com-

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munity for their performance of duty. All of the people of the Hawaiian Islands have contributed generously to our war effort . . . Among these have been the Americans of Japanese descent. Their role had not been an easy one . . . Open to distrust because of their racial origins, and discriminated against in certain fields of the defense effort, they nevertheless have borne their burdens without complaint and have added materially to the strength of the Hawaiian area.

They have behaved themselves admirably under the most trying conditions, have bought great quantities of war bonds, and by the labor of their hands have added to the common defense. Their representatives in the 100th Infantry Battalion, a combat unit now in training on the mainland; the Varsity Victory Volunteers, and other men of Japanese extraction in our armed forces have also established a fine record.

In view of these facts, and by War Department authority, I have been designated to offer the Americans of Japanese ancestry an additional opportunity to serve their country. This opportunity is in the form of voluntary combat service in the armed forces. I have been directed to induct 1,500 of them as volunteers into the Army of the United States . . ."

Within the next few weeks, 9,950 Nisei from all over Hawaii volunteered!

On February 1, 1943, President Roosevelt sent this now famous letter to the Secretary of War (Stimson) which read:

"My dear Mr. Secretary:

The proposal of the War Department to organize a combat team consisting of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent has my full approval. The new combat team will add to the nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese descent who are already serving in the armed forces of our country.

This is a natural and logical step towards the reinstatement of the Selective Service procedures which were temporarily disrupted by the evacuation from the West Coast.

No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is **that Americanism is a matter**

**of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry.** A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country whenever his skills will make the greatest contribution — whether it be in the ranks of our armed forces, war production, agriculture, government service, or other work essential to the war effort.

I am glad to observe that the War Department, the Navy Department, the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Justice and the War Relocation Authority are collaborating in a program which will assure the opportunity for all loyal Americans, including American of Japanese ancestry, to serve their country at time when the fullest and wisest use of our manpower is all-important to the war effort."

On the verbatim copy of this letter is the handwritten note requested by Elmer Davis of OWI: "Proposed letter for the President to send to the Secretary of War who will announce on Thursday, January 28, formation of combat organization of Japs who are American citizens, etc." This note shows that the immortal words uttered by President Roosevelt about "Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry" were composed by Elmer Davis, and not Roosevelt.

The rest of the story of the 442nd is well-known history. What we have just narrated is the long, arduous, and almost impossible struggle and odds that had to be overcome before the Nisei was restored the right to fight and die for the country through the 442nd experience.

The names of those honored men, "the unsung forefathers of the 442nd," who fought for the Nisei's right to bear arms for country, who should be honored and never forgotten are: Colonel Moses Pettigrew; Elmer Davis; Edwin Reischauer, who conceived and promoted the concept; General Delos C. Emmons, who strongly supported it; and John J. McCloy, most responsible for implementing the War Department's adopting of the controversial plan to reopen voluntary enlistment by Japanese American into an all-Nisei combat unit, which became the renowned 442nd Regimental Combat Team.





BY TED T. TSUKIYAMA



## A SALUTE TO "THE ONE PUKA PUKA"



Their Japanese ancestry caused them to be unwanted, feared, distrusted and even despised. An expected Japanese invasion of Hawaii induced their hasty removal from their beloved island home. The Army didn't know what to do with them after 14 months of training, even after their dispatch to North Africa. They were the Army's "orphan outfit," playing "guinea pig" for Japanese Americans in military service. Finally, after assignment to the 34th Division they gained the opportunity to engage in combat as the first and only segregated, all-Japanese infantry unit.

Soon they earned the reputation as the "Purple Heart Battalion" as the most decorated unit of its size and time in battle in the American Army of World War II. They not only proved the "Americanism is not a matter of race or ancestry" but also won for other Niseis the right to fight for their country.

That is the heart-warming "Cinderella story" of the original 100th Infantry Battalion (separate), proudly identified by the men of the 100th as "The One Puka Puka."

The true origins of the 100th must trace back to 1909 and 1920 when immigrant Japanese field workers staged a general strike for fair wages and decent working conditions, which erupted into bitter racial hostility and denigrated the entire Japanese population to be treated for the next 20 years as an economic, political, and national security threat to Hawaii. Statehood was denied because of its large Japanese population and the questionable loyalty of even the America-born Japanese youth. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, the question was directed at every Nisei, "Who you going shoot?" and the men of the 100th knew in their hearts that the burden fell upon them to answer this challenge emphatically and for all time, on behalf of every Nisei everywhere.

At the time of the Pearl harbor attack on December 7, they served in the 298th and 299th Infantry of the Hawaii National Guard, inducted through three military drafts prior to Pearl Harbor. As the waves of hysteria, fear and prejudice against all Japanese swept Hawaii after the attack, Nisei in the Hawaii Territorial Guard were discharged. Nisei then stationed at Schofield Bar-

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racks remember being herded into a confined encampment with machine guns trained on them a few nights after the Pearl Harbor attack. Jim Lovell, Captain in the 298th and later Executive Officer of the 100th, recalls a few weeks after Pearl Harbor when General Maxwell Taylor came to inspect the 298th Headquarters at the Kaneohe Ranch site and found Lovell's pup tent pitched amidst those of the Nisei soldiers, asked incredulously "Don't tell me you guys sleep here with them?". But the abiding faith and trust of General Walter Short in the Japanese Americans prevented their discharge from the 298/299th and be retained to guard Hawaii shores against possible Japanese attack. But on a national scale, when the problem of pre-war draft Nisei soldiers still serving in the Army in Hawaii was raised at FDR's cabinet meeting, the diary of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson for January 30, 1942, indicates:

"I told the President we were planning to send these men to other points in the continental United States where their loyalty would not be tempted."

The post-Pearl Harbor picture was very dark, grim and threatening for all Japanese in Hawaii. Japan had overrun Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, and the invasion of Midway and Hawaii next seemed imminent. False rumors of disloyalty and sabotage by local Japanese ran rampant. President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which General DeWitt used to imprison 120,000 mainland Japanese into American concentration camps. The order reclassified all Nisei from 1-A (draft eligible) to 4-C (enemy alien) and barred them from military service. Navy Secretary Knox and President Roosevelt constantly urged General Emmons to conduct wholesale removal of Japanese from Hawaii, which Emmons deliberately ignored.

On April 6, 1942, Gen. Delos C. Emmons requested the War Department for authority to organize the 2,000 soldiers of Japanese extraction in Hawaii into units for action in Africa or Europe, but on May 2, 1942 the War Department denied Emmon's request and directed that they be "transferred to service units" or to Zone of Interior installations. On May 11, 1942 Emmons replied:

"TO ASSIGN ALL TROOPS INVOLVED TO LABOR OR OTHER SERVICE UNITS WOULD HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON THEM AND ON LARGE JAPANESE POPU-

LATION HERE WHICH IS NOW COOPERATING FULLY WITH AUTHORITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR SITUATION HERE THAT THESE SOLDIERS BE TRANSFERRED AS A COMBAT UNIT THEREFORE URGE TRANSFER TO MAINLAND OF ONE BATTALION OF THE TWO HUNDRED NINETY EIGHTH INFANTRY TO INCLUDE ALL REMAINING JAPANESE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS UNDER ARMS APPROXIMATELY ONE THOUSAND."

Finally, on May 29, 1942, as the Japanese Navy approached Midway, Chief of Staff Gen. George Marshall ordered Emmons:

"ORGANIZE PROVISIONAL INFANTRY BATTALION OVERSTRENGTH IF NECESSARY CONSISTING OF ALL OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY IN TWO NINETY EIGHTH AND TWO NINETY NINTH INFANTRY. SEND UNIT TO MAINLAND UNITED STATES BY FIRST AVAILABLE WATER TRANSPORTATION . . . WAR DEPARTMENT PROPOSES THAT CGAGF REORGANIZE AND TRAIN THIS UNIT IN CENTRAL UNITED STATES AS AN INFANTRY COMBAT UNIT . . ."

Within five days, 1,432 Nisei soldiers transferred out of 298th and 299th into the "Hawaiian Provisional Infantry Battalion" and sailed from Honolulu on the SS Maui on June 5, 1942. Upon arrival in San Francisco, the War Department activated them into the "100th Infantry Battalion (Separate)", "separate" meaning not attached to a regiment or any other military unit, literally a military orphan outfit. In spite of such inauspicious origin, the unit 15 months later was destined to become the famed and legendary 100th Battalion.

The 100th was sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, to be organized and trained as an infantry attack unit. For the next six months they trained rigorously and so well that most men were cross-trained into use of other weapons and equipment. As reports of their superior training record reached the War Department, the 100th became the subject of rigid and frequent inspections by army brass, "the most inspected unit in the Army". Men of the 100th endured all this with equanimity and intense unit pride, striving to become the finest in the U. S. Army, ever realizing that they "must do better than the average soldier because the eyes of America were on them".

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Later, on January 28, 1943 when Gen. Emmons issued the call for 442nd volunteers, the superb training record of the 100th at McCoy was attributed as one of the main reasons the Army decided to form the volunteer all-Nisei combat team.

Seven more months of maneuvers at Camp Shelby and in Louisiana followed. On August 21, 1943, the 100th shipped out of Staten Island on the SS James Parker headed for North Africa. Even after reaching Oran, Algeria, no plans had been made for the 100th. When the 100th faced assignment to guarding supply trains, Col. Farrant Turner and Maj. Jim Lovell hurried to Gen. Eisenhower's Headquarters at Mestaghnem to protest. Finally, on September 2, the 100th received notification it would be assigned to the 133rd Regiment, 34th Division, for a combat role! Morale uplifted, the men of the 100th received the news with cheers. On September 22, 1943, the 100th stormed ashore in an amphibious landing at the Salerno beachhead as part of the 34th "Red Bull" Division. What followed is now familiar recorded history. Tough battles, especially at Cassino, marked the harsh and bitter route of the 100th from Salerno to Rome.

For the Cassino battles alone, the 100th suffered 48 killed, 144 wounded and 75 hospitalized for trench foot. The 100th landed at Salerno with over 1,300 personnel, but after Cassino only 521 remained. The "Guinea Pig Battalion" had now become known as the "Purple Heart Battalion." On March 10, April 2 and May 24, 1944, three waves of replacements from the 442nd arrived, replenishing the ranks of the 100th with 555 replacement troops. On June 11, 1944, the 100th, still retaining its name "100th Infantry Battalion," became part of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and fought together until the surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945. But this story is only about "the original 100th Battalion," the "One Puka Puka," and its incomparable and distinguished combat record that is being told here.

Generals who had previously shunned this unit of Japanese Americans now jockeyed and vied with each other for assignment of the 100th to their commands. General Charles Ryder of the 34th Division called them "the best troops in the division." Bill Mauldin, famous war correspondent writes of the 100th, "no combat unit in the army could exceed them in loyalty, hard work, courage, and sacrifice." General Mark Clark,

commander of the Fifth Army simply says "they are one of the best fighting units in the world." But beyond the widely acclaimed military prowess, men of the "One Puka Puka" convincingly proved their point. The July 31, 1944 issue of TIME magazine said:

"From a cautious experiment the Army had received an unexpectedly rich reward. A group of sinewy Oriental soldiers, only one generation removed from a nation that was fighting fanatically against the U.S., was fighting just as fanatically for it. Last week, the War Department wrote "proved" on the experiment. It added a unit citation (for "outstanding performance of duty in action") to the already remarkable collection of medals held by the Japanese-American 100th Battalion."

By war's end the 100th had compiled and contributed this incomparable record of 338 killed in action, 3 Presidential Unit Citation, 1 Congressional Medal of Honor, 24 Distinguished Service Cross, 147 Silver Star (for valor) and 2,173 Bronze Star (for meritorious service), 30 Division Commendation and 1,703 Purple Heart awards and citations.

But the true significance, contribution and legacy left by the "One Puka Puka" is best summarized in this warm tribute and accolade of the 100th rendered by Lyn Crost, wartime correspondent for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin and staunch friend of the 100/442:

"The original 100th Infantry Battalion was the first Japanese American combat unit in the history of the United States. In fulfilling the trust given it, this unique battalion helped erase much of the nation's suspicion of Japanese Americans and cleared the way for thousands of them to join the 100/442 Regimental Combat Team, which became the most decorated military unit in American history for its size and length of service . . .

As years pass, statistics and decorations and the numbers of men killed and wounded may be forgotten. But the record of that original 100th Infantry Battalion and what it means in the acceptance of Japanese Americans as loyal citizens of the United States must be remembered. If it had failed in its first months of fighting in Italy, there might never have been a chance for other Americans of Japanese ancestry to show their loyalty to the United States as convincingly as they did on the battlefields of Europe. The 100th had proved that loyalty to the United States is not a matter of

race or ancestry. And it had set an example for people of all nations who seek sanctuary here to fight for those values and concepts of government which have made the United States a refuge from the hunger and despair which haunts so much of the world."

Yes, had the men of the 100th "screwed up" when they were sent into battle from Salerno to

Rome, had they retreated or broken ranks, or shown any signs of disloyalty, the 442nd and other Nisei in military service of the United States might never have come to pass. That "guinea pig battalion" never failed. That is why, with deep indebtedness and undying gratitude, we salute the original "One Puka Puka!"

*Como sta? Tedeschi tutto via*

*Smoke round*



*Dawn of train*



BY SHIRO "KASH" KASHINO

## THE 442ND STORY FROM A KOTONK



Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, left everyone of Japanese ancestry living in the United States, especially on the West Coast, with an unbelievable future. Before the war, legislation was passed against Japanese immigration, alien land ownership, and discrimination on jobs — how much more pressure could be applied against this minority group? As time went on, history would show America at its ugliest against the Japanese people on the mainland.

Prior to the war, those of Japanese ancestry were by and large of a peaceful nature, and we assimilated into the communities and schools with little problem. We seemed to accept discrimination as a way of life and went on to make the best of it without a lot of hatred.

On February 17, 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order #9066, which changed the lives of all of us on the West Coast. That order defined off-limits areas and imposed a curfew. After that, things happened very fast — within a month, the people from Bainbridge Island were sent to California as they lived too close to the Bremerton Shipyards. Soon after, the rest of us followed; sent to hastily-established temporary camps. The Japanese from the Seattle area were sent to the Puyallup Fairgrounds to be housed in horse stalls under the grandstands and in makeshift barracks. Although rumors were rampant when word of Executive Order #9066 came to light, we could not believe they would actually intern those of us born in America, as it violated our rights as citizens! However, war hysteria and the political pressures of discrimination prevailed and the internment of all persons of Japanese ancestry became a reality. By May 1942, 120,000 West Coast Japanese were interned and America remained safe from sabotage!

From the temporary camps, we were transferred in August 1942 to more permanent internment camps. They were mostly located in the deserts or wastelands of California, Arizona, Idaho or Wyoming, miles away from any towns. The Seattle area internees were sent to Minidoka, Idaho. The layout of the camp resembled the prisoner of war camps that many of us guarded while we were in the Army — complete with barracks, mess halls and laundry rooms, as well as barbed

wire fences and guard towers. By this time, it was fall and the American farmers needed help to harvest their crops, so they came into the camps and recruited labor. Almost every able-bodied person — men, women, and even children — volunteered to help the farmers for the war cause.

Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, all Japanese Americans were reclassified to 4C and denied enlistment into the U.S. military. However, on January 28, 1943, President Roosevelt and the War Department decided to allow the Nisei the privilege of volunteering into an all American-Japanese regiment, after they realized that the relocation might be unconstitutional and no reason existed for such action. At this point, the Nisei gained reclassification as 1A. This gave birth to the formation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Many of us working on farms outside the internment camps were caught by surprise when we read the news. However, it was not a hard decision for us to make, since our families were in the camps and we had no idea what the future would be for them. Knowing the suffering our parents had gone through with the relocation and the subsequent circumstances under which they lived, we could not accept this way of life. We had to do something to prove to the American public that we were good Americans; good enough to live a normal life or a better life than before Pearl Harbor. We had to volunteer to prove that we were loyal Americans and were willing to sacrifice our lives for our country, if necessary!

More than 300 men volunteered from our Minidoka Relocation Camp and many more followed as replacements. They claim that this was the highest pro-rata number of Nisei who volunteered for the 442nd RCT from one camp. As it turned out, 46 of the 442nd RCT men from the Greater Seattle area were killed in action.

Walter Winchell described Camp Shelby as: "A hell hole — the worst camp in the U.S. Army." The Nisei volunteers from the mainland and Hawaii all came together for training here, and formed the 442nd RCT.

At times, the Army thought they had made a mistake in forming this group, as we represented such diverse cultures. The difference between the Nisei from the Northwest, California and Hawaii caused a definite breach of relationships. However, we soon came to an understanding with one

another and settled our differences; we were an intelligent and dedicated group of men with a common cause — to prove ourselves as loyal Americans and soldiers capable of fighting for the United States. As we trained hard and in earnest, we quickly learned that winning is everything in times of war. History speaks for itself as to the rest of the 442nd RCT story.

The relationship between the men of the 442nd RCT became legendary and the camaraderie enjoyed proved something special. Over the past 50 years, we have maintained our friendships and our families have become close, with our children and grandchildren also getting acquainted. Who would have thought that the formation of the 442 RCT would develop such a lasting relationship between the Hawaiian and mainland Nisei.

It is a privilege to be able to attend this 50th Anniversary celebration. We cannot forget the men who made the ultimate sacrifice during the European campaign, nor the many men who have passed away since then. Let us hope that our children will appreciate the dedication of the men of the 442 RCT and continue to carry on the "Go For Broke" spirit, for it is through them that our legacy will prevail.

*Guess who?*



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## THE NISEI WAR MEMORIAL MONUMENT

The beautiful, 21-foot Nisei War Memorial Monument at Lake View Cemetery on Capitol Hill, state of Washington was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1949.

Designed by well-known New York artist Granville Smith, the monument was erected by the Nisei War Memorial Committee with funds obtained through a public subscription drive. The Lake View Cemetery donated the plot for the monument.

The face of the monument, made of rainbow coldspring granite from Minnesota, is inscribed with the names of U.S. servicemen of Japanese ancestry from Washington state who sacrificed their lives while serving in the Armed Forces during World War II and subsequent hostilities.

A simple American shield adorns the top of the monument. A breadfruit, carved on one side of the shield, symbolizes the South Pacific, and the pomegranate, typifying Italy, is etched on the other side.

Inscriptions bear the names of major World War II battle campaigns in which the servicemen fought and died: Aleutians, Guadalcanal, India-Burma, Leyte, Naples-Foggia, North Appenines, Po Valley, Rhineland, Rome-Arno and Ryukyus.

A quotation from former President Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous "Americanism" message graces the base of the monument.





BY CHESTER TANAKA

## THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE



The draft board in 1942 labeled Americans of Japanese ancestry (AJA) as "4C, Enemy Alien." Without a hearing or confrontation of witnesses, born-in-America citizens were declared unfit for military duty. General DeWitt carried the message one step further by declaring, "Once a Jap, always a Jap." Even California's Attorney General, Earl Warren, who later became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, joined the chorus by saying, "... the fact that they (AJA) haven't committed sabotage or espionage yet means they're waiting for the right time." And then there was the Secretary of Navy uttering the unsubstantiated charge that "... the Japanese in Hawaii had cut arrows in the plantation fields pointing to military installations." In Honolulu, and other Hawaiian ports, AJA working on the docks had to wear the infamous "black badge" identifying themselves as Japanese. All other dock workers wore white badges. The AJA were banned from fishing and their boats were confiscated. Their stores were shut down and their services shunned. Homes were vandalized and some were burned. Some 1500 AJA were relocated from Hawaii and interned on the mainland. Over 110,000 AJA who lived on the west coast of the mainland were summarily relocated, locked up without a trial or hearing, their constitutional rights blatantly violated. All these things happened despite the fact that there was never a case of espionage or sabotage by any AJA before, during, or after Pearl Harbor. If 1941-42 were bad years for the United States, they were horrible ones for the Americans of Japanese ancestry.

By late '42, the high tide of racial discrimination and hysteria began to ebb. It began in, of all places, Hawaii, where the devastation was real and where martial law had been declared. It began when both the civilian and military leaders restored the military rights of the AJA and pointed the way back to the Constitution. There was the favorable report by the FBI agent in Hawaii, Robert Shivers. There was the moral leadership of the Island's Emergency Service Committee, Morale Section's Hung Wai Ching, Charles Loomis, and Shigeo Yoshida. Other Hawaiian leaders and teachers who had worked and taught in schools with the AJA spoke out in their

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behalf. Further, there was the exemplary behavior of the Victory Varsity Volunteers composed of AJA unfairly discharged from the Hawaii Territorial Guard. Their unswerving service, diligence, and dedication in whatever menial functions the army asked of them played an important factor in the making of a favorable decision concerning the AJA soldier in Hawaii.

The Commanding General of the Army in Hawaii, Delos Emmons, recommended to the War Department that a special unit be formed to accommodate the AJA soldier in Hawaii. They were the initial steps that led to the formation of the 100th Infantry Battalion later destined to be the first battalion of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The establishment of the 100th was among the earliest step to breach the "solid wall of hysteria and prejudice" resulting from Pearl Harbor.

However, the "top brass" remained unclear on how to deploy the AJA. As a result of this indecision, the 100th underwent basic training twice. During their early training sessions the AJA soldiers were issued wooden guns. They received steel rifles only after the generals became more comfortable with the presence of such soldiers.

Now came the major question. Whose command would take such untried and unlikely soldiers? General Eisenhower's staff refused them for use in central Europe. To the rescue came Lieutenant General Mark Clark. Clark had been the Western Regional Training Commandant prior to Pearl Harbor and was familiar with the AJA soldiers as trainees. He had found them to be excellent in training.

Lieutenant General Clark assigned the 100th Infantry Battalion to Major General Charles Ryder of the 34th "Red Bull" Division with the caveat, "Let me know how my "Neesees" (Clark could never pronounce "Nisei") are doing." After one week of intensive fighting in Southern Italy, Clark relayed the following report from Ryder to General of the Army George Marshall: "These are some of the best goddamn fighters in the U.S. Army. If you have more, send them over."

For nine months, 1943-1944, the 100th fought gallantly and bravely with the 34th Division, spearheading many of their drives as they fought from Salerno to the Rapido and on to Cassino, Anzio, and to the very gates of Rome. In July of 1944 it became the first battalion of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) but the War De-

partment authorized it to retain its original title, 100th Infantry Battalion.

The 100th/442nd RCT continued the 100th's tradition of "spearheading." Who can forget the major battle at Hill 140 where the unit suffered major casualties? Engaging the enemy at every opportunity, the Combat Team fought its way into Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence. They had secured the Arno River sector in Central Italy.

Their combat capabilities did not go unnoticed. Now Eisenhower wanted the 100th/442nd RCT to help lead his drive in Southern France. First came the Combat Team's Anti-Tank Company, newly refurbished as a glider-borne unit, to take up positions between Marseille and Menton in Southern France along the Mediterranean shore. The 100/442 followed in October of 1944 taking positions up the Rhone valley near Epinal and the Vosges Forest. Their new objective: take Bruyeres, a small town but a big communications hub only 30 miles from the German border. The fighting intensified. Previously, the enemy was willing to trade Italian real estate to slow the Allied advance. Here in France, they were running out of real estate and had their backs up against their own border. Artillery tree-bursts, "screaming meemies" launched from six-barrel rockets, became the order of the day along with a daily dose of machine gun and mortar fire.

The 100/442 successfully wrested Bruyeres from the enemy after ten days of fierce fighting. The cost: 1,200 casualties.

With only two days rest, with no time to bring in much needed replacements or supplies, the 100/442 was ordered to reach a "Lost Battalion" (first battalion of the 141st Regiment of the 36th Division). Previous attempts by other units of the 36th had been repulsed. The 100/442 Combat Team was successful but only after four days of continuous slaughter and mayhem. In order to rescue the 276 men of the "Lost Battalion," the 100/442 suffered 800 casualties. In one month of fighting, October 15 to November 15, 1944, the 100/442 Regimental Combat Team suffered a total of 200 casualties, leaving only 500 riflemen in the entire regiment. Every mission had been accomplished but at a bitter price.

To recoup in personnel and material, the Combat Team was transferred to relatively quiet holding action along the Italian border in southern France. Quiet, yes, but casualties still mounted from shelling and patrolling that maintaining the

border required.

By March, 1945, Lieutenant General Mark Clark got his "Neesee" out of France and back to Italy to his Fifth Army Command. At Eisenhower's insistence, he had to leave his highly regarded and much vaunted 522nd Field Artillery Battalion with the Seventh Army in France. The 522nd fought on to make history for itself by helping to liberate the Jewish and other prisoners from Dachau. They also liberated a Messerschmitt jet airplane in the process.

Clark now utilized the 100/442 to secretly lead a major diversionary attack on the western anchor of the Gothic Line of the Po Valley Campaign. The Gothic Line was a series of mountain fortresses in northern Italy that had withstood the onslaught of five Allied divisions for over five months.

There was a diversion within the diversionary attack by the 100/442. The 100th Infantry Battalion drew the enemy's attention to the extreme western flank by attacking behind a rolling barrage. This allowed the 100/442nd's 2nd and 3rd Battalions to launch a surprise attack along the "unscalable" mountain ridges to the east. This flawless execution of a classical military maneu-

ver by disciplined and courageous men typified the Combat Team at its finest.

It was during the 100th's attack after the rolling barrage that Private First Class Sadao Munemori made a frontal, one-man attack on the first of two machine-gun nests. He knocked them out after successive hand grenade attacks. Ironically, as he was withdrawing under murderous small arms fire, an enemy grenade bounced off his helmet and into a shell hole where two of his buddies had taken cover. Rising up under withering small arms fire, Munemori dove on top of the grenade and smothered the blast with his body. He was killed but his comrades were spared. PFC Sadao Munemori was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity . . . beyond the call of duty."

Later in the Po Valley campaign, some two weeks before the war in Italy would come to an end, Lieutenant Daniel Inouye scrambled up the slope of Mt. Nebbione to within five yards of the enemy's machine-gun nest and tossed in two hand grenades, destroying the emplacement. Before the enemy could recover, he stood up and raked a second machine-gun nest with his Tommy-gun, killing the crew. Although

*Meeting future brothers and sisters*



wounded, he continued on to the third machine-gun emplacement, when an enemy gun all but tore off his arm. In spite of multiple wounds, Lieutenant Inouye directed the final assault that carried the ridge. In this action, 25 of the enemy were killed, eight were captured. Lieutenant Daniel Inouye was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

These were only two of the men of the 100/442. They and their comrades in arms were responsible for changing the world of the AJA from "Enemy Aliens" to loyal Americans. In two short years, the 100/442 earned the respect of their fellow fighting men and eventually the gratitude of the country that had forsaken them. They won thousands of awards including eight Presidential Unit Citations (the unit equivalent of the Distinguished Service Cross). They also won the praise of the men and officers to whom they were attached or assigned.

"They were the little iron men," said the 92nd "Buffalo Division." "The equal of any of the fighting troops of the US Army," stated the commanding general of the 36th "T-Patch" Division. Brigadier General Charles Ryder wrote: "To the finest fighting unit I ever knew." The 517th Parachute RCT wrote: "... the 100/442 had few peers and no superiors as a combat unit." Another Parachute Combat Team, the 503rd sent the following report: "(They) fought so valiantly." Even the enemy paid a "left-handed" compliment when they marked the position of the 100/442 on their battle map with the notation, "Schreckliche Turkoman" (Translation: "Terrible Turks"). Normally, the Germans recorded only the large units like brigades, divisions, or armies. A regiment? Never! Well, hardly ever.

A highly-treasured comment from the Commander of the Army, General George Marshall, is found in his *Memoirs*. "They were superb: the men of the 100/442 took terrific casualties. They showed rare courage and a tremendous fighting spirit . . . everybody wanted them."

After the war, Texas (home of the 36th Division) made the 100/442 men "honorary citizens." Bruyeres, France, adopted them as citizens of France. Heady as it became, President Harry Truman, the plain-speaking man from Missouri, summed it up with this word of caution, "You fought not only the enemy, you fought prejudice — and you won. Keep up that fight . . . continue to win—make this great Republic stand for what

the Constitution says it stands for: 'the welfare of all the people, all the time.'"

The post-war years gave some substance to President Truman's words. The achievements of the 100/442 and the MIS (Military Intelligence Service experts in the Pacific Theater) were instrumental in obtaining statehood for Hawaii, overthrowing 600 discriminatory laws, gaining parity in immigration regulations, and spearheading the drive for civil rights not just for AJA but for all minority groups.

However, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye reminds us that although the AJA have made many and substantial gains, the war against prejudice and racism is a never-ending battle that still must be won. As he has reminded us, "This democracy with her extraordinary Constitution could imprison, without cause and with denial of due process, innocent people only because of their ethnic background . . . (places on us) a special responsibility . . . to maintain a resolve and vigilance that (such) an experience is never forgotten and never repeated."

The fight for freedom continues . . .





*The King and us*

*Top gun*





BY LYN CROST

## ECHOES OF THE PAST



*Lyn Crost*

From generals to doughboys, there was a constant litany of praise for the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II, but it was hard work getting the "Go For Broke" men to talk about themselves.

Army generals who commanded them, however, were only too ready to tell anyone who would listen what great fighters they were. Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch, Commander of the U.S. Seventh Army, with which the 100th/442nd fought through the Vosges Mountains of France, summed up a lengthy description of them this way: "I really feel I would give that unit a desperate mission and truly and sincerely trust them to fulfill it. I have a feeling of confidence when a mission is given to that unit."

Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, Commander of the U.S. Fifth Army in Italy, valued the 100th/442nd so highly that he fought against losing it to another command for the invasion of Southern France and Vosges Mountains, then fought other generals again to have it returned to Italy. "The record of the 442nd," he told me, "is one of the most magnificent jobs of this war. They are wonderful fighters."

Brigadier General Ralph C. Tobin, who commanded the 100th/442nd in the French Maritime Alps, told me: "The tougher the situation the better they are." He confessed that he had called in the Combat Team to capture infiltrating enemy spies after other outfits had failed.

In France, the fighting of the 100th/442nd at Bruyeres, Biffontaine and through the Vosges Mountains was a crucial factor in enabling the 36th Division, part of General Patch's U.S. Seventh Army, to capture St. Die, the gateway to routes leading directly into Germany. According to the U.S. Army's records, it was the first time in military history that this portion of the Vosges Mountains had been successfully attacked.

It's no wonder that General Patch wanted to retain the 100th/442nd for his march into Germany and, at the same time, General Clark demanded that it be returned to Italy. As a compromise, General Patch was allowed to keep the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion to go into Germany with his Seventh Army, where it aided survivors of the Dachau concentration camp's death

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chambers, while the rest of the Combat Team was returned to General Clark's Fifth Army in Italy. There, again, it succeeded where other troops had failed during the five months of repeated assaults. In a spectacular 32-minute battle it drove the Germans out of rock-embedded positions from which they had posed a threat to the rear of Allied troops fighting through the Apennine Mountains to end the war in Italy. Once more, the 100th/442nd had proved that they were among the greatest assault troops in Europe. It is not surprising that we constantly heard reports that Germans feared the Japanese American soldiers.

You would never learn from the men in the Combat Team that the 100th/442nd is the most decorated unit in the American history for its size and length of service. They kept their decorations hidden in backpacks. Invariably the story of how a man won a decoration came from someone else or from the official announcement of awards. That's how I learned about the Distinguished Service Cross which Daniel Inouye won.

Men from Hawaii were homesick. They read and re-read Hawaii newspapers sometimes five months old — even the "Help wanted" and "for rent" ads. Most men from the mainland didn't have any homes left to return to because their families were locked up in concentration camps. It didn't stop them, however, from fighting to win. One man from California, Technical Sergeant Takeo Senzaki, led the patrol which broke through to reach the Lost Battalion of Texans.

And there were times when the 100th/442nd men were smarter than the generals who commanded them — like the time Major General John Dahlquist, commander of the 36th Division, ordered the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion to fire on a certain hill but the 522nd FAB reconnaissance discovered it was the hill on which the Lost Battalion was isolated and scrapped the general's command. This first rescue of the Lost Battalion from certain destruction remained unnoticed in official documents for more than four decades.

There is no such thing as fearlessness on a battle front. But there is *courage*. And courage is what the 100th/442nd men had — not only to take an objective but also to protect each other. Their esprit de corps was probably unequalled in any other American unit. And there were no more dedicated "front-line" soldiers than the Combat Team's three chaplains: Masao Yamada, Hiro Higuchi and Israel Yost. They all were awarded

the Legion of Merit and two won purple hearts with oak leaf clusters.

When ammunition and food were needed on front lines, men crawled up mountainsides too steep for even mules to maneuver. They weren't supermen but they did it when mules balked and the only way to get supplies there was on men's backs.

The 100th/442nd was the only unit which was segregated during WWII because of ancestral association with an enemy country. But the "Go For Broke" men left no doubt where their loyalty lay. After VE-Day, when Cpt. Bert Nishimura was examining prisoners of war, an arrogant German officer told him:

"The United States still has to fight *your* people and the Russians."

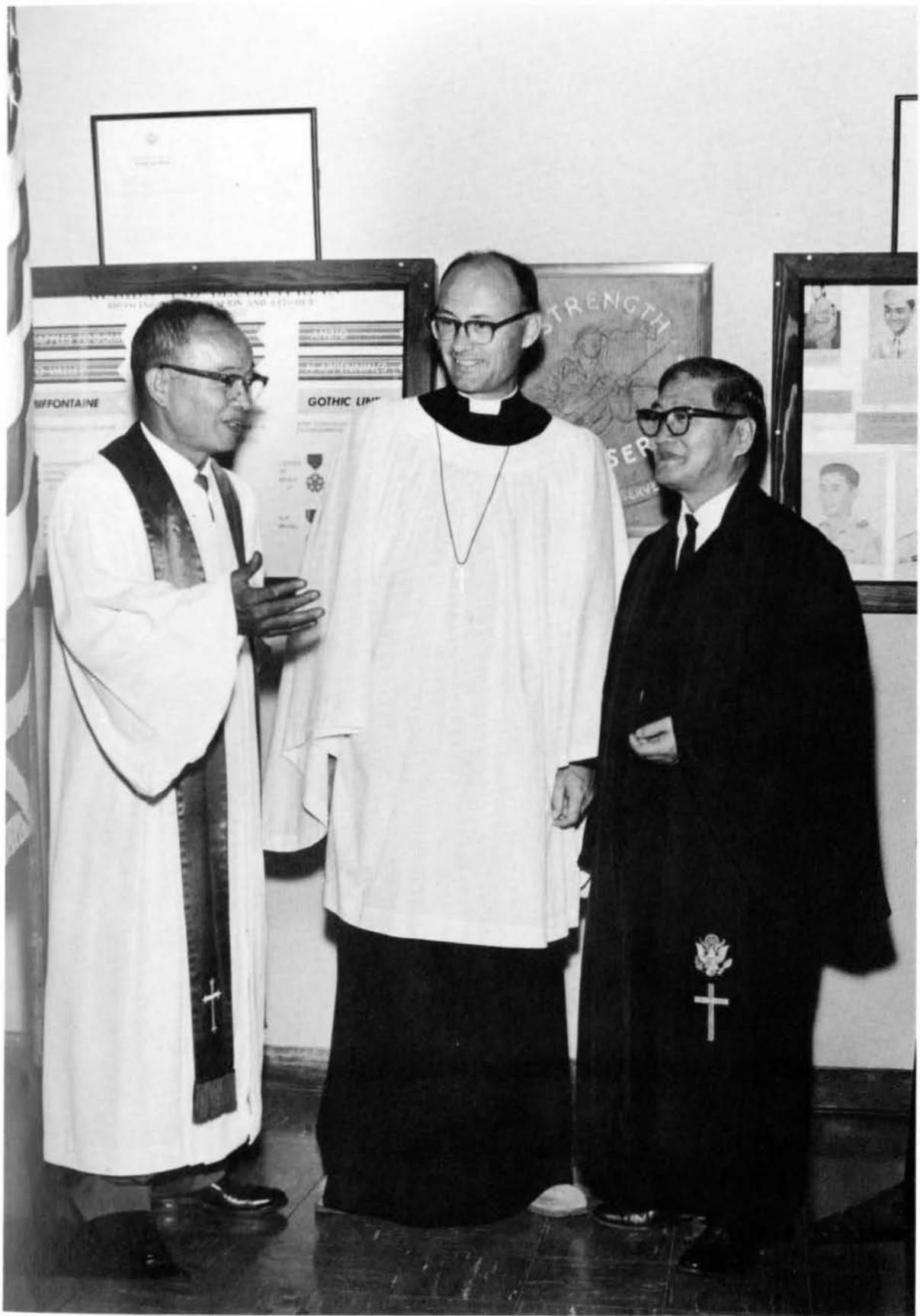
"I am an American," came Nishimura's instant, angry reply.

The German, astonished, stared at him — silent.

I know because I was there.

President Harry Truman said it best when he presented the 7th Presidential Unit Citation to the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and told them: "You fought not only the enemy, you fought prejudice — and you won."

At the completion of the award ceremony I saw this great American president walk to the crowd of spectators to talk to wounded Japanese American soldiers who had been brought from nearby Walter Reed hospital to witness the event. Despite their terrible wounds you could see the pride in their faces as they shook hands with the President. Protocol couldn't be followed, however. Some, in wheelchairs, had to remain seated in the presence of the President of the United States because they had no legs to stand on. So the President leaned over to talk to them. It was America at its best — and its saddest: the acknowledgment of unsurpassed courage and toll which war had taken among Japanese American GIs whose loyalty to the United States had been suspect after the fatal bombing of Pearl Harbor.





## “GODFATHER” OF THE 442ND

Earl Finch of Hattiesburg, Mississippi adopted the men of the 442nd during the training at Camp Shelby. He unselfishly carried on his friendship after the war and helped many 442nd veterans and others while a resident of Hawaii.



BY JOHN TSUKANO

## UNUSUAL FRIENDSHIPS



*Madame Voirin*

In World War I, the father of Mayor Georges Henry fought at Verdun, one of France's most horrible nightmares — an endless, static, trench warfare and siege which drained and consumed the French nation's most precious asset, the brains and brawns of its young men, the very future of France. The meaning of Verdun became abundantly clear in World War II when the citizens of France, weary of wars, were defeated by their erstwhile enemy — Germany.

What did the mayor of Biffontaine, Georges Henry, do to be the recipient of such a loving and caring invitation from the 442nd veterans? Who are these people who are accompanying the mayor to Hawaii, some of whom have already been to Hawaii five times to demonstrate their eternal love for the veterans, and who continue to visit and lay flowers at the 442nd and 100th monuments in the forests near Bruyeres and Biffontaine, celebrate the anniversary of the liberation of Bruyeres and continue to drive to Epinal cemetery some miles away where several 100th and 442nd veterans are still buried?

The character, spirituality and sensitivity of the people of the Vosges Mountains are best exemplified by the extraordinary behavior, courage and farsightedness of 17-year-old Georges Henry in October of 1944, when the 100th/442nd liberated Biffontaine.

For some weeks, the inhabitants of Biffontaine, France, had been hearing the muted sounds of steady artillery barrages coming from the direction of the nearby town of Bruyeres. Fervently hoping for a miracle, the people of Biffontaine met in the only church in the vicinity, supplicating the Almighty to spare them and their small village from the carnage that had befallen the unfortunate town and people of Bruyeres.

Biffontaine is in a picturesque, peaceful valley, surrounded by hills and valleys so green and lush that even Hawaiian-type ferns grow in them during the spring and summer. From the valley, even on a sunny day, the fog rolls in and blankets the hills.

Yes, strange and mystical things happened and still happen in Biffontaine, mostly inhabited by honest, hardworking farmers, many of them veterans of Verdun in World War I, "The War to End

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All War." These people were fiercely independent, didn't ask for much, and merely wanted to be left alone to live out their lives in peace, and certainly they threatened no one. One would think that such a simple wish from such an admirable people would be granted by the great powers.

But war is war. Once started it has a life of its own, had its own agenda, momentum, and nothing else matters.

The battle which was occurring somewhere else in the distance, heard in Biffontaine only in muted sounds, suddenly and inexplicably made its ugly appearance in Biffontaine.

Unknown to the good people of Biffontaine, something more terrifying than they ever imagined was about to happen to them, affecting each and every inhabitant, and even each and every animal and fowl in the confines of Biffontaine.

After the liberation of Bruyeres, the 100th was immediately ordered by Major General Dahlquist, Commanding General of the 36th Division, to head towards Biffontaine, without enough time to properly replenish supplies and ammunition. The commander of the 100th, Col. Singles, was beside himself. Nevertheless, like a good officer, he obeyed the order. The men of the 100th, the majority of whom were now 442nd replacements from Camp Shelby, also obeyed their commanding officer without question, the mark of well-disciplined organization.

Upon safely reaching the hill overlooking Biffontaine, some of the line officers of the 100th suspected that something was wrong. They sensed that something ominous was happening or about to happen to the battalion. For instance, it was discovered upon reaching the hill above Biffontaine that the wire communication to regimental headquarters had been cut. Also it was too easy getting to Biffontaine without any opposition whatsoever. The water canteens carried by each soldier were dangerously low; because of the long march, the battalion was now out of range from friendly infantry and artillery support, and the battalion was completely surrounded by the enemy. To try to return to Bruyeres would have been suicidal.

The men immediately began to dig their slit trenches on the lonely hill overlooking Biffontaine and were only too aware of their vulnerability and terrible dilemma. The officers wondered and worried . . . could it be that the

100th was sucked into a cleverly designed trap? The enemy was known to have used this tactic on other American units with devastating losses to the Americans. Unfortunately for the long-suffering men of the 100th, the suspicion of the officers that they were sucked into a cleverly designed trap was correct.

Without any warning, one of the worst rolling barrages in the Vosges Mountains campaign was raining down, seemingly on every ten square yards on the forested hill where the 100th Battalion soldiers had dug their slit trenches. Fortunately, most if not all had finished digging when the terrible barrage began.

All hell broke loose. Ear-splitting, awesome explosions shook the very ground on which the men lay and reverberated in every house and building in the village of Biffontaine. The hill was ablaze with flashes of red flames and the acrid smell of gunpowder permeated the air over the hill and the valley below. The smell of gunpowder was so overwhelming that some men vomited while lying in their slit trenches while the shells were landing all around them. How could any human being survive and endure to fight another day after taking such a merciless pounding?

The quick, methodical, well planned response of the enemy surprised the front line officers of the 100th. How did the enemy know the exact location and perimeter of the 100th and lob artillery shells so accurately within the perimeter? Nearly 50 years later, nobody knows the answer to this intriguing question. That is, nobody knows for sure.

It was a week past the middle of October 1944 but winter weather had already arrived. The coming winter of 1944-1945 in the Vosges Mountains was destined to become one of the coldest and wettest in half a century. The men of the 100th/442nd, ill-clad for winter weather, absolutely had no idea of what lay ahead of them.

In a farm house in Biffontaine, a curious, impressionable 17-year-old boy living with his parents bundled up in warm clothing and blankets in his cold house and took in everything that happened in and around his village of Biffontaine. He was a witness to the viciousness of the artillery barrage on the hill. He did not know who occupied the hill. Nevertheless, whether they were German or Americans, he felt sorrow and pain for them. His young mind told him that no

one deserved such punishment.

That night, young Georges Henry couldn't sleep. He lay awake listening to the moans and cries for help throughout the night from the wounded and dying men on the hill in the dark forest. He knew that his father fought at Verdun in World War I. He had heard stories of what it was like at Verdun. He wondered what was going to happen in his small village. All he knew was that two powerful armies were now facing each other and the battlefield was going to be the village of Biffontaine.

He wasn't wrong. Major General Dahlquist, commanding general of the 36th Division, ordered the 100th/442nd by radio to "Take Biffontaine." The word went out to the company commanders and in the morning at daylight, the 100th/442nd attacked. These men, some of them wounded from the terrible barrage on the hill, charged from the forested hill down into the open valley and engaged in close quarter fighting with the Germans.

In a normal combat situation, the men occupying the hill have an enormous advantage over the men in the valley. Yet, here they were — the men of the 100th/442nd, short on manpower, on a hill looking down at German occupied Biffontaine — surrounded by Germans and isolated without friendly artillery and flank support, ordered to leave the comparative safety and advantage of the forested hill and attack the enemy whose numbers and strength were not yet determined. As good officers and men, the 100th/442nd again — as they had done so many times before — obeyed the order and openly attacked Biffontaine.

The boy Georges Henry was cautioned by his parents to be careful, to remain in the house and not stick his head out of the window. He was too curious to obey. He wanted to find out what was happening around Biffontaine. He stuck his head out of the window and ventured around the house to find the best view. He was a witness to history, at the scene when the fighting began in his village of Biffontaine.

From the distance, he saw men of short stature, fully armed and charging out of the forest, some falling from rifle and machine gun fire as they sprinted into the open valley and spread out in the small village. Many of these men had already been wounded by the terrible artillery barrage in the forest. In a normal battle, some of these men

would have been evacuated to hospitals in England or in the states. The war would have been over for them — and here they were engaging the enemy in fierce hand-to-hand fighting to clear the houses still occupied by the enemy.

Actually, the houses were lifesavers. A man could not survive in the freezing, wet forest, unprotected from the vicious elements for too many days and remain viable or alive. The human body can just take so much punishment. This knowledge was probably why the Germans adopted the scorched earth policy — torching homes as they retreated through the foreboding and unforgiving Vosges Mountains and forest. The Germans were using the homes and farms and villages as weapons.

Later, seeing the men of the 100th at close range, Georges Henry was able to distinguish that the men who were fighting so furiously were oriental. His first thought was: "Where did these men come from? Who are they?"

The fighting went on sporadically, much of the day and the night.

That night in bed, Georges Henry, the future mayor of Biffontaine, waited in fright for the killings to stop. At the most critical time in his life, he vowed that some day he would build a monument to these strangers who fought so desperately to liberate his village. Even before he met them, he felt a strong kinship toward them.

That night, the boy Georges Henry again laid awake. He listened to the sounds of battles raging and shells landing in his village. There were sounds of small-arms firing away — rifles, machine guns, automatic weapons. There were short and long intervals when an eerie silence descended and in fact dominated the dark night, when the pounding of the mortars and artillery shells and small-arm fire started all over again.

The plight of the wounded and dead haunted the conscience of Georges Henry. He wondered over and over again where these oriental men came from. They were so fearless and so brave, he observed. As the fighting escalated and the German tanks started to fire point-blank range into the brick-walled homes suspected of harboring Americans, Georges Henry shook in fright and wished the madness would end.

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In a house in another part of Biffontaine, at the edge of the forest was the home of Paul and Josephine Voirin.

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Approximately 25 men of the 100th Battalion fortuitously occupied and crowded the home of the Voirin family, fortunate because Madame Voirin was a woman of great compassion and understanding. Instead of being fearful and resentful of the strange soldiers, she actually welcomed the men of the 100th into her home. Noticing that some of the men were badly wounded and thirsty, Madame Voirin moved quickly. She placed the most seriously wounded on four of her mattresses. One of the soldiers was badly wounded by shrapnel in the stomach. His bowels were exposed and bleeding badly. She spoon-fed him water because of the nature of his wound. He was in great pain but did not complain. He managed to grasp Madame Voirin's hand and said a few words, but Madame Voirin was able to understand only one word: Mama.

Then unnoticed by the soldiers, she quickly left the safety of her brick walled home to venture outside to the well for water. Her bucket filled with fresh, clean water of Biffontaine, she reentered the house, still unnoticed by the soldiers. To be outside even for a few minutes was a dangerous thing to do because of the plentiful enemy snipers and soldiers still in Biffontaine. As far as Madame Voirin was concerned, the soldiers were thirsty and needed water, so she went to the well to get it. That it was dangerous never entered her mind. Making sure that all the soldiers had enough water to quench their thirst, she made the rounds and treated and comforted the other wounded soldiers.

Madame Voirin wanted to spend more time with the soldier who called out "Mama." The Germans counterattacked and in the combat and confusion which followed, Madame Voirin lost track of him. At one point the situation became so desperate that her husband kissed her goodbye before what he believed was the end for him, his wife, and son. He confided to his wife, "We are all going to die here."

By the second night in the Voirin home, the 100th soldiers had fought off two strong counterattacks. Exhausted soldiers of the 100th were sprawled out in deep sleep all over the house on the floor. Madame Voirin wanted to get some medicine from her storage place in the cellar, and in order to not step on and waken the sleeping soldiers, she tiptoed her way through the dark rooms. In the cellar on the trap door which opened up to a small depository which held her

supply of stored food and medicine, four soldiers were sleeping (she thought). "Excuse me, please," she said a few times in the gentle and soft French language, but there was no response. She touched the hands and they were ice cold, and it was only then that she realized that all four of them had died in the night, on the trap door in one of the coldest Octobers ever in Europe. Madame Voirin felt a pang in her heart, for the parents of the four men lying on the trap door, and silently prayed for them and their families. She also prayed that this would not be the fate of her young and only son some time in the future, somewhere in an alien land, such as was the case for these four unfortunates who lay dead in her cellar.

After the war, as early as 1948, a veteran of the 100th/442nd revisited the battlefield in the Vosges Mountains. The latent mysteries of the place intrigued him so much that he continued to return to the place. After several more visits, he was convinced that this was indeed a sacred and special place which should never be forgotten by not only the men of the 100th/42nd, but also by their descendants.

In one of the 100th/442nd veteran's many visits, he had a long conversation with Madame Voirin. Her husband had died and her only son had moved to a town with better job opportunities. With her son's departure for a life of his own, Madame Voirin lived alone in her home with some tragic but also inspiring and uplifting memories. Her only companion was her faithful and loving cat who also died after many years, leaving Madame Voirin more memories.

Dr. Raymond Collin, long-time doctor of Madame Voirin, knowing that she did not speak English and was recovering from a serious heart attack, sent his daughter France who spoke excellent English, to gently inform Madame Voirin that she had a visitor from Hawaii. At this stage of her recovery, caution had to be exercised so as not to cause additional strain on her damaged heart.

Madame Voirin was her usual self — cheerful as ever in spite of her illness and solitude — but lines had appeared on her forehead. Three years before, her complexion had been flawless, without a wrinkle, in spite of her age. Clearly her bout with the previous year's heart attack took a lot out of her. Now her eyes looked tired and strained.

Looking out the window towards the forest,

she made a strange statement, "I told my son, who recently paid me a visit, to preserve the bloodstained mattresses in the cellar. Someone may come to claim them." After a long pause, she continued, "The mattresses were the last resting place for several soldiers who liberated Biffontaine in October of 1944.

The bloodstained mattresses evidently denoted something noble to Madame Voirin. Tears came to her eyes whenever she talked about them and the men who died on them.

Asked why she kept the mattresses in the cellar all these years, Madame Voirin was not able to satisfactorily answer in positive terms. Perhaps her veiled offer to the visiting 100th/442nd visitor was more significant and applicable. "The mattresses are available to anyone who wished to perpetuate the memory of the good men who fought and died here in Biffontaine, France."

Mlle. France Collin, a lifelong friend of Madame Voirin, explained: "Madame Voirin is an extremely modest person, extremely perceptive and intelligent, and very low key. She would have gone far in some academic field if she had been given the right opportunities. She knows all about the 100th/442nd soldiers, about the circumstances and conditions of the Japanese-Americans in America in World War II. She believes that the mattresses and the trap door can serve as reminders to future generations how some brave men fought, suffered, and died without remorse, with great dignity, in a foreign country in a remote village of Biffontaine in northeastern France; died for their friends, families, and country."

Mlle. Collin continued: "Madame Voirin is of the strong opinion that any person who can behave the way the 100th/442nd soldiers behaved in a life and death situation and the way they respected and treated and protected a defenseless couple and their son in war time when their own life were at stake, deserve to be honored, cherished, and remembered."

Madame Voirin said: "I remember them all as being kind and sympathetic. They gave their own rationed candies to my son, cigarettes to my husband and they even paid me for the cabbages they took from the garden during a lull in battle. They even asked permission to do that. After they left, my husband and I discovered that nothing in the house was missing, and on the kitchen table, the 100th/442nd soldiers had left a substantial

amount of French francs."

Asked if she remembers anything else, she sadly replied, "I remember my husband shaking his head as he saw the soldiers charging into the open field from the forest and falling to rifle and machine gun fire, and he quietly said, 'This is Verdun again.' My husband believed that World War I was the war to end all wars!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Madame Voirin. "How can I forget, I was very happy when two veterans from Hawaii (Kazuo Yasuda of Honolulu and George Oshita of Kapaa, Kauai) and their wives visited me in the Bruyeres hospital."

To Madame Voirin, it was as if her "Sons" had returned with their wives. She remembered their names later because Yasuda and Oshita had left their names on the gift boxes they had left at the hospital for Madame Voirin.

One day the inevitable happened. The clock stopped ticking in the life of Madame Josephine Voirin, and with her death the bloodstained mattresses which she had preserved in her home in the cellar for 45 years disappeared. Perhaps this was meant to be.

Pierre Moulin and Serge Carlesso informed the 100th/442nd veterans that Madame Voirin had died peacefully in 1989.

Madame Voirin believed throughout her life that the mattresses were the symbol of the men who died while liberating Biffontaine. She believed that the mattresses were **not** inconsequential but of "monumental value and importance" (her words), worthy to be preserved and cherished.

Her feeling of reverence for the bloodstained mattresses and the men who died on them did not happen overnight. It took decades of learning about the men who fought at Biffontaine before she could use words like "monumental value and importance." The bloodstained mattresses and the men who died on them represented the greatest crisis and opportunity for her. In a compressed time of just a few days, she was able to have a "glimpse of eternity" (her words). She was able to believe that she lived thorough the best of times and, in a span of just three short days, she was able to serve humanity in a most remarkable and meaningful way. This remarkable woman, Madame Voirin, died grateful for those three days.

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Georges Henry didn't forget the vow he had

made when Biffontaine was under siege. As mayor, but never a man of wealth, he was unable to save enough money from his modest income to build a granite monument in the forest near Biffontaine. Using branches from trees and other wood he had gathered, the mayor built a simple monument. He dreamed and planned for the day he could save enough money to erect a permanent granite monument that would withstand the ravages of time and stand in the forest as a reminder to all who passed by of the brave deeds done there. Through the years, he quietly tended his little monument, keeping it neat and laying flowers next to the monument at appropriate times.

The monument, located in a secluded spot on a hill, attracted little attention, and there it stood for many years. The long-term mayor — it seemed like he'd been the mayor of Biffontaine forever — kept tending his little monument with care and flowers.

Many years passed, and still the mayor of Biffontaine, Georges Henry, never gave up hope that some day he would build that granite mon-

ument.

In 1983, Jean Bianchetti, a wealthy businessman from Varigny in the Vosges Mountains, took his wife and teenage daughter to Hawaii. Monsieur Bianchetti went there to get relief from an excruciating pain his doctors in France had not been able to cure. The doctors in Honolulu couldn't either. The pain grew to the point where Bianchetti couldn't take it any longer. He and his family went to the French consulate in Waikiki. There he met a 100th/442nd veteran. When the veteran heard that the Bianchettis were from the Vosges Mountains area, he offered to take them sight-seeing. Bianchetti politely refused the offer, explaining that he was too much in pain. Mrs. Bianchetti clearly at the French consulate informed the veteran that Bianchetti and his family were there to make arrangements for Bianchetti's body to be shipped back to France to be buried.

Still wanting to do something for Bianchetti and his family, the veteran asked where they were staying in Hawaii. Bianchetti at first politely refused to give that information. Later, he did tell the veteran where he was staying in Waikiki. The

*Bianchetti and the healers*



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veteran's mouth dropped. That was the address where the veteran and his family lived when his children were still in grade school. That is where another 442nd veteran, Ted Tsukiyama and his family, also lived.

The veteran called on the Bianchettis the next day and took them to a 442 "M" Company steak-out. A strange thing occurred there. Bianchetti's excruciating pain gradually began to disappear. He felt the spirit of the "M" Company men attacking whatever it was that was causing the pain in his body. Bianchetti was now witnessing the miracle of healing, and he was astonished.

In a short time, the pain he had suffered for so many years mysteriously began to leave his body. He had seen many doctors and spent a small fortune in search of a cure, without results.

That night, free of much of the pain, Bianchetti was alert and in good spirits when the veteran showed him films of the battle of the Vosges Mountains. While showing the film, the veteran told the story of what happened to Biffontaine and its people in the gruesome three-day battle in October of 1944, and how the 17-year-old boy Georges Henry, the future mayor of Biffontaine, vowed to build a monument to the men who were fighting so fiercely to liberate Biffontaine. By the time the story was fully told, Bianchetti was in tears. Managing a smile, he said, "No matter how many more pains I may have to suffer, I am returning to Varigny in the Vosges Mountains . . . In Varigny I own a factory which builds granite monuments. Granite is so plentiful around where I live. I also own two granite quarries there. So you must believe me when I tell you that I will build that granite monument for Mayor Georges Henry. I already feel like I know the mayor."

In October of 1984, a proud Bianchetti, the picture of health, with no pain — only supreme happiness — was there in the huge audience as Mayor Georges Henry of Biffontaine dedicated the monument. It was the proudest moment in his life.

On May 20, 1990, Mayor Georges Henry addressed the throng of people lining the banks of the Rapido River at San Angelo near Cassino, Italy:

"In October of 1944, after a long and swift advance from Southern France, the American troops found themselves blocked by the enemy at the foot of the Vosges Mountains . . .

Then began the battles of Bruyeres and Biffontaine and the Lost Battalion . . . the casualties accumulating on both sides . . . It is then that France discovered the American soldiers, who came from the other side of the world, not in search of glory and fame, but simply to prove their loyalty to their country and to help France win its liberty.

It is to honor these men of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team that we erected a monument to their memory, at the Milestone No. 6, near Biffontaine, but when we learned that these same men had already waged valiant battles, suffering heavy losses in Italy and especially in Cassino, we wanted the same monument placed here in Cassino, paying tribute to their sacrifice and determination to fight against the enemies of peace.

People of all races, regardless of the color of your skin, don't ever forget what the men who fought . . . did. They gave their lives so that you and your children can be free . . . If your hope is that we will never again see war, and the suffering it brings, let us today solemnly swear that each day of our lives we will make every effort so that the world will be fair and that peace may be established in all the countries of the world. This would be the finest present that we can offer to those who gave their lives here . . . and I cannot forget a Frenchman of Italian descent, Mr. Bianchetti, the kingpin of this memorable day."

Mayor Georges Henry and M. Jean Bianchetti strongly feel they share a common denominator as precious as life itself; their deep friendship and reverence for all the men who served in the 100th/442nd.

Monsieur Bianchetti and his wife certainly will be in Honolulu for the 50th reunion and so will Pierre Moulin and Serge Carlesso of Bruyeres, to name only a few of the generous, gracious, thoughtful, spiritual, wonderful, beautiful people of Bruyeres, Biffontaine, and surrounding towns and villages of the Vosges Mountains region. Ever in their French minds is the reality that only too soon the heroes of the 100th and the 442nd who liberated them in 1944 will be gone forever. They are well aware that the 50th reunion may be the last hurrah for the men who served in the 100th/442nd in World War II.

The French people worry that after the 100th/442nd veterans are all gone, the Vosges Mountains region — especially the town of

Bruyeres and the village of Biffontaine — will be forgotten by the descendants of the veterans.

Asked whether their descendants in Bruyeres and Biffontaine will remember the 100th/442nd soldiers, the inhabitants emphatically answer, "Yes, forever."

Veterans and their families who have visited the two towns are inclined to believe this emphatic answer.



*Good people*



*Bianchetti and*

#### THE FRENCH CONNECTION

*Dedication — Mayor Georges Henry, Biffontaine*





*Carlesso and friends*



*Sister City, Bruyeres*



*Madame Jeanne Rupp*



*Bruyeres*



*Beaucoup Ami*





BY MAJOR ORVILLE C. SHIREY (RET.)

## 50 YEARS: A SUMMING UP



As we step, perhaps not so lightly as we once did, into the golden haze of this anniversary of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), Ron Oba and George Nakasato have asked me to do something I don't think can be done well in two pages.

But I'm going to try.

My mission: an overview of the Rome/Arno, Vosges, and Gothic Line/Po Valley campaigns; the significance of those campaigns to the war in Europe; and the 100th/442nd contribution to their success. Plus, what we haole officers thought of the Nisei soldiers we commanded, and how we evaluated and treated them.

Hang on. Here we go.

First, Rome/Arno, or, for the 442nd, Belevedere/Arno. For 5th Army — and 8th Army as well — this pursuing action was what passed for a war of movement in the Italian campaign. Cassino had eaten up months of time and thousands of lives. The Anzio landing, with far too small a troop commitment, probably based on faulty intelligence, was another costly stalemate. At Cassino and later at Anzio, the 100th Battalion, attached to the veteran 34th Division, fought gallantly in a campaign that chewed up gallant battalions and even great divisions in a bitter, stalemated winter.

But finally, the breakout had come in the most powerful sustained Allied assault ever mounted in Italy (General Clark had twelve divisions under Fifth Army control alone). Rome had fallen, and the Germans retreated in near disorder, giving up 65 miles in six days.

Here in mid-June, 1944, the 442nd caught up with the 100th near Civitavecchia. The 100th became the 1st Battalion of the 442nd, retaining its own unit designation. This meshing of gears, though sometimes accompanied by grinding noises and smoke, was important. Together again, with the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion (FA Bn) and the 232nd Engineer Company in place, the 442nd Combat Team was not quite yet, but would soon become a feared striking force.

That was fortunate, because the Germans, as they had so often, recovered from near disaster, falling back on the Gothic Line above Bologna, fighting a skillful delaying action in the broken, hilly terrain.

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A breakthrough — a decision in Italy — was not to be. Already VI Corps was being withdrawn for the Southern France campaign. Italy would be low-budget theater.

Meanwhile, the 442nd, fresh and eager, led the 34th Division's drive. At Bevedere, the 100th fought a classic action, the kind commanders dream about. With the 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacking abreast, stopped by fire, the 100th attacked between them, into a gap in the enemy's line, broke through, performed a double envelopment and literally destroyed a German battalion in a space of hours. For this action, the 100th received a Presidential citation.

The 442nd continued on the attack in the hills above the Ligurian Coast until Livorno (Leghorn) was outflanked and could be secured. Then the Division closed on the Arno River.

This was the last major action by the 442nd until it was transferred to the 36th Division control in France, in September. The significance of Rome/Arno Campaign in the long story of the war is hard to measure. Given the decision to make the main effort in France, should the 5th Army simply have been ordered over the defensive north of Rome? Was this campaign necessary?

It is clear that, without VI Corps, 5th Army was not strong enough to break through the Apennine defenses to the Po Valley before the bitter Italian winter. Another winter guaranteed that 15 or 16 German divisions would be tied down in Italy and kept out of France. Whether this was worth the casualties and the logistical cost of another major winter offensive was hard to say.

Or — an intriguing speculation by no means original with me — should the 5th Army have been strengthened enough to break out in September/October, 1994, and have attacked in the Balkans? Ideas like these are one of the advantages of speculating instead of sitting in a CP dugout full of ice water. Sir Winston Churchill believed the Balkan strategy was critical to everlasting peace. I agree. I think we are now seeing the fruits of giving up the Balkans to the Russians 50 years ago.

The 442nd's contributions to the campaign? to fight aggressively and well in three short but bitter battles and many small actions. . . . in fluid and sometimes difficult situations . . . win its objectives . . . and not make too many rookie mistakes. Its contribution to itself? To get in the habit

of winning. To prove to itself that it belonged in this league.

#### **On to France**

Bruyeres and the Lost Battalion, our piece of the Rhineland Campaign, had a simple objective: get to the Rhine. Maybe even get across the Rhine around Strasbourg. Except that, like Moses, we never saw the Promised Land.

Shipped out of Naples on September 27, the 442nd landed at Marseilles, then trucked and trained 500 miles up the Rhone Valley, which the Seventh Army had conquered in about five weeks. We were attached to VI Corps and further attached to the 36th Division. On October 14, 17 days after we left Naples, we were in the lines and attacking. Objective: the road and rail center of the Bruyeres. The Army can move fast when it wants to.

Resistance had stiffened after VI Corps had turned east out of the Rhone Valley. The 442nd was at that point the only fresh infantry unit Seventh Army had to its name. It appeared, from the jumble of ridges and valleys going in every direction, that the 100th Battalion would experience Cassino all over again — with the added hazard of tree bursts in the dense Vosges forests. For the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, it would be a whole new experience.

Enough has been written about the battles of Bruyeres and Biffontaine and the heroic relief of the "lost" 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, to fill several books. I will not repeat the tactical story here. It is enough to say that while the 7th Army did not cross the Rhine until early spring, it did reach the Rhine before Christmas and stabilized the front in the Vosges.

It is also fair to say that the 442nd provided a jump start when one was needed, courageous leadership for the 36th Division at a critical time, and an inspiring story for stateside people. It also acquired Presidential Unit Citations for the 100th Bn, 3rd Bn, Co. F., Co. L., and the 232nd Engineer Co., to add to the first Citation the 100th Bn had received for action at Bevedere in June.

#### **The End of the Line**

The final assault to break into Italy's Po Valley, cut up the German forces and defeat them in detail, was minutely planned at 15th Army group, and splendidly executed. The 442nd was there, rested and refreshed, and attached this time to IV's Corps 92nd Division. The battle plan included an elaborate program of deception. The

92nd with the 442nd and 473rd Infantry Regiments attached would attack through the hills and above the Ligurian Coast on April 5th, nine days before the main thrust far to the east before Bologna.

Fifth Army expected a diversionary attack to confuse the enemy and perhaps draw in his local reserves. What 5th Army got was a brilliantly conceived flanking assault on Mts. Cerreta, Folgorita, Bevedere and Brugiana that destroyed positions which had been impregnable for five months. This took four days. Not only had local German reserves been sucked in, but some of the enemy's strategic reserve as well. At the same time, the main attack of the 5th and 8th Armies struck with stunning force. On May 2, the war in Italy was over. By then, units of the 442nd and 473rd had seized Genoa and were ranging as far north as Turin and Casale.

To me, this was the maturation of the 442nd into a world-class infantry unit; daring, efficient, disciplined, able to free-lance on its own. The War Department also thought so. The 442nd RCT (less that 522 Field Artillery, which was still supporting the 7th Army in Germany) received a Presidential Citation for this action which, as the

citation said, turned a diversionary action into a full-scale and victorious offensive.

#### **How Did Haole Officers Regard the Nisei Soldiers?**

I've never taken a poll, so I can only comment on that part of my assignment from a personal standpoint. Many of us were not well briefed before we reported with the cadre. So the first reaction was shock. The second, with the Hawaii types, was "You said what . . .?" Then we got down to work.

Very early, we realized we had mostly very bright, exceptionally motivated soldiers. At the same time, they were soldiers like any others. And the good book says, "You train these guys the very best you can, because your life will depend on them." The good book also says, "You put their well-being before your own because you are responsible for them." And the book also says, in different words, "Don't get too close to your people . . . so close that you'll hesitate to order an attack . . . so close that you might fall apart if a special friend gets killed." That happened to a couple of officers I knew.

I know of no haole officer who was not proud of his service with the 442nd. I was, and I am.

*Mountains and more mountains*





*Mountain Goats*

*Training for the future*





BY A.A. SMYSER

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 442ND

The American civil rights movement of the 20th century is widely considered to have started in the 1960's with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on desegregation, Martin Luther King's peaceful protests (that drew violent reactions), and a growing body of civil rights laws.



But all of that came after Hawaii's successful civil rights struggles — the long quest that ended with the granting of statehood in 1959. The Hawaii quest became a great civil rights victory all by itself. It gave full political equality to the Asians and other non-Caucasian who are a majority of Hawaii's residents. A real first for the U.S.

This quest could have failed had it not been for the heroic World War II action of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion.

It is possible that instead of being a state today Hawaii might still be a territory with officials appointed from Washington, or a commonwealth with only a tiny voice in national government, or a county of California. Between 1946 and 1959, the year of Statehood, all three of these proposals were pushed by Statehood foes.

From Washington D.C., the Territory of Hawaii was looked on with suspicion and considered by many an unfit candidate for statehood. It was non-contiguous with the mainland. The majority of its population was Asian. These things were not true of any then existing state.

U.S. policy before World War II frowned on Asians. Pacific/Asian immigration quotas were minuscule compared to those granted Europe. The 1924 exclusions Act barred immigration from Japan entirely. Naturalization of Japanese already in the U.S. was forbidden. Americans looked down on Asians. They did not appreciate that Asian cultural histories were as rich as Europe's.

Few Americans could distinguish one Asian from another. When they did, they regarded Japanese as the worst. Japanese made cheap toys sold worldwide. They were imperialists who threatened Asia and U.S. interests in Asia. The 1930's were marked by a growing suspicion there would be a war with Japan that America presumably would win rather easily. I remember reading periodicals describing the "ring of steel" we had around Japan.

Hawaii's fit into this picture was uncomfortable. Out of a population of 422,000 in 1940, 160,000 or nearly 40% were of Japanese ancestry. The non-Japanese were divided as to how the Japanese would react in the event of war. The FBI

# WAR!

(Associated Press by Transpacific Telephone)  
**SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 7.—**President Roosevelt announced this morning that Japanese planes had attacked Manila and Pearl Harbor.

# OAHU BOMBED BY JAPANESE PLANES

## SIX KNOWN DEAD, 21 INJURED, AT EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

### Attack Made On Island's Defense Areas

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7.—Text of a White House announcement detailing the attack on the Hawaiian islands is: "The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor from the air and all naval and military activities on the island of Oahu, principal American base in the Hawaiian islands."

Oahu was attacked at 7:55 this morning by Japanese planes. The Rising Sun, emblem of Japan, was seen on plane wing tips.

Wave after wave of bombers streamed through the clouded morning sky from the southwest and flung their missiles on a city resting in peaceful Sabbath calm.

According to an unconfirmed report received at the governor's office, the Japanese force that attacked Oahu reached island waters aboard two small airplane carriers. It was also reported that at the governor's office either an attempt had been made to bomb the USS Lexington, or that it had been bombed.

#### CITY IN UPROAR

Within 10 minutes the city was in an uproar. As bombs fell in many parts of the city, and in defense areas the defenders of the islands went into quick action.

Army intelligence officers at Ft. Shafter announced officially shortly after 9 a. m. the fact of the bombardment by an enemy but long previous army and navy had taken immediate measures in defense.

"Oahu is under a sporadic air raid," the announcement said.

"Citizens are ordered to stay off the streets until further notice."

#### CIVILIANS ORDERED OFF STREETS

The army has ordered that all civilians stay off the streets and highways and not use telephones.

Evidence that the Japanese attack has registered some hits was shown by three billowing pillars of smoke in the Pearl Harbor and Hickam field areas.

All navy personnel and civilian defense workers, with the exception of women, have been ordered to duty at Pearl Harbor.

The Pearl Harbor highway was immediately a mass of racing cars.

A trickling stream of injured people began pouring into the city emergency hospital a few minutes after the bombardment started.

Thousands of telephone calls almost swamped the Mutual Telephone Co., which put extra operators on duty.

At The Star-Bulletin office the phone calls deluged the single operator and it was impossible for this newspaper, for sometime, to handle the flood of calls. Here also an emergency operator was called.

#### HOURLY OF ATTACK—7:55 A. M.

An official army report from department headquarters, made public shortly before 11, is that the first attack was at 7:55 a. m.

Witnesses said they saw at least 50 airplanes over Pearl Harbor.

The attack centered in the Pearl Harbor, Army authorities said: "The rising sun was seen on the wing tips of the airplanes."

Although martial law has not been declared officially, the city of Honolulu was operating under M-Day conditions.

It is reliably reported that enemy objectives under attack were Wheeler field Hickam field, Kaneohe bay and naval air station and Pearl Harbor.

Some enemy planes were reported shot down.

The body of the pilot was seen in a plane burning at Wahiawa.

Oahu appeared to be taking calmly after the first uproar of queries.

#### ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS IN ACTION

First indication of the raid came shortly before 8 this morning when anti-aircraft guns around Pearl Harbor began sending up a thunderous barrage.

At the same time a vast cloud of black smoke arose from the naval base and also from Hickam field where flames could be seen.

**BOMB NEAR GOVERNOR'S MANSION**  
Shortly before 9:30 a bomb fell near Washington Place, the residence of the governor, Governor Poindexter and Secretary Charles M. Hite were there.

It was reported that the bomb killed an unidentified Chinese man across the street in front of the Schuman Carriage Co. where windows were broken.

C. E. Daniels, a welder, found a fragment of shell or bomb at South and Queen Sts. which he brought into the City Hall. This fragment weighed about a pound.

At 10:05 a. m. today Governor Poindexter telephoned to The Star-Bulletin announcing he has declared a state of emergency for the entire territory.

He announced that Edouard L. Doty, executive secretary of the major disaster council, has been appointed director under the M-Day law's provisions.

Governor Poindexter urged all residents of Honolulu to remain off the street, and the people of the territory to remain calm.

Mr. Doty reported that all major disaster council wardens and medical units were on duty within a half hour of the time the alarm was given.

Workers employed at Pearl Harbor were ordered at 10:10 a. m. not to report at Pearl Harbor.

The mayor's major disaster council was to meet at the city hall at about 10:30 this morning.

At least two Japanese planes were reported at Hawaiian department headquarters to have been shot down.

One of the planes was shot down at Ft. Kamehameha and the other back of the Wa-

### Hundreds See City Bombed

Hundreds of Honolulu residents hurried to the top of Punchbowl soon after bombs began to fall, saw spread out before them the whole panorama of surprise attack and defense.

Far off over Pearl Harbor the white sky was polka-dotted with anti-aircraft smoke.

Rolling over from the bay were billowing clouds of black smoke, billowing a bank of flame overhead, the black smokes of the smoke.

At the time the city suffered one of the heaviest attacks of the war.

Turn to Page 3, Column 2

### Schools Closed

All schools on Oahu have been closed and will not resume classes until further notice. Edouard L. Doty, territorial director of schools, has announced that all schools in the territory.

Another victim who died as a result of the attack was a 30-year-old man who was killed in the attack.

There were reported injured and one reported killed from the bomb that fell at Pearl Harbor.

### Editorial

#### HAWAII MEETS THE CRISIS

Honolulu and Hawaii will meet the emergency of war today as Honolulu and Hawaii have met emergencies in the past—calmly and with immediate and complete support of the officials, officers and troops who are in charge.

Governor Poindexter and the army and navy leaders have called upon the public to remain calm. For citizens who have no essential business on the streets to stay off, and for every man and woman to do his duty.

This request, coupled with the measures promptly taken to meet the situation that has suddenly and terribly developed, will be needed.

Hawaii will do its part as a loyal American territory. In this crisis, every difference of race, creed and color will be forgotten in the one desire and determination to play the part that Americans always play in crisis.

#### BULLETIN

Additional Star-Bulletin extras today will cover the latest developments in this war move.

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set up a Honolulu Office in 1939 to deal with this question.

The fact was that after the Pearl Harbor attack some older Japanese in Hawaii retained a sympathy for Japan and expected Japan to win. Nevertheless, there was not a single act of sabotage. And the second generation of Japanese — the Nisei who were born in Hawaii — were a totally different story. They were American educated. They believed in the American ideals of freedom and equal opportunity for all. They saw these ideals working imperfectly in Hawaii where a “glass ceiling” kept most Asians from top jobs — but they believed they could correct this. They set out to do so.

Young Nisei leaders realized the war could give them a positive breakthrough. It could end any justifiable suspicions about their loyalty.

How dramatically they did it by compiling some of the greatest combat records in American history is recounted elsewhere in this album. Prejudice still existed after the war. But those who spoke with prejudice no longer could make the claim that American citizens of Japanese ancestry weren't loyal Americans. In the most challenging situation possible the AJAs had proved that they were.

Thereafter, the foes of statehood for Hawaii could be seen for what they were — people motivated primarily by racial prejudice, by fear of a state with a non-white majority.

This argument, of course, violates the Constitution and Civil Rights Amendment added to it after the Civil War but subsequently significantly ignored. The nation for nearly a century (1865-1960) settled into a pattern of co-existing with its blacks on terms defined as “separate but equal” but hardly equal at all until after the revolution of the 1960's. Blacks, too, faced “glass ceilings” against advancement. They were afforded inferior public schools and public services and were denied the vote by literacy tests and other “freeze out” methods.

Even in the dark days before World War II there were non-Japanese community leaders who totally trusted Hawaii's Japanese to be loyal Americans. They provided the spark to the Statehood movement that took off in 1934 after a threat of military government following the Massie rape-murder cases and a discriminatory tariff on Hawaiian sugar. They used these two arguments to broaden the base level of support

for Statehood. However, they faced considerable high-level resistance based on racial distrust and an unwillingness to share power.

Territorial status was enormously rewarding to Hawaii's business elite, nicknamed the Big Five because of the five key business conglomerates they controlled. Their wealth and national connections helped them to heavily influence the appointment of governors and judges by the President of the U.S. They “had it good” and they could point to suspicions about Japanese loyalty to perpetuate their favored status.

After World War II, with the racial argument destroyed, the die-hards retreated to raising fears about Communist infiltration into the Hawaii labor movement as an argument against letting the public choose its own governors and judges as would be the case under statehood — and who certainly would be of a far broader ethnic mix.

All of these arguments for distrust of Hawaii's Asians ran up against the hard, glorious record of their World War II loyalty that the Nisei veterans of the 442nd and the 100th established so bloodily and so heroically. Their record was strong enough that in 1952 Hawaii's delegate to Congress, Joseph R. Farrington, won passage of legislation removing race as a restriction to citizenship. This opened the door to thousands of older Japanese being naturalized. An irony of the situation was that the Farrington proposal was included in an Immigration and Naturalization Act authored by two anti-communist Statehood foes, Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada and Congressman Francis Walter of Pennsylvania. After Statehood, Hawaii's new Senator, Hiram L. Fong, used a position on the Senate judiciary committee to dramatically increase quotas for Asian-Pacific immigration.

Without the 442nd and the 100th, Hawaii would have been locked even until today in some inferior political status, like Puerto Rico or Guam. The opportunity to be a U.S. Senator and help broaden national racial perspectives would have been denied Daniel K. Inouye of the 442nd and the late Spark Matsunaga of the 100th. Such discrimination against Hawaii on the grounds of race would have been sure to sour race relations here, which instead are a world model for intercultural success. We all owe so much to the Nisei veterans of World War II.