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Title: Junji Sarashina Interview
Narrator: Junji Sarashina
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 17>

NW: So when did you move from Hawai'i to the mainland, then?

JS: Okay, that's another story. That's when the Korean War started.

NW: Oh, okay. So, you were stationed in the mainland first?

JS: When the war started, you know, I was out of, I was out of, what do you call it, high school. But the war started, and then I got the draft notice, it said report to camp so and so by so and so. The war was going on. And to make the story interesting, Hawaiian regiment, Cav Core, Fifth, . . . I forgot the name. Cavalier, they were stationed in Hokkaidō during the occupation period, before the Korean War. When the war started, they sent all these soldiers stationed in Hokkaidō, close to Hawai'i, um, close to Hokkaidō, they sent to Korea. They didn't win the war in Korea, you know that.

NW: No, I don't.

JS: Okay. North Koreans and the Chinese, they would send any number of person, no matter who gets killed, they keep coming and keep coming and keep coming. And, so you have an American regiment there, and they keep coming, sooner or later, you know . . .

NW: Yeah. I guess I know the result of the war, but why, how did it relate to, I mean, you told me . . .

JS: Okay. Now, when I was in Hawai'i, you hear all these Nisei soldiers getting dead, killed because they were sent to Korea. Those are the ones who are fighting against the Chinese and the Korean. They might have been winning the war, but they get wave after wave of these Chinese soldiers coming in, and sooner or later, all these American, Hawai soldiers, they died. And of course, we hear all the "so-and-so" died, or you know. Some of my old friends said, Junji, don't go in as an infantry man. You go to infantry man, so volunteer and go to language school, military intelligence, so MIS. So few of us go together, we all got the notice, friends, we went to volunteer, and went to the Army language . . . , Fort Brag, North . . . , Fort Brag, California. That's where they trained soldiers. Six months training we had as infantry men. So Fort Brag is on the way to San Francisco.

NW: So, that's the first time you went to the mainland U.S.?

JS: Yes, yes, yes.

NW: So that was after the war started, so, 1950s, at one point?

JS: Yeah.

NW: Okay. Then you went to Korea, and then you came back in a year?

JS: Yeah. No, before that. After I finished my basic training, the last day of the service in basic training, the whole company got together, and “Private so and so, Private Smith, assignment, Korea. So and so, Korea, So and so, Korea. Private Junji Sarashina, Monterey, California.”

NW: Oh, that’s where you went first.

JS: Monterey, California is about fifty minutes away from where we were taking training, the language school. So everybody else was going to Korea, and I was going to fifty minutes away to Monterey! I tell you that the whole camp said “Ahh, damn it!” Why?

NW: They envied you!

JS: Oh, naturally, because they were going to Korea. And I was getting assigned to the city of Monterey, in California. Well. I’m going to go to the language school to learn Japanese. And you could say, what did you learn, you know? So I got assigned to language school. And I talked to the instructor there, a lot of people were learning Korean, or German or different languages, at this language [school], in Monterey, California. That’s where they have a beautiful museum too, they used to be a sardine country, and fish. And teacher says, “Junji, are you going to learn Japanese?” Well, you know, okay, alright. “You already know the Japanese.”

NW: Of course, of course.

JS: So, anyway, I could help some of the students, you know, they don’t understand. So I went to the language school for about six months or so. But since I had all the time, of course I help a lot of people when they can’t do the homework well, I help them because we’re in the same barracks. I had a lot of time to go out fishing. The Army sent out recreational fishing, paid by the government. I started to go there, everyone started getting sea sick, I’m the only one not getting sea sick. So, all the fish I catch, I used to take it to all the teachers in Monterey language school, a lot of Japanese teachers. So they said okay, okay. But that’s where I learned my . . . methods of interrogation, things like that. Then I was sent to Korea, and that’s when I met Mr. Kawasaki, from Sawtelle, the *jūdō* instructor. That’s what all tied it together.

NW: That’s right, that’s right.

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