

THE 1800 STORY (By Cedrick Shimo)

Nisei (Little Tokyo) Chapter of AARP

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ONE AFTERNOON LATE LAST YEAR I HAPPEN TO GO TO THE TOKYO TOWERS RESTAURANT RIGHT NEXT DOOR FROM HERE THERE I SAW A FAIR SIZE CONTINGENT OF ELDERLY NISEI. AS I WALKED IN I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE FRANK OMATSU WHO STOOD OUT FROM THE CROWD BECAUSE HE'S SO DARN BIG - EXCUSE ME, I SHOULD HAVE SAID TALL. SEEING FRANK I AUTOMATICALLY PRESUMED THAT THIS WAS ONE OF HIS ST. MARY'S CHURCH AFFAIR, BUT AS WE GREETED EACH OTHER I LEARNED THAT THIS WAS YOUR ORGANIZATION. AS WE CONTINUED TO EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES HE SUDDENLY ASKED IF I WOULD BE SPEAK AT ONE OF YOUR MONTHLY MEETINGS - AND LIKE A DARN FOOL I SAID, "YES." I SAY THIS BECAUSE LATER I KEPT ASKING MYSELF WHY OF ALL PEOPLE HE WOULD EVEN ASK ME, UNKNOWN AND UNGLAMOROUS, TO FACE SUCH A PRESTIGIOUS ORGANIZATION AS THE AARP. THEN IT SUDDENLY DAWNED UPON ME. OL' FRANK MUST BE REALLY DESPERATE. HE MUST NOW BE SCRAPING THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL LOOKING FOR SPEAKERS, AND I FELL INTO HIS TRAP. SO HERE I STAND, FROM THE BOTTOM OF FRANK'S BARREL HOPING I WON'T EMBARRASS HIM FOR TAKING THIS GAMBLE

THIS BEING AN AARP SENIOR CITIZENS GROUP I ASSUME WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME AGE BRACKET GIVE OR TAKE MAYBE 10 YEARS OR SO. I'M ASSUMING MANY, IF NOT MOST OF YOU, HAVE THAT TYPICAL OLD AGE SYMPTOMS - FAILING MEMORY. WELL, I'VE BEEN SUFFERING FROM THAT SYMPTOM FOR YEARS, SO I HOPE YOU WON'T MIND IF I

READ MOST OF MY SPEECH. OTHERWISE I KNOW I WILL FORGET HALF OF WHAT I WISH TO SAY.

WHEN FRANK FIRST ASKED ME TO SPEAK I HAD ASSUMED HE WANTED ME TALK ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES AT AMERICAN HONDA. NOW THAT THE TOPIC HAS BEEN CHANGED, I HOPE YOU WILL INDULGE ME FOR COUPLE OF MINUTES AS I GIVE A PLUG FOR HONDA.

IN THE LATE 1980'S I USED TO SEND FRANK COPIES OF MY ANTI JAPAN BASHING SPEECHES I USE TO MAKE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AT VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS. THIS WAS THE PERIOD WHEN JAPAN BASHING WAS AT ITS HEIGHT. YOU MIGHT REMEMBER THAT SCENE ON TV WHERE AMERICAN WORKERS WITH SLEDGE HAMMERS WERE POUNDING AWAY AT , I THINK, A TOYOTA AND THANK HEAVENS NOT A HONDA. THOSE OF US WHO WERE WORKING FOR A JAPANESE COMPANY CERTAINLY FELT THE HEAT.

IN THE MID 1970'S HONDA ESTABLISHED AN EXPORT SUBSIDIARY WHICH I HEADED. OUR PURPOSE WAS TO EXPORT AMERICAN PRODUCTS TO JAPAN AND DO OUR SHARE TO HELP OFFSET THE TRADE IMBALANCE. FROM ZERO SALES WE BUILT IT UP TO A VOLUME WHERE HONDA, UNBEKNOWNST TO MOST AMERICANS, WAS RANKED 6TH AMONG 50 OF THE TOP MAJOR EXPORTERS BASED ON CONTAINER TONNAGE. I'M SURE YOU'VE SEEN THOSE HUGE 20 AND 40 FOOT CONTAINERS CLOGGING OUR HIGHWAYS. WELL WE WERE SENDING BETWEEN 500 TO 1000 OF THOSE 40' CONTAINERS EVERY SINGLE MONTH TO JAPAN. THESE CONTAINERS WERE FILLED WITH

AGRICULTURAL AND NON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. IT MAY BE HARD TO BELIEVE BUT DEPENDING UPON THE YEAR WE WERE RANKED AS THE 1ST 2ND OR 3RD LARGEST EXPORTER AGAINST APPROXIMATELY 100 EXPORTERS OF HAY PRODUCTS, ALSO AGAINST 130 EXPORTERS OF SCRAP ALUMINUM AND AGAINST 150 EXPORTERS OF RECYCLABLE PAPER PRODUCTS. ON TOP OF ALL THIS, TONS OF FEED GRAIN -- CORN AND MILO -- VALUED AT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WERE BACK HAULED ON HONDA'S AUTOMOBILE CARRIERS. AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, TWO OF OUR VESSELS WERE RETROFITTED WITH ON-DECK PENS FOR SENDING LIVE CATTLE TO JAPAN. OVER THE YEARS JAPAN WAS THE RECIPIENT OF OVER 16,000 CUSTOM FED, WELL MARBLED PRIME HONDA BLACK ANGUS TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPETE AGAINST JAPAN'S KOBE BEEF.

SO FOR ABOUT 15 YEARS I HAD A RINGSIDE SEAT, RATHER I SHOULD SAY I WAS IN THE RING ITSELF BURIED IN ACTIVITIES THAT RELATED TO THE TRADE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. SOME OF THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST JAPAN WERE LEGITIMATE. UNFORTUNATELY THE MEDIA POISONED THE PUBLIC MIND WITH ONE SIDED HEADLINES FULL OF MISINFORMATION PARROTING THE SHARP RHETORIC OF CONGRESSMEN WITH HEAVY LABOR CONSTITUENTS. COMMENTS OF OUR MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE LEADERS WERE BURIED IN THE BACK PAGES. WITH MUCH INSIDE INFORMATION AT MY FINGERTIPS I HAD THE AMMUNITION IN WHICH TO EXPOSE THE TWISTING OF FACTS BY THE DEMAGOGUES. JUDGING FROM THE MAIL I RECEIVED MY MESSAGES MUST HAVE BEEN FAIRLY EFFECTIVE. MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION IS A COMPLIMENTARY LETTER FROM U.S. AMBASSADOR MIKE MANSFIELD TO HIS FRIEND WHO HAD SENT COPIES OF MY SPEECHES TO HIM. A COPY OF HIS LETTER IS ON DISPLAY ON POSTER

#13.

SO HERE I WAS TRYING TO DECIDE WHICH OF MY HONDA TALKS TO PRESENT TO YOU FOLKS TODAY. THEN FRANK CALLED ME COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO ADVISING ME OF THE TIME AND PLACE OF THIS MEETING, AND TO SPEAK, NOT ABOUT HONDA, BUT ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE IN THE ARMY DURING THE WAR YEARS. SO, FROM THE BOTTOM OF FRANK'S BARREL HE NOW WANTED ME TO TALK ON A SUBJECT THAT FOR 55 YEARS NO ONE CARED A HOOT ABOUT EXCEPT FOR ACTIVISTS SUCH AS AIKO AND JACK HERZIG, YURI KOCHIYAMA AND THE LATE MICHIE WEGYLN.

I AM ASSUMING THAT MOST OF YOU HAD EXPERIENCED FIRST HAND, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THOSE TURBULENT WARTIME YEARS BETWEEN 1942 AND 1946. AS ALL OF YOU ARE AWARE THE INDIVIDUAL REACTION TO THAT EPISODE VARIED WITH ONE'S AGE AND THE INDIVIDUAL'S SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES. AT ONE EXTREME END OF THE SPECTRUM WERE THOSE WHO BELIEVED IN THE CONSTITUTION, DEFIED AND RESISTED THE GOVERNMENT, AND SOME EVEN REPATRIATED. THEY WERE ALL DISCREDITED. AT THE VERY OPPOSITE END WERE THOSE, DESPITE THE ODDS AGAINST THEM, WENT TO UNBELIEVABLE LENGTHS TO PROVE THEIR LOYALTY. THEY BECAME HEROES. IN BETWEEN THESE TWO EXTREMES WERE THE MODERATE MAJORITY. ON A SLIDING SCALE, SOME WERE SYMPATHETIC TO ONE SIDE OR TO THE OTHER, AND MANY, I AM SURE, HAD EMPATHY FOR THE STAND TAKEN BY BOTH CAMPS.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT TO THIS DAY OUR COMMUNITY STILL REMAINS DIVIDED ON THIS ISSUE. BUT THE RECENT TRIBUTES TO THE HEART MOUNTAIN FAIR PLAY

COMMITTEE BY THE HAWAIIAN VETS AND BY NUMEROUS OTHER MAINLAND ORGANIZATIONS ARE A HEALING STEP ON THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION BETWEEN TWO SIDES THAT HAD TAKEN DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE STAND DURING THOSE TRAUMATIC YEARS.

IN MY PARTICULAR CASE, I WAS, AT FIRST, IN THE GUNG HO GROUP BUT CIRCUMSTANCES GRADUALLY SHIFTED ME TO THE OTHER END OF THE SPECTRUM.

ABOUT 3 YEARS AGO, CAL STATE LONG BEACH CO-SPONSORED AN ALL DAY TEACHERS' WORKSHOP IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE JAPANESE AMERICAN MUSEUM, THE NCRR AND A FEW OTHERS. MOST OF THE TEACHERS PRESENT WERE HAKUJINS WITH A SPRINKLING OF NISEI AND SANSEI TEACHERS. IN THE MORNING SESSION, BESIDES SEVERAL SPEECHES AND THE SHOWING OF THAT TREMENDOUS VIDEO "DAYS OF WAITING," THE TEACHERS WERE DIVIDED INTO DIFFERENT "CAMP" GROUPS WHERE THEY LISTENED TO AND QUESTIONED THE SPEAKERS ABOUT CAMP LIFE.

AFTER LUNCH THERE WAS A VIDEO ABOUT REDRESS, A FEW SPEECHES BUT MOST OF THE AFTERNOON FEATURED A PANEL DISCUSSION. THE PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AWARE OF THE POLARIZATION OF OUR COMMUNITY IN RESPONDING TO THAT SHAMEFUL EPISODE IN AMERICAN HISTORY..

EACH SPEAKER WAS GIVEN ONLY 10 MINUTES TO DESCRIBE HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. THIS LEFT SUFFICIENT TIME FOR QUESTION AND ANSWERS. THE SPEAKERS INCLUDED A NO NO REPATRIATE FROM TULE LAKE, ANOTHER FROM TERMINAL ISLAND, ONE FROM HEART MOUNTAIN, FRANK EMI FROM THE CAMP RESISTERS FAIR PLAY

COMMITTEE. HANK YOSHITAKE OF THE 442 SPOKE ABOUT THE NISEI IN THE ARMED FORCES, AND I WAS HONORED TO REPRESENT THE 1800 ENGINEERS.

THIS AFTERNOON I WOULD LIKE TO REPEAT THAT TALK. SINCE I TOO WAS LIMITED TO ONLY 10 MINUTES YOU CAN NOW UNDERSTAND WHY I PUT IN A PLUG FOR HONDA JUST TO KILL A LITTLE TIME!

OF COURSE I'VE MADE A FEW ADDITION TO THE ORIGINAL VERSION, BUT THE FOLLOWING IS BASICALLY WHAT I PRESENTED TO THE TEACHERS:

IN YOUR PACKET YOU WILL FIND A REPRINT OF AN ARTICLE I ONCE WROTE ABOUT AN UNUSUAL ARMY UNIT CALLED THE 1800 ENGINEER GENERAL SERVICE BATTALION. THIS UNIT CONSISTED ONLY OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS OF GERMAN, ITALIAN AND JAPANESE DESCENT WHOM THE GOVERNMENT WANTED TO KEEP UNDER STRICT OBSERVATION. THE GERMAN AND ITALIAN AMERICANS WERE PLACED IN THIS UNIT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS NON OF WHICH, OF COURSE, RELATED TO THE INTERNMENT EPISODE AS WAS IN OUR CASE.

AS FOR US JAPANESE AMERICANS A FEW WERE IN BECAUSE OF THEIR PREWAR OCCUPATION BUT THE MAJORITY OF US WERE IN BECAUSE OF OUR ANGRY RESPONSES NOT ONLY TO DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT WITHIN THE ARMY BUT PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE MASS INCARCERATION OF OUR FAMILIES WITHOUT DUE PROCESS.

MANY REFER TO US AS MILITARY RESISTERS WHICH IS A MISNOMER. ANY SOLDIER WHO RESISTS OR DISOBEYS AN ORDER WOULD BE COURT MARTIALED AND IMPRISONED. CASE IN POINT WOULD BE THE FORT McCLELLAN DB OR DISCIPLINARY BARRACKS BOYS. WHEN THE 442 COMBAT REGIMENT WAS FORMED, APPROXIMATELY 600 NISEI AND KIBEI SOLDIERS WERE TRANSFERRED FROM SERVICE UNITS TO FT. McCLELLAN FOR COMBAT TRAINING. OVER 100 OF THEM PROTESTED AND WERE THROWN INTO THE STOCKADE. SUBSEQUENTLY, 21 RESISTED AN ORDER, WERE COURT MARTIALED AND SENT TO THE FORT LEAVENWORTH PRISON WHICH ALSO WAS THE HOME OF MANY OF THE HEART MOUNTAIN CAMP RESISTERS. THE OTHERS WERE INTERVIEWED AND, DEPENDING UPON THEIR RESPONSES, EITHER CONTINUED WITH THEIR COMBAT TRAINING FOR THE 442 OR WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE 1800.

SO INSTEAD OF RESISTERS A MORE APPROPRIATE TERM WOULD BE EITHER DISSIDENTS OR PROTESTERS TO DESCRIBE THE MEN OF THE 1800. I SAY THIS BECAUSE DESPITE OUR MENTAL RESERVATIONS WE REMAINED GOOD OBEДИENT SOLDIERS TO THE VERY END. THERE IS AN ERRONEOUS IMAGE THAT WE WERE A BUNCH OF TROUBLE MAKING DISLOYAL MISFITS. HERE ARE THE FACTS.

THE MISSION OF THE 1800 WAS TO REPAIR DAMAGES TO PROPERTY CAUSED BY TANKS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT DURING TRAINING MANEUVERS BY COMBAT TROOPS. WE WERE A FULL-FLEDGED ENGINEERING BATTALION WITH THE CAPACITY TO BUILD AND REPAIR BRIDGES, ROADS, FENCES AND CONSTRUCT MILITARY BASES FROM SCRATCH.

ALL THIS IS RECORDED IN THE PHOTO EXHIBIT WHICH, TODAY, IS BEING SHOWN TO THE PUBLIC FOR THE FIRST TIME. EVERY ONE OF US UPON TRANSFER INTO THE 1800 WAS REDUCED TO THE RANK OF PRIVATE AND DENIED FURTHER PROMOTIONS DESPITE THE FACT THAT MANY HELD POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. IN MY CASE, I MOVED UP FROM WIELDING A PICK AND SHOVEL, TO A TRUCK DRIVER, THE ACTING MOTOR POOL SERGEANT, ACTING SUPPLY SERGEANT AND THE ACTING COMPANY CLERK AND INTERPRETER. DESPITE THIS BLATANT DISCRIMINATION, OUR PERFORMANCE WAS OUTSTANDING AS ATTESTED BY THE COMMENDATIONS RECEIVED, AND WHICH ARE ALSO ON DISPLAY. I CALL YOUR ATTENTION ESPECIALLY TO PHOTO PANEL #6, TO AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 29, 1945 NASHVILLE BANNER. IT EXPOSED THE INEFFICIENCIES OF 11 DIFFERENT COMBAT ENGINEERING BATTALIONS WHO, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL REPORTS, "WERE UNABLE TO KEEP UP WITH COMPLAINTS FROM LOCAL LANDOWNERS." THESE COMPLAINTS TURNED TO UNANIMOUS PRAISE ONCE THE 1800 TOOK OVER. AS A RESULT OF OUR EXCELLENT OVERALL PERFORMANCE THE 1800 WAS CONSIDERED FOR OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT, NOT FOR COMBAT, BUT TO HELP REPAIR SOME OF THE DEVASTATION. IF SO ORDERED MOST OF US WOULD HAVE GONE -- UNWILLINGLY AND PROTESTING ALL THE WAY. SOME MAY HAVE CHOSEN TO RESIST BUT WOULD HAVE BEEN COURT MARTIALED. THIS ONCE CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WAS UNCOVERED IN THE MILITARY ARCHIVES BY DR. SHIRLEY CASTELNUOVA, A POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR, DURING HER RESEARCH FOR A BOOK ON THE 1800.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WAR, WE HAD TO APPEAR BEFORE A SPECIAL HEARING TO DETERMINE THE TYPE OF DISCHARGE TO BE ISSUED -- HONORABLE, WITHOUT HONOR

OR DISHONORABLE. MOST OF US NISEI RECEIVED THE HONORABLE WHEREAS MOST OF THE KIBEI, BECAUSE OF THEIR INABILITY TO ARTICULATE THEIR CASE, WERE GIVEN THE SO-CALLED BLUE WITHOUT HONOR DISCHARGE. YEARS LATER ATTORNEY HYMAN BRAVIN OVERTURNED THIS RULING. LIKewise ATTORNEY PAUL MINERICH OVERTURNED THE DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE RULING MADE AGAINST THE FT. McCLELLAN "DB BOYS."

EVERY MEMBER HAD HIS OWN PAINFUL EXPERIENCE WHICH LED TO HIS BEING EXILED INTO THE 1800. BRIEFLY, HERE IS WHY I WAS KEPT UNDER OBSERVATION FOR TWO AND A HALF YEARS OF MY 4 PLUS YEARS IN THE ARMY. IN THE 10 MINUTES ALLOTTED ME I'LL HAVE TO SPEAK EVEN FASTER SO HOLD ON TO YOUR SEATS!

(FRANK HAS GIVEN ME MORE THAN 10 MINUTES SO I WON'T RUSH....)

I HAD VOLUNTEERED FOR THE M.I.S.—THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE—WAY BACK IN DECEMBER OF 1942 SHORTLY AFTER A LANGUAGE SCHOOL WAS ESTABLISHED IN CAMP SAVAGE, MINNESOTA. ALTHOUGH THE USUAL TRAINING PERIOD WAS FOR 6 MONTHS, I WAS PLACED IN A SPECIAL 3 MONTHS SPEED-UP CLASS FOR SO CALLED ADVANCED STUDENTS. JUST PRIOR TO GRADUATION WE WERE PROMISED FURLOUGHS TO BID FAREWELL TO OUR IMPRISONED FAMILIES. MY APPLICATION TO VISIT MANZANAR WAS REJECTED. BACK THEN NO JAPANESE AMERICANS, INCLUDING NISEI SOLDIERS, WERE ALLOWED INTO THE 4 STATES THAT WERE WITHIN THE WESTERN DEFENSE ZONE. THIS RESTRICTION WAS LATER RESCINDED, BUT FOR ME IT WAS TOO LATE BECAUSE I HAD ALREADY BLOWN MY STACK TO THE AUTHORITIES. ALSO, IT WAS

AT THIS TIME THAT THE INFAMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE WAS FORCED UPON US AND TO THE CAMP INMATES. IN MY ANGER AND FRUSTRATION I ANSWERED NO-YES. NO, I AM NO LONGER WILLING TO GO WHEREVER ORDERED AND YES, I REMAIN LOYAL TO THE U.S. BUT, HAD I KNOWN THEN WHAT WAS TO TRANSPIRE FOR BOTH MYSELF, MY FATHER IN ONE CAMP AND MY MOTHER IN ANOTHER, I, NO DOUBT, OUT OF SPITE, WOULD HAVE ANSWERED NO-NO. AT THAT TIME, HOWEVER, I WAS MENTALLY PREPARED FOR OVERSEAS DUTY BUT WHEN GIVEN THIS CHOICE I GAVE AN HONEST REPLY. IN FACT I HAD ATTACHED A LETTER TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE EXPRESSING MY REASONS FOR THE "NO" AND MY WILLINGNESS TO SERVE IN THE M.I.S. BUT ONLY ON THE HOME FRONT -- THAT OUR FIGHT FOR LIBERTY WAS OVER HERE AND NOT OVER THERE. INSTEAD I WAS AMONG 20 OTHER STUDENTS AND CADRE WHO WERE EXPELLED. BEFORE DEPARTURE I ASKED COUPLE OF MY CLOSE BUDDIES WITH SIMILAR FRUSTRATIONS WHY THE YES-YES. THEIR FRANK REPLY WAS: "DO YOU WANT TO BE COURT MARTIALED AND SHOT?" THEIR FEAR OF BEING CHARGED FOR TREASON WAS GENUINE.

IN THE ANNALS OF MILITARY HISTORY I BELIEVE NO SOLDIER OF ANY COUNTRY IS GIVEN THIS CHOICE. YOU GO WHEREVER ORDERED, OTHERWISE YOU ARE COURT MARTIALED. IF EVERY HAKUJIN DRAFTEE WAS GIVEN THIS CHOICE OUR BATTALION NO DOUBT WOULD HAVE BEEN AT DIVISIONAL STRENGTH AT THE LEAST. ONLY THE NISEI WERE CORNERED INTO THIS MOST UNCOMPROMISING NO-WIN DILEMMA. I RECALL AN INTERVIEW I HAD WITH A G2 INTELLIGENCE OFFICER. HE ASKED ME IF JAPAN WERE TO INVADE THE UNITED STATES WHICH SIDE WOULD I FIGHT FOR. MY REPLY WAS THAT I WOULD FIGHT FOR WHICHEVER SIDE THAT WAS DEFENDING THE CAMPS--THAT ALL I HAD TO FIGHT FOR WAS IN THE CAMPS, AND IF THERE WERE SUCH

AN INVASION CAN YOU GUARANTEE THAT THE LOCAL RESIDENTS AND THE CAMP GUARDS WON'T START SHOOTING THE INMATES. I DON'T THINK HE LIKED THAT ANSWER BECAUSE I WAS BUSTED AGAIN. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DO NOT KNOW ARMY TERMINOLOGY, BEING BUSTED MEANS BEING DEMOTED TO THE RANK OF A BUCK PRIVATE. ALL TOLD I WAS PROMOTED 3 OR 4 TIMES AND BUSTED EACH TIME. THE OFFICIAL COMPANY ORDER READ, QUOTE, "REDUCED TO GRADE OF PRIVATE FOR HAVING AN ATTITUDE WHICH IS CONSIDERED UNDESIRABLE IN A FIRST CLASS SOLDIER OF THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES." UNQUOTE. YOU'LL FIND A COPY OF THAT ORDER IN ONE OF THE PANELS BACK THERE ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS TO SUBSTANTIATE ALL OF MY STATEMENTS.

AT THE TIME WE WERE EXPELLED FROM CAMP SAVAGE, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN OTHER NISEI AND KIBEI SOLDIERS IN OTHER UNITS WHO WERE ALSO PROTESTING. TO KEEP A CLOSER SURVEILLANCE ON THESE SOLDIER THE ARMY CREATED THE 525 QUARTERMASTER SERVICE COMPANY. IT WAS A STRICTLY A DO NOTHING LABOR UNIT. WHEN THEY DISCOVERED MOST OF THE SOLDIERS WERE OBEDIENT AND HARD WORKING, A DECISION WAS MADE TO PUT US TO GOOD USE BY CREATING THE 1800 ENGINEERS.

SINCE A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS, MAY I REFER YOU TO THE PHOTOGRAPHS BACK THERE TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF OUR OPERATION. IN THE 1800 I BECAME VERY CLOSE TO THE OFFICERS SINCE I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME IN THE COMPANY COMMANDER'S OFFICE AS THE ACTING COMPANY CLERK. THIS GAVE ME

THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT THE EXPULSION OF OUR FAMILIES. AS A RESULT THEY WERE VERY SYMPATHETIC AND TREATED US VERY WELL. AND I THINK THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE HIGH MORALE AND REPUTATION OF THIS UNIT.

YEARS AFTER THE WAR THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION JAPANESE AMERICANS BEGAN TO QUESTION WHY THE NISEI WERE SO INNOCENT AND OBEDIENT, AND DID NOT PROTEST OR RESIST. AS YOU HAVE LEARNED TODAY HUNDREDS IN THE ARMY AND TENS OF THOUSANDS IN THE CAMPS DID PROTEST AND DID RESIST AND DID SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. PATRICK HENRY WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF THEIR COURAGE AS THEY CRIED OUT, "GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH."

NOW, HAVING SAID THAT, I WOULD LIKE TO CLOSE BY STATING THAT IF ALL THE JAPANESE AMERICANS HAD TAKEN OUR STAND WE MIGHT STILL BE LANGUISHING IN THE RESERVATIONS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AND JAPANESE AFFAIRS! IT WAS THE COURAGE AND BRAVERY OF THE SOLDIERS OF THE 100Th, THE 442nd AND M.I.S. THAT SAVED THE JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY FROM EXPERIENCING THE FATE OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS. INVOLVED WERE TWO TYPES OF COURAGE: ONE OBEYED ORDERS, OVERCAME DEADLY ENEMY FIRE AND BECAME HEROES. THE OTHER PROTESTED OR RESISTED UNJUST DIRECTIVES AND ORDERS, CLEARED THEIR CONSCIENCE AND BECAME DISCREDITED. I ASK YOU, WHO CAN DARE STAND IN JUDGMENT AND PROCLAIM THAT ONE GROUP WAS MORE RIGHT AND MORE COURAGEOUS THAN THE OTHER?

MY FATHER, A MARTIAL ARTS KENDO INSTRUCTOR, TAUGHT ME "BUSHIDO"—THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR. HE TOLD ME MANY STORIES ABOUT MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, THE LEGENDARY SAMURAI OF ANCIENT JAPAN. ONE THAT I PASSED ON TO MY YMCA BOYS WHEN I WAS THEIR ADULT LEADER WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS: "LEAVE NO STONES UNTURNED IN AVOIDING TROUBLE—TO DRAW ONE'S SWORD ONLY WHEN ABSOLUTELY CORNERED. TO TRAIN AND POLISH ONE'S SKILL SO THAT WHEN FINALLY FORCED TO DRAW, DO SO WITH THE CONFIDENCE TO WIN—OR DIE WITH HONOR."

THANKS TO THE EXPLOITS OF THE 100th, THE 442, M.I.S. AND ORGANIZATIONS WHICH PROTESTED OUR MISTREATMENT, GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGED FROM ONE CONDEMNATION TO ONE OF COMMENDATION. OUR FUTURE IN THE UNITED STATES SUDDENLY IMPROVED FROM ONE OF UTTER DESPAIR TO ONE OF HOPE. AS A RESULT, I DID NOT HAVE TO DRAW MY SWORD. OTHERWISE, I WOULD HAVE BEEN ON THE FOREFRONT IN WATTS WITH THE BLACK PANTHERS, BRANDISHING MY SWORD AND SCREAMING "BURN BABY BURN."

AT ONE TIME IN 1942 AND EARLY 43, I FELT THAT MY COUNTRY HAD ABANDONED US – TREATING US AS A JAPANESE ENEMY INSTEAD OF AS AN AMERICAN. TODAY, AS I LOOK BACK I CAN ONLY MARVEL AT THE GREATNESS AND GOODNESS OF AMERICA. I FOR ONE AND I'M SURE FOR ALL JAPANESE AMERICANS, THIS EXPERIENCE HAS FORGED US INTO BECOMING BETTER AMERICANS TRULY APPRECIATIVE OF THE WORDS FREEDOM, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. IT BEHOOVES EVERY AMERICAN NOT TO TAKE THESE

VALUES FOR GRANTED BUT TO BE EVER MORE VIGILANT TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT ALL
DOES APPLY TO ALL.

AND THAT'S THE WAY I ENDED THAT TALK. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.