



*The colors of the 100th*

## Foreword

There is no more stirring battlefield scene than that of a tattered flag flying at the head of a skirmish line of infantrymen charging across an open field in the face of musket fire and grapeshot. That view, however, has gone the way of the horse cavalry. Nonetheless, unit flags - as with the battle flag of the 100th pictured opposite - continue to rouse our emotions.

For instance. After years of dreaming and training, Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka took his first flight into space in January 1985 on the space shuttle, *Discovery*, on the first Department of Defense mission into space. A year later, he and his six companions perished in the flames of the shuttle, *Challenger*, as it exploded shortly after liftoff. But for us, the dream of the boy from Kona will live on in a special way because one of the things he requested as he prepared for that first flight in 1985 was a replica of our battalion colors. That flag, about a quarter of the size of the original, is on display in our clubhouse. The NASA certificate attesting to that fact that it flew 48 orbits around the world is reproduced on the following page.

As for the body of this publication, first, John Tsukano, author ("Bridge of Love"), publisher, traveler and researcher dedicated to telling the story of the 100th, takes us on a *tour de force* of the main events leading to Pearl Harbor, the subsequent formation of the 100th and the complicated path of the unit up to its arrival in McCoy.

In the next section, author Thelma Chang explores the Nisei soldier's background in answer to the question, "Who Are We?" She's a graduate of the journalism program at the University of Hawaii and earned her master's degree in American Studies there. Her human interest, science and travel stories have appeared in numerous Mainland and Hawaii publications. Her book, "I Can Never Forget: Men of the 100th/442nd," went to book stores just prior to

the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor and has since rekindled a lively interest in the Nisei experience of WW II. We thank her not only for giving us a hand in the writing of this publication, but also for her guidance in the technical aspects of publishing.

Then Dr. Kenneth Otagaki and Sakae Takahashi explore the 100th's early days at McCoy and Shelby. Kenneth even remembers that beer at the McCoy PX was selling for 15 cents a bottle. And Sakae tells of the change at Shelby as the 100th went from unit training to field exercises involving divisions and armies in the vast training areas of Louisiana. The 100th was beginning to come to an understanding of itself.

The guts of this publication, the story of the 100th in combat, is written by Shurei Hirozawa who was recruited for the job by Sakae. Shurei was a reporter for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin for many years and, at the time of his recent retirement from the business world, was an economist at the First Hawaiian Bank. Close business associates, both men arose from West Kauai sugar plantations - Shurei from McBryde and Sakae from Makaweli. Their basic reference for this book is "Ambassadors In Arms" by Dr. Thomas Murphy. Shurei's not a veteran but only because of unintended circumstances: McBryde, where he had been working in 1940, had declared him essential, so he was exempted from the draft and later when he volunteered for the 442nd, he was classified 4F for medical reasons. Sakae, of course, was one of the handful of Nisei officers in the provisional battalion when it was organized at Schofield Barracks. Initially assigned to F Company, he became commander of Baker Company at Pozilli, after the third crossing of the Volturno.

**F**or the returning veterans, the challenge of peace was to continue the outstanding role they played in war. Having won, they exhibited no great sense of jubilation over the victory. Rather, with ambitions sparked by the experience of war, there was the urge to try a hand at new directions but these often resulted in a return to the old order. For many,

there was the practical need of finding a job so they could earn a living and return to the mainstream of life. The veterans were eager to pick up their lives because of the more interesting things happening there – young girls who had blossomed into beautiful women, for instance. Others resumed their interrupted education.



Helene Matsunaga, widow of our beloved Senator Spark Matsunaga, launches the final section with a soft personal note. Naoji Yamagata tells us of the beginnings of the Club 100 and the early years. Mike Tokunaga gives us a rundown of how our boys fared in politics. There are also brief accounts of the MIA experience, the Cat Island caper, POWs and other stories to close our scrapbook of memories.

Here are the sources of many a story about the 100th. Takeichi "Chicken" Miyashiro, for one, in the POW story. He says he was never one to mistreat prisoners. As it happened, when Miyashiro himself became a POW, his feelings came full circle. This section also contains poignant stories and photos of war, friendship and loyalty – "Remembering Turtle," "Remembering Friends" and "Remembering Brother," all amazing testimonies to the power of love.

We opened on the question of Americanism – the sketch of the two GIs on the beach as taken from "Ambassadors In Arms." Toward the end, we explore a similar question, as Stanley Akita is being interrogated in a German POW camp.

And for a touch of the magnificence of the spirit, we reprint the eulogy given by Chaplain Yost at the 1947 annual memorial service at Punchbowl, "Step Off The Road, And Let The Dead Pass By."

Dr. Franklin Odo, director of the Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, wraps it up with an analysis of our parents' hopes for a better future in the Hawaiian Kingdom. The dream can be summed up in the story of a Sansei businessman who has a shop in the Ala Moana Center. He says that his mother gently prods him on occasion to reflect upon the fact that were it not for the record of the AJAs in World War II, he and the others like him


would still be considered second-class citizens. *Don't ever forget that, she reminds him.*

The text and images of this commemorative edition were skillfully woven together by Maui-born graphic artist Harlan Yuhara. Harlan's design background includes diverse productions – from ads to annual reports. With little time, the publication committee had crushing deadlines; Harlan's deadlines were even more pressing. We think he did an outstanding job.

**Y**ou can see by now that this publication is a group effort, the work of many hands led by Dr. Kenneth Otagaki, chairman of the anniversary program. He has guided its development, mustered the financial requirements and rounded up the pictures, many of which are published for the first time. We hope your senses will be titillated by the mix of words and images.

Our only regret: that we had neither the time nor the resources to attempt a fuller publication – one enriched with stories of individual valor and heroism, and other happenings off and on the battlefields; one which pulls in the stories of the scores upon scores of people, in and out of our organization, who helped us become what we are. That is left for the morrow.

Till then, *Arrivederci.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ben Tamashiro". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Ben Tamashiro