

AN AJA GOES TO WAR!

PROLOGUE

Little did I dream that when UNCLE SAM invited me involuntarily to join the Army through the 4th draft call in October 1941 <just before my 22nd birthday>, 28 years ago, that i~~w~~ I would be involved in a world conflict and be engaged in mortal combat elsewhere from the land of our birth--Hawaii, a territorial possession of the United States at that time, but now its 50th Aloha State, and whose great naval bastion of the Pacific, PEARL HARBOR, was devastated by the infamous, now historic, sneak attack by Imperial Japan on December 7, 1941, plunging the United States headlong into World War II!

I had gone back to the U of H in September of 1941 refreshed after a year's absence working in Hawaii's labor market as truck driver, clerk, and the like and was registered as a junior-senior in the College of Arts & Sciences having transferred from Teachers College with its unbearable frustrations and pressures, and bent on becoming an eccentric anthropologist to roam the world over when Uncle Sam's invite was received. So I had to drop out once again, for another 4 years' lapse. All told it took me ten years to complete my formal college education (1937-1947)

The pre-induction physical conducted at the Honolulu Armory (now the site of our new capitol) was passed with flying colors. Then followed rounds of farewell parties both public and private <an> a few days prior to reporting to Schofield Barracks.

That was the custom of our Japanese Community, still prett~~y~~ much dominated by the Iseis, our emmigrant parents who had established customs and mores of the land they had come from, and had stuck pretty much to themselves, although they had come a long ways from the contract-laborer days on sugar plantations--their original mode of entry into the United Possession

"Little Tokyo"(Ginza) was a section of the city of Honolulu "south-of-the-border" from the big five Haole giants of Hawaii--Castle & Cooke, C Brewer & Co. Theo H Davis, American Factors and Alexander & Baldwin and located down on River St bounded by Queen St on one end and Vineyard St on the other end, and Nuuanu St running pararell to River. Then there was the Aala Market and the ~~A~~a Aala Park and adjacent Aala Triangle--the slum areas of Honolulu.

Buddhist churches of all sects were established and Japanese schools galore flourished. And to Japanese school we had to go daily after our English School hours as well as half days on Saturdays plus Sunday School on Sundays, or else, receive the wrath and corporal punishment of our stern Isei fathers. Japanese schools also offered Judo, Kendo and Sumo, and island-wide torunaments were established annual affairs. And of course our parents extolled the virtues of the Samurai spirit embodied in the modern conception of Bushido or Yamato-damashi, for love of country! Meaning of course to Japan their motherland! Many of us were still dual citizens, Americans by birth but also citizens of Japan at the request of our Alien parents.

The Iseis' prime goal had been to get rich quick and return to their homeland and live out the rest of their lives in ease and elegance. But with the pitance paid by the lordly plantations this dream could not materialize. Hence the Picture Bride era was ushered in, as it was traditional in Japan at that time too. In time, many Iseis were able to break away from the plantation and to go into business and event~~u~~ally to own real estate, as well as to raise families. Even to today, many of the Iseis still living ~~today~~, have visited their homeland, very very infrequently.

One reason why there were not many Niseis turning out for interscholastic sports in the few high schools that were in existence at that time. And Mckinley High School, one of the oldest public high school was for many years nick-named Tokyo High School because of the preponderance of the Niseis of the Yellow Race! And many of them strived harder in the Japanese Language Schools than in the English public schools--to please their parents. And this was one ~~cause~~ of the main causes of the establishment of the English Standard Public Schools within the public school system itself.

The Japanese as a group were the strongest group against inter-racial marriages. Even today, the Nisei sons and daughters strongly oppose inter-racial marriages of their Sansei sons and daughters with gaijin (foreigners) Although they were by far the greatest in number numerically, the control of the economic of the situation was in the hands of the Big Five, consequently, they too controlled government, and top government as well as business jobs could never be obtained by the AJAs

Induction day arrived early in October and off to Schofield's induction center we went with some other 90 inductees. Some carried Japanese sacred charms around their necks (omamoris) blessed at various shinto shrines as well as the "thousand pieces of cloth, to be worn around their waist to ward off bad luck (sennenbari) I almost did not pass the subsequent Army physical! Too much sugar in the urine! To be retested the next morning. Ugh! Too much party, thought I. Better drink a lot of water prior to the retest tomorrow and pass out the sugar. It would be a crying shame to be rejected now, after all the send-off and gifts. After spending an uneasy night, though, passed with flying colors the following <day>, and so on to Boom Town to receive the basic equipment to begin basic training.

In the three different prior drafts, approximately 6 months apart, many Niseis had been drafted and had been assigned to Hawaii's Own, ~~29th~~ 298th and 299th Infantry Regts which had been federalized and called to Active Duty in the Summer of 1940, world situation <being> what it was at that time--very critical.

Beginning with the "School of the Soldier", and closed order drills, training had advanced to Extended Order drills, through October and November. A sumptuous Thanks-giving dinner had been enjoyed by all, it was an Open House for parents and friends and all of us were thinking of spending the Christmas Weekend at home.

On Saturday, December 6, 1941, routinely 90% of us went home on week-end passes, and luckily not having caught any weekend detail, I was one of the lucky ninety-per centers.

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, I got up ~~abre~~ around 11:00 AM, no one having awakened me earlier, walked down Fort St all the way from home just below Pacific Hts to my mother's barber shop, yep cut-rate shop which opened on Sundays also. At which time I was told by my mother softly that I had to report back to Schofield Barracks immediately--that Japan had declared war on the United States and that Pearl Harbor had just been bombed this morning at dawn. Also that elder brother had been injured by a bomb fragment and was in Queen's--but that it wasn't a serious wound. One of our own Ack Ack shell had misfired after falling unexploded in the air only to explode on ground contact.

Turned on the radio and was able to catch a news flash that stated that all military personnel was to report back to their bases, that the last bus to leave for schofield was at 1 oclock from the Army and Navy YMCA.

Bid a hasty good-bye to Mom and walked to the Y in time to catch the 1 o'clock bus. Approaching Pearl Harbor we could see that smoke heavily overcast the sky above this area. As the bus made the turn around the bend near what is now Makalapa Gate, 4 or 5 vessels were still in flames and some lay on their sides while others were half sunken in the water with their aft sticking way out above the water and their bow below water. It was a fiery site, a very awesome one!

Finally we reached Boom Town just in time to join the ranks of our company for a Roll Call, to be accounted for, and given instructions for the night. And what a night it was. The alert sounded three times that night. Planes droned overhead, friend or foe, who knows? Gas Masks were issued. Did the Japs have landing units, will they make a landing? Who knows what might have happened had the enemy task force included landing units???

As a precautionary measure, ~~the~~ so the orders stated, the arms (rifles and bayonets) of all us Nisei draftees in Boom Town were taken away from us. And arms were not restored to us until three weeks later when we were assigned to units to do sentry work at the fire stations and other strategic stations throughout Schofield Barracks.

Had there been discussions in higher circles, regarding our allegiance and loyalty? May be many outsiders thought that us Japs should be run out. Surely one ~~of us~~ could not trust the sons of the treacherous Japanese of Japan who had dared to attack Pearl Harbor? Some of their fathers must have tipped off information????

Although imbued with filial piety, obedience, and loyalty to country--our loyalty was to the land of our birth, America! ~~th~~ There was never a doubt in my mind nor were any contrary thoughts expressed by my parents even after Pearl Harbor. They also said to me, "kunino tame" (for your country). Father even had all his children expatriated from Japanese citizenship before my induction. And CIC checks must have borne out the fact that the Japanese, both Iseis and Niseis were above suspicion, because shortly after that those of us who had had ROTC training were herded together, given an accelerated advance training program (a two-day range firing exercise for familiarization only with the old 03 rifles included), gas mask drills, very extensive, running with them on for miles at a time, and mock skirmishes. Then were "graduated" and attached to units of the 298th and the 299th to have these units come up to full authorized strength.

On New Year's Eve, 1942, I arrived at Waimanalo where Co G, 298th Inf Regt was stationed with the mission of guarding the beach from Bellows field to Makapuu Lighthouse. Upon arrival, I was transferred to a company truck and taken to one of the several MG positions located in Bellows Field to relieve some one there who hadn't gone out on pass since December 7!

Ten days later, January 10 to be exact, was the first time, I had a one-day pass <myself> to go home--but had to be back in camp by midnight. The last taxi to leave Hon for Waimanalo from Pauahi was at ten. So we were back in camp by 11 with all the goodies we could bring back--sushi, tempura, etc etc which we shared with our comrades on the post. <Blackout regulation was still in force together with civilian ration of basic commodities.>

Found out later that this was an illustrious company to which ~~has~~ I had been assigned. This company was credited with having captured a Jap two-man sub that had been grounded off-shore of Bellows Field. One of two such ~~capt~~ subs captured on December 7.

We lived the "life of Riley" out on the beach. The Hawaiian comrades caught fish during the day (with thrownets) to augment the Army chow brought in ~~in~~ from the base camp three times a day. We took turns going to the movies as the movie theatre was the closest to our MG post. And we took occasional machine gun practices taking pot-shoots at the moon's (full moon) reflection out at sea.

As well as had some pleasure harassing our officers who were on OD and had to make the rounds of our pits by halting them 100 yards from post and having them dismount to come forward to be recognized. Somebody from another post, swam out about a mile to fetch a glass ball seen floating through binoculars. And somebody caught a big Ulua using a sand crabs as bait once.

In early May, 1942, the ~~29th~~ 298th and the 299th Inf were relieved of this guard duty and returned to garrison duty back to Schofield Barracks. There was talk rift among the men that we were destined for duty down under to re-inforce Guadalcanal. But whatever the future at that time, garrison duty proved relaxing and enjoyable. But, then, on or about June 2, it was, all AJA's in both the 298th and the 299th Inf were assembled en masse. We were told that we were being formed into a separate battalion--~~the 100th Inf Bn~~ <Hawaiian Provisional Inf Battalion> to be shipped out to somewhere in the United States. We were to be shot--given all kinds of shots (medical) given physicals and be given passes of midnight duration beginning today. No passes were to be issued out on June 4 And, we were sworn to secrecy not to tell even our parents, until we had reached our destination! There were more than 1200 of us strong. And amongst us were a few hapa-Hawaiians (Hawaiian-Japanese).

~~Received a pass for June 3, and dutifully complied with the instruction. Never~~ Rumours went ~~rift~~ rampart again--the "Japs" could not be trusted--so the 298th and the 299th were to be shipped to Guadalcanal minus the AJAs. And shipped out to the South Pacific they were later on.

To digress a bit, we in Hawaii have always labelled ourselves as AJAs meaning Americans of Japanese Ancestry. The meaning of Nisei which I think is a ~~man~~ Mainland importation literally translated means, "second generation". And without any quali-~~fication~~ fication adjective could mean second generation of Germans, Dutch, French, Russian, Niseis of Japan and Hawaii-born Japanese Niseis.

Throughout the years of service in the Military though, at no time, have the AJAs been discriminated against nor ostracized against individually or collectively no matter at what echelon or to what unit we have been attached or detached to because our color was Yellow! There was no time to think about such things, we had one common job to do--finish the war!

Received a pass for June 3, and dutifully complied with the instruction. Never told anyone and was back in camp eager to move out. From exchange of stories, found out later that many never came back until the morning of June 5. Some even got married! Others went on a good drunk!

On the afternoon of June 5 we entrained to Kapalama Basin via O R & L. From there we boarded the USS Army TPT Maui. As we were boarding we noted that the Mariposa was berthed at pier 10-11 right under Aloha Tower.

In pitch darkness, after hours of hurry-up-and-wait, the USS Maui finally steamed out of Honolulu Harbor minus the Royal Hawaiian Band and real Hawaiian send-off of confetti and leis. Destination--who cared!

After five days of zig-zagging, all over the Pacific, we were not escorted. Some of us were sea-sick and flat on our backs, on the upper decks for the entire 5 days; and 3 or 4 practice alerts later, we steamed into San Francisco and under the Golden Gate bridge to dock at the Oakland Pier and to hurry-up-and wait again--until darkness settled in! What secrecy--or what contraband ~~earg~~ hot cargo?

We saw San Francisco's coastline and Alcatraz from the decks of the Maui but we were not at liberty to go ashore to explore.

As darkness settled in, we were finally moved out. And we came out of the holds of the ship where we had been herded and holed up for five stinking days, like cattles! The last to come out were the "gamblers" who had been rolling em for the entire ride, except time out for meals. I hear tell someone made a three grand roll!

At least we had sleepers going cross country to our destination. And this we did not know until later that we were divided into three sections and each section traversed a different route to eventually arrive at our final destination--Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.

Latrine rumours were rift again that (1) we had been sent to the mainland to guard German Prisoners of war! (2) We had been sent to the mainland because we could not be sent to the Asiatic-Pacific theater of operation because we might <be> cases of mistaken identity, and (3) we ~~h~~ were to be used in the European Theatre after further training!

Ours was the central route--Salt Lake City--Ogden, North Platte (what a reception we had there--the whole town was out waving the American flag. Wonder if they thought we were the returning "heroes" of Bataan!) ~~on~~ and on finally to Wisconsin. As we passed the California-Nevada border we were mistaken for Chinks (Chinese) and or Mexicans.

Spent the time playing cards or just plain talking and taking in the scenery. And it took us 4 days to arrive at our destination. After securing our tent and belongings for the night, we proceeded to buy out the beer, every case on hand, as well as all the hot dogs and hamburgers that the PX that had remained open for our convenience had on hand!

<Redesignated the 100th Inf Bn (separate) soon after arrival> Trained at Camp McCoy (old) during June, July, August and most of September--forced marches, overnight bivouacs and the like. Had one Army test while here at McCoy. <Superior rating!>

Sparta, Toma, La Crosse, Black River Falls, Wisconsin Dells, Oclaire, Madison Winona and other towns and villages within a ~~f~~ 500 miles radius of McCoy must have been explored and visited by us on weekend passes, furloughs, as well as <on> unauthorized leaves (Night passes). Such far off places like Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, Milwaukee were also being visited. Some on overnight passes.

One group of us did a lot of traveling--Milwaukee, Black River Falls, Wisconsin Dells (visiting an indian reservation and having a good time taking pictures with chiefs) We also ~~wer~~ pioneered trips into Oclaire as well as managed a two-way hitch hike from ~~Madison~~ McCoy to Madison and back to McCoy all on the same guy who picked up us just outside of the camp gate, all on one day.

On overnight passes we went as far east as Chicago, ending up bowling at 5 AM in the morning. And to Minneapolis one weekend to see Minnesota in action and deciding to get drunk, and all falling sleep after taking one drink each. We were all teetotolers, believe it or not.

Our motto was at that time "Make the most of it--we are living on borrowed time!" fatalistic perhaps but none of us thought we would come back alive, whatever fate awaited us. Who would tip taxi cab drivers \$15.00 on a trip from Sparta to La Crosse! Money meant nothing except to be spent!

Just wondering out loud how many war babies were born with "oriental" faces in areas like Sparta and especially in La Crosse. The gals on the river boats, in the churches, in the restaurants, in the bars, looked so mature and grown-up, but were they actually at least past their sixteenth birthday???

The first snow fell on September 26, 1942. We ran out outside our barracks, made snowmen, rolled snow balls and had a snow ball battle. First time we had seen snow, that is, the majority of us. Took many many souvenir pictures. Then we moved to the New Camp McCoy and Indian Summer days prevailed until the end of November. Cold in the mornings, comfortably warm during the afternoon and coiling off in the evening. Autumn was beautiful, the change in colors.

The quota of 10-days furlough to New York was increased but the days were cut

to 5 days. Was this an indication that we were about to move again??? We were visited by a team from Presidio, San Francisco's Language section. Practically everyone in our company, Co. B was interviewed. The Team leader who was a Major spoke fluent Japanese.

But this incident was forgotten in the wake of the ~~arrival~~ return of the detachment from Cat Island, Mississippi--from their top secret mission for the War Dept! Only recently we found out that their secret mission was to train dogs for the Asiatic-Pacific Theater of Operation. Their return added credence that the Bn was on the move again!

MISLS CAMP SAVAGE MINNESOTA***SEMPAI GUMI IS BORN!

The last week of November, approximately 60 members of the 100th were transferred on orders to Camp Savage, MISLS, Minnesota. They were to become Translators-interpretors for assignment eventually where needed. I was happy I was not ~~chese~~ among the chosen.

Just about ~~the~~<that> time, I was caught goofing off, and was promoted to Corporal and mandated to become Judo instructor for the company. 10 days later I was a Sgt on orders transferred to Camp Savage, Minnesota. The Quota for this school could not be filled up from volunteers from the relocation camps, so more were sent from the 100th. In this second contingent, I believe, we had 90 all told. Through the good graces of our akami sgt-major, I was promoted to an existing vacancy, which would still be there after I had left the company, but allowing me to go with a higher rank. I would like to think that this is a record as far as promotions went.

Barracks 13 was already filled up with the first contingent that had come in 10 days earlier, so we were housed in Barracks 10. Together with the earlier arrivals our contingent were the vanguards, the Sempai Gumi, the forerunners of all the later translator-interpretors that were to come out of Camp Savage and Ft Snelling and Presidio San Francisco. This was the beginning of the class of June 1943, MISLS Camp Savage, Minnesota. Predominantly this group was made up of 90% original members of the 100th Inf Bn (Sep) and 10% from the Mainland Kotonks.

It is a little known fact, nonetheless the gospel truth that men of the 100th Inf Bn (Sep) served, and well, its country in two theater of operation. In Europe as the original and first Nisei group to serve as a combat unit attached to the 34th Red Bull division and later on as the ~~3rd~~ <1st> Battalion of the Go For Broke, 442nd Inf Regt.

<The Sempai Gumi> This original group of 120-150 original members of the 100th transferred to Camp Savage ~~who~~ became the first mass ~~grea~~ graduates of Camp Savage, then went on to serve in all theaters of operation--including the European Theatre--as interpretors-translators of enemy documents, equipment, POW and other materiels of war!

We were assigned by sections with the top section designated section 1 and the lowest section was 20 or 22. There were approximately 30-40 college grads whom we tabbed 90-day wonders because they were graduated in 90 days and commissioned 2nd Lts. While we had to slave from December to June absorbing Japanese grammar, geography, history, customs and mores, military tactics (enemy) eight hours a day, with half a day ~~of~~ on Saturday--testing day before going out on pass+ for the weekend.

The perplexing thing at that time to us was how come we got picked instead of those Kibeis who had returned after years and years of schooling in Japan. Some of them had been inducted with us soon after they had returned from Japan--and they were good in Japanese, better than us who had been schooled in Japanese only in Japanese Language School's in Hawaii? Was it per chance that their loyalty ~~eej~~ could be tested and be found wanting in time of a crisis???

All was not work at Camp Savage. It was a cold winter, 32 below zero. But some of us took to skating or tried skiing (one person with disastrous results--broke his legs--but graduated with us). And talk about ice and snow. When we left Ft. Snelling in June, it was still winter--ice was still on the ground.

Rice eaters that we are, no restaurant, ~~with~~~~er~~ ~~chi~~ other than Chinese restaurants, served rice with meals. Many a steak house near Savage learned first-hand how to cook rice a la Japanese style. And not a few of the "natives" in the neighborhood began asking for steamed rice too!

Camp Savage had a Lt Col as the School Commandant, LT Col ~~Rasumse~~ Rasmussen. But it also had a Nisei civilian as head of the Language Dept, Mr Aiso who later was commissioned a Major and is now a well-known court magistrate in the state of California. Plus a Nisei WO Kobayashi as chief of Administration and logistics.

Midway through the course, about March or April, several members of the top section Section 2 1 and 2 went on detached service to Alaska and the Alutians! And immediately

after graduation a few select members of the top section again went to the War Dept in DC or the 5th Air Force--the strategic air force in DC at the time)

Immediately after graduation too, a picked group left mysteriously for destination unknow--way later they turned up with Merrill's Marauders in the China-Burma Theater of operation. As well as some left to establish a language center in India to serve the China-Burma Theater.

After graduation and promotion to S/Sgt, the last promotion I got while in the service, and a 14 day furlough in June visiting the Minedoka Relocation Camp, Pocatello, Idaho where my buddy's parents had been interned behind barricades and barbed wires enclosures and communal kitchens and bathrooms--and a trip to Walla <Walla>, Washington thrown in for good measure, came back to await our new assignment.^A

On this trip to the relocation camp, I was asked to give a speech to an assembled group of Iseis in Japanese. Duck Soup, though I, to a recent grad of Camp Savage, eh ~~who~~ wot! Not so, finally got through speaking half in Japanese and half in English and got the message across. Hand and facial gestures are also tremendous aids in communication. Visiting a relocation camp was an eye opener. Though some of our Iseis ~~mem~~ in Hawaii were interned, especially the Japanese School teachers and some of the Buddhist priests, we did not have even a third the amount of mainland Iseis that were interned in relocation camps.

After graduation we marked time at Ft Snelling, having vacated Camp Savage to make room for the next class. Saw a few from Hawaii in the next class, but never got to meet any of them. Since St Paul was nearer to Ft Snelling than Minneapolis was, spent our passes in St Paul most of the time we were marking time awaiting overseas shipment.

Then in early August we got our orders--3 teams got orders--destination unknow but port of embarkation was San Francisco.

Tired and weary, four days later, we disembarked at Ft McArthur, San Francisco. Not even a pass to San Francisco did we get. A few days later we boarded a troop ship, later we made her out as the USS Ainsworth, we surely thought it wasn't worth a damn! One of Kaiser's mass produced jobs--a liberty ship.

But we did have a good deal--no no details of any kind--just sleep and play. Our sleeping quarters were on the top deck. We speculated. Heading for Hawaii? What a happy wishful thought!

We had several alert practices, changed courses ~~serve~~ several times during the night. We had no convoy again, we found out later.

During the Pacific crossing, which took 21 days, learned to play bridge (Cu<1>bertson system) and Pinochle, because most of the team members were mainland kotonks. And that is all we did all day and night on the ship. In 21 days I got to be a pretty good bridge player. If there can be 30-day translator-interpreter wonders, then, there can be 21 day bridge wonder???

After 18 days we finally sighted land. Certainly looked enchanting and enticingly green. South Pacific possibly. But no wonder we had all them New Zealanders and the Walzing Matildas from Australia, it was New Zealand that we had reached, and the New Zealanders were going home from Europe to protect their homeland from possible Japanese landing. So were the Australians. The Australians were permitted shore leave, but not us!

We only saw Wellington from the ship's deck. But what a beautiful place New Zealand looked from the deck. Wish I could have at least looked around a little of Wellington.

When we passed the equator, although we were not "baptized" and all thrown into the salty brine, we were all initiated into Neptune's lair and issued certificates to that effect.

Finally we reached the Australian Coast and sailed inland into Brisbane. By truck we finally reached our destination, Indrilly the home of ATIS, GHQ APO 500--General McArthur's Hqtrs, translator-interpreter section--an intelligence pool for the Asiatic Pacific theatre of <allied> operation

A few days later, after all administrative matters had been cleared we went to work across the divide from our tent city in a gounset hut. And as it turned out, we had to work under Haole officers, Australian or American, translating anything that the officers deemed important to translate based on a priority system.

Although these were second echelon documents, the important ones having been scrutinized by teams of the divisions up front, especially in New Guinea, that they were attached to or detached to. Nonetheless, we did come across interesting documents of long range value.

Behind our Quonset hut was a POW compound. In this base operation, we couldn't shift from translators to interpreters, so once selected as translators we remained translators and could not go to the interpreters section to watch operations there.

The Japanese soldier from Pvt to General were prolific writers, from first wedding night to personal daily dairies to technical documents. I believe that this section, which we called the rear echelon commandos, was responsible for breaking the code system employed by the Japanese Military in referring to units (especially divisions) and giving them names of birds and animals.

A few months after arrival, a few of us were sent up "North" to ~~recieve some~~ relieve some men who had been up front for as long as six months, <with Australian units>

Meanwhile correspondence kept up with the 100 Bn Sep buddies informed us of their departure for Camp Shelby, Mississippi to participate in the Louisiana Manuevers; the arrival of the 442nd volunteers at Shelby; extensive training and then shipment to port of embarkation, Maryland <New Jersey>, staging in Africa--then Baptism of fire, Salerno, Italy!

We kept on exchanging correspondence and expressing our desire to be at the battle front in Europe. And in return getting forceful communication telling us in no uncertain ~~det~~ terms that we were damn fools to be thinking that way. That we should be happy basking in the summer sunshine in Australia.

We waited for weekends, and no duty but passes. For recreation we played poker or bridge, and on weekends <on> passes to Brisbane to eat Chop Suey or eat Italian Spaghetti. And <to> play the horses at the various race tracks in and around Brisbane. One became such an avid "horseman" that he bought all kinds of literature to bone up on the game.

Our KIA list on the European front mounted. The JACL bulletins were read with avid interest. The mainland kotoonks received this bulletin, we received none. But we got the Star-Bulletin.

In early January, 1945, a three-man team was ordered to detached service with the 6th Australian Division for mopping-up operation in Aitape, New Guinea. Hollandia had been secured for the next hop--the Philiphines, to make good General MacArthurs's "I shall return" vow at the time Coreigdor fell! I was ordered to lead this ~~this~~ team but we <had> a Australian officer in charge. He did all the POW interrogation, we did the translating.

Joined the Australian 6th Division at the Atherton Tablelands supposedly notorious for pythons and giant kangaroos. The day we joined up got drunk on Creme de menth at the welcome banquet the Diggers threw for us the night of our arrival! Then they issued us Digger campaign caps, no steel helmets!

Giant Kangaroos we saw in large numbers--but pythons and constrictor boars we saw none. A we<ek> later we flew into Aitape and settled into a tent city near the coast line.

Fighting was still going on--but b<e>ing done by pockets of stragglers. Coincidentally or accidentally we translated a clear combat order one day that stated the ~~day~~ date and time of actual arrival of an enemy submarine to pick up the stragglers. And sure enough a sub was sighted that date and time off the Aitape coast. And sunk by the Allies.

At another time a great hullabaloo was raised because a general was reported found dead in a river bed high up in the mountains and we were asked to go and verify this report. Throughout our 7 mile trek through the thick jungle and underbrush of New Guinea's inland we never encountered a wild animal including even a snake. How disappointing.

The only thing that bothered us was the mosquitoes--malaria carrying ones--with the long "needles"--and these really could give you a sting. Atabrine tablets kept us from breaking out with malaria until--!

Upon reaching the point where the body was deposited, we made a certain identification. It definitely was not the bloated body of a general--but was that of a non-commissioned officer of lesser rank than a seargent.

Aside from it all we had a ball! A "crew" member had been a mechanic prior to volunteering for service, a mainland kotoonk. From two jeeps he made one that ran well. And one day we took a joy ride 25 miles down the sandy coastline and back--no roads, just dodging the in coming waves. On other days we went to the reef

atolls, offshore from our beach camp, to collect cats' eyes, only to bury them in the sand to have the scavenger crabs eat the inside and leave the eyes nice and shiny. But--forget to dig them up!

Then on ~~en~~ another day, we hitched a ride on a B-47 headed for a routine, daily flight to ~~Hoo~~and Hollandia, spent a wonderful day on the Lake where the GHQ was located, then hitched hieked back to Aitape.

Reminiscing about this interlude in time spent in New Guinea, I am convinced that today somewhere in New Guinea, in some natave villages, there must be a new breed rising therein. It cannot be possible that all the remnants of two Japanese army divisions perished (10,000 of them) ~~p~~ in the wilds of New Guinea. The pigmyies of New Guinea, though stunted in physical growth, picked up the Japanese language readily as evidenced by their asking for tabako the first thing we got accustomed with them. They, some of that that is, could speak fluent Japanese.

Wouldn't this intriguing subject make a good scientific research for some student of sociology today? Then how about the nurses corp that ~~were~~ <was> supposed to be there also. Were ~~they~~ <the nurses> all evacuated out of New Guinea in time before being cut off with the Allies' capture of Hollandia? What was the actual fate of those ~~were-wer~~ who were so ~~set~~ cut off by the MacArthur "squeeze play"???

After 6 months of detached service with the 6th Australian Division we were recalled back to Brisbane. We enjoyed a 14-day furlough down south to Sidney upon our return, which was long over-due. Some got to enjoy <for[?]> 14 day furloughs to Sidney. Looked over the Blondes at Hyde Botannical Garden* It was quoted that gals were 6 to one <over> male in Australia at that time.

Passing as Chinese, we crashed a debutants party. All Chinese gals that turn 21 become debutants, and must attend this coming-of-age debutants ball. And what an elaborate ball this is. Couldn't get to first base, with directives from GHQ that under no condition could American GIs marry native Australians. Did get to take the girls out to the zoo, rather they took us out to see real-live Koala Bears, and Wallabys (baby ~~kankar~~ kangaroos).

Also ~~take~~ <took> advantage of the generosity of the American Red Cross office and went sailing out in Sidney Harbor. This was a real sail boat. And playing bridge sailing ~~en~~ "on the bounty" made a grand slam hand of 7-no trumps!

~~In July of 1945, the whole camp moved from Brisbane to Manila. MacArthur had finally returned to the Philipines, making good his vow: "I shall return!" It took us~~

Almost forgot to included this bit of information. While on detached service with the Australians, we also helped interrogate prisoners. ~~while~~ We usually did the finishing up job on the prisoners that Captain "Robby" had finished with. Invariably we start by offering the POW a cigarette and then working from there. Name, rank, serial number, unit ~~destinatio~~ designation.

POWs in this mop-up operation--stragglers <are> for the most party undernorished and suffering from elephantatis, and in rags. And contrary to the belief that Japanese soldiers do not surrender, these were not captured POWs but walk-in surrendering soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army!

To the question of whether or not they practiced cannibalism, one out of three answered in the affirmative, very resignedly and shrugging their shoulders and simply stating that one had to survive!

In July of 1945, the whole camp moved from Brisbane to Manila. ~~MacCathur~~ MacArthur had finally returned to the Philipines, making good his vow: "I shall return" It took us 14 days, if I recall correctly to reach Manila by slow transport. But did sail through a beautiful strait dotted with island after island, and beautiful weather.

In Manila Harbor we transferred to LSTs to go ashore. The greeters--teens of 11 to 12 vintage's first words of greetings were, "Tabako!" cigarettees please; and, "vou like my sister?" These tykes were no older than 12 or 13.

Entrucked to Santa Anita race tracks which was to be home. All homes were built on stilts, high above ground ~~this~~ This I found out was the way to survive Monsoon season!

We ventured out to Manila once in a while, and meandered through the Walled City as well as ate a chop suey dinner once in Manila City. But the kind of stare and looks we got convinced us that we should stay at home, if we wanted to stay live and healthy.

We had hardly settled comfortably in when we were notified that our request for TDY to Hawaii had been granted. On the eve of our departure, the WO called us in to ask us to postpone our departure for three to four days because the whole outfit was to be given 2nd Lt's bars en masse--direct field commissions--and we needed to have a physical--twas a long time coming these field commissions. However, my partner looked the officer squarely in the eye and said straight from the shoulders: "Do I look like officer material?" I'm ~~get~~ going on home!" I, like-wise told him that he could shove up the bars, that I too was going home.

On a converted B-20 aircraft we took off for Hollandia, staying overnight, Then after refuelling there, in the morning, with just another refuelling stop at Tarawa, we flew directly into Hickam, the same day that we had left Hollandia, just as twilight was setting in. What a beatiful sight home was!

PROLOGUE

A 90-day TDY! Came VJ-Day while we were back home on TDY. There was no communication received recalling us back to base camp in the Philipines, though we expected it, so we played it cool! Got married in August too. And finally put in for s separation (discharge) from the service, on points. Discharge was granted in September, without any question. Civilian once more, after 3 years 10 months. Came down with Malaria, for the first time, after discharge, ~~dissapated~~ quickly run down what with the after effects of getting married and getting discharged. But through the help of the VA, got the records all straightened out.

Did nothing for a while, but finally applied for Federal Civil Service (clerk-typist) and got a position at Sand Island. Got tired and finally applied for a post office job, and got a sub-clerk's position. Worked at the Honolulu Post Office until the start of the 2nd semester beg came at the U of H. Decided on the spur of the moment to go back and finish my college career, on the GI bill. Had a relapse <of> Malaria, but that was not serious, and that was the last recurrence.

Finished the requirements for my bachelors; had transferred back to Teachers College. That was in February of 1947--ten years in finally graduating from college! Went on to get my 5th Teaching Certificate, and ~~and~~ at the start of the 2nd semester of 1948, was assigned to Waimanalo Elementary School, the first assignment to teach in the public schools of the Hawaii system. And I have been a public school teacher since, all in the elementary school level!

28 years later, we are civilians, back in all walks of life, these members of this illustrious Savage MISLS, Sempai Gumi, the June 1943 Graduates! There was only one KIA amongst us, ~~S-Sgt~~ T/Sgt Terry Mizutari of Hilo. He had a premonition and was reluctant to go "north" again. But being duly put on orders as leader of a team and ordered to New Guinea again, putting duty obove all, complied with the order.

In the process of the 40th "Rainbow Division" (california-based) being almost annihilated in the early action in New Guinea, the Japs were still surging and was about to hit Australia, the command post of the 40th, from which Terry's team had been operating out of was infiltrated by an enemy sniper unit one day and in the subsequent encounter, while he was directing his men to cover, a richoceting enemy bullet got Terry in a vital spot!

We are now educators, bankers, Federal Civil Service Employees, Doctors, Lawyers, Court Magistrates, Insurance agents, Shopping Center Complex Tycoons. And we have been having a once-a-year meetings for the past 15 years or so.

And now, becoming "feeble and senile" we have come out with the idea of jotting down some of our personal experiences for posterity and for the future generations research and analysis, if for nothing else. This is it. Don't we deserve a little bitty niche in the annals of US Military History along with the much-publicized 100th Puka Puka Purple Heart Bn and the Go-For-Broke 442Nd Inf Combat Regt???