



Co. D, 298th Infantry, Hawaii National Guard, August 1941

Some of the men pictured above were transferred from this unit to the group which became the 100th.

Readily identifiable: Left to Right, 2nd Row from top -

Hideo Kajikawa (11th), 3rd Row from top - Harry Hirata (3rd),

Iwao Fujimori (4th) name unknown (6th), Kenneth Mitsunaga (9th),

name unknown (12th), 4th Row from top - Richard Ends (2nd),

Mike Takahashi (5th), Tony Kinoshita (14th)

“One Puka Puka”

Europe, Japan

War is raging and rapidly expanding in Europe. Country after country fall like dominoes to Nazi Germany. In Asia, Japan continues its aggression against China. More and more evidence points to Japanese expansion southward, where much of the raw materials coveted by Japan are abundantly available.

U. S. reactions

The U.S. retaliates with an oil, iron ore and scrap iron embargo against Japan. This is tantamount to a declaration of war, since Japan is almost one hundred percent dependent on imported oil. And a National Selective Service Act is instituted in 1940, America's first peacetime draft. Draftees are required to serve one year in the armed forces, indefinitely if war erupts. The law affirms that there will be no discrimination and that every draftee will be treated equally.

Hawaii and its draftees

In Hawaii, several thousand men are drafted and assigned to the 298th and 299th infantry regiments of the federalized Hawaii National Guard. Slightly over fifty percent of the draftees are of Japanese ancestry (over one-third of the territorial population is of Japanese ancestry). The Nisei draftees soon learn that enlistment in the Navy, Coast Guard, Marines and Air Force is closed to them.

The Issei parents are proud that their sons are allowed to serve in the Army, and throw elaborate parties for them. Throughout the territory, families and friends gather to bid “aloha,” give monetary gifts and pile flower leis on the smiling draftees. The whole community smiles with them.

Before they leave their homes, many of the parents admonish their sons: “Do your duty at all

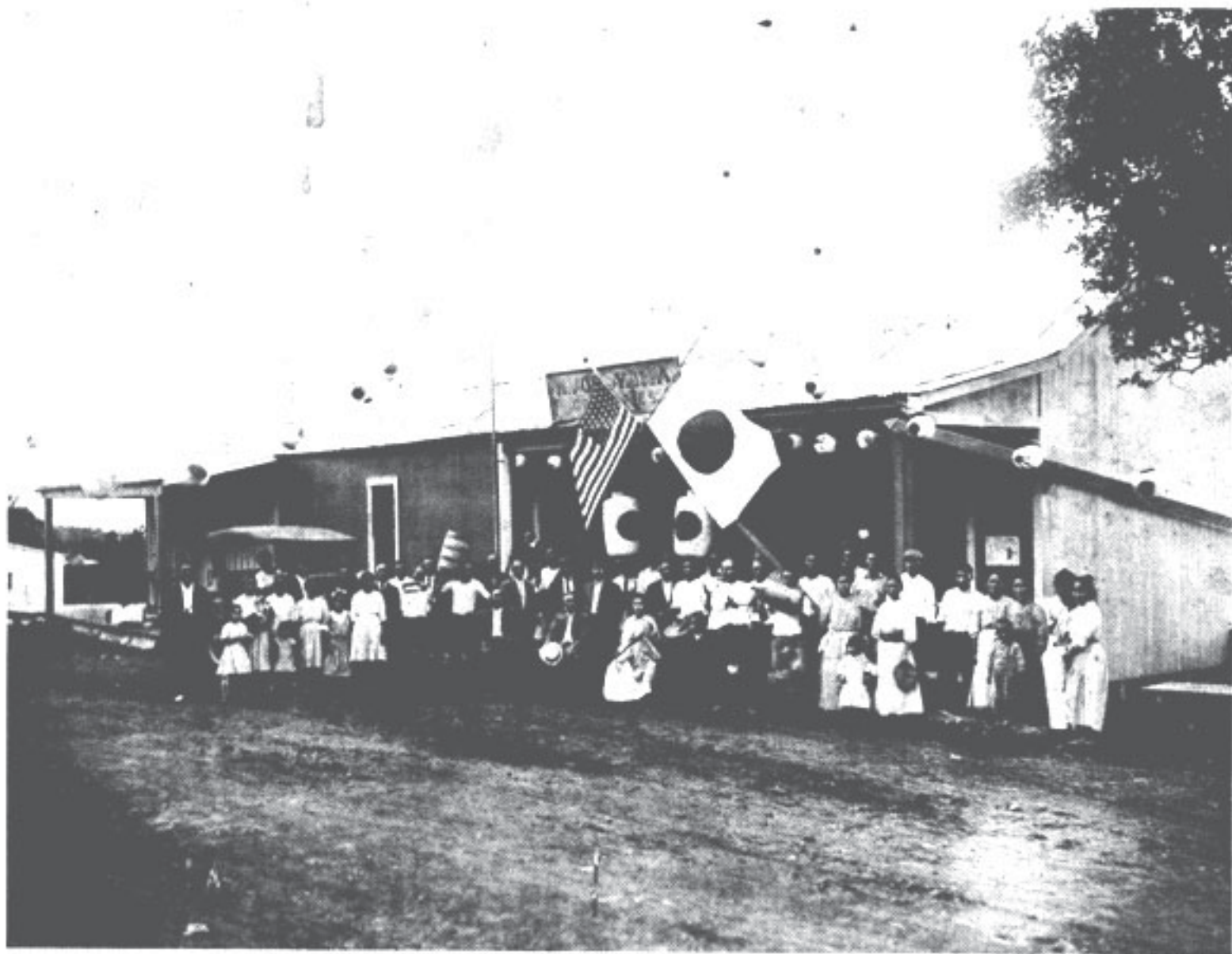
times. Do not bring *haji* (shame) to the family. Fight well for your country.” Translated, this really means, “Do not expect to come back alive.” By country, the parents mean the United States of America, and the sons do not give wise aleck answers. They understand very well the hardships their parents have endured for many difficult years in the sugar plantations as aliens in a country which, after more than a generation of residency, still refuses them citizenship. And here, the sons are hearing such advice from the mouths of their parents, who well understand the perils that await their sons in the future. It is a poignant moment for both the Issei and the Nisei. Such parental advice may have seemed cold and cruel to one who does not know or understand the character of the Issei, the Japanese immigrants in Hawaii. No one wants to see their sons become cannon fodder for the state. Nothing is sadder than when parents see their children die before they do. The Japanese parents are no exception to this universal truth. They truly love their children and would sacrifice just about everything for them.

Their children, the Nisei, understand the predicament of their parents who, raised to adulthood in Japan, are locked in the severe traditions of *Dai Nippon* where the Emperor is regarded as a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess and where certain precepts are strictly adhered to: *enryo* (self restraint), *haji* (shame), *kodomo no tame ni* (for the sake of the children), *oyakoko* (respect and love of parents), *giri* (obligation which must be acknowledged and repaid), *on* (obligations to family, community and country), *shikatanagai* (it can't be helped).

Magic

The United States successfully develops a decoding machine and appropriately names it Magic. It is now able to secretly intercept and translate highly





The blending of cultures

sensitive and secret Japanese diplomatic messages between Tokyo and its consulates in Honolulu and the mainland and its embassy in Washington. For instance, even as Tokyo requests information from Honolulu on the location of ships in Pearl Harbor and whether or not the ships are being protected by torpedo nets, these telling inquiries are all picked up by Magic. In retrospect, this fact raises the tantalizing question of why Pearl Harbor happened in the first place.

November 1941 - the Pearl Harbor task force

Relations between the United States and Japan worsen by the hour, nearing the breaking point. Unknown to the world, the most powerful and awesome task force ever assembled in the history of the world sails out of Takan Bay in the Kurile Islands for a date with destiny: six aircraft carriers, 430 dive and level bombers and torpedo and fighter planes, two battleships, nine destroyers, three cruisers, 15 reconnaissance sea planes, 27 submarines strung hundreds of miles apart, supply ships, tankers and support ships. The task force commander, Admiral Noguma, is ordered by Admiral Yamamoto (the architect of the Pearl Harbor attack) to take the task force safely and undetected to a spot many thousands of miles in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean near Hawaii. From this point, he is ordered to take the stormy and perilous North Pacific passage instead of the normally calmer, safer but much utilized central Pacific and southern routes. One restraint is carefully and specifically spelled out in the order. In the event ongoing negotiations in Washington prove successful by a specified date, the task force is to immediately turn around and return to Japan. If not, Admiral Noguma is directed to fulfill his mission no matter what happens next.

Now, only two miracles can stop the task force from accomplishing its mission: agreement in Washington, or the sinking of the entire task force into the cold and dark waters of the North Pacific

by Mother Nature. Neither happens. The die is cast. It turns south for the final run toward Pearl Harbor.

Diplomacy between Tokyo and Washington

Sizzling messages are exchanged between Tokyo and the Japanese embassies in Honolulu and Washington. Astonishingly, tragically, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lt. Gen. Walter C. Short, the Navy and Army commanders in Hawaii are not informed about Magic, not privy to the vital information gathered by Magic. Among the voluminous and sometimes crucial information gathered from the messages between Tokyo and the Japanese embassy in Honolulu, one message stands out. In great detail, this message inquires about defenses at Pearl Harbor and about the specific ships currently in the harbor. For reasons unknown, even this incredibly important information is not transmitted to the commanders. Instead, over a week before Pearl Harbor, Washington sends Kimmel and Short a vague version of a "war warning," emphasizing danger of sabotage by the local Japanese population in Hawaii. There is no mention of Pearl Harbor. Short interprets this "war warning" as a sabotage alert and informs Washington that one of the counter-measures he has taken is to place the valuable planes close together in clusters on airfields to protect them from saboteurs. There is no reply from Washington to Short's acknowledgement to the "war warning." There is no reply as to whether it agrees or disagrees with his assessment of the situation – only silence. The general leaves the planes in clusters on the wide open fields.

(Later, the Roberts Commission investigating Pearl Harbor concludes that Washington's failure to reply to Gen. Short's message was one of the contributing causes of the Pearl Harbor disaster.)

December 7, 1941, and immediate aftereffects

At dawn, from approximately 200 miles north of Oahu, the aircraft carriers of the task force unleash their winged cargoes of death and destruction and





December 7, 1941

successfully pull off one of history's biggest and most devastating surprises – the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In an instant, Pearl Harbor becomes etched in history: the Pacific Fleet is almost destroyed, hundreds of planes are damaged or destroyed, and several thousand servicemen are killed or entombed in the bellies of battleships sunk into the mud of Pearl Harbor. Ironical it is that the spectre of sabotage by Japanese-Americans and their alien parents, which has so obsessed the authorities, never occurs at Pearl or anywhere in the Islands throughout the war. Unfounded stories are spread about local "Japs" adding to the havoc by deliberately creating traffic bottlenecks, hiding machine guns in delivery trucks, forewarning housemaids not to report for work that morning, creating chaos at the docks and poisoning Nuuanu Reservoir. The same for reports that enemy paratroopers have landed on St. Louis Heights, and a downed Japanese pilot is wearing a McKinley High School ring when captured (Nisei students comprised the majority at McKinley).

Martial law

Martial law is declared by 11:30 a.m., following urgent discussions between Short, Governor Poindexter and President Roosevelt. Short becomes the military governor of Hawaii. Poindexter tells the President that what he fears most is sabotage by the large Japanese community. Rumors and roller-coaster emotions come close to rendering some Japanese incapable of facing the public. The majority, however, do not lose faith that somehow everything will turn out OK. Still, a pall continues to hang over their lives. "What can we do?" "What can we say?" "How should we behave?" "What's going to happen next?" The behavior of some of the non-Japanese teenage boys add to the wariness because these boys, acting on their own like vigilantes, make the rounds in the sugar plantation camps demanding to "inspect" the Japanese occupied homes for "contrabands." Obediently, the Japanese aliens and even grown up Niseis allow this to happen without any

thought about their civil rights. Under the stress of the times, such rights go unchallenged.

On that day and in the days following, the FBI rounds up all known Japanese sympathizers, Buddhist priests, language school principals and teachers, civic and business leaders, fishermen, instructors of judo and the martial arts. Most of the leadership positions in the Japanese communities throughout the territory are wiped out in one fell swoop. But many are released after intensive interrogation. Finally, less than one percent of the Japanese population in Hawaii is sent to detention camps on the mainland.

The Territorial Guard

Three hundred and seventeen Japanese-American University of Hawaii ROTC students step forward to join the Hawaii Territorial Guard. Before they are sworn in, the Army reminds General Short that most of the ROTC students at the university are of Japanese ancestry. His reply is classic: "I think they are perfectly loyal ... we should go ahead." It is one of the turning points for the Japanese in Hawaii.

The students are duly sworn in. Rifles are issued. Almost immediately there is a report that enemy paratroopers are landing at St. Louis Heights near the university. The student-soldiers rush to the scene to do battle with the enemy. The fact that the landing turns out to be another rumor does not take away the ultimate patriotism and courage displayed on that tension-ridden 7th of December.

The Hawaii National Guard

Almost no one in Hawaii questions the loyalty of the large number of Japanese-Americans in the National Guard. There is no time for that. Every trained soldier is desperately needed. The enemy could be appearing at any moment. Defenses have to be set up. It is do-or-die time. Unlike the ROTC students, many of these men are draftees. Having already served a year, they are ready to be discharged from the Army. Regardless, the same





*After Pearl Harbor attack :
Hawaii National Guard soldier Kunio Fujimoto
stands ready to protect a Hawaii shoreline*

question is asked of Short about the advisability of using the Japanese-Americans of the 298th and 299th Infantry Regiments against the Japanese enemy. Again, the answer is positive. Like Gen. Herron before him, Short has faith and trust in his Japanese-American soldiers.

At that crucial moment, in one of the greatest crises America has ever faced, the men of the 298th/299th are at the vanguard of the U.S. Army. History has recorded the fact and it will remain forever that on December 7, 1941, men of different races, born and raised in the Territory of Hawaii, were waiting on the beaches to take on the enemy, knowing that the likelihood of their coming out of it alive is minimal. Almost everyone "knows" that an invasion will follow the Pearl Harbor attack. After Pearl Harbor, everything and anything becomes believable.

An explosion of rumors

The morning paper in Honolulu a day after Pearl Harbor carries a banner headline on the front page: SABOTEURS LAND ON OAHU. Although this proves to be only another rumor, a fresh rash of sensational rumors erupt, all to the detriment of the Issei and Nisei in Hawaii and on the mainland.

Pressure groups in the West Coast use the most outrageous rumors of "sabotage and espionage" emanating from Hawaii to justify their demand for wholesale internment of all Japanese-American citizens residing in California, Oregon and Washington. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox arrives in Honolulu on the December 11 to get a hands-on personal evaluation. He returns to Washington after a whirlwind tour of Pearl Harbor with this assessment: "The most effective fifth column work that has come out of the war except in Norway." His statement hits the headlines across the country. Presumably, Knox got this information directly from Admiral Kimmell. This sensational but untrue remark, made at a critical time when revulsion against anything Japanese is still at its height,

makes such a deep impression on the American people that it is destined to unjustly haunt the Issei and Nisei throughout the war and after. Millions of Americans have gone to their graves believing this, and 50 years after Pearl Harbor, millions more still believe this myth.

Change of Army command

Gen. Emmons takes charge of the Army from Short on the 17th. Shortly after, Emmons asks his intelligence chief, Col. Kendall J. Fielder, "Well, Fielder, how many did you arrest today?" Fielder: "We arrested a couple of consular agents ... " Emmons: "Hells bells! Arrest them all, get rid of them!" Fielder: "Where would we put these thousands and thousands of people?" Emmons then changes the subject and goes on to more pressing problems. (These quotes are taken from a video taped interview with Gen. Fielder shortly before he died in 1982. Fielder says it didn't take long for Gen. Emmons to get his feet on the ground and do a wonderful job under very trying circumstances.)

January-April 1942

In January, the 317 members of the Territorial Guard who are of Japanese ancestry are discharged without any warning or explanation. On the first of the following month, the War Department proposes that all soldiers of Japanese ancestry be released from active duty, discharged or transferred. Then on February 9, it orders Emmons to suspend all ethnic Japanese civilians employed by the Army. On February 26, President Roosevelt sends a memo to Secretary Knox: "I think you and Stimson can agree and then go ahead (evacuation of Japanese in Hawaii) and do it as a military project." And in March comes the announcement by the government that Japanese-Americans would no longer be eligible for the draft. They are classified "enemy aliens." This is followed by the mass evacuation of the Japanese population in the West Coast states of California, Oregon and Washington.





"Take care of yourself, my son"

The One Puka Puka

In early April, Emmons sends a confidential memo to the War Department in which he tells the department that there are approximately 2,000 soldiers of Japanese extraction now in the service in Hawaii; that there are a number of young male citizens of Japanese ancestry who desire to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States in a concrete manner. He requests authority to organize them with the understanding that they be sent to an African or European theater for combat duty, and concludes with the belief that such a unit would give a good account of itself. The Department turns down his recommendation and in turn advises him: "In the event it is impractical to absorb all enlisted men and selectees of Japanese extraction in service units of the Hawaiian Department, this fact should be reported to the War Department with a view to their transfer to the mainland for duty in Zone of Interior installations."

Leaving Hawaii

In early June, the people of Honolulu notice unusual military activities and aircraft movements. Something big is about to happen. Japanese-Americans in the 298th and 299th are hurriedly recalled to Schofield Barracks; their weapons are taken away, and they are separated from their non-Japanese buddies and formed into an all-Nisei Provincial Battalion in record time. The Niseis suspect the worst. At a critical moment when every man is desperately needed to defend the Islands, when the Army is racing against time to bring in as many reinforcements as possible. And when Midway is under attack and its outcome still uncertain, the Nisei soldiers are abruptly told they are being sent overseas to an unknown destination. They are ordered not to tell anyone that they are being shipped overseas. No passes are issued. All they can do is wait and see. It is an anxious time for them. The movement is supposed to be secret, but as the battalion moves to Honolulu harbor from Schofield Barracks by train,

some of their loved ones, relatives and friends and curious onlookers are lining the railroad tracks, waving goodbye and aloha. There is no announcement in the newspapers or on the radio about their departure.

After a week-long, zig-zag journey, the troopship *S.S. Maui* passes under San Francisco's awesome Golden Gate Bridge and docks at Oakland. To the men, most of whom have never been out of the Islands before, the sight of the Golden Gate Bridge and passing under its magnificent structure are some of the greatest thrills of their young lives.

Camp McCoy

Soon after arrival, the battalion leaves Oakland and head for Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, on three transport trains. Arriving at McCoy, one of them stops at a siding. The men look out the window. Across the track stands what looks like an internment camp. There are watch towers, iron fences topped with barbed wire surrounding the camp. One of the men studies the camp very carefully. He knows that his parents are interned in a camp somewhere in Wisconsin. He feels apprehension and anxiety. He has a strong urge to get out of the train to search for his parents. The men harbor a "funny kine feeling" and wonder if this indeed is their fate. Is this the destiny of the entire Japanese population in the United States, including Hawaii's 160,000 persons of Japanese ancestry – all conveniently tucked away in concentration camps while other Americans do all the fighting and dying for them?

And why not? Already 112,000 of their counterparts from the West Coast states of California, Oregon and Washington – men, women, children, infants, the aged, the sick and the afflicted, the rich and the poor, the good and the bad, the gainfully employed and the unemployed, the aliens and citizens alike – are all lumped together, without due process and without charges or trials. They are already imprisoned in concentration camps with armed watch towers, in ten concentration camps,





*Bewildered
Miyuki Mochida, top, about age 6
and Hiroko Mochida, Taken in 1942
at Topaz Relocation Center, Utah*

in tar papered barracks, in desolate surroundings, in the interior of the United States.

As if playing out a macabre scene, the train slowly backs away from the siding and comes to a dead stop in the right area of the sprawling camp. Later, the soldier who wondered about his parents learns that yes, indeed, his parents were in the very camp he saw through the train's windows.

The stark reality that the future of the entire Japanese population in the United States now rests upon their shoulders is ever in their minds. Fate has appointed these Nisei to prove the patriotism of their people. The men of the 100th could rise to the challenge, or they could say, "To hell with it. We give up." Who could blame them if they did say that? The odds against them are astronomical. If the National Service Act of 1940 which said there will be no discrimination in the draft cannot protect them, if the Constitution of the United States cannot protect the people, what is left? They are in the deepest hole imaginable.

Unlike Frank Knox, Gen. John L. DeWitt, Earl Warren, columnist Walter Lippmann and many other distinguished Americans in and out of government who publicly express their contempt for the Issei and Nisei, the men of the 100th know they are loyal Americans, that America can count on them to pass the ultimate test – on the battlefield. They also know without a shadow of a doubt that their parents will never do anything to harm the United States of America. To do so would be like murdering their own sons. But they also know that no amount of verbal protest is going to do any good. *Words are meaningless. Action is everything.*

Crisis also an opportunity

There is an old Asian proverb which goes something like this: "A crisis is also an opportunity." The 1,432 men of the 100th claim it as their own. The men know instinctively they must spill their blood on the battlefield, like other Americans. They must sacrifice their lives, if necessary, like other Americans.

Nothing less will do. Nothing is too big, too small or too demeaning. Without question, every man knows that his life is not his, at least for the duration of the war. He can not, will not, let his loved ones down. He can not, will not, let the people down – the people who boldly speak up for them and have faith in them.

It is their "enemy" alien parents who have foreseen that it would come down to this, even before Pearl Harbor. The men of the 100th now fully realize the level of understanding, trust and even love their parents have for the United States when they are admonished to "Do your duty. America is your country. Go and do you best. Do not bring shame to the family."

The men know that before the Army sends them to the front, they will have to prove themselves in training. They must earn the right to fight for the United States of America. Nothing ever comes easy for them. With this in mind, they prepare themselves for combat with a vengeance and zeal seldom seen in an Army camp. Turner and Lovell drive them to their absolute limit. They become so outstanding and score such high marks in training that they attract the attention of the top Army brass in Washington. The 100th becomes the most inspected and most thoroughly trained unit in the Army. Each man becomes expert in several different weapons so that the unit can function in any situation. High Army and civilian officials from Washington and all over the country come to Camp McCoy to see for themselves and confirm what they have been hearing about this "crack" battalion. Even in training, the men of the 100th become a legend.

Japanese-Americans and their alien parents in Hawaii and in Mainland concentration camps look up to the soldiers of the 100th and are grateful to them. The soldiers became a symbol of hope. They lift the morale of their people.

For the men themselves, the unit's designation as the 100th Infantry Battalion, Separate,





Bachan helps the war effort with a loving heart

enhances their hope – that they will be sent overseas for combat duty.

Into the history books

Unknown to them, Gen. George C. Marshall, the top man in the Army, has sent a message to Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in Europe offering it the 100th. The reply: "Not interested." Marshall then

repeats his offer to Gen. Mark W. Clark in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations who accepts enthusiastically. The 100th is on its way to an uncertain and hazardous future; its success in training and in combat changes the attitude and thinking at the War Department forever. And the rest is history.

John Tsukano



The 100th: A Window of Hope – left to right- Yoro Sumida, Toshiko Matsumura, Kotoyo Matsumura, Taketoshi Chigawa and Sachiko Matsumura (in window)



