



What will tomorrow bring?

Tom Nosse and Katsuto Komatsu on a pass in New Orleans

Shelby

On January 6, 1943, the battalion left Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, by train for Camp Shelby, Mississippi. During seven months of training at McCoy, the men of the 100th went through regular basic training – a 13-week course designed to develop the skills and discipline of the individual soldiers. Interspersed in the basic course were lessons learned by combat troops in the front lines of Guadalcanal and other battle zones. Many of the men had gone through this basic training at Schofield Barracks, so there was some griping about repeating the same cycle of training. Nevertheless, all of the men took the training very seriously because they felt now was the time to “hone” their skills if killing the enemy was their ultimate goal.

The 2nd Army Headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, under the command of Gen. Leslie McNair, issued training directives to the 100th. The general always took a keen and special interest in the 100th. After basic, there was extensive and progressive schooling of the soldiers as members of rifle squads, platoons and companies in small unit tactics. Great emphasis was placed on leadership training for these units.

During this second phase at McCoy, the whole battalion participated in field exercises, which sometimes extended into the night, and in all kinds of weather – wind, rain, snow and extreme cold. Before leaving McCoy for Shelby, the men of the 100th had been conditioned to withstand cold temperatures, difficult for men who lived all of their lives in Hawaii.

The train ride to Shelby was uneventful, except for those who came down with the measles during an epidemic at McCoy. Sick or not, the men all shipped out together. (They were hospitalized at Camp Shelby.)

At Shelby, the 100th was assigned to one end of the military camp, an area reserved for special units. Like true soldiers, the men grumbled about their new accommodations, after living in rather comfortable abodes at Camp McCoy.

Drilling at Shelby started immediately and the emphasis was placed on the operational role of the 100th as part of a larger unit – namely, a regimental combat team, or as a special task force working under the direct orders of a division or another higher command. In the case of the 100th, the unit was attached to the 85th Division under Maj. Gen. Wade Haislip, a hard, tough taskmaster. All training orders were received directly from the G-3, Deputy Chief of Staff Operations of the Division.

The 85th's initial appraisal of the 100th was probably one of skepticism. The men of the 100th looked different in face and stature, they were not white and they spoke English with an accent perceived as “odd.” Pidgin was a language only another Hawaiian could understand. However, it didn't take long before the skepticism turned into respect for the 100th because the commanding general of the 85th Division accepted the unit as one of its own.

The first test for the 100th came early in February when the unit participated with other units of the 85th Division in a field exercise which took place in one of the training areas of the expansive military post in Mississippi. In the critique of the exercise for various subordinate commanders and staff involved, Gen. Haislip gave verbal commendation to the men of the 100th by saying that the unit “played the game well despite the rotten weather which prevailed during the exercise.” Significant was the fact that he did not commend any other unit under his command.



Hi!o Larry, (KIA)

3 April, 1943
Camp Shelby, Miss

Just scribbling down a few lines which I know won't mean much to others when they do go thru these pages, but to you it will recall of the days we spent together and of all the wonderful times, especially here in the mainland. So here's nothing more of the few incidents that occurred, remember Carnival at ~~Box~~, and ~~Pomah~~, and of the little thing that used to stay at the baseball throw stands, our trip to Madison and of our various trips to Sports! Of course you'll remember these incidents, no matter how long after words you happen to glimpse through here. It's been a pleasure to exist in here, and at this very moment, when we are about to go on maneuvers, for an indefinite period,

and God only knows when we two will have the opportunity to enjoy all the fun all over again, I have to think of the future. Nevertheless, no matter what hardships we have to face, we will, I hope live out more the worse than from our gains and experiences, which I'm quite sure, will be of a great aid to us when we actually go to the front, and that isn't so far away now.

In sincerely hoping and praying that after this ordeal, is all cleared up, we will be able to see each other again, and start all over again. Let's all put out most possible effort to clear this cleared up soon, which has brought sufferings to so many. In closing I want to say, just remember, I'm in here, is a friend indeed. Just as, a pal,
Lance, Kani T.H.

Larry (KIA) 4/29/43

Somewhere in Louisiana - no it aint the war zone but just plain maneuvers.

Hope to see you again after this war. Reckon I'll beam you a meal ticket when I go to Kauai

Aloha

Wassu Kawano
P.O. Box 1-9
Hilo, H.

APRIL 28, 1943 (KIA)
ON MANEUVERS

Two young men from Hawaii
Traveling 500 miles away
Finding friendship anywhere
Hoping to cheer it further
Be little, be humble
I'm glad I remember
To find a guy like you

Someday, somewhere
Somewhere well meet
again. Fate knows. Waiting
be sure

Yours truly
Washburn
Kaka

RR

From Larry Sakoda's autograph book,
Louisiana Maneuvers, early 1943

Some 100th officers present at the critique remembered the general holding high for everyone to see a copy of the New Orleans Time Picayune, a regional daily newspaper. Screaming headlines in the newspaper noted the staggering defeat of American forces – elements of the 1st Armored Division and the 34th Division, at Kasserine Pass, Tunisia at the hands of the Panzer tanks of the Afrika Korps, under the command of Gen. Erwin Rommel, the infamous Desert Fox. Gen. Haislip admonished the gathering that everyone in his division, including the 100th, had to take combat training seriously in order to avoid or prevent heavy losses and even defeat as occurred at Kasserine Pass.

During the first of many exercises, troops of the 100th got their first experience with “chiggers” – six-legged, blood-sucking mites. Many felt that the chiggers, never selective as to any special part of a man’s anatomy, particularly liked the soldiers of the 100th. The chigger’s bite was irritating and caused great discomfort and itching. Scratching the affected area gave only temporary relief, but the men scratched and scratched, often getting an infection in return.

Along with chiggers, there were ticks, dry land snakes and cotton-mouth water moccasins found in the streams running through forest areas, armadillos and other reptiles and animals never before seen by the men from Hawaii. Some of the men even relished armadillo steaks, which is said to taste better than chicken. At least armadillo meat was added fare to the usual GI meals prepared in the field kitchen.

The time spent in the Mississippi plains and forests was good exposure for the men. The warm climate and the challenging terrain were a change from the environment in Wisconsin. After “roughing it” in field exercises, the troops always looked forward to the trek back to camp quarters.

The officer complement was understrength from the inception of the outfit at Schofield Barracks, having been made up mainly of transfers from the 298th and 299th Infantry Regiments. The 298th and 299th were two Hawaii National Guard units that were federalized and placed under the command of the U.S. Army prior to December 7, 1941. Among the officers assigned from these two regiments were LTC Farrant Turner, Maj. James Lovell, Capt. Jack Johnson and others. Of those assigned, there were about 16 Nisei officers, most of whom were called to active duty shortly before or after the onset of war.

Most of the Nisei officers were graduates of the University of Hawaii and received their commissions by completing the advanced ROTC program. All of the Nisei officers were first or second lieutenants, except Captains Taro Suzuki and John Tanimura, who were on active duty as staff officers at Ft. Shafter prior to joining the unit.

Since there was a shortage of officers when the 100th arrived at Camp McCoy, a request was sent to higher headquarters for officer personnel, preferably those with prior Army duty experience in Hawaii. The request was answered by the assignment of about seven second lieutenants, some of them recent graduates of the Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. They all had previous experience with the Army in Hawaii.

Most of these recently assigned officers with previous experience as non-commissioned officers with the regular Army in Hawaii were middle-aged or over. Though dedicated, they did not fit well in the unit and were given other assignments before the 100th was shipped overseas. The few officers who remained did not stay long once the unit went into active fighting.

Other young officers were assigned to the unit from time to time, but it was not until early spring that the officer complement reached the authorized strength. One of the first arrivals was Lt. Young Oak Kim, a Nisei of Korean extraction and a native of Los Angeles. Although advised by the 100th’s com-



(KIA)

15

Louisiana
April 28, 1942

1010-K. RAWLINS LANE
HONOLULU, OAHU.

Larry:

May this humble person be ^{remembered} ~~remembered~~
after this war is over, & is
laid to rest.

For I'll be up there ^{waiting to} ~~to~~ welcome
you.

your pal
Randall M. Ote

My Dear friend
Words can not express
my happiness in having met
a friend such as you.
My only wish now is to have a chance
to fight side by side with you, until
victory is ours. I am only a truck driver, ~~dead~~
& certainly I look you over many bumps did'nt I?
I hope we will both take the bumps and hardships
together in the days to come.
Forever your friend
D.F.E. Shunmei Sato

May 7, 1943 10
Louisiana, Wilder

Home address
156 Piopio St
Hilo, Hawaii

DECEASED

Some messages were hopeful, others, prophetic

mander that he might have some difficulty adjusting himself to a unit comprised of Japanese-American soldiers, Kim insisted he was an American like the rest of the 100th and he wanted to remain with the unit. Lt. Kim stayed with the 100th, becoming one of its great and outstanding officers in and out of combat.

Shortly after Kim's arrival, other officer slots were filled by those with such surnames as Alexander, Anastasio, Froning, Gleicher, Grandstaff, Handley, Jakuszewski, Lakner, Mitchell and Rothsmeiler. These officers and others to follow came from all parts of the United States. Although some of them might have had second thoughts about joining this unusual Army unit, it wasn't long before they were convinced the 100th was the place for them. With the gradual buildup of the 100th – the increased officer personnel and full authorized equipment, and intensive training and operations in the field with other units – the troops became aware they were headed overseas to some combat zone in the near future.

This feeling was strengthened when a detachment of "B" Company soldiers rejoined the 100th at Camp Shelby. They had spent several months on a special training mission on Cat Island, in the Mississippi sound. The mission was supposed to be a deep secret, but many of the 100th learned about it at McCoy, very shortly after the detachment departed for its Cat Island assignment.

In early April, the 100th Battalion, still attached to the 85th Division, moved by motor and rail to Louisiana for maneuvers. The maneuver area was a huge expanse of land where a number of Army divisions participated in war games. Before departure, LTC Turner, the battalion commander, solemnly addressed his troops of the 100th and indicated that they should do their best in the war games. If they performed as well as their past exercises, said Turner, the Louisiana maneuvers would be the end of their

training and the battalion would be ready to move onto the next stage – combat.

The maneuvers in the following two months were really rough. The weather was hot and humid most of the time. Roads travelled on foot or by trucks were dusty. Chiggers, ticks, coral snakes, water moccasins in this part of Louisiana seemed to be more plentiful than in the maneuver areas of Mississippi.

Umpires judging the exercises placed realistic battle zone conditions – for example, water rationing, blackouts, tank attacks. Red troops (enemy) were employed in different combat situations to render the exercises more true-to-life. Showers and clean clothing were available only during rest periods after certain maneuvers problems were played out and completed.

The hours of hiking seemed endless. One day, the 100th marched 25 miles, partly at night to hit the "rear" of enemy positions actually manned by "red forces." F Co. was once given the assignment as a lead company in the Sabine River crossing from Louisiana to the Texas side. The assembly area for the night crossing was muddy, and the soldiers could hardly keep still because swarms of buzzing, biting mosquitoes seemed to relish the blood of the men.

Actually, the crossing was successful because the men were more than anxious to clear the mosquito-infested area and reach the other side of the river to rout the enemy force holding vital ground.

While near the Sabine River, the men were visited by Gen. Leslie J. McNair, the former commander of the 2nd Army, by then Chief of Army, Ground Forces. (Gen. McNair was killed in action while observing the breakout of the Normandy Beachhead.) He queried the battalion commander as to the unit's readiness and determined that the 100th was ready for combat. He indicated that the battalion would be leaving "within the next two or three months..."





Life: a Crap Shoot

War games completed, the battalion moved to Camp Clairborne, Louisiana for intensive weapons firing practice. With this final touch, the men of the 100th had come a long way – they were ruggedly conditioned and had become skillful in the use of weapons. Their morale was high and they were well disciplined. Camaraderie was strong, and their relationships among themselves and with officers – even with the newly-arrived officers – were well established. In sum, the 100th was ready for combat.

The 100th returned to Shelby on July 16, anxious to meet friends, relatives and other members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Their arrival was no surprise to the 100th, because word was received during maneuvers that the 442nd was organized by volunteers in March and that the men would soon be shipped to Shelby.

For a few days the men of the 100th and 442nd got together in the evenings and joyfully talked of home and old times. More soberly, the 100th troops calmly advised the younger men of the trials and tribulations of Army life and ways.

On July 20, 1943, the 100th received its battalion colors and motto, "Remember Pearl Harbor," as requested by the unit. Shortly thereafter, officers

of the inspector general's department visited the unit, another sign that the 100th was ready to move. Sure enough, orders were received to draw weapons and equipment to meet TOE requirements and prepare for overseas movement. All men were allowed 10 days leave. Officers who were sent to the infantry school and on special assignments were ordered back to the unit.

All equipment not accompanying the men were boxed in special crates painted olive drab, and marked "2404, Norfolk, Va." followed by a different letter to identify the specific unit. These boxes were shipped before hand to the port of embarkation at Norfolk, Va. and, as commonly happened during wartime, the crates reached the 100th long after the unit went into combat.

The 100th left Shelby on August 11 by train and reached Camp Kilmer, New Jersey two days later. Embarkation orders were received at midnight, August 20, 1943. From Camp Kilmer, the unit moved by train to Brooklyn, ferried over to Staten Island and got on the *S.S. James Parker*, a troopship recently converted from a banana and tourist ship. The *James Parker* sailed in a convoy the next day at dusk.

Sakae Takahashi

