

## Walter Iwasa

### An Oral History Interview

Q Let's begin with December 7<sup>th</sup>. What were you doing on December 7<sup>th</sup> in the morning?

A In the morning I was washing my car and was a nice, nice, clear day. I wash my car and I was getting ready to take my car and pick up mommy and go to church, but after washing a little bit, I went -- I could hear -- I see these planes flying with the round insignia, the rising sun, Japan, so I thought, gee, sure look like a realistic maneuver and as I went to the back of the house and looked, the machine gun from the Japan plane was shooting toward Wheeler Field<sup>1</sup> and then I heard some big explosion. Boy, I thought was a real realistic maneuver and I happened to turn my car radio on and I found that it was war. I heard President Roosevelt saying that the Empire of Japan has started a war with the United States and that -- then the radio station people were saying this is the real McCoy. So -- and a little while later -- well, they said don't use the telephone, the telephones were purely emergency purpose. I was going to call mommy, but then --

Q Oh, that's why you didn't call her?

A Well, that's one of the reasons, and the announcement came over the radio saying that ROTC, University ROTC students to report to the armory, so got to my uniform, told my mother I'm going, I got to report to the armory and I went and as I left, oh, every place -- to go through Schofield<sup>2</sup>, they stopped me and I had to tell them where I was going, then -- on the highway, various place like Waipahu intersection, there was a police, stop, tell you where you going, reporting to ROTC, as was announced over the radio, and so they -- I was allowed to go -- now I passed by Pearl Harbor and that place was burning, the ships sinking, lot of smoke and lot of activity, but I was able to go by there and was stopped a few more times.

I finally got to the university and there we joined up and told they got trucks and then whatever boys we had, we went to the Honolulu Armory and we were assigned units and then we had to take the men out to the FBI -- FBI office -- the telephone exchange offices and such and one was by Iolani Palace and -- well, it was so disorganized, that it was real difficult to get things going because, see, the food -- feeding of the men, that had to be set up, the equipment had to be properly issued to the guys and was a real mess, but finally they sent us out to Aliiolani School and then -- with a whole bunch of men and we had to guard the water tanks up on the hill in Kuliouou and -- up in the hills and it was -- then nighttime -- well, we had to change shift and blackout and, you know, driving the jeep at night, we had drivers, but they really had a hard time because they weren't trained to drive at night without any lights and so -- well, we didn't have any mishaps.

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<sup>1</sup> Wheeler Field was an Army airfield and one of the attack's primary targets to prevent the airplanes there from getting airborne and engaging in the battle.

<sup>2</sup> Schofield Barracks was an Army base next to Wheeler Field.

Then we were assigned on the other side of the island, -- I don't know why we had to guard the *pupule*<sup>3</sup> house, but –

Q *Pupule* house?

A Yeah.

Q What's that?

A The Kaneohe<sup>4</sup> – you know, in Kaneohe there's the mental case – I don't know why we had to have – they had a water tank over there, you know, so we had to guard that. We saw the inmates walking around and some just staring at the ground for hours and some was searching around the slop can. Well, anyway, we were guarding different installations and, see, the ROTC unit was made of many nationalities, the officers, but three of us, we were Americans of Japanese ancestry, Ikeda, Kadowaki and myself.

Now, after we were in the unit for – I don't know how long, but maybe couple of months, well, there was a joke expressed, you know, that mainland troops coming to Hawaii on a boat, saw men guarding the piers and that Japan had already captured Oahu and it was kind of a joke, but, anyway, I guess there must have been confusion, so they said all Japanese boys will be deactivated, in other words, turn in your gun and we – this was the Hawaii Territorial Guard that we were in and they disbanded us, but others, you know, other nationalities continued to – continued to maintain their post and such, but we had to disband, but the other nationality was saying, eh, you guys luck, now you can do whatever you want, go work, you know, and make money, but the thing was we couldn't work in Pearl Harbor or Schofield so we couldn't make money and – well, we could go to UH<sup>5</sup> and finish up. So many of us, we went back and –

Q What did you do?

A Back to the college, went back for – I don't know, was it a semester or so and then there're talks of, well, because we – if we just don't do anything, we would – we wouldn't be able to show our true colors so the people got together and decided to petition the governor and the military governor and such authorities, tell them that we, Americans of Japanese ancestry, would like to serve in whatever capacity the military people find they can use us and so after awhile, they accepted us and we formed the Varsity Victory Volunteers<sup>6</sup>, so we quit school and then we was – we went to Schofield. It was a labor battalion, we had to do all kind of labor work like building roads, repairing roads.

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<sup>3</sup> Hawaiian word for crazy, insane, reckless.

<sup>4</sup> Neighborhood on the island of Oahu where the Territorial (now State) Hospital dedicated to the treatment of people with mental illnesses was located.

<sup>5</sup> University of Hawaii

<sup>6</sup> The VVV was formed on February 23, 1942 and was assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Q Now let's go back a little bit first. You didn't know that *jichan*<sup>7</sup> had been taken and interned?

A No, I didn't know because on December 7<sup>th</sup>, I left the house, I never went back till the – after – well, I went back after we got discharged from the Hawaii Territorial Guard<sup>8</sup>, but never – I heard at that time, I found out that *jichan* was interned and, of course, you know, in our position, we couldn't do anything and so that's, well, the reason why we had to somehow get in the service, show our true colors so our parents don't have to be treated as like that, see, enemy aliens.

So these (unintelligible) days we worked hard, we build shacks, whatnot, you know, we did a real good job and were commended. *Bumbye*<sup>9</sup> they felt that, oh, gee, we were – we can be trusted and such, so they decided in Washington that maybe they should form a military unit. First, of course – but those boys were drafted, they were in the service, but they didn't carry guns. At first they carried guns, but at the time when we were deactivated, their guns were taken away and they were stationed in Schofield doing – cutting grass and all that kind of stuff.

Q You mentioned something before about what happened when you folks were discharged from the ROTC, that you and your friends went up someplace –

A Yeah.

Q -- with pistols.

A Oh, yeah, well, we were armed and this was – we – the men were being discharged, but they didn't tell us that we would – well, we knew that we would go out, but since we had our weapons, we went up to this rifle range, it was up in Punchbowl someplace, and then we fired our pistols because we had a whole bunch of ammunition, practice, you know, and we had a good time.

Q So you used up all your ammunition –

A Yeah, used up –

Q -- just before you turned in your pistols?

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<sup>7</sup> Japanese word for grandfather.

<sup>8</sup> On January 19, 1942, 317 reservists with the Hawaii Territorial Guard, many members of the University's ROTC, are classified 4-C and discharged without explanation.

<sup>9</sup> Pidgin English, a local dialect used in Hawaii, meaning "by and by."

A Yeah, used up our ammunition. So now we were in the Triple V when the 100<sup>th</sup><sup>10</sup> – they said they’re going to form the 100<sup>th</sup>, those boys were gradually being ready to be shipped. At the time the Triple V was disbanded because they said they’re going to have – but turned out they want to have about 1500 volunteers.

Q When was this?

A This was about nineteen – was it the early part of 1943<sup>11</sup>, that’s when we got disbanded, and then the matter of volunteer came up so we went down to the local draft board and I volunteered, signed up, but before they could call me, I got a call from Shafter<sup>12</sup> saying that they want me to report there ‘cause they going give me my commission. So I got my commission and same time they – Ikeda and Kadowaki – well, Kadowaki, they were there too, and then we together got our commission and –

By then, see, the volunteers were being sent to Schofield and they told us we better report – we got to report down there, our order said report to Schofield and – into that unit. So we got there, by golly, it’s tent city, see all the tents and then they get – the trucks would come, see, with all the volunteers, okay, 200 men get off, okay, this is one company, next bunch, 200 come, next company, and I had Company 12, mine was numbered number 12, see, and boys came off and this fellow here, Shiro Amioka, he’s a university – he’s a pretty big shot, you know, he’s going to be honored. Well, he was in that group so I told, eh, Shiro, I want you to be acting first sergeant, he said, okay, and then I saw some guys that I knew in Triple V, this Chinen and *da kine*<sup>13</sup>, they used to be cooks, I said, okay, you go set up the kitchen and that’s the way it went.

Q How many men were in your company?

A 200. They just unload 200 men, say organize one, *da kine*, unit and teach ‘em, teach ‘em how to march and – because we’re going to be parading in downtown.

Q How much time did you have to train them?

A Not too much, I don’t know, maybe three, four weeks, but, you know, in that process, they got to get shots and whatnot, we cannot – and who you – you don’t have a cadre. You know, good thing I knew some guys with ROTC training, tell them go acting sergeant, platoon sergeant, take them marching so that they march together and turn, all that.

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<sup>10</sup> On May 26, 1942 the Hawaiian Provisional Infantry Battalion is established, to be made up of Americans of Japanese Ancestry from the Hawaii National Guard’s 298<sup>th</sup> and 299<sup>th</sup> Infantry and other units. These men had been drafted beginning in 1940 but also included men who had volunteered. When the battalion arrived in Oakland, California on June 12, 1942, it was officially designated the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion (Separate). The “Separate” status indicated that the battalion was not assigned to a parent unit.

<sup>11</sup> January 31, 1943 the Triple V is deactivated.

<sup>12</sup> Fort Shafter, home of senior Army headquarters.

<sup>13</sup> Pidgin English used in Hawaii as a placeholder, shorthand for information the listener may understand or fill in.

Well – so in (unintelligible) you know, I heard mommy was at the entry area so – I think somebody came and told me, but, gee, you know, I was so swamped with work and I had to make certain report to *da kine* and – and trying to get the kitchen set up and whatnot, that I didn't have a chance to see mommy.

Q Oh.

A So – well, we got on the train and the train took us to the OR and L depot in Honolulu.

Q When was this?

A This was – gee, I don't – sometime in June, I think.

Q 1943, June<sup>14</sup>?

A Yeah. And we – so we had – and then we had all our supplies with us, everyone carrying duffle bag and whatnot and was – from that to the – to where the Lurline was parked, mean the boat, was a long walk and we had to walk. That was a long, hard walk. Well, when we got on the boat, then I got to have – my unit assigned certain one to take care the – help in the kitchen, this and that, yeah. Oh, was – some people got sick, many got sick and then there are lot of – some pretty good. We got on the mainland –

Q That took maybe a week or so?

A Five days to get to San Francisco and – Oakland, I think, we disembarked and then we got on this train and all the curtains were drawn and so we couldn't see outside, but I sneaked and looked and we saw the back roads of United States, I guess, and we went all the way – took – we stopped at Wyoming, was it Cheyenne, and people there – when we stop, outside, people were nice, they gave us stuff, you know, back on the train, nothing but box lunch, you know, that's what we got on the train.

Finally got into Mississippi.

Q And all this way, the curtains were drawn?

A No, after awhile, it was opened, it was only in the West Coast, that area, you know, they – I guess they didn't want to see – people to see us and maybe they didn't want us to see out, I don't know, but the curtain was drawn. Maybe they didn't want people to see troop movement because we were a whole bunch of Orientals going and, you know, people might get scared.

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<sup>14</sup> On March 28, 1943, a farewell ceremony was held in Honolulu. By May the regiment was training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi so it probably left Hawaii in April.

Well, anyway we got to Mississippi and Mississippi was kind of cool and we were inside this kind wooden shack, the kind that we built in Triple Vs, wooden shacks, you know, and with screen and then this kind shutters that – with hinges and they had pot belly stove that we had to use. Nighttime was cool – cold.

And we go through the training process. I had my – I had one platoon and got to teach ‘em certain things.

Q What was the name of the fort you were at?

A Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Q So you were there the summer of 1943?

A Yeah, summer and then we had training there for awhile. Then they sent – after couple months they sent us, officers, to Fort Benning, Georgia, to the officers basic course to refresh – well, like the three of us, we had just finished school so we knew Garand rifle and tactics and whatnot, it’s all basic stuff that we learned, but there were many reserve officers that graduated in 1932, ’33, ’34, they only know the 1906 03 rifle, so – and they’re not familiar with the new weapons and such so they sent all of us to Fort Benning where we learned about the new weapons and the tactics and such.

And at that time three of us, after finishing the basic course, we graduated, we asked for permission to go to Washington and New York, and from Fort Benning, we took the train, went to Washington, went to New York, and that’s when we were – well, people looked at us, you know, wondering who we were ‘cause we were in American uniform, officer, but we’re Oriental looking so they stared at us, but – so one experience we had was at – at the Diamond Horseshoe, the entertainer and the master of ceremonies came around to talk to different people, some movie actresses and whatnot and they came to us and say who are you and so we told them. At that time people, they didn’t bother with us, you know, and stayed away, so the entertainer, in rhythm with the music, would mention the actresses and actors there and then came to us and said they’re three Japanese, but they’re American, they’re in the American uniform fighting for the USA. Oh, they told us, stand, stand, we got a big ovation. After that, the people that were kind of staring at us, oh, they came over, they want to offer us drinks, told us, well, when you come to certain place, drop in, we want you to visit our home, all kind, all kind of invitations, and here the other two, Betsui and Tsubaki, they were drinking, oh, they had a good time, but I couldn’t drink anything so I was drinking Coke.

Well, that’s – oh, we – after that, oh, people were nice. That was one experience I had at the Diamond Horseshoe.

Q But all the other places that you toured, that you visited, how were you treated?

A Oh, we were treated all right, treat us civilly and, in fact, when we first – when this – going back, when we first got to Camp Shelby, the commanding officer mentioned that, now, okay, men, use the white facilities, because we were really surprised when we went to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, it's a town right beside Camp Shelby and we found, oh, even the bus station, there's a white waiting room, white toilet, black toilet, and we said – we – and even in the bus, you know, there's the – the coloreds ride in the back, and one time, well, I wanted – me and Lieutenant Akamatsu, we wanted to go to Camp Livingston, Louisiana, on the weekend so Saturday we got on this bus at Hattiesburg and since we got to go a long distance, we figure, oh, might as well sit in the back so we don't get in the way. Well, the bus started moving, then the bus stopped all of a sudden, thought, eh, what happened, maybe somebody want to hang – get in. The bus driver, he came to us and said – he said he want us to sit down in front, he said the back is for the coloreds, oh, okay, so we sat down in front. Well, that's the way, you know, in the Mississippi that time, the coloreds, they were really discriminated, you know, and toilets and eating places too, we – Mississippi, we can go to the good place and sit down, the white waitresses serve us and, of course, we acted like gentlemen and, you know, we – so that's the way it was and –

Q Tell me, what did training your platoon consist of?

A Well, we had rifle marksmanship, we had field training, how to search for the enemy and looking at the terrain and – it's called cover and concealment, in other words, you try to locate in the foreground what places would offer you the maximum cover and concealment from the enemy, things like that, and then map reading, how to read the map and how to orient yourself on the ground and the firing of the weapons and – those were the basic things, and marching, 'cause we had parades to go to, you know, we had to march.

Q Did you have to do some kind of running?

A Oh, well, there are physical – oh, yeah, that was – well, we had physical training, calisthenics, then – see, the – we were attached to the – some division and the division commander says he wants all the men to run and walk four miles in 50 minutes, four miles in 50 minutes with pack on. So – well, we started out – (unintelligible) my platoon – see, it was marked, certain spot and two miles, that's where we going, then going to come back so I had to go in front and one minute we run and four minutes we do a fast walk and that way, or was it four minutes we run and one minute we walk, something like that.

Now, it was real tiring, you know, because we had our pack on and, you know, and the thing was the order was make sure your men don't straggle, in other words, don't fall back, (unintelligible) I'm ready to go, I just – and, you know, these people, they're tired and they're not conditioned to that and a few of them would start falling back, so I got to go back, tell them, eh, let's hurry up, hurry up, push 'em up and I run, catch up with the (unintelligible) group, and then, you know, go like that.

Q What about your sergeant, what was he doing?

A He was also (unintelligible) trying to get them to move forward, but you see I'm responsible so I got to see that – if they don't do it, I got to see that it's done and when we come back to the company, (unintelligible) we were perspiring, tiring and we just like to just sit down and, you know – so pooped out.

Q Gee, how much did your pack weigh?

A Oh, well, not too much, maybe about seven, eight pounds at least, not much.

Q So not – were you carrying a rifle too?

A Yeah, carrying a rifle.

Q How much does that weigh?

A Maybe couple of pounds, not much, but the thing was when I had to go run forward and then run back, oh, that was – I can't forget that, was – and you know, I was skinny that time, and mess hall, we go, officers' mess and, gee, sometime the food was good, sometimes, well, look at the food, you, know, no like eat already.

Q Like what?

A (Unintelligible) I was skinny. Well, it just – well, the pork chop was cold and greasy kind, don't feel like eat. Well, so those – one of the trials, you know, you have.

Q Now, there's – sometime during that period, you went to visit *jichan*?

A Yeah, I told you I was going to Camp Livingston, Louisiana, and we finally got to –

Q When was this?

A This – I forgot when, but during a break, a long weekend, anyway, we went to Camp Livingston. It was – well, kind of long ride, finally we got to – well, actually we got to – now, I forgot the big town that's near Camp Livingston, but from there, we got a taxi and went to Camp Livingston.

Q This was with Lieutenant Akamatsu?

A Yeah, and we got there. He went to see his relative and I went and – where *jichan* is. Well, it's all barbed wire, you know, and high fence and barbed wire and (unintelligible) gate, oh, they salute me and all that, (unintelligible) there's a visiting room that they had and they told



me if I could wait there and they brought *jichan*. He was weak and very – hard time walking so I told him, gee, I wish I can do something to get him out, see, so I told him I'm going to write to the Justice Department to see that – if I can do something. Well, he was (unintelligible) we were going back from Camp Livingston, back to this town, and in – you know, I – somehow I couldn't help it but tears came out you know, talk about my father, that I just couldn't help and I had to do something, so as soon as I got back to Shelby, I wrote this letter to the Justice Department and I think soon thereafter he was sent to Amache<sup>15</sup>. Well, before – no, from Livingston he was sent to Amache.

Q Missoula –

A No, no, not Missoula, Missoula, Montana, that's right, Missoula, that's an internment camp, see.

Q That was June 1943 he was –

A Yeah, okay.

Q -- moved from Camp Livingston to –

A To, yeah –

Q -- Missoula, Montana?

A Yeah, that was before my letter had – and while he was in Missoula, Montana, then my letter must have reached the Justice Department and so they decided to release him to Jerome Relocation Camp<sup>16</sup>.

Q And that was in 1944, January 24<sup>th</sup>, he was paroled from Montana?

A Was that nineteen –

Q And then January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Jerome location?

A Yeah, well, he was – let's see. Well, I didn't know he was released, you know, actually, but – so – oh, yeah, well, see, the group that – see, the 100<sup>th</sup> had lost so much men at Cassino and all that, that they were asking for – to send all – as many officers as we had in the 442<sup>nd</sup>, probably was about 20 officers and about 300 men.

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<sup>15</sup> Amache Internment Camp was located in southeast Colorado.

<sup>16</sup> Jerome Relocation Camp was located in southeast Arkansas.

Well, we were shipped from Camp Shelby to Fort Meade, Maryland, waiting for our boat to take us to Europe. Well, during that time, I – well, I found out that *jichan* was in Jerome so – Arkansas, so I asked for leave and took a train into St. Louis and all the way to Arkansas to see *jichan*. Oh, he was happy, he was real happy.

Q He was happy to see you?

A Yeah, and happy that he was released from the internment camp because I don't know whether he, after that, he went to New York with some friends or whether before, I'm not sure, but, anyway, he was real happy to be in the relocation camp. I saw him and he introduced me to some of the camp leaders, you know, in Jerome, his section, so I said goodbye and went back to Fort Meade, Maryland, to join the unit and then we went to someplace in – was it Virginia – Newport News, Virginia, and got on the ship and we headed for Europe and was a Navy ship and the sea was rough and I remember Lieutenant Chinen, he's a judge now, I think, he was sitting at this dining table and the boat rocked and, boy, he went all the way (unintelligible) down on the floor, the dining table, you know, oh, was that rough and the plates used to move, you know, but, fortunately, I didn't get seasick. I really ate well and they really fed us well.

Q This was a Navy ship?

A Navy ship, Navy transport, and we had convoy, you can see destroyers, whatnot, it was a convoy, whole bunch of troop ships going and they make zigzag pattern and all that and – so –

Q Can you say what the date was that you left for Europe?

A No, I cannot remember. Probably – if I had looked it up, maybe I can find the information, but, offhand, I don't know. We landed at Casablanca and that – from the ocean, when you look at Casablanca from a distance, it looked like a white castle, like a long castle, you know, and looks real picturesque, but as you approach the place, then you see how dirty it is and with the – in the harbor, the ships sunk and, oh, was a mess and then the dirty Arabs, kids running all over the place and smelly and all that.

So we got into Casablanca, (unintelligible) forty and eight is a train that carry 40 people or eight horses, you know, eight mules, and now it was – it smelled like the mules had occupied the train, but we had to get in the box cars and then when we filled up the box cars, then we started for Oran. It took about two days to get to Oran, passed by a lot of picturesque countryside, date trees and whatnot and finally we got into Oran and went up to Lion Mountain camp.

Q Lion Mountain?

A Lion Mountain.

Q Oh, Lion Mountain?

A It was in the hills and was cold, it was high elevation so was cold but we were able to take a warm shower and that really was something that we wanted, that was the – and the food was good, and we stayed there maybe three, four days till, I guess, the boat got ready, then we got on another Navy transport and – this was an English – it was an English Navy transport. In there, the – they treat the non-coms real well, you know, and with respect and they got a special place from the rest of the privates.

Well, the food was good and after –

Q Was that where the officers got preferential treatment?

A Oh, yeah, we get real good – the officers (unintelligible) the privates get the crumbs. So we got on that ship and –

Q This was at what port?

A Port of Oran and we headed for Naples, Italy. Naples was bombed, the ships were pretty much – lots of ships in the harbor were sunk so they were in all kind different positions and so we finally got to a pier, got off and –

Q How many men were on the ship you were on?

A There were quite a few, but our men, we had 300 men plus about 15 officers, it's that replacement group going to the 100<sup>th</sup>, and the truck took us to countryside and finally we got into Benevento and (unintelligible) on the outskirts of the unit so we joined the unit. They assigned me to Baker Company, Second Platoon, with Captain Takahashi<sup>17</sup> as the company commander.

Q Can you give a rough date for that?

A Gee, I don't know what date.

Q Summer of 1944?

A Well, I guess so, something like that<sup>18</sup>, but, anyway, was kind of cold and we -- so we joined – we had little training there and then they said that we were going to move and we got

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<sup>17</sup> Sakae Takashashi

<sup>18</sup> The publication "Remembrances" that was published in 1992 by the 100<sup>th</sup> veterans' organization in Honolulu, Hawaii for the battalion's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, states the following on page 119: "When the battalion moved to San Giorgio near Benevento on March 10, it was joined by the first replacements of 10 officers and 151 men from the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team from Camp Shelby. Thus reinforced, the 100<sup>th</sup> headed for a new assignment at Anzio.

back to Naples on a ship and went to Anzio, – already the beachhead was established and when we got into Anzio, port of Anzio, I think it's over – well, it doesn't – oh, Anzio down here. See, Cassino is here, the unit<sup>19</sup> were having trouble there so they wanted diversionary attack in the Anzio and so we – Anzio was a nice place.

Well, the town was wrecked, you know, and we had (unintelligible) road and it was kind of a rural community where the canal had extended out – that side of the canal was the Germans and this side of the canal was Americans, big canal, and then they had roads, you know, and then they had farmhouses. We occupied – my platoon occupied – see, my – platoon, there's three squads, with a squad leader each so –

Q How big is each squad?

A Well, there're 12 men, okay, so assigned them to the different houses and because Anzio was flat ground, canal there, this tall mountain the Germans had occupied and if we moved during the daytime, oh, we get shelled.

Q You mean even if you step outside?

A Oh, yeah, they can see from up on the mountain, they shell. And that's what happened because some boys, because the cattle are roaming around, there's just a few of them, they decided they want to shoot 'em and have some steak or something. So they went out and when they did that, the Germans saw them and then pretty soon, oh, artillery shell drop (unintelligible). That night we went over there to pick up the body and had – the jeep transported back Oshiro<sup>20</sup>. So I lost one man there.

Q He's one of those that went up to get the cow?

A Yeah. He was out there so when the shell landed, he got caught. We joined the 100<sup>th</sup> about March 26, 1944 in Italy.

Q And you were the first replacements?

A And we were the first replacements to join the 100<sup>th</sup>. Okay? Well, while in Anzio, 'cause we never was really – we were shelled a lot of times and we got the 88, the German 88 shell come pretty close to us, but really we didn't actually go into combat where some of our men get killed and all that so – but we were thinking, oh, what – what combat really going to be like and , well, we dread the day, I guess.

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<sup>19</sup> Before these replacements arrived, the 100<sup>th</sup> had been pulled back into a regimental reserve position and then moved to a rest camp. By this time, the 100<sup>th</sup> had suffered severe casualties, leaving only about 40% of the battalion available for combat.

<sup>20</sup> Yeishin Oshiro.

Q Did you know what your next battle was going to be?

A No, we didn't know, as we didn't know when it was going to happen and we just was marking time only, forming the defense perimeter in Anzio, going out on patrol at night and such, those are just the defense, so that's what – that was it, we didn't – when the breakthrough would come through, we know it was going to be rough, but we didn't know where we were going to – headed for or what's going to happen.

(END OF CD 1)

A Well, Anzio, there were about three divisions that actually attacked, made an invasion of Anzio and they had at first met very little resistance so they advanced too fast and spread out their perimeter whereby they were spread out so then, that when the German counterattack, oh, there were a lot of casualties on the part – American side because they were weak and so the Americans had to establish a defense perimeter around the Mussolini Canal at Anzio and, of course, when we arrived there, Anzio – we could see the terrific number of casualties that were inflicted by the Germans.

Q How could you see them?

A Well, we could tell by the crosses in the grave as we passed, this huge American grave that was established near the beachhead and –

Q It was all covering the beach?

A No, it was, well, away from the beach, but covered a pretty large area, the white crosses, so we realized that there was quite a bit of casualty when the German counterattacked. Anzio was a flat area and maybe about ten miles away, high mountains, the Germans were able to observe us so -- Anzio was a farming area and the farmhouses were established every hundred feet or so and during the daytime, we got to sit down and at night we were able to engage in communicating with the company headquarters and the members of our different squads in getting the mail and doing things like that, and one day the boys, they see the – there were no Italians there, just the field and – well, nothing planted and the cattle roamed there and the boys thought, gee, would be nice to have some meat and they fired on some cattle and they went out to – during the daytime to get the meat. Well, the Germans on the hill observed that and shelled that house and we got one casualty, one person died on account of –

Q Do you know his name?

A His name, Oshiro. And, of course, we cautioned them not to do that, but because it's so quiet and peaceful during the daytime, they're tempted to go out and that was bad. At night there are a lot of patrolling going out into the – the area to see what the Germans are doing, patrolling,

communicating with our squad and at night we – that's what we did at night. So daytime we slept, nighttime we moved around.

So when the time came the – well, the reinforcements of units from tanks to all kinds of armored vehicles, all types of trucks and whatnot, it was unloaded and it was stationed right in Anzio and when the right time came, the tanks and whatnot advanced and the different units moved forward and that's when we – we were kept in defense on one side and they moved toward Casserta, town of Casserta and there were quite a few American casualties.

Q What about the incident where the tanks refused to advance, when did that happen?

A Oh, that was afterwards. That was when we – the next phase, as we moved up forward, the American units were stopped and so we were – we came up, up to the front line and one morning we had to advance and move up the flat area. Just about 300 yards away was a farmhouse and we can hear machine gun firing from there and – several machine guns were firing and we just weren't able to move (unintelligible) and German 88 tank shell fly toward us, so – well, when the machine gun was firing, we couldn't move and our artillery unit wasn't nearby so we had the – our unit commander asked for tank support and we could hear the tanks making big noise in the back, quite a distance in the back. Some came up close to our place, but they wouldn't advance beyond and try to knock out the – the machine gun and so when they came up close to us, oh, they fired the 88 shell, German 88 and they would – some of them would start burning and cause the explosion of the ammunition inside and they pulled – the tankers pulled back so – well, fortunately, that night the Germans had pulled back to another high point further back and so were able to advance. Early the following morning we advanced and we didn't meet any resistance.

Q And was that – was that the time when you told mom you didn't think you were going to live?

A Yeah, because we were under heavy fire and seems like the – well, I guess with all the shells falling, people dying, that seems like a – it's a miracle that we came out all right.

Q Well, that particular instance when the tanks refused to advance, was that when the – your captain was ordered to have you men advance?

A Well, he was told that we should advance, but he knew that it would be suicidal and we just weren't able to advance and, of course, the tanks wouldn't advance so, in the meantime, well, we – we were waiting for orders from our company commander and he was in contact with the battalion (unintelligible) battalion (unintelligible) division and they were trying to get the – I guess the artillery to get into position so they could – artillery could fire and knock out the machine gun nest. Well, in doing – it took – we were on the flat ground just – we had to stay in down on the ground, we couldn't move 'cause Germans can see us if we move, so we just lay flat on the ground and waited till sundown and (unintelligible) crawled and see how our men

were and such, but fortunately, the Germans pulled back 'cause they knew we were going to advance at night or early morning so they didn't want to be caught so they pulled back to another high position and wait for us, that's what their tactic – it was just a delay action, they knew we were going to advance.

So that's what happened and we advanced and while we were going to this place and we had – next morning we advanced real fast and some of our unit had advanced so fast, that there was a – see, now, finally the artillery caught up with us and this Piper Cub that was flying above us saw troops way in front, thought it was German troops, I guess, and our own artillery fired on them and, oh, as we advanced (unintelligible) position, we saw lots of boys killed.

Q You mean they were from the 100<sup>th</sup>?

A Some were, yeah, some were 100<sup>th</sup>. They were right beside a road, they were – I guess they were just staying, you know (unintelligible) and artillery fired and –

Q You mean they were trying to get some kind of protection from the artillery?

A Well, they weren't getting – in fact, we didn't need the artillery at that point because that was our own troop, but that Piper Cub didn't know that some of our boys were up there already. They advance early and they want to try to advance as fast as possible because the flat area, get up into the higher area so that, you know, you don't get seen by the German 88 shells, but Piper Cub had called for artillery fire and caused some casualties.

So – and then we advanced that night and we captured our objective the next day.

Q What was that?

A It was a farmhouse where supposed to be some Germans there and when we got there, there was nobody there, but that was our objective, our company's objective. So that night we rested -- after we got there that night, we rested for about three hours, then we got orders that we got to move so we didn't have chance to eat our C-ration and then we started to go toward this town of Genzano<sup>21</sup>, 'cause the bridge, big, long bridge was broken so we had to go down and then cross the stream and go up again to get up to the road (unintelligible) level top of the bridge.

Q You mean the bridge had been blown up?

A Yeah, Germans had blown the bridge so that would slow down our armored units from getting there so we had to – we went across the other side. We met some firing from (unintelligible) that slowed us down, then some of the boys fired and then somehow the firing

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<sup>21</sup> A town about 18 miles from Rome.

stopped, we advanced, kept going and there was some – well, the horse on the road, dead horse and all kind animals dead in this town, ‘cause the town, the glasses, window glass was broken.

Q The town was deserted?

A Deserted. Well, maybe there were – they were down in the basement maybe because we didn’t have – we didn’t have – we weren’t – they told us we just go through the town and continue on so some people in the rear would check to see (unintelligible). We just advanced as fast as possible, moving, moving, moving. Then, finally, oh, I was on the – there was this artillery unit, I mean anti – this personnel, they have this kind armored unit passed us, went forward and then, all of a sudden, stopped, so the infantry unit – another company of our unit went forward and then at the farmhouse, there was this resistance, firing by antitank weapons and whatnot Germans had, so our men went over there and knocked those out. Then the – by then we had caught up and we thought, gee, now our chance to go into Rome and we were going, then, oh, the armored units, they passed us and they make a lot of dust, went on to Rome, so we were kind of mad because –

Q You did all the dirty work?

A Yeah, and they got the glory of going into Rome and whatnot. Well, anyway, we had to camp. We had taken over some houses on the outskirts of Rome and slept at night. We had rations finally, and following day we got on our – the 100<sup>th</sup> trucks caught up with us and we got on the trucks, we went through Rome and we got to assembly area and there we waited for the 442<sup>nd</sup> to catch up with us. They joined us at – I think was Civitavecchia, that town. Yeah, that town has – I believe the 442<sup>nd</sup> joined us and then – then we advanced from then on.

Q That means you went all the way back out to the sea from Rome?

A Well – yeah, well, the road goes along there and then it travels, you know, along that sea area. So –

Q Well, what about between Rome and Civitavecchia?

A Well, there was no resistance, the Germans had pulled back to the Arno River, so you see from Anzio, this is Anzio, then we go – just about that time, the two officers from the battalion and then some enlisted men were given leave to go to Rome for a pass for – I think was about three, four days of pass so we got on a jeep and we went to Rome. Now, during that time the unit had engaged the enemy at Belvedere where the – they were able to capture some – they destroyed lots of trucks, jeeps and whatnot. I wasn’t there. When I came back, they told me about it, but they had a motorcycle with them and at that time I rode the motorcycle.

Q So Belvedere was when they captured the German motor pool?



A Yeah, that's right.

Q So when you got back, you got to try out one of the captured vehicles?

A Right. Now –

Q How long did they have the captured vehicles?

A Oh, just a couple of days.

Q Then what happened?

A Then the unit went to the Cecina River and then we were at Cecina – let's see, the Arno is there. Well, Cecina, we advanced and – oh, over here is where the – we met some resistance from the enemy and German 88 fired directly at us and was real difficult going up. That's when that – what was that fellow's name that mommy said that –

Q Is it Tamura?

A Yeah, was it Tamura? Yeah, I think so, he was in my platoon, he got hurt and at this time there were heavy shelling going on and somebody says that – I was going in the front and somebody says, oh, that Paul Tamura got hit so I went back and found him. They was – he was saying something about he got hit around his throat and I couldn't tell, but I told him to go back to the aid station and so he called and went back. I had to take care the platoon so I had to go forward and, of course, we saw quite a few of our boys hit and one in particular, oh, had his whole stomach shot out by this shell, was real terrible.

Anyway, so we finished at that point and kept on going and went up the hill and at this time Pastina is where we were moving – we were up in a high area and, oh, the Germans were firing at us and I thought I felt something hit my trousers, but I didn't think anything hit me, I didn't feel any pain, so from that position, that night we pulled back about a mile or so and rested and next morning, oh, my foot hurt –

Q Your leg or your foot?

A Yeah, my leg hurt and then I couldn't – my trousers wouldn't come off because my leg was swollen and as I tried to look at it, you know, looks like had a sore spot so I went to the battalion aid station and they looked at it and they tried to open it and to see what's inside. Oh, it hurt so he said you better go to the – the field hospital so I – they took me in the ambulance to the field hospital and there they knocked me out and then took the bullet out from right in back of my shinbone. After that, sewed the thing up and then sent me to general hospital in Rome, stayed there for about three weeks or so.

Q Three weeks?

A Yeah, got a Purple Heart.

Well, at Anzio we noticed at night they were firing weapons from our side and from the German side. You can always tell the difference between the Germans and Americans. The German, their firing rate was real fast while the American was real slow and then the German went so fast and then – and they fire quite a lot of ammunition like that, so the Germans had real good weapons, the pistols were good and lighter than Americans' and were more accurate and –

Q You said you folks used to keep their weapons and use them?

A Yeah, well, the boys kept souvenirs, weapons, but the reason why I didn't get any is that any time you have anything extra, that's weight and when you're moving – actually in my pack, tell you what I had, this is a combat pack. I had, first of all, for a blanket, I had a shelter half, it's a half of a shelter and a tent, which is maybe about six feet long and about three feet wide so when I lied down, I can just put that over me. No blanket. Was cold – well, I didn't have any blanket. I had that to cover me and I had one toothbrush, my toilet article was one toothbrush, no paste and a razor, small piece of soap and a towel that was just like a washcloth size. That's all I had.

The reason why – and then, of course, every day we get food to carry, the rations, you know, yourself, you got to carry, and that's all – and my weapon and my extra ammunition always with me, but that's all we carried because, you know, if you carry – if you get another weapon, oh, that's extra weight and just couldn't afford to – because you have to move around, you know, I have to go in the front, go in the back to check on the men and, you know, that's all – if you got that weight on you, you can't move and then, you know, got to go down when you hear the artillery shell coming in. You know, it's – only thing – we used to – at first, oh, any time I hear the artillery shell, we used to hit the ground, but after a while, if we hear the artillery shell, well, we weren't – we can sense where it's going to hit and then we didn't go down. The worst kind are the mortar shells and the mortar shells, when you hear it, it's too late 'cause it's coming down and it's – so in that sense, after awhile you get kind of familiar with artillery shells, say, oh, there goes another one, oh, there goes another one and it's –

Q You have any close calls?

A Yeah, there were some – few that fall pretty close, but I guess it didn't have my name on it so was all right, but –

Q You said there was one officer who always dug a foxhole?

A Yeah, this Lieutenant Moran<sup>22</sup>, back in Lanuvio, he – oh, he was one of those that did things according to the book where if he was supposed to dig a foxhole, he would dig a foxhole, which is about 18 inches by the length of your body, you know, and you go down about this far, at least you're protected. Well, at this initial stage, he was down in the foxhole because there was lot of firing so – and, well, I didn't have no foxhole, I was just lying on the side of this hill, you know, just – and I was too tired to dig one so – well, the artillery shell landed right inside, the German artillery shell, killed him, was too bad, see, so I – if your name is on it, even if you dig a *puka*<sup>23</sup>, well, that's – you get jam up, see. So that was – those are chances, you know.

Q When you were – you were in the Rome hospital for three weeks?

A Yeah, and then – then they discharged me, sent me up to replacement depo and – by truck and then at the replacement depo, they supposed to take me up to where the 100<sup>th</sup> is, but they don't have the transportation at that time so they – they said – there were replacements coming in, see, from the states, said can you talk to the – to them about combat to prepare them mentally so – well, I talked to them about the buddy system of, you know, you have another person who you can rely on right beside you in case you're hurt. Well, anyway, you try work together, you know, and so, oh, they were kind of impressed and they asked all kind of question about combat, how it is and all that. So I gave them some B.S., you know, just – because it's hard for them because they, unless you go through it, you know, they can't realize what it is. It's hell no matter what it is when you get fired on so you cannot describe, you know.

Anyway, so we advanced after I came back. I joined them at the Arno River and this place, we can see the Leaning Tower of Pisa (unintelligible) if I'm over here, you can see the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Q How many miles away were you?

A Oh, must have been about five, six miles, I think, maybe more. Well, our unit was – gee, the English people, English unit was there and they were just pulling out and we were replacing them, see, and there are lot of houses there and, oh, the English people, oh, the *pilau*<sup>24</sup> guys, you know, they – they took a lot of the clothing and whatnot, which – because of the Italians. Well, the Italians, apparently they fled, see, when the fighting came close. They didn't take anything. In fact, we look in the closet, oh, the linens piled neatly, towels, all kind and look in the closet, some of the clothes were gone 'cause one whole closet empty. Well, the English people, we saw them loading up in boxes as we replaced them.

Q You mean they were taking the things they had found in the farmhouses?

A Yeah.

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<sup>22</sup> Edward V. Moran

<sup>23</sup> Hawaiian word for hole.

<sup>24</sup> Rotten, spoiled. In this case, it refers to rude, inconsiderate behavior.

Q But you said they were *pilau*?

A Well, you know, you – it don't belong to them and, well, for the poor Italians. We didn't want to be accused later on that we had done it so we reported it to our commander, that we saw them taking so that we won't be later accused. Well, I don't know what happened to them, but, anyway, over here we had to run patrols across this river and in the patrol, the Suwa<sup>25</sup> boy got killed by a sniper at night, somebody got shot and got killed.

Q Is that Sharon Suwa's relative?

A Yeah, Sharon's uncle, I think, he got killed, yeah. And then – then we were up in here, but we didn't get to Pisa, then they said, oh, we're going go to France so they – we went all the way back to Naples, which is way down here.

Q You backtracked all the way –

A By truck, yeah, to go – because Naples is a port city, see, that's where the ships going to take us to – let's see, this southern France. Mark Clark<sup>26</sup> and then there was – I don't recall whether this was Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson or some guy from Washington came to review the troops and I remember being there and then Mark Clark was telling the Under Secretary that these are my best troops. I heard that, right in front of me. So that was one of the incidents we had to – some dignitary from Washington come, we got to form an honor guard.

Oh, no, this is before that. Right after Civitavecchia<sup>27</sup>.

Q Okay, what happened?

A Well, we were up on high ground and we were supposed to wait till – and let the 442<sup>nd</sup> Second and Third Battalions move up their section up to a certain point and then we would move and when we were watching them, they were all running all directions it seems being fired on with artillery shell and was kind of disorganized move. Of course, that's a result where none of them – the first – well, that's the first time in combat and they were confused as to what to do, even the officers I think were confused and it was kind of a pitiful situation.

Q It took a lot of casualties there?

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<sup>25</sup> Nobuyuki Suwa

<sup>26</sup> General Clark, commander of the Fifth Army.

<sup>27</sup> Belvedere and Sasseta were captured on June 26 – 27, 1944 with the 100<sup>th</sup>'s Company B leading the attack. General Clark recommended the Presidential Unit Citation be awarded to the 100<sup>th</sup>. He also ordered that the unit be represented at a review honoring Secretary of War Henry Stimson on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Captain Sakae Takashashi and his Company B were selected to serve as the honor guard. It was Major General Charles Ryder, commander of the 34<sup>th</sup> Division who said to the Secretary that the 100<sup>th</sup> was his best outfit. In an August 1944 ceremony, General Clark and Under Secretary of War Patterson presented the Presidential Unit Citation streamer to the 100<sup>th</sup>.

A Well, I imagine so. Of course, I don't know, but – I didn't talk to them, but I imagine they must have.

Well, the units, after crossing the Arno River, the unit was ordered to go back to –

Q Naples?

A -- Naples and from – so we got to Naples and we got ready, get everything ready and we got on a ship, American ship and went to Marseilles, France, southern France and after – the port of Marseilles was all – we found a lot of ships sunk partly at the pier and we had to get to – get off the ship by using a rope ladder to get down and get on to the pier so – and we were – we got on trucks and went to this town of Aix, A-I-X, and there we camped and was raining, raining, raining, and this was a French vineyard and it was muddy.

Q What time of year was that?

A Was kind of a cold time<sup>28</sup>, I don't know exactly what, but it was cold and I remember sleeping on the ground and then, all of a sudden, I can feel pain in my back and I thought, gee, that's funny, but next morning we got the boys back on the truck and then the truck went about 20 miles up to

Epinal, the town of Epinal and there they unloaded us, oh, and that night, oh, had fever and didn't feel good so went to the battalion aid station and they said, oh, you got (unintelligible) you better go to the hospital so got on the ambulance and went to the hospital and then they said that you got some fluid in the lung or pleurisy so that's when – from then on, of course, I was in the hospital and in the hospital in – way up there, then came down to Marseilles. That's when I met some fellow officers of the 100<sup>th</sup> who were there on account of they had – in this forest that they went, when the Germans fired their artillery shell, the shells hit the tree and they were sprayed with artillery – these shrapnels and was all over their back and they were in the hospital and I met them, they said that that's one of the things that they met, the Germans firing into the trees causing tree bursts and even if you're flat down, you know, it rained down, artillery shell, and they all got hit.

Q That was during the Rescue of the Lost Battalion?

A No, this was before that, that was before that and, of course, I was in the hospital and gradually I felt better, temperature got better, got back to – close to normal and they said, oh, well, they going send me back to the States. Well, I wasn't going to argue with them. Well, after that, you know, had the Lost Battalion and Bruyeres. This time they really – see, the ground is all soggy and this was wet country, you know, and – you know, you got to sleep, you sleep on this

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<sup>28</sup> About the beginning of October.

kind of ground and then, you know, you – it really was – it was terrible so – so I came back to the States, that's what happened to me.

Q That's – is that when you went to some hospital in New Mexico?

A Yeah, hospital, general hospital, Bruns General Hospital in Santa Fe, New Mexico where – and then when I got there, *jichan* was in Amache Relocation Camp and we communicated with each other. He came to Santa Fe and then I got a pass and we went to a chop suey place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and talked and he was happy to see me, happy that I came back in one piece, not in a pine box, and so I saw him get on the bus and then I came back on another bus back to the hospital. Then we were shipped – I was shipped to Seattle to some – one station hospital in Seattle ready to (unintelligible) to go back to Hawaii.

Q Was that when the war was still on?

A The war – no, I think the war was over, I think, the war with Japan was over already so – well, when I got to Seattle, I found out that *jichan* was in the Seattle immigration station where all the internees were kept so I talked to him and again we had a meal together. We went to a Japanese town there and had a meal together, he was happy. Then we got back – I didn't realize we were going to go back on the same ship, but we were on the same ship.

Q Tell how you found him.

A Well, actually as I was on the ship, you know, waiting for the others to come on, then the internees start marching and *jichan* was the first one at the head of the (unintelligible) he was coming toward the ship, recognized him and – so after he got into (unintelligible), I went to see him. See, they had us set up where they had some GIs just standing guard certain part of the boat so the internees cannot roam around, all around and our section especially had – they posted a guard and none of the enlisted men can come to our section and – well, I felt I want *jichan* to use our toilet, use whatever he want (unintelligible) told him to come over and he came. He used the toilet, wash himself, take a bath, all kind.

Q You mean they didn't have that kind of facilities where he was?

A Well, they had, but, you know, it's – they're in the so-called third class maybe where it's a toilet, but, you, lot of toilet all together. Ours, we have a cabin, we have a –

Q Private?

A Yeah.

Q Private bath?

A Private bath and nicely fixed up so at least thought, well, let *jichan* –

Q What was the name of the ship?

A Oh, I forgot. If I look through – gee, I don't know whether we took pictures, but, anyway, so we came back that way. So that's the end of the story.

Q Well, was anyone waiting for you at the pier? You remember that?

A Gee, I don't – (laughs) sad sack!

Q Did they -- ?

A (Unintelligible)

Q Didn't they have a party for you when you got back or something?

A Party?

Q Yeah, welcome home or something.

A That was in the hospital, when I went to Schofield station hospital and –

Q You still had to be in the hospital?

A Yeah, 'cause pleurisy and they had to, you know, they had to check me up before discharge. Well, they said, well, they going to retire me from the service. Oh, well, I'm not going to argue again 'cause by being retired at that time you get monthly \$157.50 so I wasn't -- so, oh, I was shifted to Shafter and then there to get to a retiring board. See, a doctor has to come and interview you and get the lowdown. And he asked me what outfit. So I told him I was with the 100<sup>th</sup> and, oh, he was impressed and told him, well, poor food and whatnot and I got sick. Yeah, well. The only thing he did was he kept praising us.

C-ration, which consist of three cans of – well, one is supposed to be – supposed to have powdered coffee and sugar and powdered cream and some cookies inside (unintelligible). They had these congealed meat, looks like cold so it's – if you heat it up, then probably would taste good, but – pork and beans in another can. Well, you know, in the first place the food is not appetizing, it was cold and some of the boys carried a little, small stove, but I didn't have a stove so, well, I opened some of the cans, looked at the food and just don't feel like eating and – because the thing is, you know, you're thinking about, well, the conditions weren't really more pleasant because you're tense and you're thinking, oh, well, tomorrow what's up and check on your men and – well, you just don't have any appetite, you know. Even I think under those situations where, in your mind, you don't think about death, but there's something that – you

know, it's there and you feel, well, I wonder what it's going to be like tomorrow and you start thinking. You cannot develop any appetite. So the only time that I really ate was when the company kitchen caught up with us and then they cooked hot food for us.

Q That wasn't very often, was it?

A Oh, was good if it was once a month.

Q Once a month?

A Yeah. And they also issued beer to the men and to the officers, they gave a quart of whiskey. Of course, that – I didn't drink so somebody else got it, but, anyway, it's just that you don't feel like eating, and they also had K-ration which was chocolate.

END OF CD 2

Q Okay, you were saying that you had K-rations which were chocolate?

A Yeah, the chocolate and that helps to – taking that is all that sometimes I needed, just chew on a chocolate, and that's all the food that I wanted so – and I guess – 'cause didn't help you, you know – well, for one thing, didn't have appetite so that was sufficient to keep you going.

Q Well, I guess this is all contributing to your ill health or to making you subject to getting sick.

A Yeah, well, I guess so, I suppose so, but that's the way it is, you know. You cannot relax because it's not like you're going on a picnic, you got – every day is – well, you wonder, I wonder if – well, we don't think, you know, whether – consciously, but subconsciously, I guess, we must be thinking, gee, why do – and many a night, you know, I used to think, eh, how come I have to shoot a German across there and he's probably thinking the same thing. Why can't – you know, when there's peach, you know, because either I going to shoot him or he going shoot me and one of us got to go. Well, what's the sense, but I know when you start rationalizing, well, that's what it is, but the time come the (unintelligible), okay, I got to go to the company, find out what the lowdown is and tell my men – sergeant to wake the guys up, got to move. Well, I can hear the grumbling, the men tired, eh, we never eat yet, I like take a crap, all kind stuff, you know, they're saying, but, okay, ten minutes we got to go. And, you know, we all had – we don't take off our clothes.

Q So you had to stay in the same clothes day after day?

A Yeah, shoes, shoes, everything on, all you do is just throw the – throw the shelter half over us and sleep on the ground.



Q I guess you folks must have wanted to take showers.

A Oh, yeah, we want to get cleaned up, but every couple months, we get chance to take a shower.

Q Every couple of months?

A Yeah. Well –

Q So for two months you had to go without taking a bath or changing your clothes?

A Yeah, well, you know, you don't feel anything. Same clothes.

Q There's more important things to worry about than your clothes?

A Yeah, the – it's woolen, that kind shirt, pant and – well, I don't have any change of underwear with me, anyway, so went – they have what you call quartermaster shower unit that comes and when – every two months or so, they meet us (unintelligible) clothes and then we able to get shower, wash ourself. Yeah, at that time, all of a sudden, I feel – I would come out, I feel cold, all that sweat and dirt is all wash off and pores become clean. I felt cold, after they gave me these warm clothes, I felt cold, but actually you don't think about taking a bath and many a time we don't even brush teeth and just don't shave. When – get couple days' rest, then we go by the – there's a stream, get some water and then just – get soap and shave. That's the way – that's why you see the – in this kind pictures, guys, lots of beards, whatnot.

Q I haven't noticed.

A “Cause they – you don't have time to do that, you just have to think of – every chance you get, either sleeping or you're eating and – because they don't give you much chance to rest, keep on going, going, going until – so it's a rough – it's a rough life. So –

Q You got back to Hawaii and they offered you retirement because of the pleurisy?

A Yeah, TB, pleurisy, you know.

Q You had T – I mean they diagnosed –

A Yeah.

Q -- you as having TB then, too?

A Yeah, so – so at that time they didn't have any – the medication that – subsequently they developed like streptomycin and the other – para amino acid which really know out the TB but didn't have that. The only way was rest and – so that – that's what I was doing on the mainland when I was at Bruns General Hospital, came back this side, got retired, and by then, you know was (unintelligible) was stable so, you know – then later (unintelligible) something so I went back into Tripler<sup>29</sup> and they operated on me, they cut off – they cut off part of the lung, the top of the lung and they gave me a new medicine and after that, all the tests indicate that everything was all right.

Q But the part that they removed, did they determine that was diseased?

A Well, they said it wasn't conclusive, you know, that it was bad, but – since that time, the medicine is so good that they don't operate. I think if I had (unintelligible) wait a little longer, I just take the medication, it would have been all right but that's what I went through. But that's when I got retired, you know, and – so all of you went to the PX<sup>30</sup>. (Laughs)

So that's about the end of the story, Chris.

Q Okay. (Unintelligible) saw a lot of fruit trees?

A Yeah, this farmhouse we were staying, there're a lot of fruit trees and I was dying to eat peaches and so I picked the peach and washed it and I ate it. Oh, boy, did I have the runs. (Laughs) Well, so – we were told not to, you know, drink the water, well water because the wells were poisoned and dead animals, whatnot inside, so don't drink. Well, I used that well water to wash the peach so I think – I don't know, I don't know what the – lots of flies too, so I don't know where (unintelligible) the bug was, but anyway, I really suffered.

Q How did the peach taste?

A Oh, was real good, oh was real – just like over here, in fact, better because this is fresh, but little – not the soft kind like here, but real good.

Q Maybe you would have been better off not washing it.

A Maybe, but – but that's what I did and that's what I experienced.

Q Boy, that's bad, especially in combat.

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<sup>29</sup> Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

<sup>30</sup> Post Exchange. Retail store with discounted prices on army bases. Mr. Iwasa meant that his family had PX privileges because he was a retired Army officer.

A Yeah, I suffered but I went to the aid station. They gave me something and that took care of it so – well, that’s the way it is. So we carried water with us and that water is supposed to – I don’t know where the – they – the battalion gets the water someplace where – and they bring to us in a five-gallon can and we transfer it to our canteen which we carry.

Q Did you ever run low on water?

A Oh, yeah, many times. They cannot catch up with us, see, and then especially when we had to walk long distance and we get – we don’t eat much but we drink a lot of water and water ran low and the boys asked me, when is the water going to catch up? Well, I sent word to the company, the company said, oh, they don’t know, we’re going too fast. They – they can’t locate us in the back – our headquarter group which handles the water and the rations, they got to get out from some central part way in the back and they got to catch up with us and someplace they got to catch up at night and we way up in the boondocks, they don’t know where we are. So days we don’t get any –

Q Then how did you manage? I mean everyone must have drunk the last drop?

A Well, that’s why – that’s why they go look for vino, that’s wine, farmhouse, invariably they locate the wine and drank the wine. They were able to get some liquid that way and then the river, small stream, you know, going, so they fill up their canteen, then we went further upstream and then the dead bodies (unintelligible). Wow, that’s one of those things, you know, you cannot help.

Well, such is life. So I know, you know, we seen the real gruesome kind, you like to forget it, but those gruesome kind I guess where people are blown apart and – it’s terrible and shot in the head and all kind.

Q I don’t see how you folks could go on when you see, you know, your friends near you getting hurt or killed like that.

A Yeah, well, you know, you feel real sorry for them and, gee, but you got to remember what our job is, job is to keep on going and when the order comes we got to go, tell the men, eh, we got to go. Oh, they grumble, they’re tired, they want to rest, they haven’t rested, only two hours’ sleep and then go. Many times like that. They mad like heck, you know. Let somebody else go, eh, come on, come on.

Q And you being an officer, even though you want to rest and –

A But, yeah –

Q -- you know, you don’t want to go and you have to –

A I have to encourage them to go and we got to go and I got to see that all of them are up and some of them, oh, they so damn tired already, but talk to them, let's go, let's go, and get them and the sergeant goes and help them out, pack their stuff, okay, let's go, go (unintelligible) but that's the way it is.

END OF CD 3