2:16 JAPANESE-AMERICAN EVACUATION UNITED STATES MILITARY 1943-45

C-A
171

Co "C" Sch Bn
Sch Bn, Bks "E"
Camp Savage, Minn.
January 7, 1943

N

Professor Paul S Taylor
University of California
Berkeley, Calif:

Dear Professor Taylor:

As one "GI" Nisei soldier in uniform about to be shipped anywhere between Burma & the Aleutians, I wish to express my heartwarmest thanks for the stand that you took on the behalf of the Japanese-American soldiers in regards to the resolution adopted by the California State Board of agriculture.

Our path has not been an easy one to ~~trod~~ tread. The moments of bitterness, frustrations

and disappointments have been many.

However, to such people as you, we say "thanks"; for it is with the fervent faith that the Americanism of the Nisei will not be questioned nor doubted in the post-war period that we carry on.

Thanking you, again, I am,

Yours Sincerely,

Cpl Kay I Kitagawa

COPY

(From Australia)

Mr. U. Watada
c/o Nuuanu Y.M.C.A.
Honolulu, T. H.

do not use names

T-Sgt. A. Komori
10100023,
A.G. Hq. USASOS
APO 501
c/o Postmaster, San Francisco
1 July 1943

Dear Watada:

Got your nice letter today. Thank you for all the news. I was particularly interested in your Kaimuki Y.M.C.A. set-up. There's a great job there and ideal, too. All Kaimuki has eyes on it, more than likely, and that's just what it has been needing for years. (A huge gym has been proposed before but never carried out.) Hank Nakamura is keen about it, too; I hear from him.

To tell you the truth, I believe you can get better stuff here than back home. Silk stockings, leather briefs, tailored army uniforms, kangaroo wallets, English old briars, 2-inch porterhouses, Scotch, Australian light wines, Gilbert & Sullivan plays, restricted blackouts, and no curfews; above all the compatability of American with Australian men, women, girls and young chaps is surprisingly a fact.

The Australian likes frankness and friendliness, and despises put-on airs and lack of straightforwardness. Sometimes it seems they are overly inquisitive but that's because of their sincere interest and not suspicious nosiness. They are always glad to hear good of their country spoken by Americans, and are only too eager to find fault themselves with the failings of their country and make amends for it by promising better conditions and policies after the war, and by taking their pliticians and misguided forerunners to task. But we all understand that its youth, its frontier civilization, is still the whole reason for its being rediscovered by the American world. Still it's surprisingly well established, and yet not tied down by old rules. Its criminal laws are more liberal than at home, government rule can always be questioned and aired as I never saw before, and individualism is allowed to a great extent.

I'm getting daily back issues of the hometown dailies, so am quite up on the current events of Hawaii. I see the letter columns are nothing but soldiers pros and cons about Hawaiian girls, Niseis, habits, hospitality, and Americanism. It sure looks funny to me, way out here. It's a soldiers' paradise with some limitations there apparently.

As for me, I'm doing all right, and making the most of borrowed time, until more action comes my way, then I'll be more than ready to meet it.

Please give my regards to Mrs. Watada, and the kids, the Newtonians, other Y'ers and rest of the people.

Sincerely,

Arthur

USE OF NAMES OPTIONAL

Extract from a letter from First Lieutenant S. M. Sakamoto, Co. A, 100th Infantry Battalion, to Hitoshi Yoda, Honolulu; letter dated North Africa, Sept. 9, 1943.

"This letter goes to you from North Africa, where it is too damn hot during the day and too cold during the night. Where the French and Arabs and a sprinkling of Spanish make their living tending vineyards and making wine, and then drink the wine. Where the Arabs are so filthy that they smell from here to Heaven and back again. They also look and dress just as crummy. They use dirty rags for clothes -- and barracks bags and mattress covers and fatigue clothes which they steal from the American soldiers for Sunday wear. It is a comical sight to see an Arab walking down the street with a barracks bag for trousers, after making two holes for his legs to come through, with a Sergeant's name and serial number stencilled on the 'okole'.

By the home town papers I was getting while back in good old U.S.A., I saw where you were doing a wonderful job of baseballing. The next time I'll be pitching, it will be grenades, and it's going to mean Jerry's life or mine. It's going to be good, for I don't aim to push up daisies."

Extract from a later letter, also from Lieut. Sakamoto to Mr. Yoda, dated Italy, October 14, 1943.

"Words cannot describe adequately the emotions and worlds I passed thru when first subjected to Jerry's fire. My 'okole' felt heavy and my feet cold. Then memories of better and happier times kept flashing thru my mind. But almost immediately these feelings disappeared and the prime thought in my mine was to get Jerry. Our boys did a helluva good job - be proud of them. We miss Joe Takata."

Mayn Blake
2411 atherton St
Berkeley

COPY

October 10, 1943

Dear Hung Wai:

It's about time that I finally wrote to you and let you know how things are as far as the boys and the whole situation are concerned. I know that you must be pretty busy "peddling land" among other things, and your work with the O.M.G. must be pressing you for time but you should have time to scan a few of my thoughts and observations.

Of course, you know that I'm no longer with the 442nd but was "shanghaied" up here to this camp with Masaji, Ralph and the rest of them and at the time of this involuntary transfer, I was so upset, so desperate that I was contemplating wiring home to some of you to keep me with the outfit I volunteered for. However, when I found I was bucking something inevitable, I became so frustrated and burned up that I couldn't see straight for days. In the meantime they hustled me over here and I cooled off and decided to make the best of it, come whatever they cared to throw. At least, they could have picked Shiro and a few others who are far superior in respect to language, or drafted Herb or Kats, whose background and brains should make them just as desirable. At any rate, despite my poor knowledge of it, I am getting along satisfactorily although I still think I'm better fitted for purely military work, or has the 442nd fallen to some subsidiary importance. They have a highly efficient and very speedy system up here and seem to know what they're doing - and it seems that they prefer Hawaii material to that available up on the mainland.

What I like about my change is the North - its scenery, its people, its atmosphere so entirely different from the South - so much more intelligent, open, friendly and broad-minded. I still can't fiture out why they sent the gang down South when they had a nice place like McCoy. I'm getting a great opportunity to travel and see some of these bigger cities and meet some of these people whom I consider the real, typical type of American people. One is also closer to better social, economic and cultural contacts up here, not forgetting to mention the Minnesota Gopher games against Big Ten opponents. I'm beginning to live for passes.

A little about the boys down Shelby: Kats and Herbie and Shiro are about to or have gone to New York for a 2-weeks furlough, along with the rest of the boys, and they tell me that they sure needed it or would have bust. They seem to have lost a lot of faith in that outfit - they thought it had a high rating, that its number would be kept intact, that it would get the best of everything needed for training, but here they see a bunch being dragged off to Savage while those "katonks" keep drifting in, slowing up everything, and they feel they are no longer important as they thought they were. Most of all, they want someone from Hawaii on top because they feel that they otherwise haven't got a damn soul to back them up - to understand their peculiar problems arising from a different social and cultural background. In short, with the "katonks" as non-comms and a malihine staff, they feel as though it isn't their own outfit anymore, that they're there for the convenience of someone

else, that it isn't "Hawaii's own" - but it's only their sense of duty and loyalty to the cause that they volunteered for that they stick to it with guts and sweat to pile up the highest score in the 3rd Army. Take away the Hawaii boys and you have no combat team, but take away the rest and one could still make a team. Frankly, though my opinion isn't much, with the material they had at hand and the spirit the boys started out with, they could have made a far better unit than they have now. That makes the boys think of home all the more, so you know how they feel - homesick isn't the word for it, one of them tells me. There is the problem of morals to consider, too. The youthfulness of most of them make them susceptible to the lowlier ways of escape from the confines of military discipline. As Kats put it, it isn't the heat, the chiggers or the hard training, but the mental beating that one has to take that is eating the better things out of their heart and soul. So they take it out - on themselves - when they go out on pass, but I never expected some of the more decent ones to fall so low. They really need more paternal guidance of some kind, I think, and "Chicken" Yamada should be a help. I have sometimes wondered if the whole cause and effort of our volunteering for the Army will be worth the hundreds of warped and brutalized lives and minds the end of the war will bring back to Hawaii, so great a moral change some of them are undergoing.

As far as military achievement goes, I doubt if any outfit in the Army can touch them and they should be a superior outfit on the battlefront but I doubt if they'll ever have the unity that Colonel Turner had over his boys, who incidentally are making a great showing in Italy. The boys who went into Alabama to guard P.W. say that the people there treat them very well, which isn't like Mississippi. I don't know how they are getting along with the other haole outfits in Camp but it did get worse after your visit there and little incidents are still cropping up now and then. Funny how the McCoy gang kept out of trouble when they were down there. I guess those boys are older and know how to handle themselves better; also, having an old "kamaaina" at their head, they must feel a greater loyalty and responsibility to their unit as a 100% Hawaii one and their conduct shows it. One can see the difference- while in Wisconsin they made the citizens become more warmly receptive to them, whereas here and down Shelby, I seem to notice that the surrounding people become less receptive to the boys and it wrings my heart to know that the boys could make a far better impression if they were educated with a deeper group loyalty and a guiding philosophy with which they could face any citizen hereabouts openly and proudly as soldiers of the U.S. Army. It all sums up to the fact that the AJAs in general have a long road ahead in regard to achieving true Americanism although they are loyal and sincere otherwise. Isn't it unfortunate that the war had to come so early in their state of progress. Oh well, truths are tried, tested and tempered by obstacles and hardships and our true spirit of Americanism has to be earned the long, hard and bitter way and not to be easily assumed or taken for granted. The war will prove this, if anything else.

I must tell you of my impressions of the Relocation Camp I visited down in Arkansas just before I came up here. It isn't the material aspects concerned, for they seem comfortable enough but their attitude is one of the greatest disapppintments to me in my life. True, they may have been unceremoniously uprooted from their homes and placed in there but it is no justification for the sour attitude that many of them assume, and it all disappointingly goes to

show that their Americanism or so-called Americanism never was an integral part of their mental and spiritual fibre, and it shows how thin rooted their loyalty was. Strong words? Yet, you'd agree if you saw the countless number of young men there who will have nothing to do with the Army but instead will participate in great numbers in a "bon" dance attended by the whole camp or watch some of them taking part in a Japanese dance. Here were many men so much more proficient in Japanese and yet they ignore the great duty they can perform for their country by coming up here. But instead, we who belong heart and soul to the combat team, with the military background to prove more useful to the combat team, have to be uprooted and brought up here to take the place they could readily have assumed. The illogicalness and irony of it all made me so disgusted, I left the place in a few hours, having satisfied my curiosity of the place. That's the greatest criticism we from Hawaii have of these mainland "katonks" - that they have no guts, no spirit, no character. I do give credit to those who did volunteer in face of such negative environment, though, and I have met a few nice boys from the mainland.

But Hawaii - I speak of the AJs in Hawaii with a different tone because they are different. They may not be as American in speech and culture as these mainland AJs but their heart is in the game 100% and they'll see it through 'till the very end. You know that we who came up will never fail the cause we came for, never fail the people whom we came out to fight for. But what bothers me now is whether the homefolks will not fail us in the long run - ? This has been in my mind ever since I read the Star Bulletin account of that morale meeting at which Colonel Selby spoke, I read it again and again and was further impressed with each reading that he was 100% right and I admired the way he spoke straight from the shoulder, to the point, yet tolerantly and understandingly. People in Hawaii cannot fail the understanding and trust that a few of those high officials hold for them and they should thank their lucky stars that they have such men of broad vision in control. In short, if they do not realize that they will be the focus of attention more and more as the war swings to the Pacific and do not take active, positive and constructive steps to alleviate or improve such an enviable position, then they certainly will have lost a home front war just as certain as we will emerge victorious and successful in our share of the war. Exactly as the Colonel spoke, if the American Japanese in Hawaii are still "on the spot" even after their AJ soldiers come marching home, then the people themselves at home are to be blamed. If, during the course of this war, they have not progressively won and earned for themselves a more secure and trusted status in the community, then we, who have left everything so dear to us in Hawaii to endure the hardships of army life, are fighting a losing battle as well, as far as home-front Hawaii is concerned. I wonder if the people back home really know how dearly and nostalgically we think of our homeland and how fervent, our hopes of returning there to pick up our normal, peaceful and trusted lives again. They cannot rest on our laurels alone; they have their own responsibility to fulfill, for our sake as well as theirs.

I'm sure I convey the mind of every deep-thinking, far sighted soldier from Hawaii and I urge that our feelings be known to those concerned, even if it is necessary to wake them from their lethargy and indifference. They've got to get on the ball and no buts about it! I know what a hard task it is to achieve such results but they have to be achieved. I know that the homefolks are sincere and they mean well, that they are proud of us - but that is no reason for them to become complascent. The speaking of Japanese by those who can speak American

must go. Their reticence and restraint from speaking openly against the Emperor, Japan and Germany have to be broken. If they cannot realize that their future is tied up with Hawaii and the United States and that the complete defeat and devastation of Japan will have no bearing on their future as Americans, then truly they must be classed as half-baked Americans as much as I hate to say it, and in many people's vocabulary, there is no such thing as lukewarm Americanism. The American way is to show your hand openly on the table when your cards are called, and if the American leaders of Japanese ancestry themselves cannot subscribe to this and lead the way, then truly we left a sad bunch of people at home.

Strong words, they may say? Not too strong, in fact, not strong enough to be spoken by any soldier who volunteered his services, his freedom, his life, if necessary, to undergo the most gruelling experience of his life for the sake of those very people at home as well as for the millions of other Americans. I know that I speak the mind of every soldier from Hawaii because for the first time we are truly appreciating and realizing that Hawaii means to us and how much we are tied up with it body and soul. You can tell the homefolks that if they fail in their part and shun their responsibility back there, then we might as well forget about Hawaii and settle in Africa, Burma, the Solomons or wherever we may be when the war ends, because Hawaii would not be worth living in then.

I should like to mention how deeply we are feeling the loss of Kats Miho's untimely death, especially we who have lived closely by his side and shared his troubles and joys. We feel so helpless before the irony of fate which takes those who deserve to live most first. Indeed, Herbie wrote so appropriately, "The world cries out for men of purpose, determination and will. Kats possessed these aforesaid qualities but he has gone to his reward so soon.-" In fact, observing the supreme sacrifice of one so close has made us more conscious of what we strive for, of what we want. Yes, we feel his loss greatly, and it has steeled us considerably and we can truly say:

> "-My man's death diminishes me for I am involved in mankind; therefore never send to know for whom the bell tools. It tolls for thee!"

and it tolls for every man who fails, he who falls for freedom's sake.

Sincerely yours,

Ted

(Ted Tsukiyama)

P.S. I hope you are in fine health. Will you give my regards to all friends?

COPY (Original V-Mail)

To

MR. MASA KATAGIRI
EMERGENCY SERVICE COMMITTEE
NUUANU YMCA
HONOLULU, T.H.

From

Capt. K. Kometani
100th Inf. Bn APO #2 34
New York, N.Y.

Please do NOT use name

Oct. 30, 1943.

DEAR MASA:

BY THIS TIME, IT IS KNOWN THAT WE ARE IN ITALY WITH THE OVERSEA FORCES ON THE OFFENSE AND IF YOU WILL FOLLOW THE PAPERS CLOSELY, THERE WILL BE NEWS OF THE BOYS FROM TIME TO TIME. WE ASKED FOR IT AND WE ARE GETTING IT. OUR ENEMIES ARE CLEVER FIGHTERS AND TRAINED TO THE GILLS, BUT THE BOYS ARE NOT WINCHING AN INCH AND CARRYING ON LIKE TROJANS. HOWEVER, AS YOU KNOW WE HAVE NOT BEEN WITHOUT OUR CASUALTIES AND DEATHS. THE MORALE OF THE BOYS ARE GREAT, AND THE THOUGHT THAT YOU AND THE PEOPLE BACK THERE ARE WITH THEM, IN THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS HAVE CERTAINLY AIDED IMMENSELY TO THEIR FIGHTING SPIRIT. THE GREATEST MORALE BUILDER IS NEWS AND LETTERS FROM HOME AND THOUGH IT TAKES A LITTLE LONGER FOR MAIL TO REACH US AND ANSWERS AND REPLIES, SLOW, AND MAYBE NONE FROM THIS END, WE HOPE THAT THE PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE WRITING. SOMETIMES WE FEEL THAT THE ANXIETY OF THE FAMILIES OF THESE SOLDIERS IS GREATER THAN OUR DISCOMFORTS ON THE FIELD, AND YOU CAN ASSURE THE PEOPLE THAT THE BOYS DO NOT PASS A DAY WITHOUT THINKING OF THEIR FAMILIES AND DEAR ONES. WE HAVE RECEIVED NEWS THAT THE CHURCHES HAVE SET ASIDE ONE SUNDAY A MONTH AS PRAYER DAY FOR THE 100th, PLEASE CONFIRM AND ALSO LET ME KNOW OF ANY SUCH MOVEMENTS AS THE BOYS WILL CERTAINLY LOVE TO HEAR IT. IT IS WITH REGRET THAT WE RECEIVED THE DEATH OF MIHO'S BROTHER OF THE VOLUNTEERS. PLEASE EXTEND MY SYMPATHY. IT IS A GENERAL BELIEF THAT THE VOLUNTEERS HAVE A LONG, LONG WAY BEFORE THEY CAN CARRY ON WHERE WE LEFT, ESPECIALLY AFTER SEEING COMBAT, AND WHAT IT IS LIKE. WE HAD SEVERAL BOYS FROM THE VOLUNTEERS AND THAT'S OUR SUBSTANTIATION. THIS WILL BE OUR SECOND CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM HOME. WE HOPE THE NEXT ONE WILL BE IN HAWAII. KINDLY EXTEND MY GOOD WISHES TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND ALSO MANY FRIENDS WHOM YOU KNOW. THANK THEM FOR THEIR STAUNCH STAND BEHIND OF US AND THAT COMES FROM THE 100th. PLEASE CARRY ON FOR THE BOYS.

(s) KOME

do not use name

P

COPY

(Original V-Mail)

Recipient of
Purple Heart Award

do not use names

Mr. I. Imai
3532 Hinahina St.
Honolulu, T.H. 31
U.S.A.

Cpl. Max M. Imai
Co. D 100th Inf. Bn.,
APO 34, c/o Postmaster
New York, N. Y.

Nov. 11, 1943

Dear Family:

I hate to say this to you, but I guess I'll have to anyway. I am now wounded and am well taken care of in a hospital, but I am not in a bad shape. What happened was that a few shrapnels imbedded itself under my skin-- severe but not serious. Why I'll be up again at no time flat so please don't worry.

Hope you are getting along very well. Give my sincerest regards to all.

May God bless you--

Love,

Max

do not use name

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Capt. Jack Mizuha (0331006)
Co. D. 100th Inf. Bn (Sept)
A P O #34
c/o Postmaster, New York
12 November 1943

Please do NOT use name

Dear Masa:

It's about time to write a few lines to you people back there about the program of the 100th. Newspaper accounts probably have given you people more information than censored letter can. Suffice for me to say the boys are doing a gallant job. We have come over 12,000 miles to prove we're loyal - the proof in terms of human lives and human blood. Our only regret is that we could not or were not given the opportunity to prove our loyalty in the Southwest Pacific where our most hated enemy lies dug in the series of islands that form a _____ to Japan.

I know that the sacrifices we make here may be adequate proof, but the question of our loyalty to our country could have been settled for all time, if we sacrificed our men on the battlefields of the South Pacific. Then no rabid race hater can say: "How do we know whether these boys will fight soldiers from the land of both of their parents?"

Everyone who sits in his foxhole here waiting for the day when this will be all over regrets that if he were to make sacrifices, why couldn't he have made them in the South Pacific fighting the Japs.

Well that is fate. Will do our best. Everyone at home must have the strength and courage to bear the news for all of it will not be good. Thanks to the Lord above, I'm still kicking around.

Take good care of yourselves.

(signed) Jack

do not use name

Typist's note: _____ indicates word that could not be deciphered.

A LETTER FROM A NISEI SOLDIER TO HIS FATHER

Saturday, Nov. 20, 1943
10:00 P.M.

Dear Dad,

Thanks a million for your very nice, heart warming letter. To tell you the truth, it was the best letter I've ever received in all my life. Before I forget, please tell Mom to write to me as I miss her very much. She could write to me in Japanese if it is easier for her. I'll probably have some trouble in reading it but I could ask one of my friends who is studying Japanese to help me out. I've given up the idea of going to S..... as I find the folks here are O.K. Besides that, I've signed up for the Medics, so I'm hoping to be transferred as soon as my basic training is over.

Every morning the band wakes us up around 6:30 A.M. with a very tuneful march. You know, Dad, how much I liked music and I guess I'll always enjoy it as long as I live. Well, it almost tempts me into joining up with the infantry band but I figure it wouldn't do me much good overseas. I want to help the boys the best I can, so I'm going to be or try my durn best to become a tough, well-trained first aid man. I want to be right up in the front with my buddies so I can help them whenever they need me.

Don't worry about us fellows because we are going to do our best in everything we do. I didn't want to brag but this outfit is really tops. There's quite a number of Caucasian outfits stationed here but my infantry has them all beat. We made the best scores in the recent tests. Right now the whole outfit is training awfully hard. They're never in camp because they have to go out into the bivouac area from various military problems. Last week they went thru live machine gun fire with dynamite blowing up all around them. This week they had to eat and sleep in a fox-hole for about four days. When the company goes out they close the mess hall so we (recruits) have to eat at some other mess hall.

I'm going into my sixth week of basic and it's getting tougher every week. I belong to the 11th platoon, which is the latest platoon to be organized. In our platoon there's always some soldier coming in from the outside, one by one. Most of them are drafted from back east, or from another outfit. Gee, the soldiers from another outfit look as white as a ghost, even though some of them have been in the army from 2 to 3 years.

You ought to see me now, Dad. I'm as dark as some of the colored neighbors we used to have. I've also gained a couple of pounds and worked up an awful appetite. Right now I've got a slight cold because of the queer weather down here. It's always changing from hot to cold.

So far I've hiked 78 miles and this was done mostly during the night time. Night hikes are O.K. if we didn't get so sleepy. Every night I have to clean my rifle, no matter how late I come home from a hike or night problem.

Last week I learned how to take a light machine gun apart. It sure looked complicated but after I learned the name of some of the parts it was pretty easy. Most of our basic has been devoted to dry firing with our rifles because in a couple of weeks we are going out on the range to shoot for records. We're going to sleep in our pup tents and have a couple of blankets for about two weeks. During this time we're going through live machine gun fire just like our company did. Also we're going to shoot carbine and all kinds of targets at different ranges. I'll probably freeze out there, but if the fellas in the company could take it I guess I can.

Sunday, Nov. 21, 1943

Here I am again, Dad, with so much to tell you that I just couldn't finish it last night. In my hutment there's ten regular cooks and K.P.'s. Most of the time they're not in because they have to go out on the field for a week. They come home Friday nights and take off again the following Monday morning around 4 A.M. Yes, Dad, they're really on the ball, as we say it in the Army.

The food in the army is O.K. but I don't get enough of it. I'm always running down to the PX for sandwiches. Usually on night hikes I store up with candies and sandwiches as I'm awfully hungry when I come home.

The hutments aren't as warm as the ones in Topaz but that's the army. Anyway, I received another blanket which makes a total of three blankets and a comforter. Besides this I have a coal stove right close to my bunk, so I am quite warm at times. Every Monday morning we air out the mattresses and change the sheets.

This Sunday I almost had K.P. duty but finally talked my way out of it. It would have been my third Sunday detail if I worked today. K.P. isn't bad on week days but on Sunday, No Sir!

Hey, Dad, I bet you'd make a hell of a good Lieut. in the army from the way you boss Hiro Ukagi and Jim Kushida around. Kidding aside, how's your job coming along?

This morning I went to church and Chaplain Yamada from Hawaii was the speaker. This infantry outfit has three chaplains now. The other two are Chaplains West and Higuchi. Chaplain Yamada spoke about the true meaning of Thanksgiving. Boy, I sure had a lot to be thankful for, Dad. Thanks a million for understanding my volunteering into the army. Boy, I sure tried like hell to make you understand how I felt towards volunteering. I guess if Mom had said "no", too, I probably wouldn't have volunteered. To both of you I'm greatly indebted and this is my way of showing how much I love my folks, so that we may be together again in a nice home.

Gee, Dad, I sure hated to go against your word but it was the one thing in my life that would have bothered me if I didn't. I guess if the Japanese from Hawaii could come all the way down here, I don't see why the mainlanders can't. They're Japanese just like me and any other niseis in the mainland. Some of them might never see their folks again but they are willing to take a chance and it's a darn good gamble if we come out the way we wanted it to be. So, Dad, you can just about understand how prowd I am to serve in the Japanese American Combat Team. A month ago I saw a news reel which showed the Japanese Americans of the -- Inf. fighting over in Italy. All of us fellas whistled and cheered because we were so proud of the fine record they are making.

No, Dad, I won't be coming home this Thanksgiving or Christmas as I haven't finished my basic training. Sure wish I could be there to enjoy the Christmas Holidays. But don't worry, I'm coming home on the first furlough I get. So, until that day comes, I'll always be thinking of you folks.

Again I want to thank you both, you and Mom, for understanding the way I feel. It just makes me feel glad all over when I can say: "Sure, my folks are backing me up 100 percent and more with all their love." Some of the fellas aren't as lucky as I am because their folks have gone to Tule Lake. But just the same they are training just as hard as anybody else and more.

Well, its time for chow so I'll close this letter. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,

Your loving son,

/s/ Walton

P.S. Don't forget to tell Mom to write, too.

USE OF NAMES OPTIONAL

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Copy of a letter from Staff Sergeant Yoshiharu Nishida, Co. A, 100th Infantry Battalion, to L. F. Deacon, Honolulu.

R

Somewhere in Italy
November 20, 1943

Dear Mr. Deacon:

I've been very busy and haven't had time to write any letters until today. Censorship regulations have been relaxed to the extent that we can write of our battle experiences but I'd rather not talk about them. The enemy has thrown everything it has against us, artillery, mortars, multi-barreled "screaming meemies", machine guns, machine pistols, rifles, grenades, mines, booby traps, and aerial bombing and it's hell. I'm one of the lucky ones who haven't been even scratched although I've had my share of close calls.

It's autumn now and the leaves are turning yellow and red. It's cool during the day and cold at night. To make things worse it's been raining now for six straight days. Fortunately we are having a sort of rest period and we have our tents and blankets with us. I feel sorry for the men at the front who have no tents and have to stay in water filled trenches and fox holes because of enemy fire although our turn will again come soon enough. Snow can be seen on some of the mountains to our front.

Even when the weather was mild we had little opportunity to bathe or wash our clothes. We can't bathe for weeks at a time and now that it's cold it'll be worse. I'm wearing the same clothes I wore in North Africa and I've had them washed only about two times since -- once by a little Italian signorina.

I've picked up a little Italian -- it's surprising how much one can pick up by talking to an Italian who doesn't speak a word of English. I can count and tell time in Italian.

I'd like to tell a story which, although it wasn't funny at that time, seems funny now. One night we marched about an hour with full combat equipment -- only we had no trousers on, just drawers -- and waded across a river. The water came up to the crotch and it was icey cold and the current was so strong it almost swept me off my feet.

The 100th is doing a grand job out here and we've earned an excellent reputation. I only hope that the war will be over before the 442 can come over and get into this mess.

A few days ago we were given three months pay -- August, September and October -- in Allied Military currency and it was in lire. Prior to the war 1 lire was equivalent to 20 cents but now it's worth only 1 cent. I'm enclosing a 5 lire note as a souvenir.

A Merry Christmas to you and please extend my regards and greetings to any of our mutual friends that you may meet.

Yours truly,

/s/ Yoshiharu Nishida

C

COPY

do not use names

TO: Mr. C. R. Hemenway
Hawaiian Trust Co. Ltd.
Honolulu, T. H.

FROM: S/Sgt. Kenneth Teruya 30100324
Co. D. 100 Inf. Bn.
APO 34, c/o P. M. New York

November 23, 1943

Dear Mr. Hemenway:

This past week our men have been resting and catching up with letters, after a tough battle in which we engaged numerous German counterattacks. Rain and cold made it all the tougher, but we survived with relatively few casualties. Your letter of Oct. 6 brought me closer to Hawaii, and I thank you for your moral support. Captain [Kometani] read your letter and he said he had already written to you. He is doing a great work and has the respect of all the men. Yes, the 100 Inf. Bn. is now a battle tested outfit, and I am proud to be a part of it. We have a great task yet to be won, and I know we will help win this war till the end.

Today, volunteers for blood donors were asked, and realizing the great need for blood and plasma, the men in my platoon volunteered 100 % except for one man, though willing, was not strong enough. We know the great need for plasma as many of our comrades have bled to death and ask those at home to keep supplying, not only food and ammunition, but blood so that many may be saved.

May you and the good people of Hawaii enjoy a merry Christmas with a little thought and prayer for us and all those who are away from home.

May God bless you all.

Truly yours,

[Kenneth Teruya] do not use.

Dear Mary Ann -

B

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER OF AN AJA SOLDIER TO HIS WIFE

December 24, 1943

Tomorrow, another Christmas day and my second away from home. The spirit of Christmas is the same throughout the world, wherever we may be, and with the approach of the day, I am thinking of you, and Frankie, Jimmie and Carol.

In spite of our position far away from home, we are trying to observe this day. We have two Christmas trees which Kenichi Kimura decorated. They look beautiful. They are for the boys. The boys are all sitting up in their tents and singing - making merry under tiny candle light. It is certainly the greatest spirit of the Army - the spirit that will carry them through hell or high water.

I just returned from a little officers' Christmas get-together. It was great because the men in the front line possess something only they themselves can explain. It was a terrific spirit. It is the American democratic spirit - free thinking.

Tomorrow three officers from our outfit will be promoted by General Clark, and out of the three it's going to be Lts. Fukuda and Henry Kawano for battle field promotion.

I am hoping that someday I can sit with Carol in my arms, Frankie and Jimmie on the side, and you right next to me, and tell you the great spirit of the American Army on the front line.

Our chaplain who is a very energetic, hard working, and understanding man has formed a little carol singing choir for us. Jun was in it. It is great - this Christmas spirit.

The ones who are here are those, and only those, who understand World War II. I cannot speak for the South Pacific, but yesterday I received a letter from Eddie Mitsukado from India. That means we have men all over the world working in the Armed Forces.

5

(Copy of letter from Staff Sergeant Yoshiharu Nishida, Co."A", 100th Infantry Bn., U.S.Army to L.F.Deacon, Honolulu.)

North Africa
December 25, 1943.

Dear Mr. Deacon:-

I'm spending Christmas in my bed in a hospital in North Africa. I've been hospitalized for 3 weeks; one week in Italy and two in North Africa. I haven't been wounded; I'm here with trench feet (frozen feet.) I'm still a bed patient -- I can't stand on my feet yet. For two weeks my left foot was swollen and ached and I couldn't sleep, but now the pain has disappeared and I'm comfortable. I'm afraid I'm going to be here for another month.

It must be very cold in Italy now; even when I was there we had snow, canteens of water froze, and the ground was frozen.

About a month before I was hospitalized, the battalion put in papers for my commission as a Second Lieutenant. Since I'm in the hospital and since I won't be able to join the outfit for some time to come, I don't know whether I'll get it or not.

By the way, I was (censored) from Italy to Sicily, stopped over night in Sicily, and (censored) to Africa the next morning.

Every one of us out here prays that he will be home next Christmas.

Yours truly,

Yoshiharu.

Fair Play Com

COPY

TO: Mr. Walter Mihata
Chairman Christmas Fund Committee
Emergency Service Committee
Nuuanu Y M C A, Honolulu, T. H.

FROM: Captain Katsumi Kometani
Special Service Officer
100th Infantry Battalion

DATE: December 27, 1943

do not read names

In the absence of Captain Jack Mizuha, who was wounded in action, I am taking the privilege of acknowledging the receipt of your generous Christmas gift of three thousand dollars ($3,000.00) in behalf of the officers and men of the 100th Inf. Bn.

Your letter was read to the men of the battalion yesterday at the formation in which official awards were given our men. The commanding general awarded the Silver Star to one, while Sgt. Joe Takata was awarded the DSC posthumously, besides a few other commendations. You will be proud to hear from time to time, news of such awards as the men are going through hell and high water and doing a good job.

Each and every man who was present to receive the surprise Christmas gift to the battalion, was most sincerely inspired by the thought that you who are behind us in this battle of kill or be killed, have not forgotten us far away in Italy. The morale of the men was raised to a higher pitch. It was not the size of the money, but the sentiment and kind and well wishing thought behind of it all. They are happy that you all appreciate the real and actual battle they are going through, for you and the people back there, and for the country which has raised us and given us a place.

You will also be interested to know that the money has been sent to our club 100, in care of Mr. Hemenway of the Hawaiian Trust for a very wonderful reason which has come spontaneously. It is the wish of the men that when this great Christmas gift be spent, all those who are not with us at present, and those who are suffering in the hospitals be well remembered.

Once this battalion was a gay and easy going outfit, training intensively for "THAT DAY". That day has come. Today it is a determined and hard fighting outfit. You are going to be proud of them.

Very fortunately or unfortunately, the 100th has received much publicity. I am writing to you in the hope that you will understand that we have no control over the front line publicity and it is not our desire. We are just one of the many American soldiers doing a little of our share, not asking for any favor but the chance to do our share. Then, if those beyond our control feel that we deserve those flashes, we deserve it and rightly so.

We are also part of the many other AJA soldiers throughout the world. The 100th is proud because we have men in all fighting fronts now. Please take care of the other units, the 442nd Combat Team, the Camp Savage boys, and those who are working in Hawaii. They are part of us. The 442nd particularly, as they are the best and the fightingest outfit. However, they must be impressed with the fact that like us, when that day comes, they must be fully prepared, both physically and mentally. Once out in the lines, you can't quit or even say, "I can't take it". The people have given us every support; please push the younger unit which we have always looked with pride.

In closing, from the officers and men of the 100th Infantry Battalion to those who have made it possible to be really "HAPPY" on Christmas day, our thank you.

Very sincerely yours,

Katsumi Kometani, Captain
Special Service Officer

do not use name

F

Mr. Loomis says that the December 30th letter from Africa resulted in the Morale Committee's arranging for an enlarged vocational educational program for the rehabilitation of soldiers when they return and also plans by the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce Postwar Committee to secure employment for soldiers upon their return.

COPY

Co. D. 100th Inf. Bn. (Sep's)
A P O #34
c/o Postmaster, N. Y. C.
Dec. 30, 1943

Dear Masa:

Just two days and it will be 1944. It leaves me with a rather queer feeling to be welcoming the New Year at a base hospital here in North Africa, but the Grim Reaper has prescribed that I so spend my time. Never realized throughout my period of training that I would be spending my time in bed in an hospital like this.

Fortunately for me, I don't have to look at the New Year's while knocking at St. Peter's gate above. The German machine gun bullet that knocked me went right through my back missing my spine and my lungs. Just an inch either way and I would have been just a cross with other crosses on the Italian landscape where future tourists can pause and stand in reverence during their travel. I'm able to walk around now, but it will take some time before I can return to the front.

Major Lovell came to see me today. He suffered a leg wound but his circulation has not been too good. We are both sweating it out--hoping that we'll be able to return to combat duty in due time. Sometimes I feel as though I've let the boys down, but when you get hit you stay hit--that's all there is to it.

Our boys here made a gallant showing--one that should make all of you proud at home. They have been in the thick of the bitterest fighting on the Italian front and proved their salt.

In one of the hospitals there I met Lt. Col. Anton Marston who is the youngest brother of Col. Marston who was G-2 for the Hawaiian Department. He and I had many good talks together and he is just like his brother whom I don't know too well. Funny how in odd spots you meet people whose friends or brothers played an important part in our lives as Col. Marston did during that trying period before and after the outbreak of war. I know we have lived up to every expectation of (Chinese) ~~soldier and others~~ there in the Hawaiian Department who had faith in all of us.

Masa, there is one question that is really bothering me, now that I've come back all the way to base hospital and have seen many of our boys. There will be quite a number of our boys returning before the war will be over for whom tactful consideration and help must be given if they are to readjust themselves in the island scheme of life. They will possess definite handicaps--loss of legs or arms, or loss of the use of these limbs. If kind considerate help is not given by an organized group to get them going in island social, industrial and economic life, they will be maladjusted individuals there in the islands. I have written to Oren E. Long about it, hoping that some thought has been given to the problem. What are you fellows doing to cope with this great problem of rehabilitation of our wounded boys --permanently wounded and physically handicapped?

In one of the field hospitals, I had just come out of the operation and suffering like anyone would from my wound. Then another of our boys

who had just come out heard my voice and in an hysterical voice called out to me a few cots away: "Captain Mizuha! Captain Mizuha! What am I going to do now? What am I going to do now? They cut my hand off. I can't go home to Hawaii now."

There in all my pain and agony I had to answer him, to soothe and console him, to tell him that adequate agencies will be set up at home to take care of them when they return there, to help them get readjusted to island life. I hope that that is so.

For us who have seen so _____ pray and hope that you people will be able to take care of them when they return. It's going to be a difficult task but I'm sure you'll all be able to do something for these boys who need faith and confidence in their start in life again with permanent handicaps.

I've written enough. We'll be carrying on here in 1944 doing our best. I know you people will be able to take care of the home front. My regards to the rest of your group.

Sincerely,

(signed) Jack

(Capt. Jack Mizuha)

Please do NOT use name

Typist's note: _____ indicates words that could not be deciphered.

COPY

Somewhere in Italy
January 4, 1944.

Dearest Mom & Pop:

Thanking you for the nice postcard you've sent. Really, it was a happy moment for me to receive something from Mom and Pop and to know that they're always thinking of their son so far away.

Gee, I wish I could get something for both of you but because of being in this strange land, I am sorry that there's nothing I can send.

Gosh Mom, it sure is getting cold out here lately and we are always busy trying to keep warm. There has been snow piling up on the mountains too and they're making an awfully pretty sight. The morning gets quite chilly, there's usually frost on the ground. Anyway, as long as the rain doesn't pour, we'll be doing okay.

Mom, we're doing our darndest out here to end this war so that we may all be together again but it seems like this war will keep up for quite a spell yet. There's nothing to worry about though, because we are the besttaken care of soldiers. We are well fed, clothed, etc., and are very cheery at that too.

Guess I better be saying goodbye now, Mom, so here's wishing you the best of health throughout the ensuing year. My dearest regards to you both, Mom & Pop--

Always

Your loving son

Eddie

do not use name

(Pfc Edward Morikami 30100649
Co. A, 100th Inf. Bn. APO 34
c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.)

BULL, BIART & BIEBERSTEIN
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELLORS
MADISON, WISCONSIN

COPY

February 3, 1944

Secretary of War Stimson
War Department
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Being interested in the job of relocating loyal American citizens of Japanese ancestry, I was glad to note that Sergeant Ben Kuroki, an American hero, was to have a place on the Ginny Simms program. When I heard part of the announcement on the air I wondered why he was taken off the program.

I have noticed since that time that apparently it was NBC's decision. If this be the case, for one I would like to say that in view of the publicity which was given to this matter, the invitation to him, the service to his country, I would think the action was highly unwise and ungracious to this American soldier.

Would you have your department kindly write and advise me for our Committee the persons responsible for his removal and the reasons therefor.

Prima facia, it looks like a surrender to West Coast influences and the race hating on the coast particularly in its relation to American citizens, is excellent ammunition for the propagation of Japanese militarists in the countries they have occupied.

I have read NBC's statement "The whole American-Japanese question is highly controversial." I take it there is no controversy about Sergeant Kuroki's record and neither can there be any controversy about the humiliation which Sergeant Kuroki has been obliged to suffer. If he wasn't to appear on the program then his appearance should never have been publicized.

I wish to take this occasion, on behalf of our Committee, to extend to you our congratulations and thanks for

the position that the War Department has taken in working this problem out in the real American way and I trust that what appears to have been a surrender of right principles and a terrible slap at an American boy, who fought to demonstrate his loyalty and then fought with great honor, may be righted.

The loyalty of this Sergeant under the trying circumstances is a rebuke to the almost Nazi attitude of the race haters.

This Committee is very familiar with all of the good work which your department has done in this problem. It is grateful and it has confidence in your leadership and that of the Chiefs of Staff and is very proud of the part which has been taken by Assistant Secretary of Way, Jack McCloy.

We hope that no American hero, regardless of ancestry, will again have to be subjected to humiliation of this kind.

May I say that the writer of this letter volunteered and was commissioned at the First Officer's Camp at Ft. Sheridan; was Camp Intelligent officer at Camp Custer in the last war, past commander of the American Legion, has an associate who is a prisoner in the Philippine Islands--as to whom I have recently written a request--and is active in Selective Service work.

Very truly yours,

Benjamin H. Bull

BHB:HSG

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON

May 31, 1943

Dear Miss Breed:

Thank you for your letter of May 30. In accordance with your request I am enclosing herewith the War Department press release announcing the decoration of the three Japanese American soldiers. For military reasons it is not possible to give the locality in which these soldiers were serving nor to recite in detail their meritorious actions for which they received their decorations.

Sincerely,

William P. Scobey

WILLIAM P. SCOBEY
Colonel, General Staff
Executive

Sent to SF Chronicle 10/13 (?) (not returned) MJ

Miss Eleanor D. Breed
18 Panoramic Way
Berkeley 4, California

Enc.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

C O P Y

Wrote to you a few days ago but am writing again. Received your letter this morning. Thanks for calling my family immediately upon receiving word from me. My family told me about it too. It was really considerate of you, they said, and I really think so too sir. Perhaps I've told you before but anyway, my A.P.O. number has changed since then. It is no. 34.

Regarding Cpl Shigeru Oshita - immediately upon reading your letter I started asking the boys who he was because I, myself, don't know who he is. Of course, I didn't tell them the reason nor anything whatsoever about why I was inquiring. Nobody seems to know him either, at least none that I talked to. Frankly, it would be easier finding out if we were still in garrison life but being out here as we are, it is really difficult even seeing your friend, let alone finding a person you don't even know. However you can assure his fiancee, whoever she is, that I am really trying my best and will continue trying. I know how she feels. Worrying about someone you care for is no fun. I know that. Tell her not to worry too much for I'm sure everything will turn out alright in the end.

From your letter & from others, back home must be pretty safe and quiet as far as the war situation is concerned. I'm glad of that. But I certainly wish you were here with us sir. It would be a tremendous help having an officer one knows well and have confidence in. We are always talking about you officers left behind and how swell it would have been if all of you could have come with us.

We are still doing a grand job. Receiving the praises of everyone here. You will be pleased to hear especially that a company, comprising of Maui boys, have done and are doing exceptionally well. In fact they even were highly praised by the rest of the men from the 100th. But of course, each and every man of the 100th is doing a great job. Be proud of us Capt. for you have a good reason to be. I mean it. Your confidence and faith in us are not given in vain. We are more than living up to it.

This letter is full of grammatical and typographical errors and strike-overs but please overlook them for I'm writing it hurriedly and besides, lack an eraser. I must say so long for a while again. I will remember you to the boys. They will be pleased to hear that you people back home are still thinking of us. Till the next time, goodbye and good luck sir.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT APPROVES COMBAT TEAM

OF CITIZENS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Following is the text of a letter received by the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, from the President:

"February 1, 1943

"My dear Mr. Secretary:

"The proposal of the War Department to organize a combat team consisting of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent has my full approval. The new combat team will add to the nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry who are already serving in the armed forces of our country.

"This is a natural and logical step toward the reinstitution of the Selective Service procedures which were temporarily disrupted by the evacuation from the West Coast.

"No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country wherever his skills will make the greatest contribution -- whether it be in the ranks of our armed forces, war production, agriculture, government service, or other work essential to the war effort.

"I am glad to observe that the War Department, the Navy Department, the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Justice, and the War Relocation Authority are collaborating in a program which will assure the opportunity for all loyal Americans, including Americans of Japanese ancestry, to serve their country at a time when the fullest and wisest use of our manpower is all-important to the war effort.

"Very sincerely yours,

"/s/ FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT"

STIMSON'S LETTER (From Rocky Nippon Feb.19, 1943)

Editor's Note: The following letter by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to James M. Omura, leading figure in the fight for democratic acceptance and treatment of the U.S. Niseis, is released by special permission of the War Department.

WAR DEPARTMENT
Washington, D.C.
February 9, 1943

Dear Mr. Omura:

I have your letter of February 5, 1943, in which you protest against the establishment of a regimental combat team composed of volunteer American citizens of Japanese ancestry as an integral part of the United States Army, on the theory that the constitution of the combat team as a separate unit will tend to postpone the eventual assimilation of Japanese-Americans into the rest of our population. I can see some basis for your argument, but I do not believe that you have the benefit of all the facts in the matter.

I do not have to remind you of the wave of hatred and distrust of all things Japanese which swept this country after Pearl Harbor. For many months thereafter, no attempt was made to distinguish the loyal from the disloyal; all were lumped together and called "Japs". This feeling continues today, but in diminished force, I am glad to say that. The War Department felt that by giving loyal Japanese-Americans an opportunity to form a unit of their own, of considerable tactical importance and for service in an active theater, Japanese Americans could, by an appropriate display of their loyalty and bravery, for all times set at rest the suspicions harbored by the uniform elements of our population. By the same token the unit would constitute a symbol to which every loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry could point with pride. It is easy to see that if loyal Japanese Americans were scattered throughout the ranks, there indivisual contributions would past relatively unnoticed, whereas by formation of a separate unit there collective strength will be evidenced to the world.

The War Department is not commited to a policy of segregation for Japanese Americans. As you no doubt know, there are well over two thousand Japanese Americans already in the Army serving in ordinary units both in this country and abroad.

There are other reasons, primarily of a military nature, which favor the establishment of a separate unit. The ordinary regiment or division is trained for service in any theater, whereas a number of factors make it desirable that Japanese American troops be not employed in the Pacific Theater. For instance, there would be the likelihood of inhuman treatment in the event of capture. There would be the possibility, not now exsistent, of disastrous confusion if the enemy was successful in infiltrating into our midst a few of his troops clad in American uniforms. Again , while it would be expected that Japanese Americans would fight just as zealously in the Pacific theater as elsewhere, the very fact that they and the enemy sprang from the same racial stock would constitute a psychological barrier affecting the morale of other troops. If Japanese Americans were not established

in a separate unit, it would mean that Japanese Americans would have to be separated from the unit with which they had trained if that unit became designated for the Pacific theater. This would be unfortunate for the man as well as for the organization, to say nothing of the time and energy wasted.

I have written you at length as I wanted to make it clear to you that the advisability of creating a special unit for Japanese Americans had been very carefully considered by the War Department prior to its adoption. The conclusion has been reached that this is the best way to proceed. It was not a question of segregation, but what in the long run would work out best, not alone for the Army, for our Japanese American population as a whole. It may well be the precursor to "equal participation" by loyal Japanese Americans "in all phases of America's war efforts."

Sincerely,
(Signed) HENRY L. STIMSON,
Secretary of War

OMURA'S REPLY

February 15, 1943

Hon. Henry L. Stimson,
The Secretary of War,
Washington, D.C.
Dear Mr. Stimson:

I have given your letter of Feb. 9th the most careful attention, and though much as I would like to agree with you on the basic merit of establishing a separate combat unit of American Japanese volunteers, I cannot quite agree with you in the various features of the program involved.

In this letter to you on Feb. 1st, in which he placed his stamp of approval on the formation of an American Japanese combat unit, the President of the United States revealed that "nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry are already serving in the armed forces of our country."

I am inclined to feel that the War Department, if it were earnest in carrying out the basic issue involved, would have utilized the idle Nisei already pressed into service first before calling for volunteers. I am also conscious of the fact that the one hundredth infantry battalion composed of Hawaiian Japanese and commanded by Lieut. Col. Farrant L. Turner, is still stationed at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin and has seen no active service despite the fact that it is the oldest of the so-called " foreign regions" authorized by the War Department.

Neither can I quite comprehend why the procedure for the induction of these volunteers could not have been processed through the regular channels of the universal draft thereby mitigating the resulting feeling of discrimination and segregation to some extent. If a Nisei Region were an absolute necessity I stillcannot understand why the Selective Service System could not have been opened to them and from there each volunteer assigned to this special unit.

Despite your assurance that "the War Department is not committed

to a policy of segregation for Japanese Americans," I do not feel secure that segregation will not occur and that the process of assimilation will not be retarded. The inherent and potencial danfer of segregation still exsists in the previous policies of Federal departments and officials are not conducive to impel credence and trust.

In respect to the undesirability of employing Nisei soldiers in the Pacific theater, I fully recognize the attendant confusion and disaster that might conceivably result. However, it is my understanding that Nisei soldiers are serving under General MacArthur in Australia and on the New Guinea front. The case of Soldier Nishizu, who was recently commended on the Jergens' radio program, is an example. It is an unfortunate destiny that we must carry into battle this "double peril," but I do not believe that a single loyal soldier of Japanese decent would shirk his duty and would request an assignment elsewhere.

It is for these basic reasons that I challenge the intent and procedure of the War Department and consequently protest the creation of a special combat unit of Nisei volunteers. I fully realize that ~~thi~~ this protest will carry small weight with the War Department and its decisions will not be altered a single iota.

I do not doubt for one moment that the Americans of Japanese Lineage will volunteer and that Nisei battalion will be created, but I do regret that the spirit of the democratic government cannot be preserved even in times of war and that we cannot maintain at home the principles for which we are fighting along the various global fronts.

Very respectfully yours,
JAMES M. OMURA.
Executive Director,
Pacific Coast Evacuee
Placement Bureau

Seattle, Washington
June 9, 1943

E B MACNAUGHTON, PRESIDENT
THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF PORTLAND
PORTLAND, OREGON

I HAVE YOUR TELEGRAM OF JUNE 8TH IN WHICH YOU REFER TO A PROPOSAL TO MEMORIALIZE CONGRESS IN FAVOR OF DEPORTATION OF ALL JAPANESE AMERICANS IRRESPECTIVE OF CITIZENSHIP. THE WAR DEPARTMENT HAS RECOGNIZED THE LOYALTY OF MANY JAPANESE AMERICANS AND HAS INCORPORATED A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF JAPANESE AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS IN THE ARMY. THE RECORD OF JAPANESE AMERICAN UNITS IN THE ARMY HAS BEEN EXCELLENT INDEED, A CERTAIN NUMBER HAVE RENDERED SERVICE AGAINST THE JAPANESE EMPIRE FOR WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN DECORATED. I FEEL THAT ANY PROPOSITION TO DEPORT ALL JAPANESE AMERICANS IRRESPECTIVE OF CITIZENSHIP OR LOYALTY WOULD NOT ONLY BE INAPPROPRIATE BUT CONTRARY TO OUR EXPERIENCE AND TRADITION AS A NATION. DEPORTATION OF DISLOYAL ELEMENT IS OF COURSE DESIRABLE BUT THE WAR DEPARTMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY SUCH SWEEPING PROPOSAL AS YOU REFER TO IS JUSTIFIED IN MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS.

(FILED WASHINGTON D C JUNE 9)

Henry L. Stimson

COPY

Capt Jack Mizuha - Army Hospital in Baltimore

I'm certain that you people already know that we are now somewheres in Italy. We've been here for quite sometime now but only recently were we permitted to write about it. Up till then we weren't allowed to reveal our presence in this country. We are, at last, doing what we always hoped for & waited patiently for - that of engaging in actual combat.

Regarding military affairs, naturally, I cannot tell you much. However, we, the 100th, are a definite part of the great American army steadily advancing northward, & just as important as any other unit of similar size. No doubt you have already read of our being commended upon by Lt. Gen. Clark. The truth is, we are doing very well & shall continue to do so. You will hear a lot more about us and before this whole thing is over you and all back home who have so much faith in us, will be more than proud of us sir. We will not fail you, I assure you.

We get along very well with the civilians here. They treat us swell. Our chief difficulty, like in N. Africa, is the language. But unlike Africa, we do not have a language guide to help us along, which makes it all the more difficult. Every word we learn is done just by listening to the natives talk.

In my opinion, Italy is a beautiful country with all its greeen mountains & valleys, However, the towns & villages are somewhat like those of Africa - that is, narrow streets & not exactly clean. But this is an interesting land, old & ancient, with many historical structures. They are many things to see but of course, we don't have much time for those things. We aren't exactly on what you might call a sight-seeing tour. There are far more important things to be done. Out here, there isn't such a thing as 8 hr day, 48 hr week. There aren't any passes, leaves, Sundays or holidays. Sometimes we go on for days at a time with but an hour of sleep each night. But sir, seldom indeed it is when you hear the boys complain. We all realize the fact that we're here to do a job & the sooner it's done the better it is. Petty personal grudges are all cast aside - many things that we thought were important before, all become so trivial & silly & insignificant. Going through all this, one's viewpoint of things certainly changes.

I've written so much about us that I must admit I quite forgot to ask about you. How are you sir. Still well & healthy & carrying on your duties in your usual fine manner, I presume. And how's everyone at the "District". Hope they're all okay too & progressing nicely. Tell them sir, that a nice "hello" arrived from an ex District soldier.

Guess I've written enough for now. Will write again. Drop me a few lines whenever you find a little time from your duties. Letters from friends are always welcomed, especially being out here like this; tends to bring up the morale considerably. In fact, they are just about our sole consolation.

Keep well & healthy, sir. We may meet again - sooner than we think.

LETTER TO THE REVEREND ARTHUR T. KENT FROM COLONEL WILLIAM P. SCOBEY
EXECUTIVE TO THE ASST. SECRETARY OF WAR

July 28,1943

Your letter of July 20, addressed to the Secretary of war, has been referred to this office for acknowledgment.

I regret it is not possible, because of military security reasons, to give exact answers to the questions you ask. However, I can give approximate and general statements which I trust will serve your purpose. The answers given herein are in the order in which the questions were asked.

a. There are approximately 8,000 Japanese American citizens in the Army at the present time. Of these 8,000 approximately half are volunteers. On December 7,1941, there were approximately 4,500 Japanese American soldiers serving in the Army and although some were discharged the greater number of them were retained in service. On January 28, 1943, the Secretary of War authorized the organization of a Japanese American Combat Team. The press release announcing that organization is attached herewith for your information. In addition to the separate Japanese units in the Army there are about 3,000 Japanese American soldiers in other units and scattered throughout the various service command units.

b. It is not possible to give the number of U.S. soldiers of Japanese extraction now overseas. It can be stated, however, that this number is much less than a thousand. It might be added that the majority of those serving overseas are in the Southwest Pacific theater.

c. There is no single reported incident of treacherous conduct on the part of any Japanese American soldier. As a whole their conduct is better than the average American unit. In fact, as far as known to this office, the record of the 442nd Infantry Combat Team at Camp Shelby, Mississippi,(having a strength of about 3,500) for three months showed only one court martial for serious offenses. Reports submitted to this office show that the military offense of "absent without leave" is negligible. Also it was stated that only one Japanese-American soldier had been arrested in the city of Hattiesburg. On the occasion the soldier was arrested by the civil police and transferred to his unit with the report that he was "drunk but orderly".

d. To date the record shows that three Japanese-American soldiers have been cited. These three were awarded the military decoration, Medal of Merit, for meritorious service in the theater of operations. Since all of these soldiers came from Hawaii, I am not furnished their names. Neither can the theater of operations in which they are serving be stated. Commanders serving in the combat zones having Japanese-American soldiers under their control in all instances report that they perform highly important missions in a very loyal manner. In fact, these officers report no single occasion for having the slightest concern about their loyalty and trustworthiness.

The officer of the Army having closest contact with the Japanese-American soldiers and those in command of the units in which they belong are enthusiastic in their praise for them. In particular, the 442nd Infantry Combat Team has a very high esprit de corps, and the War Department is of the opinion that when its training is complete it will be able to acquit itself with honor on the field of battle.

I trust the information given herewith will be of value to your and serve your purposes.

Sincerely,

(signed)
WILLIAM P. SCOBEY
Colonel, General Staff
Executive to Asst. Secretary of War
(Washington, D.C.)

This is a copy of a letter from Dell Kettering, radio operator on the Liberator bomber on which Sergeant Ben Kuroki was the top turret gunner. Sgt. Ben Kuroki of North Platte, Nebraska, volunteered within a few hours after Pearl Harbor. He made 30 missions over Europe including Ploesti, Wilhems Haven, Bordeaux and Tunisia. He received two distinguished flying crosses and an air medal with five oak leaf clusters. With the rest of his crew he was presented to the King and Q ueen of England. He is now a waiting service in the Southwest Pacific.

Feb. 8, 1944

Mr. Benjamin H. Bull

Dear Sir:

In answer to your letter of Jan. 26, I am glad to give you any information regarding T/SGT Ben Kuroki.

Benny was in my squadron from the time it was formed in Ft. Myers, Fla. in 1942. He had a double battle to fight due to the prejudice of our men towards him.

I felt sorry for him and more or less took him under my wing and will always feel good for having done this.

We flew 25 missions together over Europe and Africa.

He proved himself as loyal an American as any man who ever crossed the ocean. He won the respect of both officers and enlisted men with whom he worked with and proved himself a superior soldier and a credit to the U. S. Army A ir forces.

He is a gentleman at all times and fully realizes the odds that are stacked up against him.

Anything you may do to make the American people realize that the greatest per cent of American born Japnese are loyal Americans, will be appreciated by me and a good many others whom I know.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) T/SGT. Dell Kettering

20th Academic Sqdrn.
Scott Field, Ill.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

WAR DEPARTMENT
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Washington, D.C.

8 February 1944

Mr. Benjamin H. Bull
c/o Bull, Biart & Bieberstein
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Bull:

Your letter of February 3, 1944, addressed to the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of Was, has been referred to this office for acknowledgment and reply.

I note in your letter that you request the War Department to advise you and your committee as to the persons responsible for the cancellation of the appearance of Sergeant Ben Kuroki on a recent National Broadcasting Company program and the reasons therefor. May I suggest that your query be addressed to the National Broadcasting Company, whose officials are responsible for the presentation of these programs.

Your understanding and approval of the position the War Department has taken in these matters is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

(signed) H. A. GERHARDT

HARRISON A. GERHARDT
Lt. Colonel, General Staff
Executive to Ass't Secretary of War

THE BIOW COMPANY

9 Rockefeller Plaza- New York

Advertising

Reply to
Hollywood Office
6111 Sunset Boulevard

February 14, 1944

Mr. Benjamin H. Bull
Attorney at Law
817 Gay Building
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Bull:

Miss Simms has allowed me to read your letter pertaining to the appearance of Sergeant Ben Kuroki on our program.

The final decision determining Sgt. Kuroki's appearance on our show was not ours.

At the last moment the network decided against the presentation of Sgt. Kuroki on our program on the basis that "the American-Japanese issue was a controversial one." This wasn't our interpretation as we were presenting him as an American fighting man and couldn't see how this could be in any way a controversial matter.

If and when it is possible to present Sgt. Kuroki, we shall be happy and proud to do so.

Cordially yours,

(signed) KARL M. GRUENER

Karl M. Gruener
Assistant Producer
Ginny Simms-Philip Morris Program

C O P Y

The Assistant Secretary of War

Washington

14 October 1944

Benjamin H. Bull, Esq.
817-824 Gay Building
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Bull:-

Mr. McCloy has asked me to reply to your letter of October 7 in which you raise the question of Sergeant Ben Kuroki's assignment.

I take pleasure in informing you that the War Department has reviewed Sgt. Kuroki's request to continue service with his squadron and that in view of his excellent record it has been decided to make an exception to the policy of non-assignment of soldiers of Japanese ancestry to the Pacific Theater.

Your interest in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Harrison A. Gerhardt

Colonel, General Staff Corps
Executive to Ass't Secretary of War

Reprint

JAPANESE LOYAL TO U.S.A.

The follow ing letter from H. V. Kaltenborn, radio commentator, appeared in THE PACIFIC, published monthly by the Northern California Congregational Conference:

"I have just returned from a comprehensive, although brief, tour of our Pacific fighting areas.

"On the basis of first-hand information I can tell you that American citizens of Japanese ancestry are performing some of the most valuable work that is being done by our Armed Forces in the Pacific. These American citizens of Japanese ancestry have not only proved their loyalty, but in many cases they have voluntarily risked their lives in order to perform important front-line services.

"With rare exceptions they are the only competent Japanese translators available to our Armed Forces. Those that have been given the privilege of taking up arms in the Italian war theater have also distinguished themselves. The number of medals which they have earned for outstanding service is large in proportion to their numbers.

"In talking with General Richardson, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army in the Central Pacific, with headquarters at Honolulu in the Hawaiian Islands, he informed me that there has not been a single case of active disloyalty proved against a single one of the 160,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the Hawaiian Islands. As he put it, 'We have no Japanese problem.'

"I have given an interview to the press in San Francisco, in which I stated that there must be something wrong with the way the Japanese problem has been handled in continental United States.

"I expect to comment on this matter in my broadcasts as the news may suggest. But you are at liberty to use the statements I have made in this letter in any way that will further the cause of decent treatment for American citizens, whose only crime is that they were born of Japanese parents."

KALTENBORN'S CONTRIBUTION TO JAPANESE AMERICANS

H. V. Kaltenborn, radio commentator, attests to the splendid contribution being made by young Japanese Americans in the war effort.

The following story appeared in the editorial column of the Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin:

"Attorney Benjamin H. Bull of Madison has just received a letter from H. V. Kaltenborn, nationally known radio commentator, enclosing Mr. Kaltenborn's check for $100 to help provide a scholarship for a young American of Japanese descent at Wayland Academy, Beaver Dam Wisconsin. Mr. Kaltenborn writes: 'As one who has personal contact with the magnificent contribution being made by young Americans of Japanese ancestry to our war effort in the South and the Southwest Pacific areas, I am happy to have an opportunity to make this contribution. I feel that I personally owe something to my fellow Americans of Japanese ancestry to make up for sometimes unfair and sometimes unintelligent treatment which they have received. You are at liberty to publicize both this contribution and this statement if you feel it will serve the cause of fair play to our fellow Americans of Japanese ancestry which we both have at heart.' Atty. Bull has been active for many months in behalf of American Citizens of Japanese descent in helping them to find employment and a chance to assist in our war effort."

U. S. Department of Justice

Immigration and Naturalization Service

Philadelphia 2, Pa.

Franklin Trust Building

October 30, 1943

20/201
CCU

Mr. Mitchell P. Briggs
Dean of Men
Fresno State College
Fresno, California

My dear Mr. Briggs:

This will acknowledge the receipt of your letter of October 12, 1943, requesting to be informed concerning the authority for the naturalization of Chinese aliens who are serving in the armed forces of this country.

Section 701 of the Nationality Act of 1940, as added by Title X, of the Second War Powers Act of March 27, 1942 (Public Law 507-77th Congress) provides for the expeditious naturalization, by a naturalization court, of members, or former members, of the armed forces of the United States during the present war. For the purpose of Section 701, the present war shall be deemed to have commenced on September 1, 1939.

A petitioner for naturalization under Section 701 is exempted from the following usual requirements:

(a) Any requirement as to age;
(b) Declaration of intention;
(c) Admission to the United States for permanent residence (lawful admission to the United States, including its Territories and possessions, and residence therein at the time of enlistment or induction are required);
(d) Any period of residence in the United States or State;
(e) Ability to speak the English language;
(f) Signing of the petition in his own handwriting;
(g) Any educational requirement or test;
(h) Any racial requirements;
(i) Any restrictions relating to the naturalization of alien enemies; and
(j) The payment of any fees.

The provisions of Section 701 shall not apply (1) to a person who, during the present war, is dishonorably discharged or is discharged on account of his alienage from the military or naval forces, or (2) to any conscientious objector who performed no military duty whatever or refused to wear the uniform.

Under Section 702 of the Nationality Act of 1940, any person entitled to naturalization under Section 701 of this Act, who, while serving honorably in the armed forces of this country, is not within the jurisdiction of any court authorized to naturalize aliens, may be naturalized if serving outside of the United States, in accordance with all the applicable provisions of Section 701 without appearing before a naturalization court.

It is the administrative view of this Service that the benefits of the Second War Powers Act are available to any alien, otherwise qualified under the statute, of whose legal admission to the United States a record appears at the port of entry. It is not necessary that the entry be for permanent residence, but it must be "lawful" in that the alien must have passed inspection by the immigration authorities. (Title III, Public Law 507, 77th Congress).

Sincerely yours,

Earl G. Harrison, Commissioner

By

(Signed) T.B. Shoemaker, Assistant Commissioner

Sunday, December 5, 1943

Dear Assemblyman ~~Gannon:~~

I have before me a newspaper clipping about you and your Assembly Interim Committee on Japanese Problems.

Before I continue, I want to let you know that I am an American-Chinese, born in California, educated in California schools and firmly believe in American institutions.

I have been in the Army nearly three years. I was in the Battle of Attu and am now somewhere in the Hawaiian Islands.

To read your narrow minded race hating campaign was a shock. This is a democracy. It is people like you who are leading the way to fascism - the very thing millions of people are fighting.

The opinion you expressed that returning soldiers and marines would slit the throats of Japanese if they were to be seen on the streets of California is utterly ridiculous.

Here in Hawaii the Japanese are everywhere. They are even permitted in army camps. In town, thousands of servicemen, men who have fought the Japanese, mingle freely with them. Not once - and this is important- have I seen or heard of any incident of fist fighting or throat-slitting. Here, if anywhere, bitterness against the Japanese should be at its height. Yet there is only tolerance and benignity.

We in this company have seen the horrors of war and the sufferings of humanity. We have seen violent death come to both Americans and Japanese. I have heard my buddies -Americans all- express time and time again, while gazing upon the dead, that they hope there will never be another war after this one is over. Yet how can be if we have race-baiting fascists fomenting hatred at home.

From remarks of my friends, it appears that only men who have fought Japanese will be able to save Constitutional Americanism in California and to preserve decent democracy in the country.

Sincerely,

Sgt ~~Corporal~~ William Leung
U.S. Army.

Permission to use this has been given

[illegible]

copy

6

Co. B. Section 31
1551 st Service Unit
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

December 23, 1943

Fresno State Alumni Association
Fresno State College
Fresno, California.

Dear Sirs:

I have received four copies of your "Loyal Stater and believe me, I have enjoyed it very much. It has been nice to hear of the goings on of old friends and comrades. There are a number of Fresnans here, among them, Pvt. Randal Walker, Pvt. Calvin Peterson is now stationed at the University of Cincinnati.

I have read with genuine interest the letters of a number of friends I had at F. S. C. among them that of an old friend, Cpl Takeo Sekiya. I had not thought much about writing in, even though my address has changed and my 1st sergeant has threatened me with K.P. if I do not notify all of my correspondents, but then I read the article which was entitled "Races" and appeared in the December 20, 1943 issue of Time Magazine and I felt that there were a few things that must be said.

I, along with many other servicemen here, was filled with horror as together we read of the activities of the professional flagwaving, super-duper patriots and other home-grown Nazis. It seems that in our absence these men are taking over and attempting to destroy the high ideals we are fighting for. Strangely enough they claim to do this in the name of patriotism and anyone of those few brave and clearminded individuals who has the guts to defy them is promptly labeled a "Communist" be they Republican or Democrat. Perhaps it is not so strange for no Nazi movement has risen in any nation which has not branded its enemies as "Communists" and posed as the only true and holy super-patriots. Nor has any Nazi movement arisen which has not preached racial hatred and persecution.

We servicemen - those who are across and those of us who are preparing to go across - do not intend to fight this war only to lose the peace. The current anti-Japanese-American agitation now being sponsored by ~~Mr. Hearst, the American Legion~~ and other arm chair purveyors of hate is regarded with disgust and horror. There seems to be less and less as time passes to distinguish the American Legion from Adolph Hitler's Storm Troopers both as to ideals and methods.

Cpl. Sekiya's letter in volume 2, No. 1 of the Loyal Stater was proof of the things we have long believed, that our comrades in arms of Japanese extraction are fighting for the same ideals and principles that we are. It is no wonder that we become burned up with anger when we read of the efforts of those "Oh ever so brave!" men who are trying to deprive them forever of their homes and their possessions. You can imagine how we admire the men who are trying to drive them

and their families permanently from their homes. There is nothing so valuable to a soldier as his home and his family. We believe that our Japanese-American comrades-in-arms- are getting the dirtiest deal ever perpetrated on an American soldier. What other group of real patriots has fought so loyally and gallantly for our country and its great ideals, while at home they are being systematically knifed in the back? When have any so cheerfully gone to battle and so bravely made even the supreme sacrifice and received so little gratitude at the hands of their fellow citizens.

I hope that Fresno State and its Alumni will show that same enlightened liberal attitude that it has shown in the past. I hope the Fresno State will take its stand on the issue with the same courage that it has shown in the past in combating the professional flag-wavers and red-baiters on other issues.

Americans stand on trial before the world. We must prove to the world that we do believe in the ideals we preach. Every time there is a race riot, fuel is added to the enemy propaganda machine. The State of California and the city of Fresno owes a debt to our Japanese-American citizens in the service who are paying the price of our common freedom with their lives. Fresno owes these soldiers a monument and not a stab in the back!

I hope you will forgive me for "blowing my top" in this manner, but I too look forward to coming back, and when I come back, I shall look forward to meeting my Japanese-American friends of school days at F. S. C. on the streets of Fresno as they go happily about their tasks as honored and respected citizens. I don't want to see their homes broken up and destroyed any more than I would want to have it happen to my own. I want those boys to know that we other servicemen will back them up in seeing that justice is done.

Sincerely

Cadet Wesley S. (Wizzer) Waite.

[WRA

FACTS CONCERNING JAPANESE-AMERICANS IN U.S. ARMY

April 14, 1944

Japanese-Americans on the Battle Front in Italy

Following are reports from the Fifth Army front as told the American public by war correspondents, the War Department, the officers of the Japanese-American battalion in Italy, and others.

One of the first to report the action of the 100th Infantry Battalion composed of American-born Japanese troops on the Italian front was Reynolds Packard, UP staff correspondent. In the Washington, D. C. Daily News, Oct. 4, 1943, Packard's dispatch quoted Burt Tanaka of San Diego, California, who is a Japanese-American fighting in Italy.

"You don't need to worry about us. We're glad of this chance to show the world that descendants of Japanese are just as good and loyal American citizens as the descendants of Italians and Germans who are also over here fighting."

* * * * * *

Record of the "Guinea Pigs"

Referring to what has been called the "guinea pig" unit, the St. Louis Post Dispatch, October 19, 1943, said:

"The alarmists who profess great trepidation over our Japanese-American population are thrown for a considerable loss by the record of the so-called "guinea pigs from Pearl Harbor." This is the name given an infantry unit recruited in Hawaii, composed almost wholly of men of Japanese descent and recently in action on the Volturno front."

It quoted their officers as saying: "Their story is a record of daring, doggedness and heriosm."

Referring again to the "guinea pig" unit, the Post Dispatch went on: "It is likely that these fighters are driven to superlative performance by the feeling that they must vindicate their group before the unthinking critics. These men have Japanese faces but they are loyal Americans."

An editorial in the Salt Lake City Telegram of Oct. 11, 1943, relates an amusing incident which illustrates the democratic composition of our Army:

"The first unit of Japanese-American troops has been in action in the Salerno-Naples area of Italy and an incident which occurred shortly after they reached the battle zone might give Army authorities some idea of a new way to undermine German morale.

"When the Japanese-American soldiers were moving up toward the front, they passed a German prisoner. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw Japanese soldiers in American uniforms. His jaw dropped a foot as he saw men of a race

supposed to be allies of Germany fighting on the other side. He asked if they were really Japanese, and when told that they were, but that they were natives of this country, and American citizens, he shook his head with amazement and said: 'Ach! That's America!'"

Continuing, the editorial comments:

"Seriously, our Japanese-American soldiers will be a valuable addition to our combat forces in Europe. Not only are they proving to be good soldiers, but their appearing in the fighting lines will be an impressive demonstration to our enemies of American unity and patriotism."

* * * * * *

Stimson Reports on Their Conduct

Before they had been in Italy one month, Secretary of War Stimson reported on Oct. 14 "Their behavior under fire and their combat discipline have received the praise of General Clark."

* * * * * *

They Occupy Advance Positions

On October 11, the United Nations radio at Algiers said that a detachment of American-born Japanese soldiers, after four days under fire recently near Benevento, finally entered the town and rescued 22 United States parachute troops who had been behind enemy lines for more than two weeks.

* * * * * *

Japanese-American Unit Wants to Fight Pearl Harbor Attackers

"An entire unit of American soldiers of Japanese descent is fighting today on an important sector of the Fifth Army front", according to a delayed dispatch from H. R. Knickerbocker, Chief of the Chicago Sun Foreign Service, which appeared in the Sun on Oct. 28.

Knickerbocker quoted their commanding officer, Lt. Col. Farrant L. Turner, as follows: "They actually tell me something you may find it hard to believe - that they would rather fight Japanese than the Germans."

As a result of an interview with their senior commissioned officer, Capt. Isaac Kawasaki, Knickerbocker reported that he said:

"Yes, that's the way these fellows feel about it. The Japanese in the Pearl Harbor attack hurt us worse than anybody. They did really a dirty job on the 300,000 Japanese people living in the United States.

"We pay and will go on paying a terrible price for the sin of those Japanese. They made us lose the faith and trust of the American people. Now we men of Japanese blood in the United States Army are trying to win back that faith and confidence of America.

"We are more than willing, we are eager to fight the Germans. But it is not against the Germans we hold our primary grudge. It is against the Japanese Imperial Army, Navy and Air Force."

* * * * * *

Tested Under Fire

The Akron, Ohio Beacon Journal, October 22, 1943, commenting on the fact that "Gen. Mark Clark has praised both their behavior under fire and their combat discipline," continued:

"The men of the 100th are Americans just as the U. S. fighters whose ancestors came from Germany and Austria and other Axis nations are Americans. We are proud that this Japanese-American unit came through its test with honor. Democracy has scored a victory over race prejudice."

* * * * * *

Japanese-Americans Are Playing Heroic Role in Italy

John Lardner, special correspondent in Italy of the North American Newspaper Alliance in a wireless dispatch dated October 25 and which appeared in the Toledo Times, October 27, reported:

"In the last month they have charged repeatedly into murderous machine-gun and automatic fire. Their position today is perhaps the most advanced of the Fifth Army forces."

* * * * * *

Biddle Lauds Nisei Soldiers

In an Armistice Day address in New York Attorney-General Biddle lauded Nisei soldiers in Italy. He said, "Our sons are today fighting side by side with sons of Italians, of Germans, and of Japanese. Is anything more needed to entitle the loyal Japanese-Americans to recognition?"

* * * * * *

American-Japanese in Italy Like to Stay at Front

"It is virtually impossible to evacuate to rear areas any of the Japanese-American troops fighting for Italy except in the case of very severe battle wounds," an AP dispatch from Allied Headquarters in Algiers declared on Nov. 16. This dispatch, which appeared in the Seattle Times Nov. 19, added, "These boys don't want to go back, even with injuries requiring days of rest. . ."

* * * * * *

Loyalty Is Demonstrated

The Grand Rapids Herald (Michigan) on November 25 quotes an (INS) Wash-

ington dispatch concerning Japanese-American soldiers on the Italian front as follows:

"During their four days under fire the men were in the fight for two. They led a veteran American division which had won glory in the Tunisian mountains. For much of the time they were under a heavy artillery barrage from the Germans." The dispatch goes on to quote their commanding officer as saying:

"We've had our baptism of fire and we have not been found wanting. We don't say we've done anything remarkable."

* * * * * *

Doughboys O.K. Japanese Yanks

Kenneth Dixon, AP correspondent with the Fifth Army in Italy, in a delayed dispatch dated Nov. 24 and which appeared in the Seattle Times, Dec. 3, states:

"They first came in to replace a rough, tough battalion which was removed from the division before the North African invasion.

"The division, so the boys say, fought through the North African campaign minus one battalion, and it was to fill this gap that the boys of Japanese descent joined them . . ."

"They moved into the lines while the doughboys looked at them and reserved judgment. When at the front they were under constant fire day in and day out, battling mud and rain and terrific terrain."

The dispatch goes on to say:

"They hail from Hawaii and they're of Japanese descent, but they call themselves Hawaiians or just plain Americans, and across the cold mud and rocks and hills of this bleak Italian front the doughboys will tell you that 'they've earned the right to call themselves anything they damn well please!"

In an interview with one of these soldiers, Dixon reports him as saying:

"The Jerry prisoners were pretty surprised when they saw us, and they couldn't understand it. But we told them we were good Americans."

This is the article about which I called you Monday morning.
Please let us know if you wish to have copies of this, and if so, how many.

OK 500

HBogert
Public Relations Office
WRA
San Francisco

April 28, 1944

FACTS CONCERNING JAPANESE AMERICANS IN U.S. ARMY

Japanese Americans On The Battle Front In Italy

These reports are a continuation of those sent out under the date of April 4. They are reports from the Fifth Army as told to the American public by war correspondents, the War Department, the officers of the Japanese-American battalion in Italy, and others.

They Give Their Lives For U.S.

The Des Moines Register, in a four column feature on Dec. 13, under the headlines, Jap-Americans Give Lives for U.S. In Italy, had the following to say:

"Daily they are giving their lives for Uncle Sam in rough mountain action against the Germans. The U.S. Army unit . . . has distinguished itself in action as daring as any in the entire Italian war theatre."

Not One Nisei Soldier Has Betrayed Trust

"High executives of the War Department are proud of the way in which Japanese American soldiers have responded to the call of American patriotism and done a good job in the Army," Drew Pearson declared in his nationally syndicated column, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," on Dec. 18, 1943.

The Pearson column added: "Reports from Italy pay tribute to the bravery of one Japanese-American battalion which was under fire. Most of its men were recruited from Hawaii. They fought with great heroism and the casualty lists were very heavy."

Commenting on their loyalty, Pearson said: "The Japanese-Americans are all carefully investigated before they enter the Army, but in no case has one of them, after entering the Army, betrayed trust."

* * * * *

American at War

H. R. Knickerbocker, Chief of the foreign staff, of the Chicago Sun and now with the American Army in Italy, in a cable to the New York PM of Dec. 22, said:

"Once more it can be noted how many different kinds of men are fighting under the flag of the United States. Since Pearl Harbor I have personally seen Filipinos, Japanese and Mexicans, not to speak of American Indians and negroes, fighting side by side with their white brothers in a sort of true brotherhood for which we are waging war."

* * * * *

General Clark Lauds Nisei Unit

Commenting on an AP dispatch of Dec. 27 in which it was reported that General Mark W. Clark gave high praise to the Japanese-American battalion, the San Francisco Chronicle of Dec. 30 editorializes:

"General Mark Clark has promoted two American Army officers of Japanese descent, citing them for outstanding leadership in the field of battle, and assuring them that their battalion, the 100th Infantry, is doing a fine job on the Italian front . . .

"These facts will be carefully overlooked by German propagandists, desirous of increasing racial problems in America and of persuading the world that our race prejudice is as bitter as theirs. A Nazi would find it hard to explain why our Army advances officers whose ancestry is Japanese - or why, for that matter, people of that ancestry volunteer to fight for the United States."

* * * * *

Japanese American Battalion Fighting Some of the Hardest Italy Battles

Japanese-American soldiers who have fought in the Italian invasion "to prove they are as good Americans as any other doughboys have won their place so far as their fellow fighters are concerned," Don Whitehead, AP staff correspondent with the Fifth Army in Italy, reported in a delayed dispatch dated Dec. 27. This dispatch was quoted in the Stars and Stripes, Jan. 4, 1944.

"From the beaches of Salerno right into the Nazi winter line these troops of Japanese descent have fought and are now fighting some of the hardest battles of the entire campaign," Whitehead declared.

"They have asked no quarter, nor have they receive any. They rank on a par with other troops for endurance, skill and ability," AP report added.

"They are no different from any other soldiers, but they have that added incentive to fight because some of their fathers are in internment camps at home.

"These island troops do not like to be called 'Japanese Americans', nor do they like to be regarded as different from any other troops," said Whitehead. "About ten percent came into the Army from the Hawaiian National Guard, while the others entered through Selective Service. About 17 percent of them are college men. Some operated or worked on plantations, some were school teachers and others were in business.

"Since landing in Italy the unit has won a reputation for its close fighting."

* * * * *

Secretary Stimson Reports on Casualties Sustained by Japanese American Unit

Secretary of War Stimson, at his press conference on January 20, pointed out particularly the casualties of the 100th Infantry Battalion composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry. He said their losses to date have been 96 killed, 221 wounded and 17 missing in the Italian campaign.

"A battalion ordinarily numbers slightly more than 1,000 men. Thus the Japanese American battalion has suffered casualties amounting to about one-third of its men," according to a UP dispatch in the Grand Rapids press Jan. 20, 1944.

* * * * *

Nisei Soldiers Win Praise of Officers

A letter was received recently in Washington from Lawrence J. Collins from an American Red Cross hospital in Africa. He wrote:

"I am happy to see that the battalion of American Japanese that has seen action in this theater has won praise in all quarters for its ability and loyalty. Several officers (Caucasians) from that unit are in this ward and they laud them to the skies. Interesting, too, are the praises they receive spontaneously from other officers here that have seen them in action or just worked with them in adjacent sectors."

* * * * *

Only 11 Nisei Came Back

How a "suicide mission" of Japanese-American volunteers secured a vital road junction for United Nations forces on the Fifth Army front is revealed through a newsphoto from Italy which was published on Feb. 13 by the Des Moines Register.

The Register printed the photo of eleven battle-weary Japanese-American soldiers, noting "only these returned from a rendezvous with death." The caption to the picture reported that these eleven soldiers, members of the fighting 100th Infantry Battalion, "were all who came back out of a platoon that accomplished its mission and secured for United Nations' Armies a road junction in Italy that had been heavily defended by a German machine gun crew." A platoon normally numbers 50 men.

* * * * *

Japanese Americans First to Storm Cassino

The Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion has won new distinction in twenty-eight days of steady fighting in the bitter battle of Cassino, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, special correspondent for the New York Times Syndicate, reported from the Fifth Army front in Italy on Februrary 28:

"The full story of this battalion and its losses cannot yet be told for various military reasons. It took San Michele in a night attack. It launched the first infantry attack right around Cassino, getting ahead of other units in its enthusiasm. It held the terrible Castle Hill sector," Sulzberger cabled in a dispatch which praised the courage of the 'Puka Puka' battalion, the great majority of whose members are American soldiers of Japanese ancestry from Hawaii.

"The Japanese American unit is described by their commander as 'the best soldiers I have ever seen'," Sulzberger said, adding:

"The men of this Japanese American battalion have fought with tremendous bravery, sustained stiff casualties and carried heavy loads uncomplainingly. They have said nothing about their suffering in the bitter climate around here. Apparently they feel they are serving in a sort of crusade to make the rest of America understand that they, too, are good and loyal citizens.

"According to their commander, Major Casper Clough, Jr. of Saugertes, N.Y., 'they are showing the rest of the people that they are just as good citizens as the next John Doughboy!'

"Some of the latest periodicals reaching the front indicate an unfortunate amount of the type of patriotism that holds all Japanese citizens should be barred from the United States and that the 'only good Japs are dead ones.'

"The record of the 'Puka Puka' battalion appears to be a good answer to that."

Sulzberger quoted the commander of the Japanese American battalion who said that the Nisei troops have already won special Distinguished Service Crosses and Silver Stars.

"They are fine men and I hope America realizes it," the officer said.

* * * * *

Willian P. Haughton, State Commander of the California American Legion, states in the February 15 issue of the California Legionnaire:

"The American Legion has pledged its confidence in and its full support to our Army and Navy. Numerous persons of Japanese ancesters are now serving with the armed forces of our country on the battle fronts, and according to all reports, are serving valiantly and well.

"We salute all men and women who love this country enough to fight, and, if need be, die for it. Every person good enough to fight for us is entitled to our respect and equal protection under the Constitution."

* * * * *

FACTS CONCERNING JAPANESE AMERICANS IN U. S. ARMY

Secretary of War Stimson at his press conference on January 20, pointed out particularly the casualties of the 100th Infantry Battalion, composed of Americans of Japanese ancestry. He said their losses to date have been 96 killed, 221 wounded and 17 missing.

A battalion ordinarily numbers slightly more than 1,000 men, so the Japanese-American battalion probably suffered casualties to about one-third of its men.

In a later statement, the War Department has announced 85 more wounded, increasing the casualty list to 419 -- more than 40 per cent of the total personnel of the battalion.

The position held by the Japanese American 100th Infantry unit on the road to Rome was "perhaps the most advanced of the Fifth Army forces" on October 25, 1943, John Lardner, special correspondent in Italy for North American Newspaper Alliance reported in a delayed wireless dispatch dated October 25, 1943, and published in U. S. newspapers on October 27.

Among the casualties recently flown from an east coast port to Memphis, Tennessee General Hospital, according to a United Press release of January 17, was Pfc. Yoshinoa Omiya, of Honolulu. He is a Japanese-American who fought bravely until both eyes were blown out by a land mine.

The Secretary of War praised the courage and daring of Nisei troops, paying special tribute to their skillful work in scouting and patrolling.

Further recognition of Japanese-American fighting men was recently given by the War Department in the awarding of decorations to two Nisei soldiers. Staff Sgt. Ben Kuroki of the Army Air Forces has received the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster as well as the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters. Sgt. Kazuo Komoto was decorated with the Order of the Purple Heart.

Sgt. Kuroki received the Flying Cross and oak leaf cluster for his performance as a turret gunner on one of the Liberator bombers which raided the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania. He was previously given the Air Medal for participating in 100 hours of operational flight against the enemy in the Middle East Theater. The three oak leaf clusters were added after he had taken part in bomber combat missions over enemy-occupied Europe.

Sgt. Komoto saw action at both Guadalcanal and on New Georgia Island in the Southwest Pacific. He was wounded by an enemy sniper who opened fire on his detachment with a concealed machine gun. Now convalescing at a military hospital in California, he recently visited his parents in Gila River.

(over)

On December 28, an announcement from the Headquarters of the 34th Infantry Division stated that Purple Heart Awards had been made to 58 of the officers and men, all of Japanese ancestry.

H. V. Kaltenborn, Drew Pearson and others have mentioned the invaluable services being rendered by the Nisei with the fighting units in the South Pacific and Attu.

WAC headquarters in Washington have informed WRA that seven Nisei girls were inducted in the Women's Army Corps during the past several weeks.

According to an official bulletin of the War Relocation Authority there are more than 9,000 young men of Japanese ancestry--roughly half of them volunteers--serving in the United States Army.

Statement of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF WAR HENRY L. STIMSON
Released with announcement of organization of a Japanese American Combat Unit of the United States Army.
January 28, 1943. Washington D.C.

"It is the inherent right of every faithful citizen, regardless of ancestry, to bear arms in the nation's battle. When obstacles to free expression of that right are imposed by emergency considerations, those barriers should be removed as soon as humanly possible. Loyalty to country is a voice that must be heard, and I am glad that I am now able to give active proof that this basic American belief is not a casualty of war."

Endorsing the Army induction and employment program, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a letter to the Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson. The content is printed below:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
February 1, 1943

"My Dear Mr. Secretary:

"The proposal of the War Department to organize a combat team consisting of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent has my full approval. The new combat team will add to the nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry who are already serving in the armed forces of our country.

"This is a natural and logical step toward the reinstitution of the Selective Service procedures which were temporarily disrupted by the evacuation from the West Coast.

"No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country wherever his skills will make the greatest contribution--whether it be in the ranks of the armed forces, war production, agriculture, government service, or other work essential to the war effort.

"I am glad to observe that the War Department, the Navy Department, the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Justice, and the War Relocation Authority are collaborating in a program which will insure the opportunity for all loyal Americans, including Americans of Japanese ancestry, to serve their country at a time when the fullest and wisest use of our manpower is all-important to the war effort."

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Honorable,
The Secretary of War,
Washington, D.C.

MAJOR JOHN R. MacFADEN, A. C.
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER
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SGT. BEN KUROKI SPEECH
COMMONWEALTH CLUB
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
4 FEBRUARY 1944

I want to thank you gentlemen, especially Mr. Deutsch and Mr. Ward, for inviting me to speak to you today. This is a great honor, and I really appreciate it. I just hope that I won't disappoint you. People who are going to make speeches usually start out by saying that they don't know how to, but in my case it's really true. A soldier's job is to fight, not talk, but I'll do the best I can.

I've spent most of my life in Hershey, Nebraska, which isntt where they make Hershey candy bars. Hershey is so small that probably none of you has ever heard of it. Before the war the population was about 500; now I guess it's about 300.

I didn't even live in Hershey; my father had a farm a mile north of town. I remember the farmers used to go to town every saturday night and stand in groups on the street corners talking about their cows and horses. We've lived on that farm since 1928, and after I finished high school I helped my father work it until the war came along.

The last two years are what really matter, though, and maybe I can tell you something about them, even if I don't know much about making speeches. That's one thing the Army didn't teach me, though it taught me a lot of other things, and the experiences I went through as a result of being in the Army taught me even more.

I learned more about democracy, for one thing, than you'll find in all the books, because I saw it in action. When you live with men under combat conditions for 15 months, you begin to understand what brotherhood, equality, tolerance and unselfishness really mean. They're no longer just words.

Under fire, a man's ancestry, what he did before the war, or even his present rank, don't matter at all. You're fighting as a team -- that's the only way a bomber crew can fight -- your're fighting for each other's life and for your country, and whether you realize it at the time or not, you're living and proving democracy.

// Something happened on my first mission that might give you an idea of what I mean. We were in a flak zone -- the anti-aircraft was terribly accurate -- and we had a flock of fighters attacking us.

A shell burst right above the tail, and flak poured down. Our tail gunner was a young kid named Dawley, from New Jersey. The piece that got him was so big it tore a four-inch hole through a quarter of an inch of aluminum and double-welded steel. It caught him just above the ear. It went through his fur helmet, and in so far we couldn't even see it when we got to him.

I was firing the right waist gun on our Liberator that day. All of a sudden I heard him yell over the interphone:

"I'm hit in the head, let's get the hell out of here!"

[illegible]

We couldn't leave the guns until we'd shaken the Messerschmitts that were after us -- it would have been suicide -- but in a few minutes the tunnel gunner and I were able to get back to the tail.

We pulled Dawley back into the fuselage, so that we could work on him and at the same time watch out for more fighters. Then we took off our fur jackets and covered him up. It was about 10 below zero and we were about freezing to death.

He was in terrible shape; I can't even begin to describe the look of pain on his face. He was semi-conscious, but he couldn't open his mouth to speak. His lips seemed to be parched, as though he was dying of thirst. We couldn't understand how he was still alive.

I called the radio operator, because he's the one who is supposed to administer first aid on a Liberator, but instead the co-pilot, a first lieutenant, came back. He was going to give Dawley a morphine injection, but I stopped him. They'd taught us in gunnery school not to give morphine for head injuries; it might kill the man instantly. The co-pilot had either forgotten or was so excited he could think only of stopping the pain.

Anyway, I motioned to him -- we couldn't hear each other above the roar of the motors -- I pointed to my head and shook it. The co-pilot evidently understood, because he didn't give Dawley the morphine.

That tail gunner lived to fly and fight again,

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and the last I heard he had completed his tour of duty. Whether or not I was instrumental in saving his life by stopping that morphine injection isn't important -- it was just that we had to work together regardless of rank or ancestry.

The tunnel gunner that helped me with him was Jewish, I'm a Japanese-American, the bombardier of our crew was a German, the left waist gunner was an Irishman. Later I flew with an American-Indian pilot and a Polish tunnel gunner. What difference did it make? We had a job to do, and we did it with a kind of comradeship that was the finest thing in the world.

The (That) first mission was over Bizerte; it was the 13th of December, 1942, and we'd just arrived in French North Africa from England two days before. When I say "we" I'm talking about the outfit I was serving with; it was Brig. Gen. Ted Timberlake's Liberator bomber group, which everybody over there called "Ted's Traveling Circus" because it got around so much back and forth between England and Africa. In fact, it got around so much it kept German military intelligence guessing, trying to figure out where it was from week to week.

It was a funny thing -- I'd just been assigned to a crew the day before we left England, although the group had been based there for about four months. I'd finished gunnery school more than a month before, and ever since

I'd been trying to get assigned to a crew. It wasn't easy; I'd talk to the pilot whenever I knew there was going to be an opening on a crew, and each pilot would assign me temporarily and then replace me when the time came for permanent assignment.

I understood well enough how they felt; and they knew I was as good as any man they did assign, but still they were uneasy. But I wanted to get into combat more than anything in the world, so I kept after it.

In fact, it had been one continual struggle from the beginning of my Army career, and I felt that I had done pretty well to get overseas and to gunnery school.

Two days after Pearl Harbor, my brother Fred and I drove 150 miles to Grand Island, Nebraska, to enlist in the Army Air Forces. We were held up for nearly a month because of all the confusion and misunderstanding in Army camps at that time. For the first time in our lives we found out what prejudice was.

I began to realize right then that I had a couple of strikes on me to begin with, and that I was going to be fighting two battles instead of one -- against the Axis and against intolerance among my fellow-Americans.

Finally, after two more trips to Grand Island and three telephone calls, Fred and I were accepted at the recruiting station at North Platte, and sent to Sheppard Field, Texas, for basic training.

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There was so much prejudice among the recruits there, that I wondered if it would always be like that; if I would ever be able to overcome it. Even now I would rather go through my bombing missions again than face that kind of prejudice.

My kid brother Fred could hardly stand it. He'd come back to the barracks at night and bury his head in his pillow and actually cry. We were not only away from home for the first time; but because of this discrimination, we were the loneliest two soldiers in the Army.

After basic I was sent to clerical school at Fort Logan, Colorado, and then to Barksdale Field near Shreveport, Louisiana, for permanent assignment. Of the 40 clerks sent to Barksdale, I was the last one assigned. I spent about a month at Barksdale, most of it on K.P. You've all heard the Air Forces motto, "Keep 'Em Flying." Well, my motto was "Keep 'Em Peeling"; they called me "Keep 'Em Peeling" Kuroki in those days.

The most discouraging thing about that was the fact that I had no assurance that I ever would be assigned. About the only thing that kept me going were the wonderful letters of encouragement I received from home. My sister would write me that I had to realize that Americans were shocked by Pearl Harbor, and that many of them were unable to distinguish between Japanese and Americans of Japanese descent. I still was without a friend in the Army, though, and that made it bad. There was only one boy who was kind

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to me at all -- he used to get my mail for me when I was on K.P. and couldn't get away. //

I was finally assigned to a squadron in General Timberlake's bomber group, which had been formed at Barksdale and was ready to move to Fort Myers, Florida, for final training. A few days before we were to leave, the commanding officer of my squadron called me in and told me I wasn't going; and that I was to be transferred to another outfit.

That was about the worst news I had ever heard. I asked him why, and he said that he had nothing to do with it. He started asking me questions then -- how I liked the Army, and so forth. I told him pretty bluntly about the prejudice I was encountering, and that I didn't even go into town because I couldn't enjoy a minute of it when I did. He seemed sympathetic enough, but he said there was nothing he could do to stop my being transferred.

But my words must have had some effect, because the day before the group left, he called me back and told me to pack my bags, that I was going with them.

// At Fort Myers I did clerical work for about three months. I gradually began to win over some of the soldiers, and the boy who used to get my mail for me at Barksdale became a good friend of mine. We were in a truck accident one day, and I was able to help him. After that we were inseparable. //

When the group had finished training and was ready to go overseas, I was given orders, as I had been at

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Barksdale, transferring me out of my squadron. This was even worse than the time at Barksdale, because I really wanted to go overseas and had been counting on it for three months.

General Timberlake -- he was then a colonel -- was already up north with the air echelon of the group, so I couldn't see him. I went to see the squadron adjutant and begged him, really begged him, with tears streaming down my face, to take me along. He said there was nothing he could do about it, that it wasn't because I was of Japanese decent. But he did agree to talk it over with the group adjutant, and in about an hour he came back with the good news that I would remain with the outfit. I was about the happiest guy in the world just then.

We shipped north right after that and sailed from New York on the last day of August 1942. Ours was the first Liberator group sent to the European theater. As soon as we had our base set up in England, I applied for combat duty. I had to beg for that too, but at least I was sent to gunnery school.

It wasn't much schooling -- about a week, I guess -- a lot different from the way it is now, when every crew member goes to school for months in this country. I really learned to shoot the hard way, in combat.

As a result of the recommendations of the armament officer, I was accepted on Major J. B. Epting's crew as an

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auxiliary member; we were to go out on a raid the next day, but it was cancelled because of the weather. About a week later I was permanently assigned to his crew. The next day we flew to Africa and my tour of duty began. Once again I'd received a break just in the nick of time.

We were glad to get away from the cold, fog, rain and mud of England. Boy, Africa seemed like heaven for the first two days. It was dry and warm and the sun was shining. It was interesting, too, at first. I met my first live Arab. The Arabs used to come out to the base peddling tangerines and oranges and eggs, foods we hadn't seen for months in England. I remember in London they were asking 18 shillings -- about $3.50 -- for a pound of grapes; one of our boys even asked the vendor if they had golden seeds in them.

One of our gunners made a deal with an Arab -- a filthy barefoot old man dressed in something that looked like grandma's nightgown. The gunner told him he would trade the plane for six eggs delivered every day for six months. So every day the Arab would bring him six eggs. Then he would go over to the plane and pat it and smile, thinking of the day when it would be his. We wondered what he thought when we took off one day and didn't come back.

After the second night in Africa we weren't so sure it was an improvement on England. It started to rain and kept on raining until we finally couldn't operate

at all. We had no tents or barracks or any place to sleep, Some of the boys slept under the plane until it got too muddy. I picked the flight deck inside for myself, but gave it up so that Major Epting could sleep there. I slept in the top turret.

If you have any idea of the size of a top turret on a Liberator, you can imagine how comfortable I was. I had to sit up, and all night I would bump into switches which would snap on and wake me up. One night of that was enough for me.

We'd left England in such a hurry that we didn't have mess kits. All the time we were in French North Africa we ate our canned hash and hardtack out of sardine cans.

And the mud -- I've never seen such gooey mud. Our group flew about three or four missions from that base and then the planes couldn't even get off the ground. They'd start to take off and sink into the mud all the way up to the belly, and then we'd have to unload the bombs, dig the ship out, reload and try again. It was a mess. After about 18 days we gave up and moved out of there.

From French North Africa we went to the Libyan desert, near Tobruk, not long after the Germans had surrendered it. Tobruk was the most desolate place I have ever seen; it was full of abandoned tanks and guns and broken buildings. Only a church had escaped complete destruction, and no living person dwelt in that city.

But as far as we were concerned, we were glad to get out of our mudhole in North Africa, but not for long. We were in Libya three months. In all that time, we were able to take a bath only once, and that was when we were given leave to fly to an Egyptian city for that specific purpose. That was the only time we shaved, too; we must have looked like a convention of Rip Van Winkles before we left.

There were no laundry facilities; we were allowed only a pint of water a day for everything. This water we drew from a well, which we had to abandon after a while when we found some dead Germans in it.

We were at least 300 miles from any town, excepting the dead city of Tobruk. We had no entertainment of any kind out there on the desert; when we weren't on raids we just lay around in our tents, or took walks in the desert.

The most dismal Christmas eve of my life I spent on the Libyan desert. It was cold, and we didn't even have tents to sleep under. We slept in our clothes and didn't even take off our shoes. Our morale was certainly low that night, as we thought of the fun we could be having in the States, and of our families and friends back there. But it's things like that, as well as actually fighting together, that bring men close to one another, as close as brothers.

Our group was going on raids about every other day while we were in the desert, and they were all pretty rough.

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We bombed Rommel's shipping lines over and over at Bizerte, Tunis, Sfax, Sousse and Tripoli in Africa. Then we started in on Sicily and Italy.

We had some boys of Italian parentage flying with us, and whenever we took off to bomb Naples or Rome I'd kid them about bombing their honorable ancestors. "We're really going to make the spaghetti fly today," I'd say, and they'd retort that they couldn't wait to knock the rice out of my dishonorable ancestors.

Naples was always a rough target. It was the "flak city" of the Italian theater. The flak burst so thick and black you couldn't even see the planes a hundred yards behind you. Yet our raids over there were called spectacular examples of precision bombing.

We participated in the first American raid on Rome last July. It was the biggest surprise I'd had so far; we thought we were going to run into heavy opposition, and we were almost disappointed when we found hardly any.

We bombed Sicily and Southern Italy at altitudes of about 25,000 feet, and it really gets cold at that height. One time over Palermo it was 42 below zero. I froze two oxygen masks; after that I had to suck on the hose to get any oxygen.

Even at that height we could see our bombs breaking exactly on their targets, and as much as an hour after we had left the targets we could see the smoke rising from the fires we had caused.

It gave you a funny feeling; you couldn't help but think of the people being hurt down there. I wasn't particularly religious before the war, but I always said a prayer, and I know for sure that my pal Kettering, the radio operator, did too, for the innocent people we were destroying on raids like that.

But we were in no position to be sentimental about it. The people knew they were in danger, and they could have gotten out. Besides, we weren't fighting against individual people, but against ideas. It was Hitlerism or democracy, and we couldn't afford to let it be Hitlerism. And so, unfortunately, it was German and Italian lives or ours. That was the only way you could look at it.

It was a happy day when after three months of Libya, we received orders to return to England. We took off from Tobruk at midnight. There was no formation; the planes left at two-minute intervals, and each was on its own.

The next morning, instead of seeing daylight, we looked out over a blanket of clouds without any opening. We had had to go up to about 10,000 feet to get over the clouds, and now we couldn't go under them, for fear of crashing into mountains.

We were lost. The navigator could do nothing, and the radio operator, though he was working like mad, couldn't get his messages through because of the weather. Finally he got a message, but by that time we didn't have enough gas to get to the air field that had answered us.

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We'd already been up 11 hours and 20 minutes with a 10-hours' supply of gas. We expected to go down any minute.

The pilot called back that anyone who wanted to bail out could do so. Nobody did; I know I had so much faith in Major Epting's flying ability that I wouldn't leave until he did. All of a sudden, and it seemed like a miracle to us who were tensely waiting for the crash, there was a tiny rift in the clouds. Epting didn't wait one second; he just dove right into it, and made a perfect landing in a valley that wasn't big enough to land a cub in safely.

We had just gotten out of the plane when a swarm of Arabs surrounded us. There must have been a hundred of them, and they were armed with rifles, spears, and some with clubs. When we saw them coming we debated whether we should shoot at them or try to talk to them. We decided to talk to them, but we couldn't understand them and they couldn't understand us.

They didn't hurt us, but they certainly weren't friendly. They took everything away from us -- guns, wallets and everything we had in our pockets -- and they wouldn't let us near the plane.

We had no idea where we were, but in a few minutes a Spanish officer came up and arrested us, and we found out that we had landed in Spanish Morocco. The officer marched all of us, our crew and the Arabs, into a native village about two miles away. The procession we

[illegible]

made caused more excitement, I guess, than that village had had in its entire history.//

The natives all thought I was Chinese, but Kettering, our radio operator, explained to the Spanish soldiers that I was Japanese-American. That created quite a stir when it got around. Most of the people, both Spanish and Arabs, flatly refused to believe it, and later it took the American embassy to prove it to them.

In a few days we were flown to Spain in a German plane and interned in a mountain village. We thought we'd be there for the duration, but within two months, through methods I can't reveal, we were in England.

//From England we bombed targets in Germany and began preparations for the raid on the Roumanian oil fields at Ploesti, preparations that were to last three months and take us back to the Libyan desert. In England our group practiced low-level bombing. We practice-bombed our own airfields, each plane having its own specific target. That way our bombardiers got accustomed to finding targets at low altitude.//

After nearly a month in England we returned to Africa. This time our base was set up near the city of Bengasi in Libya. Here we had a complete dummy target of what we later learned were the Ploesti refineries.

Up to this time I had been a tail gunner, but now I was assigned to the top turret, the position I held

throughout the rest of my missions. To celebrate the event, Kettering painted in big red letters across the glass dome of the turret these words: "Top Turret Gunner Most Honorable Son Sgt. Ben Kuroki." "Most Honorable Son" was what they usually called me -- that or "Hara-kiri." They were a great bunch over there.

Every day that we weren't on missions, 175 Liberators loaded with practice bombs would take off in groups at regular intervals and bomb duplicates of the real target. On these practice raids, each group rather than each plane had its specific target, so that it was really a dress rehearsal of the actual raid. Some of the planes flew so low that they came back with their bomb-bay doors torn off. And we sure scared the daylights out of the natives; we had to dodge groups of Arabs and their camels all over that desert.

Despite the heat we had to do double work, because we had only a skeleton ground crew -- our real base was still in England. We'd go up into 10 to 20-below-zero temperatures and then come back into 110-above heat. It was no wonder that a lot of the boys came down with colds.

We had fewer sandstorms and they didn't last as long as when we had been stationed near Tobruk. What really worried us were the poisonous sand-viper snakes and scorpions. The scorpions especially -- big two-inch long devils with curving tails were thick as flies. We'd find them in our blankets and everywhere else. If you got stung by one of

[illegible]

them, you really knew it; you'd be sick as a dog for at least a day.

The month preceding the Ploesti raid we were taking part in the invasion of Sicily, bombing Messina, Palermo and various airfields. It's unusual for heavy bombers to bomb airfields, but we were assigned that job so that it would be impossible for enemy fighter planes to take off from those fields and strafe our ground troops as they landed.

During all our practice for Ploesti we were intensely curious as to what our target was going to be. Rumors of all kinds were floating around, but no one thought it would be Ploesti because no one could imagine how we could carry enough gas to get there and back.

Our base was guarded by British anti-aircraft gunners, and we used to ask them what they thought about our flying so low. They said it was an advantage from the point of view of escaping the heavy anti-aircraft fire, but that we would be dead ducks for anything smaller than 40 millimeter cannon. Right then we began to think of the approaching raid as a "suicide" mission.

The last week in July every crew member in every group was restricted to the base until after the mission, but it was not until the day before we left that we were told the target was the Roumanian oil fields. That was news all right. You hardly ever hear of an oil field

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being bombed -- the only other one I know of was in Burma. We were really surprised. There had been a couple of rumors that our target was to be Ploesti, but nobody had put any stock in them -- it seemed too improbable.

We were briefed all that day and into the night. The American engineer who had constructed the Ploesti refineries talked to us; he knew the exact location of every refinery and every cracking and distilling plant. The information he gave us proved invaluable the next day. They showed us motion pictures which gave details of the individual targets of each group.

In the afternoon Major General Brereton, commanding general of the Ninth Air Force, came around in a staff car and talked to us for almost an hour. He said we were going on the most important and one of the most dangerous missions in the history of heavy bombardment, that it had been planned in Washington months before. He told us that Ploesti supplied one-third of all Germany's oil and nearly all of Italy's, that it was timed, furthermore, to cut Hitler's fuel supply as his divisions rushed to Italy to defend it against the coming Allied invasion.

When he finished, our group commander -- not General Timberlake, who had just been promoted from colonel and was now a wing commander, but the new group commander -- briefed us again, and went into minute details of the takeoff the next morning. He tried to encourage us as much as possible.

"I'll get my damn ship over the target if it falls apart," he said.

He got his ship over the target all right -- we were close behind him. And we saw it when it fell apart, flaming to the earth.

That afternoon before the raid he emphasized that nobody had to go who didn't want to; it was really a volunteer mission. No one declined, but we were all very tense. Someone had mentioned that even if all planes were lost it would be worth the price, and that started more talk about its being a suicide mission.

We didn't sleep very much that night, and there was none of the joking that usually went on among our crew. We tried hard to sleep, because we knew it would be a long trip and we had to be at our best, but you can imagine how easy it was.

The first sergeant blew the whistle at four in the morning. While we ate breakfast the ground crews, who had been working on the planes for the last two days, gave them a final checking over. Those planes were beautiful, parked wing to wing in a long line on the runway.

We took off at the crack of dawn. It was a perfect summer day, warm and balmy. The lead plane of the group started out, and the others followed at precise intervals until finally the whole group was in the sky in perfect formation. Our group joined other groups from nearby fields at pre-arranged places. It was all split-second timing.

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We were keyed up. We knew it was going to be the biggest thing we had ever done, and we were determined it would be the best. It was the same with the ground crews; they always took great pride in the ships, but this time they had gone overboard to get them in perfect condition. They shared our excitement and anxiety, too.

From Bengasi we flew straight over the Mediterranean. It was very calm and blue that day. We were going along at about 5,000 feet when suddenly we saw one of the planes ahead take a straight- nose-dive. It went down like a bullet, crashed in the water and exploded. For half an hour we could see the smoke from it. It gave us a haunting feeling, as of approaching disaster -- we could see that not a man on that plane had a chance to escape.

A couple of hours after we left Bengasi, we were crossing the ,ountains of Italy, going up sometimes as high as 10,000 feet to get over them. Then the Adriatic and into Jugoslavia, through Bulgaria and across the Danube into Roumania.

Over the Danube valley, in Roumania, we went down to about 300 feet, so low that we could easily see people in the streets of Roumanian towns waving at us as we went over. They must have thought we were friendly bombers because we were flying so low. Or maybe they recognized the white star on our wings and were glad that we were coming.

About 10 miles from the target, we dropped to 50 feet, following the contours of the land, up over hills

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and down into valleys. // Our pilot would head straight for those hills, and every time I thought sure we'd crash right into them, but he would pull us up just in time, and just enough to get over the ridge, and then down into the next valley. // Coming back we were flying part of the way at five and 10 feet off the ground, and some of the planes returned to base with tree tops and even cornstalks in their bomb-bays.

// We had a very good pilot. He was our squadron leader, Lt. Col. K. O. Dessert, and his co-pilot was our regular pilot, Major Epting.

This was the 24th mission I had flown with Major Epting and the same crew, except for Dawley, the tail gunner who was hurt during our first raid. Our ship was named in Major Epting's honor; his home town is Tupelo, Mississippi, and so we called the plane "Tupelo Lass."

The major, who is 23 years old, is one of the best pilots I've ever seen. He pulled us out of a lot of tough spots when we thought we were gone.

And between ~~them~~ Major Epting and Col. Dessert they got us through Ploesti without a scratch, but it was a miracle that they did. //

We came into the oil fields at about 50 feet and went up to about 75 to bomb. The plane I was on was leading the last squadron of the second group over. Five miles from the target, heavy anti-aircraft started pounding us. When

we saw the red flash of those guns we thought we'd never make it. We really started praying then. We figured that if they started shooting at us with the big guns at that distance, they would surely get us with smaller and more maneuverable batteries. We remembered the British anti-aircraft men who had said we'd be dead ducks for anything under a 40 millimeter cannon. At our height you could have brought a Liberator down with a shotgun.

Ploesti was wrapped in a smoke screen which made it very difficult to find the targets. When we got over, the refineries were already blazing from the bombs and guns of the planes ahead of us.

Red tracers from the small ground guns had been zig-zagging all around us for half a mile or more, and the guns themselves were sending up terrific barrages. Just as we hit the target, gas tanks starting exploding. One 10,000 gallon tank blew up right in front of us, shooting pillars of flaming gas 500 feet in the air. It was like a nightmare. We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw that blazing tank high above us. The pilot had to swerve sharply to the right to avoid what was really a cloud of fire. It was so hot it felt as though we were flying through a furnace.

The worst I saw, though, was the plane to the right of us. Light flak must have hit the gas, because all of a sudden it was burning from one end to the other. It sank right down, as though no power on earth could hold

it in the air for even a second. When it hit the ground it exploded.

Every man on that ship was a friend of mine, and I knew the position each was flying. I'd seen planes go down before, but always from a high altitude, and then you don't see the crash. This way it seemed I could reach out and touch those men.

The most pitiful thing was that ship's co-pilot. He was an 18-year-old kid who'd lied about his age to get into aviation cadet training. We always called him Junior. When our regular co-pilot, who was firing the right waist gun that day, saw Junior's ship go down, he let loose with his gun like a crazy man. Junior was his best friend.

Then we saw flak hit our group commander's plane. In a second it was burning from the bomb-bays back. He pulled it up as high as he could get it; it was fantastic to see that blazing Liberator climbing straight up. As soon as he started climbing, one man jumped out, and when he could get it no higher, two more came out. Every one of us knew he had pulled it up in order to give those men a chance. Then, knowing he was done for, he deliberately dove it into the highest building in Ploesti. The instant he hit, his ship exploded.

We left Ploesti a ruin. Huge clouds of smoke and fire billowed from the ground as we pulled away from the target. It was like a war movie, seeing those masses

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of flame rolling toward you, and white flashes of 20-millimeter cannon-fire bursting alongside of you.

We got back to camp 13 hours after we had taken off. It was the longest bombing mission ever flown, and that explains why it was necessary to do it at low altitude. If we had bombed at the usual level, we would never have had enough gas to get back.

It was also the most dangerous mission in the history of heavy bombardment, ranking as a battle in itself. It is officially regarded not as the Ploesti raid but as "the battle of Ploesti."

There was no line at the mess hall that night. Even though we were starved, we couldn't eat when we thought of the men that should have been standing in line and weren't.

And even though we were dead tired, we couldn't sleep. I know I didn't sleep for several nights after that. The ground crews kept the runway lights on all night, and many of them stayed up until morning, though they knew the planes they had worked so hard on and their friends, the men who flew them, weren't coming back.

The next morning was rough, too. We always got up at six o'clock, and there was always a lot of yelling back and forth between the tents -- sometimes we'd throw rocks at each other's tents. The only yelling we heard that morning was our co-pilot calling for his friend

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Junior, although he had seen him go down in flames the day before.

Ploesti was my 24th mission. For most of the crew it was the 25th; in other words, it completed their tour of duty for them. I was assigned to another crew for my last mission.

For a long time I had been thinking about volunteering for an extra five missions. I wanted to do that for my kid brother; he wasn't overseas then. The day after my 25th, I asked my commanding officer if I could go on five more. He said I should go home; in fact, there were orders out already for me to do so, and a plane ticket to the States waiting for me. But he finally gave me permission, and I stayed with the crew I had flown with on what was supposed to be my last raid.

It took me three months to get those five missions in, the weather was so bad. And then when I came home it was by banana boat and not airplane. I was sure burned up about that.

It was at this time that I flew with the only full-blooded American-Indian pilot in the European theater; everybody called him "Chief," but his name was Homer Moran, and he was from South Dakota. Four of those extra five missions I flew from England over Germany.

I nearly got it on the 30th mission, my last one. We were over Munster, in Germany, and a shell exploded right

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above the glass dome of my top turret. It smashed the dome, ripped my helmet off, smashed my goggles and interphone. The concussion threw me back against the seat, but I didn't get a scratch. I thought the ship had blown apart, the noise of that explosion was so loud. I passed out, because my oxygen mask had been torn off, but the radio operator and the engineer pulled me out of the turret and fixed me up with an emergency mask.

Things like that aren't explained just by luck. I must have had a guardian angel flying with me that time, and on the other missions too. They say there are no atheists in foxholes; I can tell you for sure there are none in heavy bombers either. //

I left England the first of December. They wanted me to stay over there, with my outfit, as chief clerk in operations, but from the beginning I have felt that my combat career would not be over until I had fought in the South Pacific, and so I asked to come home for a brief rest and then be assigned to a Liberator group in the South Pacific.

It was December 7, two years to the day after Pearl Harbor, when our ship reached New York. I thought I was a pretty tough sergeant, but when I saw the Statue of Liberty and the sunlight catching those tall buildings, I damn near cried. I knew I had come home, and I felt so lucky to have gotten through all those bombing missions without a scratch that I said a prayer of thankfulness as

I leaned against the rail. I only wished that all my buddies could have come home too.

I spoke earlier of having two battles to fight -- against the Axis and against intolerance. They are really the same battle, I think, for we will have lost the war if our military victory is not followed by a better understanding among peoples.

I certainly don't propose to defend Japan. When I visit Tokyo it will be in a Liberator bomber. But I do believe that loyal Americans of Japanese descent are entitled to the democratic rights which Jefferson propounded, Washington fought for and Lincoln died for.

In my own case, I have almost won the battle against intolerance; I have many close friends in the Army now -- my best friends, as I am theirs -- where two years ago I had none. But I have by no means completely won that battle. Especially now, after the widespread publicity given the recent atrocity stories, I find prejudice once again directed against me, and neither my uniform nor the medals which are visible proof of what I have been through, have been able to stop it. I don't know for sure that it is safe for me to walk the streets of my own country.

All this is disappointing, not so much to me personally any more, but rather with reference to my fight against intolerance. I had thought that after Ploesti and 29 other missions so rough it was just short of a miracle I got through them, I wouldn't have to fight for

~~miracle I got through them, I wouldn't have to fight~~ for acceptance among my own people all over again.

In most case, I don't, and to those few who help breed fascism in America by spreading such prejudice, I can only reply in the words of the Japanese-American creed: "Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people."

The people who wrote that creed are the thousands of Japanese-Americans whom certain groups want deported immediately. These Japanese-Americans have spent their lives proving their loyalty to the United States, as their sons and brothers are proving it now on the bloody battlefield of Italy. It is for them, in the solemn hope that they will be treated justly rather than with hysterical passion, that I speak today.

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An Address by Sergeant Ben Kuroki, U.S. Army Air Force
Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, Cal.
February 4, 1944

I want to thank you gentlemen, especially Mr. Deutsch and Mr. Ward, for inviting me to speak to you today. This is a great honor, and I really appreciate it. I just hope that I won't disappoint you. People who are going to make speeches usually start out by saying that they don't know how to, but in my case it's really true. A soldier's job is to fight, not talk, but I'll do the best I can.

I've spent most of my life in Hershey, Nebraska, which isn't where they make Hershey candy bars. Hershey is so small that probably none of you has ever heard of it. Before the war the population was about 500; now I guess it's about 300.

I didn't even live in Hershey; my father had a farm a mile north of town. I remember the farmers used to go to town every Saturday night and stand in groups on the street corners talking about their cows and horses. We've lived on that farm since 1928, and after I finished high school I helped my father work it until the war came along.

The last two years are what really matter, though, and maybe I can tell you something about them, even if I don't know much about making speeches. That's one thing the Army didn't teach me, though it taught me a lot of other things, and the experience I went through as a result of being in the Army taught me even more.

I learned more about democracy, for one thing, than you'll find in all the books, because I saw it in action. When you live with men under combat conditions for 15 months, you begin to understand what brotherhood, equality, tolerance and unselfishness really mean. They're no longer just words.

Under fire, a man's ancestry, what he did before the war, or even his present rank, don't matter at all. You're fighting as a team--that's the only way a bomber crew can fight--you're fighting for each other's life and for your country, and whether you realize it at the time or not, you're living and proving democracy.

Something happened on my first mission that might give you an idea of what I mean. We were in a flak zone--the anti-aircraft was terribly accurate --and we had a flock of fighters attacking us.

A shell burst right above the tail, and flak poured down. Our tail gunner was a young kid named Dawley, from New Jersey. The piece that got him was so big it tore a four-inch hole through a quarter of an inch of aluminum and double-welded steel. It caught him just above the ear. It went through his fur helmet, and in so far we couldn't even see it when we got to him.

I was firing the right waist gun on our Liberator that day. All of a sudden I heard him yell over the interphone: "I'm hit in the head, let's get the hell out of here!"

We couldn't leave the guns until we'd shaken the Messerschmitts that were after us--it would have been suicide--but in a few minutes the tunnel gunner and I were able to get back to the tail.

We pulled Dawley back into the fuselage, so that we could work on him and at the same time watch out for more fighters. Then we took off our fur jackets and covered him up. It was about 10 below zero and we were about freezing to death.

He was in terrible shape; I can't even begin to describe the look of pain on his face. He was semi-conscious, but he couldn't open his mouth to speak. His lips seemed to be parched, as though he was dying of thirst. We couldn't understand how he was still alive.

I called the radio operator, because he's the one who is supposed to administer first aid on a Liberator, but instead the co-pilot, a first lieutenant, came back. He was going to give Dawley a morphine injection, but I stopped him. They'd taught us in gunnery school not to give morphine for head injuries; it might kill the man instantly. The co-pilot had either forgotten or was so excited he could think only of stopping the pain.

Anyway, I motioned to him--we couldn't hear each other above the roar of the motors--I pointed to my head and shook it. The co-pilot evidently understood, because he didn't give Dawley the morphine.

That tail gunner lived to fly and fight again, and the last I heard he had completed his tour of duty. Whether or not I was instrumental in saving his life by stopping that morphine injection isn't important--it was just that we had to work together regardless of rank or ancestry.

The tunnel gunner that helped me with him was Jewish, I'm a Japanese-American, the bombardier of our crew was a German, the left waist gunner was an Irishman. Later I flew with an American Indian pilot and a Polish tunnel gunner. What difference did it make? We had a job to do, and we did it with a kind of comradeship that was the finest thing in the world.

That first mission was over Bizerte; it was the 13th of December, 1942, and we'd just arrived in French North Africa from England two days before. When I say "we" I'm talking about the outfit I was serving with; it was Brig. Gen. Ted Timberlake's Liberator bomber group, which everybody over there called "Ted's Traveling Circus" because it got around so much back and forth between England and Africa. In fact, it got around so much it kept German military intelligence guessing, trying to figure out where it was from week to week.

It was a funny thing--I'd just been assigned to a crew the day before we left England, although the group had been based there for about four months. I'd finished gunnery school more than a month before, and ever since I'd been trying to get assigned to a crew. It wasn't easy; I'd talk to the pilot whenever I knew there was going to be an opening in a crew, and each pilot would assign me temporarily and then replace me when the time came for permanent assignment.

I understood well enough how they felt; and they knew I was as good as any man they did assign, but still they were uneasy. But I wanted to get into combat more than anything in the world, so I kept after it.

In fact, it had been one continual struggle from the beginning of my Army career, and I felt that I had done pretty well to get overseas and to

gunnery school.

Two days after Pearl Harbor, my brother Fred and I drove 150 miles to Grand Island, Nebraska, to enlist in the Army Air Forces. We were held up for nearly a month because of all the confusion and misunderstanding in Army camps at that time. For the first time in our lives we found out what prejudice was.

I began to realize right then that I had a couple of strikes on me to begin with, and that I was going to be fighting two battles instead of one--against the Axis and against intolerance among my fellow-Americans.

Finally, after two more trips to Grand Island and three telephone calls, Fred and I were accepted at the recruiting station at North Platte, and sent to Sheppard Field, Texas, for basic training.

There was so much prejudice among the recruits there, that I wondered if it would always be like that; if I would ever be able to overcome it. Even now I would rather go through my bombing missions again than face that kind of prejudice.

My kid brother Fred could hardly stand it. He'd come back to the barracks at night and bury his head in his pillow and actually cry. We were not only away from home for the first time; but because of this discrimination, we were the loneliest two soldiers in the Army.

After basic I was sent to clerical school at Fort Logan, Colorado, and then to Barksdale Field near Shreveport, Louisiana, for permanent assignment. Of the 40 clerks sent to Barksdale, I was the last one assigned. I spent about a month at Barksdale, most of it on K.P. You've all heard the Air Forces motto, "Keep 'Em Flying." Well, my motto was "Keep 'Em Peeling"; they called me "Keep 'Em Peeling" Kuroki in those days.

The most discouraging thing about that was the fact that I had no assurance that I ever would be assigned. About the only thing that kept me going were the wonderful letters of encouragement I received from home. My sister would write me that I had to realize that Americans were shocked by Pearl Harbor, and that many of them were unable to distinguish between Japanese and Americans of Japanese descent. I still was without a friend in the Army, though, and that made it bad. There was only one boy who was kind to me at all--he used to get my mail for me when I was on K. P. and couldn't get away.

I was finally assigned to a squadron in General Timberlake's bomber group, which had been formed at Barksdale and was ready to move to Fort Myers, Florida, for final training. A few days before we were to leave, the commanding officer of my squadron called me in and told me I wasn't going; and that I was to be transferred to another outfit.

That was about the worst news I had ever heard. I asked him why, and he said that he had nothing to do with it. He started asking me questions then--how I liked the Army, and so forth. I told him pretty bluntly about the prejudice I was encountering, and that I didn't even go into town because I couldn't enjoy a minute of it when I did. He seemed sympathetic enough, but he said there was nothing he could do to stop my being transferred.

But, my words must have had some effect, because the day before the group left, he called me back and ~~told me to pack my bags, that I was going with them~~ them.

At Fort Myers I did clerical work for about three months. I gradually began to win over some of the soldiers, and the boy who used to get my mail for me at Barksdale became a good friend of mine. We were in a truck accident one day, and I was able to help him. After that we were inseparable.

When the group had finished training and was ready to go overseas, I was given orders, as I had been at Barksdale, transferring me out of my squadron. This was even worse than the time at Barksdale, because I really wanted to go overseas and had been counting on it for three months.

General Timberlake--he was then a colonel--was already up north with the air echelon of the group, so I couldn't see him. I went to see the squadron adjutant and begged him, with tears streaming down my face, to take me along. He said there was nothing he could do about it, that it wasn't because I was of Japanese descent. But he did agree to talk it over with the group adjutant, and in about an hour he came back with the good news that I would remain with the outfit. I was about the happiest guy in the world just then.

We shipped north right after that and sailed from New York on the last day of August 1942. Ours was the first Liberator group sent to the European theater. As soon as we had our base set up in England, I applied for combat duty. I had to beg for that too, but at least I was sent to gunnery school.

It wasn't much schooling--about a week, I guess--a lot different from the way it is now, when every crew member goes to school for months in this country. I really learned to shoot the hard way, in combat.

As a result of the recommendations of the armament officer, I was accepted on Major J. B. Epting's crew as an auxiliary member; we were to go out on a raid the next day, but it was cancelled because of the weather. About a week later I was permanently assigned to his crew. The next day we flew to Africa and my tour of duty began. Once again I'd received a break just in the nick of time.

We were glad to get away from the cold, fog, rain and mud of England. Boy, Africa seemed like heaven for the first two days. It was dry and warm and the sun was shining. It was interesting, too, at first. I met my first live Arab. The Arabs used to come out to the base peddling tangerines and oranges and eggs, foods we hadn't seen for months in England. I remember in London they were asking 18 shillings--about $3.50--for a pound of grapes; one of our boys even asked the vendor if they had golden seeds in them.

One of our gunners made a deal with an Arab--a filthy barefoot old man dressed in something that looked like grandma's nightgown. The gunner told him he would trade the plane for six eggs delivered every day for six months. So every day the Arab would bring him six eggs. Then he would go over to the plane and pat it and smile, thinking of the day when it would be his. We wondered what he thought when we took off one day and didn't come back.

After the second night in Africa we weren't so sure it was an improvement on England. It started to rain and kept on raining until we finally

couldn't operate at all. We had no tents or barracks or any place to sleep. Some of the boys slept under the plane until it got too muddy. I picked the flight deck inside for myself, but gave it up so that Major Epting could sleep there. I slept in the top turret.

If you have any idea of the size of a top turret on a Liberator, you can imagine how comfortable I was. I had to sit up, and all night I would bump into switches which would snap on and wake me up. One night of that was enough for me.

We'd left England in such a hurry that we didn't have mess kits. All the time we were in French North Africa we ate our canned hash and hardtack out of sardine cans.

And the mud--I've never seen such gooey mud. Our group flew about three or four missions from that base and then the planes couldn't even get off the ground. They'd start to take off and sink into the mud all the way up to the belly, and then we'd have to unload the bombs, dig the ship out, reload and try again. It was a mess. After about 18 days we gave up and moved out of there.

From French North Africa we went to the Libyan desert, near Tobruk, not long after the Germans had surrendered it. Tobruk was the most desolate place I have ever seen; it was full of abandoned tanks and guns and broken buildings. Only a church had escaped complete destruction, and no living person dwelt in that city.

But as far as we were concerned, we were glad to get out of our mud-hole in North Africa, but not for long. We were in Libya three months. In all that time, we were able to take a bath only once, and that was when we were given leave to fly to an Egyptian city for that specific purpose. That was the only time we shaved, too; we must have looked like a convention of Rip Van Winkles before we left.

There were no laundry facilities; we were allowed only a pint of water a day for everything. This water we drew from a well, which we had to abandon after a while when we found some dead Germans in it.

We were at least 300 miles from any town, excepting the dead city of Tobruk. We had no entertainment of any kind out there on the desert; when we weren't on raids we just lay around in our tents, or took walks in the desert.

The most dismal Christmas eve of my life I spent on the Libyan desert. It was cold, and we didn't even have tents to sleep under. We slept in our clothes and didn't even take off our shoes. Our morale was certainly low that night, as we thought of the fun we could be having in the States, and of our families and friends back there. But it's things like that, as well as actually fighting together, that bring men close to one another, as close as brothers.

Our group was going on raids about every other day while we were in the desert, and they were all pretty rough. We bombed Rommel's shipping lines over and over at Bizerte, Tunis, Sfax, Sousse and Tripoli in Africa. Then we started in on Sicily and Italy.

We had some boys of Italian parentage flying with us, and whenever we took off to bomb Naples or Rome I'd kid them about bombing their honorable ancestors. "We're really going to make the spaghetti fly today," I'd say, and they'd retort that they couldn't wait to knock the rice out of my dishonorable ancestors.

Naples was always a rough target. It was the "flak city" of the Italian theater. The flak burst so thick and black you couldn't even see the planes a hundred yards behind you. Yet our raids over there were called spectacular examples of precision bombing.

We participated in the first American raid on Rome last July. It was the biggest surprise I'd had so far; we thought we were going to run into heavy opposition, and we were almost disappointed when we found hardly any.

We bombed Sicily and Southern Italy at altitudes of about 25,000 feet, and it really gets cold at that height. One time over Palermo it was 42 below zero. I froze two oxygen masks; after that I had to suck on the hose to get any oxygen.

Even at that height we could see our bombs breaking exactly on their targets, and as much as an hour after we had left the targets we could see the smoke rising from the fires we had caused.

It gave you a funny feeling; you couldn't help but think of the people being hurt down there. I wasn't particularly religious before the war, but I always said a prayer, and I know for sure that my pal Kettering, the radio operator, did too, for the innocent people we were destroying on raids like that.

But we were in no position to be sentimental about it. The people knew they were in danger, and they could have gotten out. Besides, we weren't fighting against individual people, but against ideas. It was Hitlerism or democracy, and we couldn't afford to let it be Hitlerism. And so, unfortunately, it was German and Italian lives or ours. That was the only way you could look at it.

It was a happy day when after three months of Libya, we received orders to return to England. We took off from Tobruk at midnight. There was no formation; the planes left at two-minute intervals, and each was on its own.

The next morning, instead of seeing daylight, we looked out over a blanket of clouds without any opening. We had had to go up to about 10,000 feet to get over the clouds, and now we couldn't go under them, for fear of crashing into mountains.

We were lost. The navigator could do nothing, and the radio operator, though he was working like mad, couldn't get his messages through because of the weather. Finally he got a message, but by that time we didn't have enough gas to get to the air field that had answered us. We'd already been up 11 hours and 20 minutes with a 10-hours' supply of gas. We expected to go down any minute.

The pilot called back that anyone who wanted to bail out could do so. Nobody did; I know I had so much faith in Major Epting's flying ability that I wouldn't leave until he did. All of a sudden, and it seemed like a miracle

to us who were tensely waiting for the crash, there was a tiny rift in the clouds. Epting didn't wait one second; he just dove right into it, and made a perfect landing in a valley that wasn't big enough to land a cub in safely.

We had just gotten out of the plane when a swarm of Arabs surrounded us. There must have been a hundred of them, and they were armed with rifles, spears, and some with clubs. When we saw them coming we debated whether we should shoot at them or try to talk to them. We decided to talk to them, but we couldn't understand them and they couldn't understand us.

They didn't hurt us, but they certainly weren't friendly. They took everything away from us--guns, wallets and everything we had in our pockets--and they wouldn't let us near the plane.

We had no idea where we were, but in a few minutes a Spanish officer came up and arrested us, and we found out that we had landed in Spanish Morocco. The officer marched all of us, our crew and the Arabs, into a native village about two miles away. The procession we made caused more excitement, I guess, than that village had had in its entire history.

The natives all thought I was Chinese, but Kettering, our radio operator, explained to the Spanish soldiers that I was Japanese American. That created quite a stir when it got around. Most of the people, both Spanish and Arabs, flatly refused to believe it, and later it took the American embassy to prove it to them.

In a few days we were flown to Spain in a German plane and interned in a mountain village. We thought we'd be there for the duration, but within two months, through methods I can't reveal, we were in England.

From England we bombed targets in Germany and began preparations for the raid on the Roumanian oil fields at Ploesti, preparations that were to last three months and take us back to the Libyan desert. In England our group practiced low-level bombing. We practice-bombed our own airfields, each plane having its own specific target. That way our bombardiers got accustomed to finding targets at low altitude.

After nearly a month in England we returned to Africa. This time our base was set up near the city of Bengasi in Libya. Here we had a complete dummy target of what we later learned were the Ploesti refineries.

Up to this time I had been a tail gunner, but now I was assigned to the top turret, the position I held throughout the rest of my missions. To celebrate the event, Kettering painted in big red letters across the glass dome of the turret these words: "Top Turret Gunner Most Honorable Son Sgt. Ben Kuroki." "Most Honorable Son" was what they usually called me--that or "Hara-kiri." They were a great bunch over there.

Every day that we weren't on missions, 175 Liberators loaded with practice bombs would take off in groups at regular intervals and bomb duplicates of the real target. On these practice raids, each group rather than each plane had its specific target, so that it was really a dress rehearsal of the actual raid. Some of the planes flew so low that they came back with their bomb-bay doors torn off. And we sure scared the daylights out of the natives; we had to dodge groups of Arabs and their camels all over that desert.

Despite the heat we had to do double work, because we had only a skeleton ground crew--our real base was still in England. We'd go up into 10 to 20-below-zero temperatures and then come back into 110-above heat. It was no wonder that a lot of the boys came down with colds.

We had fewer sandstorms and they didn't last as long as when we had been stationed near Tobruk. What really worried us were the poisonous sand-viper snakes and scorpions. The scorpions especially--big two-inch long devils with curving tails were thick as flies. We'd find them in our blankets and everywhere else. If you got stung by one of them, you really knew it; you'd be sick as a dog for at least a day.

The month preceding the Ploesti raid we were taking part in the invasion of Sicily, bombing Messina, Palermo and various airfields. It's unusual for heavy bombers to bomb airfields, but we were assigned that job so that it would be impossible for enemy fighter planes to take off from those fields and strafe our ground troops as they landed.

During all our practice for Ploesti we were intensely curious as to what our target was going to be. Rumors of all kinds were floating around, but no one thought it would be Ploesti because no one could imagine how we could carry enough gas to get there and back.

Our base was guarded by British anti-aircraft gunners, and we used to ask them what they thought about our flying so low. They said it was an advantage from the point of view of escaping the heavy anti-aircraft fire, but that we would be dead ducks for anything smaller than 40 millimeter cannon. Right then we began to think of the approaching raid as a "suicide" mission.

The last week in July every crew member in every group was restricted to the base until after the mission, but it was not until the day before we left that we were told the target was the Roumanian oil fields. That was news all right. You hardly ever hear of an oil field being bombed--the only other one I know of was in Burma. We were really surprised. There had been a couple of rumors that our target was to be Ploesti, but nobody had put any stock in them--it seemed too improbable.

We were briefed all that day and into the night. The American engineer who had constructed the Ploesti refineries talked to us; he knew the exact location of every refinery and every cracking and distilling plant. The information he gave us proved invaluable the next day. They showed us motion pictures which gave details of the individual targets of each group.

In the afternoon Major General Brereton, commanding general of the Ninth Air Force, came around in a staff car and talked to us for almost an hour. He said we were going on the most important and one of the most dangerous missions in the history of heavy bombardment, that it had been planned in Washington months before. He told us that Ploesti supplied one-third of all Germany's oil and nearly all of Italy's, that it was timed, furthermore, to cut Hitler's fuel supply as his divisions rushed to defend it against the coming Allied invasion.

When he finished, our group commander--not General Timberlake, who had just been promoted from colonel and was now a wing commander, but the new group commander--briefed us again, and went into minute details of the takeoff

the next morning. He tried to encourage us as much as possible.

"I'll get my damn ship over the target if it falls apart," he said.

He got his ship over the target all right--we were close behind him. And we saw it when it fell apart, flaming to the earth.

That afternoon before the raid he emphasized that nobody had to go who didn't want to; it was really a volunteer mission. No one declined, but we were all very tense. Someone had mentioned that even if all planes were lost it would be worth the price, and that started more talk about its being a suicide mission.

We didn't sleep very much that night, and there was none of the joking that usually went on among our crew. We tried hard to sleep, because we knew it would be a long trip and we had to be at our best, but you can imagine how easy it was.

The first sergeant blew the whistle at four in the morning. While we ate breakfast the ground crews, who had been working on the planes for the last two days, gave them a final checking over. Those planes were beautiful, parked wing to wing in a long line on the runway.

We took off at the crack of dawn. It was a perfect summer day, warm and balmy. The lead plane of the group started out, and the others followed at precise intervals until finally the whole group was in the sky in perfect formation. Our group joined other groups from nearby fields at pre-arranged places. It was all split-second timing.

We were keyed up. We knew it was going to be the biggest thing we had ever done, and we were determined it would be the best. It was the same with the ground crews; they had always taken great pride in the ships, but this time they had gone overboard to get them in perfect condition. They shared our excitement and anxiety, too.

From Bengasi we flew straight over the Mediterranean. It was very calm and blue that day. We were going along at about 5,000 feet when suddenly we saw one of the planes ahead take a straight nose-dive. It went down like a bullet, crashed in the water and exploded. For half an hour we could see the smoke from it. It gave us a haunting feeling, as of approaching disaster--we could see that not a man on that plane had a chance to escape.

A couple of hours after we left Bengasi, we were crossing the mountains of Italy, going up sometimes as high as 10,000 feet to get over them. Then the Adriatic and into Jugoslavia, through Bulgaria and across the Danube into Roumania.

Over the Danube valley, in Roumania, we went down to about 300 feet, so low that we could easily see people in the streets of Roumanian towns waving at us as we went over. They must have thought we were friendly bombers because we were flying so low. Or maybe they recognized the white star on our wings and were glad that we were coming.

About 10 miles from the target, we dropped to 50 feet, following the contours of the land, up over hills and down into valleys. Our pilot would

head straight for those hills, and every time I thought sure we'd crash right into them, but he would pull us up just in time, and just enough to get over the ridge, and then down into the next valley. Coming back we were flying part of the way at five and 10 feet off the ground, and some of the planes returned to base with tree tops and even cornstalks in their bomb-bays.

We had a very good pilot. He was our squadron leader, Lt. Col. K. O. Dessert, and his copilot was our regular pilot, Major Epting.

This was the 24th mission I had flown with Major Epting and the same crew, except for Dawley, the tail gunner who was hurt during our first raid. Our ship was named in Major Epting's honor; his home town is Tupelo, Mississippi, and so we called the plane "Tupelo Lass."

The major, who is 23 years old, is one of the best pilots I've ever seen. He pulled us out of a lot of tough spots when we thought we were gone.

And between Major Epting and Col. Dessert they got us through Ploesti without a scratch, but it was a miracle that they did.

We came into the oil fields at about 50 feet and went up to about 75 to bomb. The plane I was on was leading the last squadron of the second group over. Five miles from the target, heavy anti-aircraft started pounding us. When we saw the red flash of those guns we thought we'd never make it. We really started praying then. We figured that if they started shooting at us with the big guns at that distance, they would surely get us with smaller and more maneuverable batteries. We remembered the British anti-aircraft men who had said we'd be dead ducks for anything under a 40 millimeter cannon. At our height you could have brought a Liberator down with a shotgun.

Ploesti was wrapped in a smoke screen which made it very difficult to find the targets. When we got over, the refineries were already blazing from the bombs and guns of the planes ahead of us.

Red tracers from the small ground guns had been zig-zagging all around us for half a mile or more, and the guns themselves were sending up terrific barrages. Just as we hit the target, gas tanks started exploding. One 10,000 gallon tank blew up right in front of us, shooting pillars of flaming gas 500 feet in the air. It was like a nightmare. We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw that blazing tank high above us. The pilot had to swerve sharply to the right to avoid what was really a cloud of fire. It was so hot it felt as though we were flying through a furnace.

The worst I saw, though, was the plane to the right of us. Light flak must have hit the gas, because all of a sudden it was burning from one end to the other. It sank right down, as though no power on earth could hold it in the air for even a second. When it hit the ground it exploded.

Every man on that ship was a friend of mine, and I knew the position each was flying. I'd seen planes go down before, but always from a high altitude, and then you don't see the crash. This way it seemed I could reach out and touch those men.

The most pitiful thing was that ship's co-pilot. He was an 18-year-old kid who'd lied about his age to get into aviation cadet training. We always

called him Junior. When our regular co-pilot, who was firing the right waist gun that day, saw Junior's ship go down, he let loose with his gun like a crazy man. Junior was his best friend.

Then we saw flak hit our group commander's plane. In a second it was burning from the bomb-bays back. He pulled it up as high as he could get it; it was fantastic to see that blazing Liberator climbing straight up. As soon as he started climbing, one man jumped out, and when he could get it no higher, two more came out. Every one of us knew he had pulled it up in order to give those men a chance. Then, knowing he was done for, he deliberately dove it into the highest building in Ploesti. The instant he hit, his ship exploded.

We left Ploesti a ruin. Huge clouds of smoke and fire billowed from the ground as we pulled away from the target. It was like a war movie, seeing those masses of flames rolling toward you, and white flashes of 20-millimeter cannon-fire bursting alongside of you.

We got back to camp 13 hours after we had taken off. It was the longest bombing mission ever flown, and that explains why it was necessary to do it at low altitude. If we had bombed at the usual level, we would never have had enough gas to get back.

It was also the most dangerous mission in the history of heavy bombardment, ranking as a battle in itself. It is officially regarded not as the Ploesti raid but as "the battle of Ploesti."

There was no line at the mess hall that night. Even though we were starved, we couldn't eat when we thought of the men that should have been standing in line and weren't.

And even though we were dead tired, we couldn't sleep. I know I didn't sleep for several nights after that. The ground crews kept the runway lights on all night, and many of them stayed up until morning, though they knew the planes they had worked so hard on and their friends, the men who flew them, weren't coming back.

The next morning was rough, too. We always got up at six o'clock, and there was always a lot of yelling back and forth between the tents--sometimes we'd throw rocks at each other's tents. The only yelling we heard that morning was our co-pilot calling for his friend Junior, although he had seen him go down in flames the day before.

Ploesti was my 24th mission. For most of the crew it was the 25th; in other words, it completed their tour of duty for them. I was assigned to another crew for my last mission.

For a long time I had been thinking about volunteering for an extra five missions. I wanted to do that for my kid brother; he wasn't overseas then. The day after my 25th, I asked my commanding officer if I could go on five more. He said I should go home; in fact, there were orders out already for me to do so, and a plane ticket to the States waiting for me. But he finally gave me permission, and I stayed with the crew I had flown with on what was supposed to be my last raid.

It took me three months to get those five missions in, the weather was so bad. And then when I came home it was by banana boat and not airplane. I was sure burned up about that.

It was at this time that I flew with the only full-blooded American Indian pilot in the European theater; everybody called him "Chief", but his name was Homer Moran, and he was from South Dakota. Four of those extra five missions I flew from England over Germany.

I nearly got it on the 30th mission, my last one. We were over Munster, in Germany, and a shell exploded right above the glass dome of my top turret. It smashed the dome, ripped my helmet off, smashed my goggles and interphone. The concussion threw me back against the seat, but I didn't get a scratch. I thought the ship had blown apart, the noise of that explosion was so loud. I passed out, because my oxygen mask had been torn off, but the radio operator and the engineer pulled me out of the turret and fixed me up with an emergency mask.

Things like that aren't explained just by luck. I must have had a guardian angel flying with me that time and on the other missions, too. They say there are no atheists in foxholes; I can tell you for sure there are none in heavy bombers either.

I left England the first of December. They wanted me to stay over there, with my outfit, as chief clerk in operations, but from the beginning I have felt my combat career would not be over until I had fought in the South Pacific, and so I asked to come home for a brief rest and then be assigned to a Liberator group in the South Pacific.

It was December 7, two years to the day after Pearl Harbor, when our ship reached New York. I thought I was a pretty tough sergeant, but when I saw the Statue of Liberty and the sunlight catching those tall buildings, I damn near cried. I knew I had come home, and I felt so lucky to have gotten through all those bombing missions without a scratch that I said a prayer of thankfulness as I leaned against the rail. I only wished that all my buddies could have come home too.

I spoke earlier of having two battles to fight--against the Axis and against intolerance. They are really the same battle, I think, for we will have lost the war if our military victory is not followed by a better understanding among peoples.

I certainly don't propose to defend Japan. When I visit Tokyo it will be in a Liberator bomber. But I do believe that loyal Americans of Japanese descent are entitled to the democratic rights which Jefferson propounded, Washington fought for and Lincoln died for.

In my own case, I have almost won the battle against intolerance; I have many close friends, in the Army now--my best friends, as I am theirs--w where two years ago I had none. But I have by no means completely won that battle. Especially now, after the widespread publicity given the recent atrocity stories, I find prejudice once again directed against me, and neither my uniform nor the medals which are visible proof of what I have been through, have been able to stop it. I don't know for sure that is safe for me to walk

the streets of my own country.

All this is disappointing, not so much to me personally any more, but rather with reference to my fight against intolerance. I had thought that after Ploesti and 29 other missions so rough it was just short of a miracle I got through them, I wouldn't have to fight for acceptance among my own people all over again.

In most cases, I don't, and to those few who help breed fascism in America by spreading such prejudice, I can only reply in the words of the Japanese American creed; "Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people."

The people who wrote that creed are the thousands of Japanese Americans whom certain groups want deported immediately. These Japanese Americans have spent their lives proving their loyalty to the United States, as their sons and brothers are proving it now on the bloody battlefield of Italy. It is for them, in the solemn hope that they will be treated justly rather than with hysterical passion, that I speak today.