

One of the defining events of 1943 was creation of the 442 Regimental Combat team (Jan. 28, 1943). As originally conceived, it was to be made up of Mainland and Hawaiian Nisei volunteers. It had been preceded by suggestions from few individuals and groups including JACL that a combat group be formed and that "hostages", presumably evacuees, be held to insure "loyalty and performance". This was a grim reminder of the shogun period in Japan when selected daimyo families were sequestered in the Shogun's compound as loyalty hostages.

When the Army recruiting teams visited the concentration camps to enroll volunteers, as part of the process a special Selective Service questionnaire was required to be completed even though Niseis were classified as 4-C ("unacceptable because of nationality or ancestry"). Of the 20,000 (actually 19,963) eligible Nisei males in the camps from ages 17 to 37, more than 25% refused to answer the "loyalty" and "allegiance" questions, thus indicating an unwillingness to serve. Eventually 1,182 enrolled as volunteers and the Army accepted 805 (4% of the 20,000 eligible males) who met the loyalty and physical standards. The War Department had anticipated 3500; obviously Nisei males had grave reservations.

It was only after the superior performance in Italy by the 100th. Infantry Battalion and "excellent showing" of 442 (still in training), the draft was re-opened (Jan. 20, 1944) and miraculously we were 4-A again. The same loyalty and allegiance questions were again confronted in the Selective Service questionnaire which was different for other American citizens; e.g. German Americans were not questioned on their loyalty and allegiance to Germany and Hitler. Again some Niseis

answered in the negative or rejected the questions so from Jan. 20 to August 26, 1944 only 2,213 were drafted. Initially 91 refused to report for induction and 164 failed to report for physical examination. They had answered the loyalty and allegiance questions in the affirmative, walked to the brink of induction, and faced the abyss of draft resistance. The low induction numbers of volunteers and draftees during the early period underscored the many ~~nuanced~~ ^{NUANCED} tortured decisions. Yet after the early Sturm and Drang period, 13,528 Nisei men from the camps eventually entered into the Army by December 1945. 10,417 (75% of the 13,528) or more than 50% of all eligible Nisei males saw Army service in 442 CT. This was the highest percentage of eligible males of any racial or ethnic groups assigned to a combat unit and not surprisingly it resulted in one of the highest death and morbidity ratios in the Army. 3,111 or 23% were assigned to Military Intelligence. The breakdown figures for Hawaiian Nisei males were almost mirror image of the Mainland numbers with one notable exception; they had more volunteers.

What "principles" resonated in *NISEIS* to make the Faustian compact with the Government and Army, for in the end we would serve, mortgaged to "conduct and performance", concentration camps and hostages, and a cloudy American future. These principles were further shredded by the U.S. Supreme Court's Endo and Korematsu decisions (Dec. 18, 1944) and new racism was embedded into the Constitution and persists to this day. Yet the values of Americanism and loyalty were commonly cited by most of the men who served despite their awareness of the fallibility of the Constitution and the Government.

I have a different view. I suspect we transmogrified these values and principles from our dormant Japanese side; a collection of formulistic ideals such as giri, aware, chū, Way of the Samurai, and Japanese metaphysics of loyalty and death. Or was it the cultural and racial memories of Confucian and Shinto canons of preserving the essential harmony between the individual, family, public, and government? Furthermore, I contend that we in 442 fought by these idealistic bytes from a distant and medieval world and at the end acquired a tragic sense of America. The draft resisters stood ^D on Constitutional principles and not on old world canons or formulas, thus were more "American" but are now having hot flashes of existential despair.

For these and other considerations, the perceived negative judgement towards resisters by 442 veterans should be re-examined and perhaps this could be done during the next March 442 CT reunion in Honolulu. We were compelled to become warriors and instruments for change. During youth our passion was the Evacuation and war; in our old age shouldn't it be compassion and understanding? For better or worse, ^{ARE} we ^A all American made.

Sincerely yours,



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