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NISEI

in the

WAR *against* JAPAN



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
War Relocation Authority
Washington, D. C.
April, 1945.

Nisei aid in Saipan -in the Camotes

JAP-AMERICAN PROVES PATRIOT

Clears Saipan Cave Of Foe By Courageous Talk To Refugees

By KEITH WHEELER
WITH THE U. S. THIRD FLEET
IN THE PACIFIC, Jan. 29.—(By
Wireless) — (NANA) Remember
back in September or October,
when a super-patriotic barber out
in Denver or some other place be-
gan slugging a wounded and
decorated Japanese-American sol-
dier, who wanted only a haircut?

It made me sore at the time and
now that I think about it, I'm
downright mad.

If memory serves, the barber
said he had two sons fighting the
Japs, and to his mind any Jap is a
Jap and he aimed to give the boys
a hand. I'm reminded of one
"any" Jap named Kubo, a sergeant
in the Army of the United States,
who served as interpreter on Sai-
pan.

Kubo Proves Patriotism

There came a time in those cruel,
heart-breaking and incredible days,
while the Americans were trying
to round up Jap civilians, when
Kubo proved his Americanism.

Huddled in a cave on the pre-
cipitous face of a cliff were about
40 wounded, ragged, starving men,
women and children. For five
days they remained stubbornly,
mutely immobile while Americans
pleaded, cajoled, threatened and
bribed them to come out and ac-
cept salvation. Nothing worked.

They simply sat, and tired Amer-
icans wasted priceless time from
the major job of killing savage
snipers who daily claimed a toll of
American lives.

At last Sergeant Kubo shucked
off his weapons and equipment,
scrambled down the face of the
cliff and, unarmed, walked into the
cave.

Faces Jap Rilleman

He didn't try to high-pressure
the terrified refugees. He talked
calmly, reasonably, with sym-
pathy.

"You're tired, hungry, wounded.
You need help. If you will listen,
I can give you that and justice,"
he said. "I don't expect you to
believe me, but here I give you
the names of your neighbors who
already have decided to surrender
and now are receiving the things
you need."

A movement behind him brought
Kubo's head around and there
stood a Jap soldier with a rifle
leveled at his back. He stayed
calm—a virtue the barber could
use.

"We Americans admire you. You
fought well. But you have lost.
There is nothing further you can
do for your country now. If I
were you, I would choose to live,"
he told the soldier.

Calmness Wins

"I'm leaving now," he informed
them all, "but I can give you a
little time to think it over. Then
because we must have it, an Amer-
ican battalion will take this cave
and you cannot stop us. If you
decide to surrender, let me know."

He walked out, not even batting
an eye as he passed the soldier
with the rifle.

An hour later, two frightened
old gaffers crawled up the cliff
and said they wanted some of that
justice Kubo had talked about.
Next morning the whole lot, in-
cluding the soldier, surrendered.

That Kubo possessed mercy, in-
telligence and courage, all of which
the Denver barber might cultivate
with profit.

Arizona STAR

Jap-American soldiers honored

Participation of Japanese Amer-
ican troops in the conquest of
Saipan island was disclosed yes-
terday in a report announcing cita-
tions for six American soldiers of
Japanese ancestry.

Four of the soldiers, all of
whom received Bronze Stars, are
from California. They are:

T/Sgt. Ben Henda, Marysville;
T/Sgt. George Matsui, Los Ange-
les; T/Sgt. Min Nakanishi, Stock-
ton, and T/Sgt. Mike Sakamoto,
San Jose.

Los Angeles NEWS
August, 1944

NISEI SOLDIER HELPS COMRADES FOIL JAPANESE

The Indian style moonlit attack
by a Japanese force might have
been disastrous for the men at the
command post in the Camotes is-
lands had it not been for a Japa-
nese-American, a Nisei, who list-
ening for the commands barked
out by the Jap commander, trans-
lated them to the Americans, ac-
cording to Maj. Cortez A. Kitchen,
who is now recovering at Madigan
general hospital from the wounds
received in the encounter.

Major Kitchen was executive of-
ficer of the reinforced battalion of
the 7th infantry division that was
sent into the Camotes islands for
relief from the Jap troops. One
night the Japs slipped out of the
pocket in the forest where the
five fighting companies of the bat-
talion had penned them and at-
tacked the command post.

The action that followed was
like an Indian encounter in Amer-
ican frontier days. The Yanks
were stationed behind trees in a
square about 100 yards each way
around the post. The Japs massed
for the attack in the surrounding
woods. Just inside the defense
perimeter was the Nisei, listening
to the Japanese commander in-
structing his men.

Three times the Japs tried to
crash through the square around
the command post, hitting first on
one side and then the other. Each
new attack on a new section of the
square was preceded by a barked
command in Japanese, and each
time the Nisei warned where to
prepare for action.

The attacks continued four
hours. At dawn the Japs fled,
leaving 30 dead. There were eight
casualties among the defenders,
one of whom was the major, who
was hit when he exposed himself
while attempting to send a radio
message to the headquarters' task
force at Leyte.

Tacoma NEWS-TIMES
March, 1945

On Iwo Jima, Guam, and in the Marianas

JAP-AMERICAN BRAVERY HAILED BY CAMERA MAN

A1769

Loyalty Proved in Battle, He Says

BY CHARLES GOTTHART

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

New York, March 31—Americans of Japanese ancestry who are serving with the Pacific assault forces have proved their loyalty to the United States thru heroism that has won the praises of all who have seen them in action.

This was the message brought back from the Pacific today by Joe Rosenthal, Associated Press photographer who made the historic picture of the marines raising the Stars and Stripes at the crater rim of Mount Suribachi after the bloody battle for Iwo Island.

"There are thousands of Japanese-Americans in United States service in all theaters," Rosenthal said in an interview. "All of those with whom I came into contact are anxious to prove their loyalty to this country. Often their anxiety is touching, for they volunteer for all sorts of dangerous missions.

Many Pay With Lives.

"Many have paid with their lives, and many more have been wounded. They have done an outstanding job for the allied cause and their heroism should be recognized. It has been recognized by the marine commanders where I saw them in action at Guam, Peleliu, and Iwo.

"Usually they work with headquarters in serving as interpreters. Armed with hand grenades at the entrances to Jap pillboxes or caves, they often convince the enemy to surrender where American officers, lacking the proper diction of the Jap language, would fall.

"They work so close to the enemy on these missions that, along with the danger of being killed by Japs, they run the risk of being shot, unintentionally, by our own marines. From a distance it's hard to tell them from the enemy. Their dungarees soon become ragged in rough country and the similarity of their physical appearance makes their job that much tougher."

Family of Nisei in Marines On Iwo Lives in Chicago

By Roy Cummings.

Chicago Sun Foreign Service.

WITH THE MARINES ON IWO, Feb. 28.

SGT. JAMES YOSHINOBU, whose wife and five children live in Chicago, is one of the first Japanese-Americans (Nisei) to work with the Marines in the Pacific war.

Previously they have traveled with the Army as interpreters in such campaigns as the Marshalls and Marianas.

Two groups of Nisei landed with the Marines on Iwo Island—one each with the 4th and 5th Divisions. Yoshinobu was in one of the units.

YOSHINOBU, 47, is a veteran of World War I. Born in Maui island of the Hawaiian islands, he volunteered for the Army in 1916 and was trained at Camp Grant but he did not go overseas.

After the war, he went to Northwestern University and received a degree in electrical engineering. He operated a truck farm near Los Angeles from 1920 until he enlisted in the Army in 1943.

He said he thought he would not return to California after the war.

"I HAVE very little reason to," he said wryly. "A friend wrote me that the house I built on the land I had leased for farming had been stripped of everything but the walls. I plan to go to Wisconsin or Michigan after the war and perhaps return to electrical engineering

Shifts to Pacific Asked.

Rosenthal said many of the Japanese-Americans in service in Europe had clamored for transfer to the Pacific where, lent to the marines, their linguistic and other talents could be put to better use. He said virtually all were serving with special units rather than with regular fighting units.

"And they get along fine with the marines, who are pushing their way to Tokyo," he added.

SGT. JAMES YOSHINOBU'S wife, Toshi, and their five children came to Chicago last December from a relocation center in Rohwer, Ark.



Sgt. James Yoshinobu.

The oldest child, Tomika Julie, is a freshman at Hyde Park High School, and the next three attend

Oakenwald Grammar School. Mrs. Yoshinobu knew her husband was in the Pacific area, but had not known he was on Iwo until told by The Sun.

which I was never able to do in California.

"I like Chicago all right but would rather live in a smaller town. My kids are used to the country and like it."

Mrs. Yoshinobu lives at 3949 Lake Park av., with their two sons, Rei, 12, and Seiji, 8, and their three daughters, Tomika Julie, 14, Sumie Jean, 5, and Etsuko Agnes, 2.

Rosenthal condemned isolated instances of antagonism toward Japanese-American fighting men by United States groups. He termed a "crying shame" the action by the Hood River, Wash., American Legion post in removing the names of Japanese-Americans from the city's honor roll, a move that also was condemned by the national Legion organization. The names later were restored.

Rosenthal is preparing to return to the Pacific soon.

Chicago Tribune

April, 1945

Now in the Marianas

Nisei Gunner 'Takes Care'

T. Sgt. Ben Kuroki, the Hershey, Neb., Japanese-American turret gunner who requested Pacific service after 30 bombing missions in Europe, has found certain disadvantages at his new post.

In a letter from "Somewhere in the Marianas" he writes: "There are still a few of my dishonorable ancestors running loose on this island. They don't give us much trouble, but at one time our boys fell victims to a lot of wild rumors and became a bit trigger happy . . . I had to be careful not to go walking in my sleep, or some yard-bird would take a couple of shots at me."

Sergeant Kuroki returned last year from the European theater with two Distinguished Flying Crosses. In November he became a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars here. His letter was to C. F. Mulvihill, tenth district VFW Judge Advocate.

"I'm sure that if more people could see the actual tragedies on the battlefronts they would be resolved to make this the last war," he wrote.

"I must concentrate on dropping some 'roses' on Tokyo Rose. If things go well, I'll see you in Omaha again."



WRA

Omaha WORLD-HERALD
February, 1945



Home Is Where the Heart Is
"I have the face of a Japanese but my heart is American," said T. Sgt. Ben Kuroki in revealing here that the War Department has granted his request for assignment to combat duty in the Pacific.

Speaking before a group of transplanted Nisei (Japanese-Americans shunted from the West Coast) this modest soldier from Hershey, Neb., who flew with the first Liberator squadron over Europe, told of his ambition to fly over Tokyo in a bomber.

His words might well be pondered by some, perhaps well-intentioned, who have the face of Americans but the hearts of bigots so far as Ben Kuroki and his minority group of Americans are concerned.

Omaha WORLD-HERALD
November, 1944

On Leyte,

Luzon,

and

Aitape

Hachiya Gave His Life For Our Country

Was On Dangerous Voluntary Mission

News of the death of Frank Hachiya, who was born on the Rodamer ranch at Odell and attended Odell schools before he went to the University of Oregon, came in a special Associated Press dispatch from Leif Erickson, at U.S. Army Pacific Headquarters, and follows:

"Frank T. Hachiya, 25, one of 16 Japanese-Americans whose names have been stricken from the county memorial roll by the Hood River, Or., American Legion post, died while performing a dangerous volunteer mission, the army reported Thursday of last week.

"Hachiya, attached to the 7th division, was fatally wounded on Leyte, December 30. He died January 3, after most of the men in his regiments volunteered to give him blood transfusions.

Lieut. Howard Moss, Hachiya's commanding officer, said Frank volunteered to cross a valley under Japanese fire to scout an enemy position. The regiment was in a tough spot. Information on enemy disposition was essential. At the bottom of the valley Frank worked ahead of his protecting patrol.

"A Jap sniper let Frank have it at close range," Moss related. "Frank emptied his gun into the sniper. Shot through the abdomen, Frank walked back up the hill. Medics gave him plasma and then started him to a hospital. He was operated on immediately, but the bullet had gone through his liver and he died."

Hachiya enlisted shortly after the Pearl harbor attack, and had served through the Kwajalien and Eniwetok invasions. He was attached to General MacArthur's staff as an interpreter.

NEWS, Hood River
Ore.

February, 1945

CAVES HIDE ENEMY IN LUZON HILL WAR

Americans Lug All Equipment Up Steep Zambales Ridges— Japanese Use Shotguns

By LINDESAY PARROTT

By Wiretrans to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WITH THE THIRTY-EIGHTH DIVISION, on Luzon, March 18—One of the stubbornest small engagements in the Luzon campaign is still being fought fifty miles north of Manila, where a force of Japanese who fled from Fort Stotsenburg holed up in the hills as troops of Lieut. Gen. Walter Krueger's Sixth Army brushed by them to take the Philippines capital and for more than a month have been stubbornly resisting all efforts to dislodge them.

Radio Broadcast Under Way

Just as we arrived they had set up radio equipment, all of which also had been carried in, and an American-born Nisei boy was making a broadcast to enemy troops summoning them to surrender. No effect was observable but the soldiers say they sometimes have known Japanese to commit suicide as a result of learning from such broadcasts that they were surrounded and unable to escape.

U. S.-BORN JAPANESE AID YANKS IN PACIFIC

Nisei Valuable as Interpreters and Translators, St. Louis Says.

Nisei, or American-born Japanese, are performing invaluable service in the front lines of Southwest Pacific battle areas as interpreters and as translators of captured documents, Staff Sgt. George B. Coleman said today after returning from two and a half years of service in that area.

"At Aitape I was helping question Japanese who were captured," he said. "The Nisei acted as interpreters. We'd be lost without them. They are so few they work nearly all the time, and we could use more of them.

During the Buna campaign, Coleman was one of an infantry reconnaissance unit that worked immediately in front of or behind enemy lines. During the six weeks his company was in action, its strength dropped from 144 to 68 because of deaths, wounds or illness.

St. Louis POST-DISPATCH
September, 1944

TWO OREGONIANS BACK JAP-YANKS

Portland, Ore., Dec. 16—(U.P.) Two prominent Oregon men today defended the 16 Japanese-American soldiers whose names were removed from the Memorial plaque at Hood River, Ore., American Legion post.

Dr. Harold J. Noble, a marine major formerly with the history department of the University of Oregon, said he commanded a unit of Japanese-American soldiers in the Pacific area, and that his men consistently showed great courage.

G. B. McLean, editor of the service bulletin of the Oregon State Medical society, told of Capt. Robert Kinoshita, army medical corps, who was wounded three times and is again on active duty in Holland.

A Soldier Writes Nisei Writes Japan's Epitaph

'Her History Ended
On Dec. 7, 1941'

By Eugene Rachlis.

Chicago Sun Washington Bureau.

Washington, Sept. 23.—A young Nisei (Japanese-American) fighting with Merrill's Marauders in Burma against his former countrymen has learned the value of the democratic way of life as opposed to that laid down by Japanese warlords.

In a letter to his 12-year-old sister, now in a War Relocation Administration relocation area, the fighting sergeant urged the girl "to enter a real American school and live the American way."

Letter Tells of Disgust.

In the letter, made available to The Chicago Sun, he poured out his disgust with his former country in these words:

"Japan is a country of the past—her history ended on Dec. 7, 1941."

Sgt. G. — his actual name must be withheld because his parents have close blood relatives in Japan who could be subjected to reprisals by the government—is one of many Japanese-Americans now fighting the Japs in Asia. From field reports he has done more than his share. An excerpt from his letter to his sister shows that.

Fought Four Months in Burma.

"Right now I'm in an American hospital recovering and recuperating from my third attack of malaria, double hernia and intestinal ulcer," he wrote. "We were in Burma for four months fighting the Japs in the jungles and mountainsides. I had walked 860 miles, climbed hills that you practically had to crawl up, crossed and recrossed rivers 49 times. It rains quite a bit in Burma, and at times I slept wet, wet all day for weeks at a time."

Because of his knowledge of the language, Sgt. G. was used by military intelligence in questioning prisoners. His findings give a picture of Japanese life at home and in the field that can be accepted as valid.

Many Prisoners Questioned.

His letter said:
"I questioned many Japanese prisoners and found that the Japanese Army is rapidly deteriorating from lack of supplies and ammunition. The Americans have

cut the Japanese supply lines in many places so that they have a hard time to do anything. One prisoner who recently left Japan told me that things are bad, food, clothing, recreation and all sorts of conditions are very bad, that the crime wave in Japan is terrible due to shortages.

"He told me that returning Japanese to Japan from America had most of their household equipment, such as irons, waffle irons, heaters, radios, ice refrigerators (sic), bed springs and mattresses, confiscated as need for war production. Also that the returning Japanese were treated with contempt because they didn't do their part in the attempt to crush America.

Suspicious of One Another.

"The prisoner knew all these things because his brother had returned to Japan on the exchange ship and told of many shameful incidents that they went through. Now you know how suspicious the Japanese are of one another in Japan—well, the prisoner states that it is worse now due to the Fifth Column activities in Japan. It is such that if one family gets into a fight with another they report to the Japanese kenpei that such and such a family is doing many queer things and as a result they are sent to jail and undergo many cruel treatments.

"Such is the inside of Japan today."

He Sums It Up.

With this picture before him, Sgt. G. reached a conclusion he must have more than suspected he would reach when he volunteered for service. This is what he told his sister:

"These statements made by this prisoner set me to thinking very seriously about your mother and dad. For your sake I would want you to enter a real American school and live the American way. The life you are leading now is not the thing for you. You must live in America—'cuz you are all America by heart. Dad and mother must realize this and they do know it deep down in their hearts.

"Yes, Japan is a country of the past—her history ended on Dec. 7, 1941."

Chicago Sun

Awards Go to Pacific Heroes

The Bronze Star has been given Lieut. Shigao Yasutake, formerly of Gardena, Calif., who has served two years in the Solomons, on Russalia Island, in the Munda campaign on New Georgia, and on Guadalcanal, New Caledonia, and Vella Lavella in the Bougainville sector. He has three brothers in the Army, privates.

Other California Japanese-Americans given the same citation include Technical Sergeants Bon Honda, Marysville; George Matsui, Los Angeles; Mike Sakamoto, San Jose; Min Nakanishi, Stockton—for meritorious action in the capture of Saipan. The same award went to Howard Hiroki of Honolulu, Hawaii. One young Japanese-American, Technical Sergeant Terry Mizutari, killed while commanding a group of men during a Japanese counterattack, has been posthumously awarded the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and a citation from his commanding general.

Christian Science Monitor
March, 1945

DeWitt Hospital Treats Japanese American Soldiers

AUBURN (Placer Co.), Dec. 7.—Approximately 20 Japanese-Hawaiian soldiers, veterans of nearly every theater of operations, are being treated at the DeWitt Army General Hospital near Auburn.

This was disclosed today by Colonel William H. Smith, commandant of the hospital, who said the patients represent practically all the branches of the service, including paratroopers and infantrymen.

Many suffered their battle wounds for which they are being treated on the Italian front. Colonel Smith singled out as an example Sergeant Imoto of Honolulu, a veteran of the Italian front, southwest Pacific invasions and Saipan. Imoto, who holds 13 different ribbons, was machine gunned in the shoulder in Italy.

The patients were sent to the DeWitt General Hospital because of army policy placing wounded soldiers in hospitals nearest their homes, in this case Honolulu and other Hawaiian island areas.

The present population of the hospital, which specializes in vascular and neuro surgery, is 1,100 patients, with a maximum capacity of 1,700.

Sacramento Bee.

3 'Ears' of Merrill's Marauders Return to Fort Snelling as China-Burma Vets



AMERICAN - JAPANESE VETERANS from the China-India-Burma theater who were members of Merrill's Marauders, show Col. K. E. Rasmussen, commandant of the military intelligence language school at Fort Snelling, the area of their operations. The three formerly studied under Rasmussen and are on their way to attend officer candidate school at Fort Benning, Ga. They are, left to right, Sgt. Robert Y. Honda, Sgt. Russell K. Kono and Sgt. Y. Herbert Miyasaki.

American-Japanese to Be Officers

Three graduates of the army language school formerly conducted at Camp Savage, returned to Fort Snelling Wednesday after serving as "ears" for the famous "Merrill's Marauders" in the China-Burma-India war theater.

They have worked within 40 yards of Japanese lines while Gen. Merrill's troops were advancing against the enemy.

All Americans of Japanese descent, the men are T/Sgt. Robert Y. Honda, S/Sgt. Russell K. Kono and T/Sgt. Y. Herbert Miyasaki. They now are en route to Fort Benning, Ga., for officer training.

WEARS BRONZE STAR

Kono wears a bronze star, presidential citation and combat infantryman badge. He won it for holding a road block with four other men while three wounded comrades were withdrawn to a safe position.

Honda wears a presidential citation. His battalion once was surrounded by the Japanese for 13 days. The men had no drinking water for three days. During one 24-hour period, the battalion fought off six counterattacks.

Miyasaki, who has the presidential citation and combat infantry badge, was personal interpreter for Gen. Merrill through the North Burma campaign.

COMMANDER DIED

Capt. William A. Laffin, commanding officer of the men when they left Savage, died in Burma. Now in charge is Lt. Edward H. Mitsukado, promoted from sergeant to lieutenant in the field.

The sergeants, who took three months of "jungle training" in India while attached to Merrill's Marauders, praised the specialized training received at Camp Savage under Col. K. E. Rasmussen.

TRIBUNE
Minneapolis, Minn.
January, 1945

Editors Comment on Nisei

Frank Hachiya, American

From now on Frank Hachiya won't have to give a damn about what the American Legion post of Hood River, Oregon, thinks, says, or does about him. On Leyte, the Japanese-American volunteered to cross a valley under enemy fire to scout their position. As he was doing so, a Japanese bullet stopped the American.

Out in Hood River, Oregon, some of the old-timers who fought for America a quarter of a century ago never did learn, apparently, what they were fighting for. Over the strenuous protests of national Legion officials, they voted to strike the names of 16 Japanese-Americans from the county memorial roll. It didn't make any difference to them what General Eisenhower or General MacArthur or General Mark Clark might think of such fellows fighting under their command. Under their definition of Americanism, any man with Japanese blood in his veins was out.

What is an American? We are no race, no color, no creed. The melting pot of all the world was welded together out of a common faith in the equality of man, as best expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution with its Bill of Rights, the Gettysburg Address, and, for that matter, the Sermon on the Mount. When any man risks his life for this country on an especially hazardous mission, it is only fair and reasonable to assume that as an American he knew what he was fighting, what he was dying for.

Pittsburgh POST-GAZETTE
February, 1945



LITTLE KENNY YASUI

For those skeptics who question the sincerity of Japanese-American soldiers, here's a little story.

Staff Sgt. Kenny Yasui of Los Angeles, Calif., has distinguished himself as the "Baby Sergeant York" for his heroism on the Burma front. Although he is only five feet two and weighs scarcely more than 120 pounds, he's plenty tough when it comes to fighting Japs for Uncle Sam.

During mopping up operations after the collapse of organized resistance on the Irrawaddy river, a group of about 17 enemy Japs was hiding out on an island. There was a call for volunteers and little Kenny was among the first to step out. He and three others stripped and swam the river, with Kenny in charge.

Upon approaching the enemy nest, California-born Kenny Yasui yelled into the brush in the Japanese he learned while a student at Waseda university, Tokyo. He ordered the enemy to come out and surrender.

In their bewilderment, the nips filed out to surrender their arms. Just then, a Jap officer sprang from a thicket, throwing a hand grenade to blow up Yasui and himself. Yasui jumped into a foxhole and the Jap officer into another world. Then Kenny drew his sword. Three recalcitrant Japs were killed by other Americans while Yasui held his ground.

Little Kenny solved the problem of getting the party across the Irrawaddy by having the remaining 13 prisoners swim pushing a raft. On the raft sat Kenny, sword in hand, bringing his prisoners back in the name of Old Glory.

It's a great tribute to those many Japanese-Americans who are striving conscientiously to be good citizens of the country of their birth.

Twin Falls TIMES NEWS
October, 1944