

By KATHRYN GORMAN

To "model" feminine Americanism in the land of their ancestors, 12 Nisei WACs will leave Fort Snelling Saturday for Japan.

These mannequins for democracy will be the first American-born Japanese WACs to put their feet on Japan. And part of their job will be to show the Japanese how becoming to women the garb of Americanism can be.

"We joined the WACs," one of them said, "to prove to our fellow Americans that we too are good Americans. Now we are going to Japan and part of the assignment will be to show the Japanese what Americans of Japanese ancestry are like. And it may be a tough job."

Accompanying the party of young Nisei women, all of whom are attractive and alert, will be a Caucasian WAC, Sgt. Rhoda Knudten whose home is in Berkeley, Calif. She is 23 years old, tall, blond and extremely attractive. She was born in Japan of missionary parents and she lived in Tokyo until she was almost 18 years old. Her parents plan to return to Japan as soon as possible but Sgt. Knudten said: "I'm going to beat them there this time. They got there ahead of me the first time."

The Nisei WACs are very

serious about their trip to Japan. In most cases their parents sailed away from the islands from 30 to 45 years ago in any kind of boats. The WACs will be flown to Japan from California in a glistening transport plane and will make the trip in a fraction of the time it took their fathers and mothers to cross the Pacific.

And they have no idea what kind of a reception they will receive when they get there. This worries them.

"We have Japanese faces," one of them said, "but we will be Americans. It will simply be up to us to make the Japanese understand this. By our example we will have to show them what a woman of Japanese background can be like—how she acts—when she has lived in a democratic country and had the advantages offered by such a country. It's going to be a big job—but we all know it and we are going to do our best to be successful at it."

According to the present plan, the 12 Nisei WACs and the Caucasian sergeant will be discharged from the Army upon their arrival in Japan. Then they will become civilian workers assigned to a variety of tasks, they have been informed.

Some of the young women have a complete knowledge of the Japanese language; some of them are expert translators and some are adept at clerical work. They will be placed in positions—government jobs—suited to their training. Most of them think that they will be there at least a year, perhaps longer.

This first little band of Nisei WACs to land in Japan have a notion that their new assignment will be more difficult than their WAC jobs were.

"We proved that we are loyal Americans in the WAC," one of the girls said, "now we have another persuading job to do."

Only four Nisei WACs will remain at Fort Snelling after Saturday. They could have gone on the assignment to Japan had they wished but they chose not to go.

The Nisei young women are reluctant to say whether or not they have relatives in Japan. "Their relatives might be hostile," one of them said. "They don't know if they will meet them and they do not know how the relatives will receive them if they do. To avoid any unpleasantness they do not want to talk about relatives in Japan."

The girl speaking said she had none.

All day today the girls shopped for personal articles they think they may not find in Japan. Some of them stowed away a few tins of food they like especially well. Others laid in a stock of their favorite hair brushes, combs, bobby pins, and tooth brushes.

Despite the fact that they realized a grave mission is ahead of them, they giggled and laughed and called to each other gaily in their barracks at Fort Snelling. Most of them will not have an opportunity to see their relatives before they leave this country for the land from which their people came.



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Below, a trio of the Nisei girls get ready to take a farewell ski on a snowy field at Fort Snelling. They are, left to right, T5 Harriet Hirakawa, Sgt. Miwako Yanamoto and Pfc. Atsuko Mori, all of whom enjoyed Minnesota's winter weather.

