

# Soldiers in the Pacific War

## Nisei Heroes

Newspapers which have reached us from the Territory of Hawaii abound in accounts of heroic services performed by American soldiers of Japanese descent on duty in the Pacific. We have heard something of the gallantry of these Nisei in Italy. For example, the 1300 men who comprise the 100th Infantry Battalion—all of them of Japanese ancestry—have earned 1000 Purple Hearts, 11 Distinguished Service Crosses, 44 Silver Stars, 31 Bronze Stars and three Legion of Merit decorations. But there has been virtually complete silence from the War Department concerning the valor of the Nisei in the Far East. We believe their story should be told—not merely in Hawaii, whence many of them entered the Army, but here in the continental United States, where some Americans have still to learn that devotion to democracy is not an inherited characteristic.

Nisei soldiers have played a vital and dramatic role in our succession of victories over the Japanese in the coral islands and steaming jungles of the Pacific theater of operations. Their knowledge of the Japanese language has been invaluable. And this has been principally because they were so often willing to incur terrible risks to make it effective. One of them allowed himself to be lowered by a rope into one of those huge caves on Saipan which the Japanese had utilized as centers of resistance; then by a combination of wit and bluff and bravery he contrived to obtain the release of all the civilians whom the Japs had herded there. In Burma, according to men who have been their comrades there, the Nisei proved themselves particularly intrepid and helpful, venturing into the enemy lines and throwing them into confusion by speaking their language. They have done no such deeds for the Navy or Marine Corps, to be sure; these branches of the service have never seen fit to permit their enlistment.

The War Department's expressed reason for its silence about such exploits is that the men's families, if still in Japan, might suffer reprisals from the Japanese. It seems to us a curious explanation. In many cases, the families of these men are not in the hands of the enemy at all but in the hands of an agency of the United States Government. They are "detained" in "relocation centers" because the War Department lacks sufficient faith in American democracy to permit them to return to their homes. And in other cases, the caution strikes us as excessive; it is not applied to men whose families may be subject to Nazi reprisals in Lithuania or Czechoslovakia or Norway. The Nisei have made a magnificent record in this war. Their fellow Americans ought to hear about it—if only to assure their families better treatment here at home.

Washington D.C. POST  
September, 1944

### Bronze Star Is Awarded Relative Of Poston Man

With the 81st "Wildcat" Infantry Division in the Pacific—Staff Sergeant Shinso Chojin, cousin of George Takata, 17-13-D, Poston, Arizona, has been awarded a Bronze Star for heroic achievement with the 81st "Wildcat" Infantry division commanded by Maj. Gen. Paul J. Mueller. The award was in connection with Sgt. Chojin's going to the aid of a wounded man on Angaur island in a dense jungle area.

SUN and SENTINEL Yuma, Ariz.  
April, 1945

# Nisei Sergeant Interviewed in Manila

By GENE SHERMAN

MANILA.—While I was waiting for some transportation at the 1st Cavalry Division headquarters in a suburb of the city, the public relations officer, whom I had met in the Admiralty Islands, said he had a technical sergeant from Hollywood I might like to meet.

Naturally I did want to meet him, being primarily a collector of people from the Southland. Sgt. Ernie Hirai, 1043 N. Cole Ave., was lying on a cot in the tent, waiting, because the public relations officer knew all along that I was a collector.

ERNIE IS JAPANESE, a Nisei born in Los Angeles, who attended Hollywood High School and took a degree in mechanical engineering at the University of California.

He is attached to G.H.Q. as an interpreter and translator, and was working on temporary duty with the 1st Cavalry. He is tall and has a friendly grin which is unconsciously augmented by a typical Oriental eye-blinking.

One of the first 26 Nisei to be sent to this theater as interpreters, Ernie has been overseas 26 months. He was drafted into the Army in June of 1941, some months before his parents—Japan-born—were sent to an internment camp in Wyoming.

I ASKED HIM the obvious question—how it feels to be on the side that is killing Japanese. And I got the obvious answer.

"I consider myself American in every way," Ernie said. "Why not? All of my education has been that way. I don't know anything else. That's just the way it happened to be."

It seemed a bit odd, sitting there in the tent talking to a Japanese in the uniform of the American Army while not far away Americans in the same uniform were killing Japanese. But it didn't seem odd the way Ernie put it. He has been through the New Guinea, Admiralty Islands and Leyte campaigns.

IT SEEMED A little odd to hear Ernie talk about the "Japs" he interrogates, too.

"Some of them are quite surprised when they first see me," he said. "They ask me right away if I am Japanese. I tell them right away that I am American. I explain to them that America is a land of many races and nationalities.

"Sometimes they make a little trouble. But mostly they are all right when they discover they aren't going to be killed or tortured. I talk to them a bit about home and what they were doing, give them a cigarette and put them at ease."

IT IS ERNIE'S opinion that the average Jap soldier is just as sick and tired of war as the average American G.I. He doubts very much if the Japanese as a nation will commit suicide, an opinion frequently expressed by experts.

Later I asked some of the enlisted men what they think of Ernie. They all think he is a great guy.

Los Angeles Times

March, 1945

# Seven Nisei Brothers Serving Uncle Sam



Times photo

**SCAN HEADLINES**—Yoshio Nakada and his brother, Pvt. James Nakada, happily scan headlines telling of American victories over Japs in Philippines.

## Luzon Victories Gladden Nisei

Uncle Sam's victories in the Philippines are the best kind of news to an 18-year-old private in the Army specialized training program despite his racial background, he asserted yesterday as he and his brother scanned the Times headlines chronicling Gen. MacArthur's progress.

He is Pvt. James Nakada, Azusa, who enlisted seven months ago as a 17-year-old internee at Hart Mountain (Wyo.) Relocation Center.

### Seventh to Join

One of seven sons of Ginzo Nakada, Azusa truck farmer who returned to his home there Jan. 15, Pvt. Nakada shortly will welcome a seventh brother, Yoshio, 28, into the Army, he said last night.

The five other brothers are Sgt. Yoshinao Nakada, 26, in Army intelligence in this country; Pvt. Saburo I. Nakada, 25, in Australia; Pvt. Henry Nakada, 22, in France, all of whom were in uniform by January, 1942; Tech. 5th Grade Minoru Nakada, 24, in Alabama, and Pfc. George Nakada, 20, in France.

### Return Permitted

The Nakadas—less the three then in uniform—were removed to Pomona in May, 1942, and later to Wyoming. They were given permission to return to Azusa last month.

"The removal from our home?" echoed Pvt. James. "Well, it was rather sudden, but we all realized it was necessary, or considered necessary, and as loyal Americans we were glad to co-operate.

"I have been happy in the Army, and I think it gives me just as big a thrill as any other soldier to live and train, and fight if need be, under Old Glory. The Stars and Stripes constitute my flag the same as any other American, after all, you know."

The elder Nakada plans to resume his truck farming at Azusa.

Los Angeles Times February 10, 1945

## Jap-American Volunteer From Tule WRA Center Fights Nips in India

A Japanese American volunteer from a WRA center is today fighting in the India-Burma theater as a member of the U. S. Army's First Air Commando group, according to an army-censored "dispatch" to the Pacific Citizen from "somewhere in India."

The soldier is Staff Sgt. Tom Taketa, who volunteered for the Army in 1942 from Tule Lake relocation center.

Following is the army-censored "dispatch" from Staff Sgt. Tom Taketa of the First Air Commando group:

"The First Air Commando group—that name would strike a familiar chord in your minds. Surely you have read about the great doings of this outfit. I don't know what the newspapers have said about the First Air Commando group and its undertakings, but whatever was written must have made good reading material. I may be prejudiced because I happen to be one of its members, the

only Nisei with this group, but I assure you that whatever I say about this outfit is with the deepest sincerity, and is shared by each and everyone of us.

"A year and a half ago, I was one of the evacuees in Tule and little did I realize at the time of my enlistment that I would be fortunate enough to join such an outfit as the one I'm in now.

"Our 'old man' the C. O., incidently, he isn't very old; and in his thirties—is a hard-fighting leader. He's a go-getter, and that's one of the main reasons that we've accomplished so much in such a short time. Our men are taking the war to the enemy, and I am more than certain that the enemy is feeling the might of our punches. I know it may sound incredible when I say that we're fighting a war of our own, but that's exactly what were doing; that is, with as much free-wheeling as we're allowed."

Klamath Falls

HERALD and News

## Seattle Nisei Saves Platoon Of Marauders

Sergt. Henry Goshu of Seattle, Nisei soldier with Merrill's Marauders in Burma, is one of 14 Japanese-Americans serving in the outfit, the War Relocation Authority announced yesterday.

The W. R. A. quoted a letter from a white sergeant in the Marauders, who apparently was writing about Goshu.

"The men of our platoons owe their lives," the letter said, "to Sergt. Henry G., a Japanese-American of Seattle. Hank (we call him Horizontal Hank because he's been pinned down so many times by Jap machine-gun fire) guided the machine-gun fire on our side which killed every Jap on that side.

"The boys who fought alongside Hank agree that they never have seen a more calm, cool and collected man under fire. He was always so eager to be where he could be of the most use and effectiveness and that was most always the hot spot."

Seattle Wash. TIMES  
March, 1945

## Reveal Husband of Cleveland Japanese Saved U. S. General

A 26-year-old Japanese-American sergeant, whose wife and brother are living in Cleveland, today was credited with helping to save the life of an American general in hand-to-hand combat with Japanese forces in the South Pacific.

Sgt. Tomas Sakamoto, whose wife is a civil service employee of the War Department, has been mentioned in dispatches from the South Pacific as the first of his race to be cited for action against the Japanese. Mrs. Sakamoto, 23, lives at 11102 Lorain avenue, while Sgt. Sakamoto's brother,

Frank, 22, lives at 1906 E. 93d street.

Sakamoto was the only non-commissioned officer in an assault party led by Brig. Gen. William Chase. The party was attacked by a Jap group, headed by the Japanese island commander.

In the ensuing fighting the entire Jap group except two were killed.

Sgt. Sakamoto is a native of San Jose, Cal. He has been in the Army three years and met his wife in Minneapolis, Minn., while he was at Camp Savage.

Cleveland PRESS

## LT. GARY KADANI VISITS WRA CAMP

RIVERS, Jan. 7:—(P)—Lt. Gary Kadani, on furlough from New Guinea, visited relatives at the War Relocation Administration camp here this week accompanied by his wife, whose residence is in Columbus, Ohio.

Lt. Kadani, who received his commission for valor and by presidential citation, said there were very few Japanese-Americans in the South Pacific theater when he was first sent there in 1942 but now there are many. He said they were giving a good account of themselves.

Before the war Lieutenant Kadani and his wife lived in Fresno and San Francisco.

Arizona STAR



WRA

Wounded in battle with the Japanese enemy in the South Pacific, Sgt. Kazuo Komoto was returned to the United States for hospitalization. On a visit to his family at the Gila River Relocation Center, he displays his Purple Heart to an admiring younger brother.

## JAPANESE TELLS OF PACIFIC WAR AT RIVERS CAMP

One Jap sniper who tried his best to kill a Japanese American "doughboy" never lived to tell of his failure.

The Japanese American soldier, Staff Sgt. Kazuo Komoto, is back in America after a slug from the sniper's machine gun had shattered his knee. He visited his parents at the Rivers Relocation Center last week.

The sergeant in recounting his experience in the "toughest fighting in the world" said that he had been without sleep for a week, and had climbed out of his fox hole behind the front lines to rest. Some twenty minutes later the sniper, who had infiltrated and camouflaged himself in a tree, opened on him and several other American soldiers near him. A few seconds later the sniper was riddled by American fire.

Later, on a hospital ship, his commanding general presented him with the Purple Heart award. With a soldier's disdain for what he terms a "cripple's medal," Komoto shrugs off congratulations. Completely recovered from his knee wound, he is ready for action again.

Baltimore Sun

## General Reveals Japanese Americans Took Part In Capture of Kwajalein Atoll

Japanese American soldiers from the United States and Hawaii participated in the invasion of the Marshall Islands and the successful capture of Kwajalein, Maj. Gen. Charles H. Corlett, whose Seventh Army Division participated in the invasion, declared in an Associated Press interview dated February 17 from the U. S. Army Headquarters in the Central Pacific.

General Corlett, whose troops are veterans of Attu, praised the work of Japanese Americans with the invading American forces.

This dispatch, published widely in U. S. newspapers, was the first official Army report of the role of Japanese Americans in the Pacific fighting, although previously published reports have indicated that Japanese Americans are fighting in the South Pacific and took part in the successful recapture of Attu and Kiska.

## Nisei Sergeant Returns to U. S. After 33 Months in Pacific



FORT SNELLING, Minn.—Tech. Sgt. Takashi Kubo, right, overseas veteran of 33 months in the Pacific war zone, shows his brother, Master Sgt. Takeo Kubo, center, and Staff Sgt. Tateshi Miyazaki, both of Fort Snelling, his collection of enemy invasion money from the Pacific theatre. All are veterans of Pacific fighting, going overseas together in May, 1942. Before them is a captured Japanese 7.7 mm Lewis-type heavy machine gun, a 1932 Model still being used by the enemy.—Army Signal Corps photo by T/5 Gen Sonoda.

By PVT. PETER OHTAKI  
FORT SNELLING, Minn. —  
Tech. Sgt. Takashi Kubo of Holly-  
wood, Calif., returned to the Unit-

Pacific Citizen

ed States recently after serving  
33 months in the Guadalcanal,  
Northern Solomons and Guam  
campaigns.

March, 1945

### Japanese American In Italy Has Fought Both Nazis And Nipponese

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29.—(UP)—  
Second Lieutenant Richard K. Hay-  
ashi, who should know because he  
has fought them both, says German  
and Japanese soldiers are using al-  
most identical tactics in their des-  
perate efforts to stave off defeat.

Hayashi, the war department re-  
ported, served in the Pacific as an  
enlisted man with an air force unit  
and now is with the 5th Army in  
northern Italy, leading fellow Jap-  
anese Americans in combat against

Sacramento BEE

August, 1944

the Nazis.

"Both Germans and Japs are defi-  
nitely on the defensive now and  
use 'hit and run' tactics," he said.  
"They both leave a lot of snipers  
behind with orders to fight until  
death."

Furthermore, he said, both are  
using "teen age kids and conquered  
peoples" in their armies.

Hayashi is a former resident of  
Stockton, Calif. His wife, Mrs. Lor-  
raine Hayashi, was relocated after  
Pearl Harbor along with other per-  
sons of Japanese ancestry from the  
Pacific Coast but has since been re-  
settled in Minneapolis, Minn.

## MARINE LAUDS U.S. 'GOOD' JAPS

BY MAURICE FISCHER.

Yes—there are some Japanese  
who have not only the respect and  
admiration of U.S. Marines, but  
are even their buddies. For that  
you have the word of Lt. Robert  
J. Newell, 7448 N. Claremont av.,  
who has just returned from 14  
months of service in the South  
Pacific with a unit of Marine  
Corps. combat military police.

But these Japanese are Ameri-  
cans—American-born Nisei and  
soldiers in the U.S. Army, who  
have been serving with Marine  
detachments in the Pacific islands  
as interpreters and otherwise  
providing the leatherneck fight-  
ers with the benefit of their  
knowledge of enemy ways.

Good Yank Soldiers.

"They have the respect of the  
Marines because they are good  
American soldiers and we realized  
the risks they are exposed to, in  
event they are captured by the  
enemy," said Lt. Newell, who left  
the study of law at Marquette  
University in 1941 to enlist in the  
Marine Corps.

"As it was, these boys had a  
tough time of it," recalls Newell  
with a laugh. "Each one of them  
has been captured eight or nine  
times—by our own men. One day  
two of them were seized while  
standing in a Marine chow line,  
in their dungarees.

Needed a Bodyguard.

"It got to the point where fi-  
nally, for their own protection,  
we had to detail a marine to ac-  
company them wherever they  
went. The men took it in good  
spirit."

Chicago DAILY-NEWS  
April, 1944

### Coast VFW Post Admits Jap-American Soldier

By the Associated Press.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 25.—Sergt.  
Karl Yoneda, a Japanese-American  
now serving with the Army in the  
Burma theater, has been elected to  
membership by the Howard A.  
Sperry Post, No. 3570, Veterans of  
Foreign Wars.

VFW officials here said that to  
their knowledge it was the first time  
since the outbreak of the present  
war that any person of Japanese  
extraction had been voted to mem-  
bership in a VFW post.

Washington D. C. STAR

## Kaltenborn Hails Nisei Role In War Against Japanese

**Noted Commentator  
Sends Check to Help  
Provide Scholarship**

MADISON, Wis.—Benjamin H. Bull, Madison attorney who has been active in assisting the resettlement of Japanese American evacuees, has received a letter from H. V. Kaltenborn, nationally known NBC radio commentator, enclosing Mr. Kaltenborn's check for \$100 to help provide a scholarship for a young student of Japanese ancestry at Wayland academy, Beaver Dam, Wis., the Capital Times reported on June 27.

In a letter accompanying the check, Mr. Kaltenborn declared: "As one who has personal contact with the magnificent contribu-

tion being made by young Americans of Japanese ancestry to our war effort in the South and Southwest Pacific, 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 the sometimes unfair and sometimes unintelligent treatment 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."

The Capital Times added that Attorney 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."

The PACIFIC CITIZEN

July, 1944

## Nisei Officer

Thirty-one months on Pacific battle fronts, from Kokoda trail to the Philippines, are a nightmarish dream to First Lt. Phil Ishio, former University of Utah student, but his first Red Cross Christmas box at Buna remains a glowing memory.

Lt. Ishio, son of Mr. and Mrs. Masaichi Ishio, 25 S. 1st West, returned to Salt Lake City this week on a month's leave after four years' service with the U. S. army intelligence division.

Gratitude for that Red Cross Christmas package and high praise for the fair treatment of nisei soldiers by the U. S. army highlighted Lt. Ishio's reminiscences.

"Pearl Harbor did not make any difference in the army's treatment of nisei soldiers," he said. "All of us are given equal chances for promotion in the true American way, and there are many commissioned officers, in both the European and Pacific theaters."

## Lauds U. S.

**Wears Battle Stars**

Remaining in the background of his conversation is the story told by his service ribbons: A bronze star medal for meritorious service, three stars for the Papuan, New Guinea and Dutch New Guinea campaigns, a star for being under attack by the enemy and two presidential unit citations.

A graduate of West high school, Lt. Ishio attended the University of Japan and the University of Utah, majoring in languages in both universities. He was inducted into the army at Fort Douglas in October, 1941, and was sent to Camp Roberts, Cal., for field artillery basic training. Further training was received in California and Kansas camps.

**Graduates in 1942**

Advanced to private first class, he was sent to the military intelligence service and language school at Camp Savage, Minn., being graduated with that school's first class in September, 1942.

## Army Spirit

About the time allied forces were meeting reverses across Kokoda trail in New Guinea, Lt. Ishio was sent to Australia. When the allies began driving the enemy back, he was sent to the front, then on to the Buna campaign, where the Salt Laker had his "closest shave." A bomb dropped so close to his foxhole that the hole caved in on him. "Buna was tough," he admitted.

**Campaign in Philippines**

Later attached to Sixth army headquarters, Lt. Ishio participated in all the major campaigns from Finschhafen to the Philippines. His ship was bombed, but not sunk, at Leyte.

Salt Lake TRIBUNE  
April, 1945

PRESS POSTSCRIPTS

"THESE JAPANESE ARE AMERICANS-AMERICAN-BORN NISEI AND SOLDIERS IN THE U. S. ARMY, WHO HAVE BEEN SERVING WITH MARINE DETACHMENTS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.....

"THEY HAVE THE RESPECT OF THE MARINES BECAUSE THEY ARE GOOD AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND WE REALIZE THE RISKS THEY ARE EXPOSED TO, IN EVENT THAT THEY ARE CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY." --CHICAGO DAILY NEWS, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH MARINE LIEUTENANT ROBERT J. NEWELL. April 19, 1944.

-----

T/3 Ken Omura, Seattle-born Japanese, was drowned in New Guinea, March 19, while on active duty with the Army.--From the Seattle Post Intelligencer. April 5, 1944.

-----

"THE SOLDIER'S MEDAL IS AWARDED TO MASTER SGT. SUSUMU TOYODA FOR HEROISM AND BRAVERY NEAR TOROKINA, BOUGAINVILLE, BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS ON JUNE 29, 1944." EXTRACT FROM WAR DEPARTMENT CITATION.

-----

Kakuichi Sadamune, 56, started the New Year reunited with his family at 220 6th Street, Oakland, after nearly three years at a Japanese relocation center in Poston, Arizona.

His eldest son, Alfred, a Technical High School graduate in 1933 was seriously wounded in France.....Another son, Raymond, 26, has been a private in the Army since March 1941 and has spent most of the past two years in foxholes fighting to recover Pacific bases from the Japanese. He is now believed to be on Leyte Island. -- From the TRIBUNE, Oakland, California. January 2, 1945.

-----

IT IS A MATTER OF RECORD THAT BEFORE THE NISEI TROOPS WERE ASKED TO START GOING TO WORK ON THE GERMANS, THEY CAPTURED THE FIRST JAPANESE PRISONER OF THIS WAR. ON DECEMBER 7, 1941, TWO JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL GUARDISTS SWAM INTO THE PACIFIC AND TOOK A JAP OUT OF A ONE-MAN SUBMARINE STUCK ON A REEF OFF THE ISLAND OF OAHU. --FROM JOHN LARDNER'S REPORTER AT LARGE IN THE NEW YORKER. March 31, 1945.

-----

"I've seen many Nisei soldiers in action. They do a good job and are very popular."--From an interview with Richard W. Johnson, UP correspondent in the Pacific.--In the OREGON JOURNAL. February 6, 1945.

-----

A DELAYED APRIL 3 DISPATCH FROM THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE RELATES HOW A NISEI INTERPRETER AIDED STAFF SGT. JAMES K. DUBOIS IN PERSUADING 250 CIVILIANS TO COME OUT OF A CAVE ON OKINAWA ISLAND WHERE THEY WERE HIDDEN.

DUBOIS, AN ARMY PICTORIAL SERVICE CINEMATOGRAPHER, WAS ABLE TO RECORD FILMS OF THE EPISODE AFTER THE NISEI HAD CONVINCED THE NATIVES THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE HARMED.--THE PACIFIC CITIZEN. April, 1945.