



INSPECTION AT CAMP SHELBY—Col. C. W. Pence, commanding officer, inspects the "Combat Team" from jeep in first formal review of the 442nd Infantry, U.S.A.—Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps.

# WITH HAWAII'S AJA BOYS AT CAMP SHELBY MISSISSIPPI

by

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## FOREWORD

At Camp Shelby, Mississippi, are a large number of young Americans of Japanese ancestry, organized in the 442nd Infantry Combat Team. . . . They are youths who volunteered in Hawaii for this duty, and were sent from Uncle Sam's mid-Pacific territory to the Mississippi camp for training. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin sent a member of its Washington staff to Camp Shelby to write a series of news stories about the young men—their training, their development as prospective fighting-men for Uncle Sam, their work and their play. . . . Mr. Terry was for several years a member of the news staff of The Star-Bulletin in Honolulu. His story of these "AJA's" at Camp Shelby is told in 15 chapters.

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## CHAPTER I

### *The 442nd at Their Camp Home*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 10.—This is the home, temporarily, of the 442nd combat team, that remarkable United States army unit whose membership is composed of American citizens of Japanese ancestry, the majority of them from Hawaii.

Camp Shelby, itself, an enormous establishment, lies on a flat, pine dotted plain that stretches across the lower part of Mississippi south to the Gulf of Mexico.

Dawn was just breaking when we arrived here this morning and got our first view of the place where boys from Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, the Big Island and Kauai are living and undergoing training for combat service.

We arrived after an 18 mile automobile trip from the neighboring town of Hattiesburg, accompanied by Col. Charles W. Pence, commanding officer of the 442nd combat team, and Maj. Oland Russell, public relations officer. During the automobile ride, Col. Pence gave us our first authentic information about the combat team from one of its own members.

**"They are doing well. They're doing fine," the colonel said. "Their spirit is tops, and they are learning fast. The heat bothered the Hawaii boys at first."**

\* \* \*

As time went along we were to learn that Col. Pence has pride in the men he commands, and, even though much training lies ahead and ultimately the experience of battle, he already has faith in the combat record they will establish in the future.

The day's activities were just getting under way when we arrived



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at the hutments of the 442nd inside the boundaries of Shelby. Reveille had sounded, and the men were on their way to their mess halls for breakfast, at 6:30 a. m.

**After breakfast and until 7:30, the men's time is their own—their own, that is, if there is any left after they have made their cots and straightened up their hutments.**

At 7:30 they begin drilling, and keep it up until 11:30. Lunch is at 11:45. Drill resumes at 12:45 p. m. and continues to 4:45, when the men clean their rifles, care for any other equipment they have used, and prepare for retreat.

\* \* \*

With payment of respect to the colors at retreat at 5:30, the day's work normally ends. Supper is served at 5:45. Nearly three hours of summer daylight remains for outdoor sports. Lights in the hutments go out at 9 p. m., but in each company's "day room," or clubhouse, lights are permitted until 11 p. m.

\* \* \*

After breakfast, and on our way into the field to watch Hawaii boys undergoing military training, we met Lt. Norman Gilbert, athletic officer of the combat team.

**"We have some pretty good talent in the outfit," he said. "We hold the Camp Shelby baseball title. There is a man from Pearl City here—Lefty Matsuo Higuchi, who really knows how to pitch. Understand he used to pitch for the Hawaii All-Stars. Nobody around here can touch him. We won 12 out of 13 games."**

He told us that Richard Chinen of Honolulu, one of the cleverest lightweights Hawaii ever produced,

is coaching the boxing team. Some of the boxers are Kenji Nobori and Henry Oshiro of Honolulu, Wallace Nagao of Kauai and R. Chinen of Hilo, all former title-holders in the islands.

\* \* \*  
A few minutes from the hutment area by jeep brought us to an area where men of the 232nd engineering company were working on a camouflage net. In the group were Richard Matsumoto of 508 Kaiwiula St., Honolulu, squad leader and formerly a draftsman with C. W. Dickey; Private Hitoshi Inouye, Honolulu; Private Mike Otake, also of Honolulu; Private Toshimi Kato of Wailuku, Maui, and Private Kosuke Yamashiro of College Walk, Honolulu, bugler.

Mike Otake is married and has a son whom he has not seen. Mike volunteered for combat duty shortly before the birth of his boy.

\* \* \*  
Capt. Pershing Nakada, a mainland AJA, is the commanding officer of the 232nd engineers.

"I've got a smart lot of men in my company," he said. "They're right on their toes."

\* \* \*  
Nearby were more men from the islands, under command of Lt. Walter Matsumoto of 838 Lukepane St., Honolulu. He commands the first platoon of the engineering company, and is company transportation officer.

Walter, a graduate of the University of Hawaii, won his commission in 1936, while in the university. Prior to the war, he was an engineer in the city-county bureau of plans, under Walter Mowrey.

Back in Honolulu Walter has a wife and a son, age 16 months. They will be interested to know that he looks perfectly fit, thinks his platoon is the best in the army, and shares the high spirits of his men.

We piled back into our jeep. The driver was Private Archie Murakami of Honomu plantation. He is a graduate of Hilo high school.

Nearby we found a group of men receiving instruction in stringing barbed wire. They were working under the eyes of Lt. Gregory Ikeda of 1040 Kinau St., Honolulu. Gregory was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1939 when he was with the ROTC unit at the University of Hawaii.

He has come a long way from Honolulu, both in miles and in his activities. Not so long ago he was in clerical work. Now he is the confident commanding officer of the ammunition and pioneer platoon of the 2nd battalion of the 442nd infantry regiment.

"One thing about my platoon," he said. "They are very willing. They learn fast. The heat bothers them some. But their morale is high. They are a fine bunch of men."

\* \* \*  
Back at combat team headquarters a familiar figure came out from one of the buildings.

"Remember me?" he asked, grinning.

It was Earl Kubo, formerly of the Honolulu police department.

"He scored 25 consecutive bullseyes at 200 yards on the range," Murakami said. "That's the best anybody in the 442nd has done."

Kubo is attached to the service company at regimental headquarters. He says he likes army life.

Almost without exception, the war and army life has given Hawaii's AJA's their first sight of territory outside the islands. Earl is one of the exceptions. In 1938, while on the Honolulu police force, he brought two prisoners to the mainland.

## CHAPTER II

### *Tackling War Problems*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 10.—“Now let me ask you a question,” Lt. Charles W. Tayman, ex-All American footballer of Texas, said.

Lt. Tayman is commanding officer of the anti-tank company of the 442nd infantry regiment.

“Let me ask you a question. There is a 37 millimeter anti-tank gun within 50 feet of where you are standing. There is another within 20 feet. Where are they?”

We looked, hard, and took our time about answering. We not only couldn't see any guns; we couldn't see gun crews, either.

Lt. Tayman looked pleased. We headed into the thicket, and finally saw the wicked little muzzle of a 37 millimeter gun barely visible through the leaves. Nearby was another gun.

“That's what you call camouflage,” the lieutenant said.

\* \* \*

**We pushed through the growth, and found six Hawaii boys—six boys who had learned their lessons well in camouflage—a matter of some importance in a combat team that is playing for keeps.**

Branches hung low over their gun, and over them. Stuck through the net on their helmets were twigs, leaves and grass. They looked like grinning Indians.

There was Makoto Miyamoto, who used to be a truck driver at Paia, Maui; Akira Fukunaga of Lahaina, Maui; Achiro Hirano, Ewa crane operator, nicknamed the Bear; Takayuki Sasaki, ex-carpenter from Pahoia, Hawaii; Yuki Toyana, electrician from Puunene, Maui, and Kosaburo Hata of 1420-A 10th Ave., Kaimuki, formerly a clerk with the Honolulu Gas Co.

Their gun commanded a road—and any tanks that might move along it.

“This is a big country,” Fukunaga said. “Plenty big.”

“We went down to New Orleans on pass,” Miyamoto said. “Nice place, but used to be much better.”

**We decided the men must be adapting themselves rather rapidly to their new environment, since they could toss off an opinion like that about New Orleans when they had never seen the city in their lives before.**

\* \* \*

“Now that you have seen something of the mainland, where do you want to live when the war is over?” we asked.

We got a unanimous six way reply! You can guess it!

\* \* \*

Lt. Tayman led us off to another gun. “Here's my six second gun crew,” he said.

Private Shigemi Honma of 3918 Maunaloa Ave., Honolulu, acting corporal of the gun crew, barked out an order, and things began to happen faster than they ever did in backfield of the old University of Hawaii wonder football team. Trail legs were spread, sight was adjusted, breech opened, shell inserted, breech locked and gun bearing on the target in seven seconds.

“That's what is known as ‘placing the gun in action,’” Lt. Tayman said.

In addition to Honma, the gun crew was composed of Privates Toshio Moriyama, Wahiawa; Matsato Yoshimasu, Paia, Maui; Shigeru (Herbie) Nikaido, also of Paia; and Masaichi Sagawa of Kohala, Hawaii.

**Lt. Tayman strutted around the gun like a quarterback looking over his backfield. “These men are really on the ball,” he said in his Texas drawl. “You can tell the people back in Hawaii they don't have to worry about these boys. They'll do.”**

\* \* \*

Several other officers of the anti-tank company were there. To name

them gives an idea of how widespread an area has furnished officers for the 442nd combat team. They were 2nd Lts. Charles L. Schettler of Illinois, Norman K. Kurlan of Pennsylvania, Hugh R. Manes of Illinois, J. M. Scotland of Pennsylvania and Boon E. Takagi of Jamestown, N. Y.

Elsewhere in these interminable, steaming pine woods we found a group of Hawaii boys engaged in setting up the communications system of a command post in the field. They were manipulating with practiced hands the compact, beautiful equipment that makes this a war to be fought by intelligent, highly trained men—not by cannon fodder.

\* \* \*

At a switchboard was Private First Class Hideo Nozama of 822 Wiliwili St., Honolulu, the son of a World war veteran. Hideo, swallowed up in these woods, plugging the diminutive switchboard under simulated war conditions that will become the real thing in time, has come a long way from the job he held not many months ago with Theo. H. Davies.

"I like the army fine," he said. "But when it's over I want to go back to Hawaii."

Sergeant Sam Nakamura of Regimental Headquarters Co., 442nd Infantry Regiment, was in command of the message center. He is a Hilo boy, for whom his present work is not as great a change as in the case of Hideo. Sam used to sail back and forth over the inter-island waters of Hawaii as radio operator aboard the steamer Humuula.

Private Stanley Taguchi was a busy soldier, operating a hand generator that is part of the equip-

ment of the communications system. He is from Hilo. Near him were Privates Lawrence Iwamoto of Kona, Hawaii; Hirojuki Hiramoto of Honolulu, and one mainland AJA—Howard Sakura of Seattle.

\* \* \*

We departed in a jeep which Mitsuyuki Fujita of Ewa plantation drives with an air of pride, authority and affectionate abandon, as becomes a jeep operator who drives for his company commander.

Fujita is a well fed boy known through the regiment as "Big Target." He's down to a reasonably lithe 170 pounds from a pre-war 190.

"I lost plenty weight—plenty," he said, complacently patting his opu. "Did me plenty good."

"What do you want to do when it's all over?" we asked Big Target.

"I want to go back to my old trade. It was my ambition to become a mechanic. I went through apprentice school at Ewa and had just graduated as a mechanic."

"Big Target" asked about Jimmy Mead, formerly of the Ewa plantation staff.

\* \* \*

Back at regimental headquarters late this afternoon, we sighted the familiar bulk of Capt. Philip B. Peck of Honolulu, brother of Jack Peck, formerly of The Star-Bulletin. Capt. Peck has been transferred from the 100th Infantry Battalion and assigned to the 166th Infantry, which is now in training here at Shelby. They are the sons of the late Samuel S. Peck and Mrs. Peck. Phil used to be with the Inter-Island and has a host of friends in Hawaii who will be glad to hear of his progress.

## CHAPTER III

### *A Long Day's Training*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 11.—This long day of training for the 442nd ("Go for Broke") infantry regiment composed of mainland and Hawaii AJA volunteers began

under starlight this morning and ended under moonlight.

Night time found squads and platoons, functioning as individual units rather than as a regiment,

spread out here and there over miles of country. Officers, afoot or in blacked-out jeeps, prowled around, looking for lights that might furnish tell-tale, disastrous information to an enemy—and these soldiers are training to meet a real enemy.

Voices were subdued—also for precautionary reasons. At mess time the clanking of aluminum kits sounded faintly, like distant cowbells. This practice for the test of real combat will reduce even those sounds.

\* \* \*  
Moonlight flooded the meadows with a pale light, and cast dark shadows through the pine woods. There were soldiers everywhere—three battalions of them. The woods were literally full of them. But you seldom saw them, until you joined one platoon or another. Their fatigue uniforms seemed part of the grass, the trees and the huckleberry bushes.

Moonlight, silence and the unseen presence of hidden troops made it seem unreal. The only persistent sound was the whirring of locusts in the tree tops.

Mess sergeants set up their field kitchens in shadows under the trees, and cooked by whatever moonlight filtered through the branches, or by the red light of "blackout" lamps. Boys to whom a luau is a more familiar experience than this, moved forward in columns to get their food. They sat down on the grass to eat, and talked in murmured conversation.

\* \* \*  
Somewhere in the woods we ran across a group of men, who turned out to be headquarters company of the 1st battalion. We picked a man out at random. He was sitting on a tree stump, eating.

We asked him if he were from Hawaii.

He is Lt. Robert Y. Katsuki of 1817 Wilhelmina Rise, a well known Honolulu physician prior to war, now 1st battalion surgeon. He told us the health of his men is excellent.

\* \* \*  
Another man came up.  
"Heard somebody was here from

The Star-Bulletin," he said.

He was Capt. John T. Earnest, commanding officer of the company, formerly sales manager for the Schuman Carriage Co. in Honolulu, and an ex-ROTC instructor at the University of Hawaii.

"The boys from home have proved themselves willing, alert and intelligent," he said. "The people back in Hawaii might be interested to know that every Hawaii man in the entire combat team, without a single exception, has taken out soldier's insurance. In every case it has been for the maximum amount, \$10,000 a man. The rates are low."

Half a mile away from headquarters company of the 1st battalion we found company A, also of the 1st. Private Paul Tamura of 759-J Laniwai St., Honolulu, who used to work for the Hawaiian Tuna Packers, said, "It's fun, but pretty tough. The only thing that bothers me is chiggers."

We got into a jeep with Lt. Col. V. R. Miller, who is the regimental executive officer. A regular army man, he has served many years at Schofield barracks. With us was Capt. Ivan Kovac, who is plans and training officer for the regiment.

The soldier at the wheel of the jeep was Private First Class Sam Fujikawa. His home is at 1718 Yamada lane, Honolulu.

We found Maj. S. L. Watts, 1st battalion commander, giving instructions to his vehicle drivers.

"The men in this battalion are tough," he said. "We don't drop a one of them on marches. They will march four miles in 50 minutes, carrying pack, rifle and helmet. That's about 80 pounds.

"When they hit the last 100 yards of the four miles, somebody's apt to say, 'Let's go doubletime,' and off they sprint. That's esprit de corps.

"I didn't start them on these conditioning marches with full equipment. They just wore their uniforms and helmets at first. Later on their guns. Finally, the whole outfit."

\* \* \*  
A soldier nearby turned out to be Private First Class Richard

Okinaka of 1020 11th Ave.

While we were talking, we noticed a group of men less than 100 yards away, walking Indian fashion across a moonlit meadow. They were the heavy weapons company of the battalion.

They moved out from a group of pines, filed across the meadow and slowly vanished into the dark woods beyond. No one had heard them emerge from the trees. In the moonlight, their soundless movement across the meadow seemed ghostlike.

\* \* \*

**Col. Miller was pleased. He favors a ghostlike army at night, until circumstances require the ghosts swiftly to assume other qualities.**

We got back into the jeep, and Sam Fujikawa started snaking us off through the trees and over the meadows. Sometimes he put his jeep on a dirt road and let her out a bit.

As we swung into one road a sentry snapped out, "Halt. Who's there."

Fujikawa reined in his jeep. "Officer of the post," Col. Miller said.

"Advance and be recognized!"

The colonel unwound himself, got out of the jeep, advanced and was recognized. Then he got back in the jeep.

We were more interested in recognizing the sentry, who wasn't letting anybody get through who didn't belong.

He was Private Wataru Uemura, who, in the days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor made him feel he had to volunteer to fight back as an American soldier, lived on Molokai.

He has seen a lot more country than he ever saw on Molokai, and he is going to see more. When it is over, he wants to go back to Molokai. It's home.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Modern Training Saves Lives*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 11.—By all indications the Hawaii and mainland AJA soldiers here will be a well trained outfit when their time comes to go overseas and meet the enemy.

Early this morning the 442nd infantry regiment moved out from its hutment area for training in the field. Next Sunday night they will return, wiser and better soldiers for five days and nights of tactical combat instruction and practice.

"Among other things, we are training to save lives," Maj. S. L. Watts said. He is a stocky officer with a little go-to-hell moustache, is commander of the 1st infantry battalion and a disciplinarian.

"There was an incident in Tunisia that comes to my mind. Fighting was going on, and our men were ordered to fall back to the next hill.

"They filled up their fox holes, and stood up straight. Well, they

were mowed down. The enemy couldn't miss.

"We are teaching these men from Hawaii and the mainland not to do that. We are teaching them to take advantage of every natural cover, to crouch, to be smart. We are training them to do the right thing, so that it becomes second nature."

\* \* \*

At 6:31 this morning Maj. Watts' battalion, the first unit to leave the hutments, was passing its "initial point" some distance from camp. Timing was exactly on schedule. The men were marching into the field, just as they would move up toward a waiting enemy.

It was a strange sight—hundreds upon hundreds of armed Hawaii boys moving silently through this Mississippi pine forest a quarter of the way around the world from their homes. A greater contrast to Hawaii's islands and coco palms could hard-



ly be imagined. But they all know that stranger and more distant scenes await them.

The men walked in single file, Indian fashion. Their khaki had been replaced by olive-colored fatigues and canvas leggings. They carried light packs, and had their Garand rifles slung over their shoulders. Under their leaf-tufted battle helmets they looked small, but tough.

\* \* \*

Ahead of them lay a nine mile march to their bivouac areas.

The soldiers marched well off the roads, under cover of pines and huckleberry thickets. Soldiers don't march down the middle of roads in this war.

Ahead of each unit was its advance guard—a small number of men, well spaced. Behind was its support—a larger group. Next came the main body, and after that the rear guard. Off to either side were flank patrols.

\* \* \*

Each unit was potentially deadly, and hardly likely to be surprised because of its cushion-like formation. Each was prepared to strike hard and fast, or fall back in order.

"A regiment is all eyes and ears," an officer said.

Here and there along the line of march were antitank guns and anti-aircraft weapons, manned by boys who only a few months ago were working on Maui and Kauai plantations, were clerks in Honolulu business houses, were HRT bus drivers, school teachers, policemen, or young AJA's from

Seattle or Sacramento or Salt Lake City.

Second and third battalions of the 442nd moved into the field soon after the first.

Noontime chow was cooked in camouflaged field kitchens under elms and pines, and was eaten under the trees, out of sight from the air. A plane droned around in the blue, with an observer scanning the ground for signs of the regiment.

Lt. Thomas E. West, one of the regimental chaplains, was sitting on the grass, eating and talking with the men. Before he joined the army he was head of the music department at Cumberland college, Williamsburg, Ky.

Nearby was Private Robert F. Onzuka of Hanapepe, Kauai.

"When the war is over I'm going to travel," he said, skipping over the fact that he has done a good deal already. "I want to see this whole country. I'm going to travel in Europe. After that I'll go back home, to Hawaii."

Private First Class Masaru Shimose of Wailuku, Maui, said he had his postwar plans down to definite schedule—nothing vague.

"I made a date with a girl in Hawaii for Christmas Day, 1946," he said. "The war will be over then."

He wouldn't say who she is.

Private Tom Sakamoto of 2221 Pacific Heights Rd., Honolulu, was resting with his head on his pack and his helmet beside him.

"Give my aloha to Hawaii," he grinned cheerfully.

## CHAPTER V

### *A Day in the Field*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 12.—How Private Bob T. Nakamura of Waiialua, Oahu, woke up we don't know, but at 5 o'clock this morning he clapped a bugle to his lips and blasted headquarters company of the 442nd infantry battalion into

consciousness out here in the field in Mississippi.

Over miles of timbered country, other young AJA soldiers from Hawaii and the mainland were bugling first call, rousing the Go for Broke regiment to another day of tactical training.

Stars were still bright, sunrise an hour away. The locusts stopped whirring in the pine trees while Nakamura took over. Then they went back to their own shrill song, which seems to go with this heat as an accompaniment.

\* \* \*

Fifteen minutes later Nakamura sounded reveille, and then whipped off chow call a quarter of an hour after that.

We looked him up.

"I used to play trumpet in the Waialua high school band," he said. "So they sent me to a bugle school when I got back here."

Before he became a soldier in the U. S. army, he built concrete irrigating flumes on the Waialua plantation.

Under the mess tent a corporal was baking hot cakes. His touch, and the results, were professional.

They should have been, because he used to cook hot cakes at the Naniloa hotel in Hilo, and at the Royal and Moana in Honolulu. He is George Tsukahara of 1356 College Walk, Honolulu.

\* \* \*

Sitting at the base of an elm tree, eating hot cakes, scrambled eggs, toast and coffee, and scratching chiggers, were other Hawaii boys. One of them was Harold Y. Sato of Paia, Maui, formerly a tractor mechanic for HC&S Co. His mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Jihei Sato, live at Paia. They might be interested to know that there is nothing wrong with their boy's appetite.

Mrs. Kama Higa of 2257 Kamehameha IV Rd., Honolulu, can be given the same assurance about her boy, Hideo Higa.

Others in the group at the tree were Y. Kawakami of Kalaheo, Kauai; Angelus K. Matsushima of Makaweli, Kauai; S. Chinna of Kalihi valley, Honolulu, who already has two years of army service behind him; James T. Masatsugu of Waialua, Oahu; Y. Roger Hiraoka of Fresno, Cal.; Hisashi Tamura of Hilo, who drives a jeep; Norman H. Nishimoto of Honolulu, who worked there for Sears-Roebuck, and Robert Wakuya, who thinks Waialua plantation on Oahu is the only place to go back to live.

They talked about their trip across the continent. "San Francisco is a beautiful city," Wakuva said. "All those bridges, and the big buildings on the hills. We like New Orleans, too, but oh boy, plenty hot!

"I'm going back to Waialua. You know John Midkiff? He's manager there. I like it there. It's my home."

Private Kawakami of Kalaheo, Kauai, with pride that would become one of those tradition en-crusted regiments that trace their history back to Balaklava or Green Mountain or the Alamo, said:

"The Kauai boys celebrated the fifth month anniversary of the 442nd infantry yesterday. We were the first inducted in Hawaii. March 11, 1943."

\* \* \*

First Lt. Keith Stivers, regiment headquarters motor transportation and mess officer, a slender, gentle young man who teaches these AJA's judo and what the army calls "dirty fighting," strolled by.

"When this war's over," he announced, "I'm going to take a vacation in Hawaii. I'm going to spend a week with each one of my men, and I'm going to have me a luau every Sunday."

He was extended a year's worth of invitations on the spot.

\* \* \*

Later in the morning we saw Maj. E. L. O'Connor, formerly of the Honolulu liquor commission, in the field with his troops. He is executive officer of the 3rd battalion of the 442nd.

We stopped at the command post of the 3rd battalion to talk with the commanding officer, a husky, gray haired lieutenant colonel from Illinois named Sherwood Dixon. When the armistice was declared in 1918, he was a corporal with American troops, fighting with Italians and British against the Austrians at the Piave river.

"These men," he said, "all wanted to go to war. They volunteered. They aren't malingerers. I never saw a more willing lot of soldiers in my life.

"Ninety eight per cent of them qualified in rifle fire. I had grown up to believe that 85 per cent was pretty good."

The battalion clerk at Col. Dixon's headquarters is Private First Class Tokio Shimazu, of 1953 S. Beretania St., Honolulu. He was handling incoming telephone calls from field positions, and relaying orders.

Col. Dixon took us out via jeep to an area where Capt. Ralph Graham of Baltimore was putting his Company I through combat tactics.

"These are squad and platoon problems we are conducting this morning," Capt. Graham said, indicating a group of Hawaii and mainland AJA's who were advancing toward a simulated enemy position under command of their own non-coms.

"These problems require a good deal of maneuvering, and real head-work. The problem is briefly outlined, and the non-commissioned officers must use their own judgment in carrying out the assignment.

**"The old Bunker Hill stuff is out. The sergeant has to figure out a plan of advance and assault, and a plan for withdrawal. He**

**can use his corporal any way he wants. Out of this we are training the leaders who will take these squads into battle.**

"The sergeant must not only organize his own offense and defense, but he has to keep in touch with the squads on either side of him."

\* \* \*

We watched Private Richard Ni-shioka, an island boy acting as sergeant, tell his men that orders had just been received to attack a German rifle team on a nearby hill. He had just reconnoitered the area, and briefly he gave his men the facts and outlined his plan of attack. He named his scouts and his corporal as second in command.

"See those bushes over there?" he asked. "When you get there, you will proceed by leap and bound movement."

An officer smothered a smile.

"Proceed by leap and bound movement," he murmured. "That's a new one to me, and pretty good, too."

## CHAPTER VI

### *Learning Combat Tactics*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 12.—Second Lt. Jim Wheatley of Alabama said: "There is a German automatic rifle team just over the crest of that hill, 300 yards away.

"Your squad will destroy that rifle team. Time of attack is 10 minutes from issuing of this order. Any questions?"

The officer was addressing Private Walter Okumoto of 131 Koalele St., Honolulu. The order given by Lt. Wheatley called for the execution of a simulated combat problem, and Walter was serving as acting sergeant in command of a rifle squad composed of Hawaii boys, members of Wheatley's 3rd platoon of Co. I, 3rd battalion of the 442nd infantry regiment.

What we were watching was the serious business of training for combat—for the action these boys from the islands asked for when

they volunteered their services last March at the call of the war department and Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons.

What these boys are learning in this school of war is the business of making the enemy dead soldiers and keeping themselves live soldiers.

\* \* \*

"Right now we're not only training them in combat tactics," Lt. Wheatley said, "but with problems like these we are finding out who the men are who display the leadership and the command ability that is needed for noncommissioned officers. Every one gets his chance."

**Right now Walter Okumoto was being given the responsibility of commanding the squad. He was on his own—absolutely,**

just as he would be in battle. Lt. Wheatley had given the order; from there on it was up to Walter to take over.

His squad was dispersed in the pine woods. He called them together. Briefly but thoroughly he informed them of the situation at the assignment. Ten minutes later he and his men slipped quietly away to begin the attack.

For the next hour the squad carried out its problem, took its objective and retired. The men carried light packs and rifles. Twigs and bits of leaves were stuck in the nets over their helmets. Their gray-green fatigue uniforms blended in with the surrounding greenery.

\* \* \*

When it was over Walter told us how he had carried out his assignment.

"As soon as I got the order from Lt. Wheatley, I made a reconnaissance. I took Private Tom Sakamoto with me as scout. (Tom's home is at 2221 Pacific Heights Rd. He used to drive a bus for Honolulu Rapid Transit.)

**"We got within 20 yards of the enemy position, and then came back. I told the squad what we had to do—attack a German automatic rifle team. I gave them every detail of the problem.**

"I appointed Private Kenneth Okuna (1638 Olona lane, Honolulu) as acting corporal and my second in command of the squad. I sent Toni Sakamoto out as No. 1 scout, and Private James Okimoto (Dole St., Honolulu) as No. 2 scout. I ordered the men to keep dispersed, to walk crouched and keep low.

"When the time came to begin the attack I ordered the men into squad column formation—staggered, each man five to 10 yards from the next. We moved into a draw that ran towards the left from the enemy position.

"When we got to a bend in the draw that led toward the German rifle team, I gave arm and hand signals to the squad. I ordered the men to crouch and crawl toward the hill, taking cover.

"We were close there when the enemy fired on one of the scouts ahead. (There was gunfire—with blank ammunition). I signalled the men to take skirmish formation around the ridge, and signalled to Okimoto to throw a grenade into the enemy position.

"As soon as he threw the grenade, I ordered the assault. We jumped up, hollered and took the position.

"I then put out the men for security, to hold the position. The scouts were put out ahead, and the rest of the men dispersed in every direction.

"After we took the hill, a German unit opened fire from another hill. Lt. Wheatley gave me this message: 'The squad on your left has failed to sustain its advance. You will withdraw immediately to your original position.'

\* \* \*

"I ordered the men to go back by the draw, one by one, taking cover. I ordered Private T. Okimoto (of Molokai) to remain behind with his automatic rifle to cover our withdrawal. I ordered him to remain behind three minutes after the last man had left, and then withdraw himself.

"When we got back to our original position I got new orders from Lt. Wheatley."

(A copy of the order read: "A strong enemy attack is developing from hill No. 4. The squad on your left and the platoon on your right are defending that ground. Your squad will organize and defend this hill immediately.")

"I placed my men in skirmish formation," Walter said. "I made each man dig a fox hole, and I placed Okimoto in a position where his automatic rifle would have the best field of fire."

Lt. Wheatley followed the squad throughout the problem, but left the entire discharge of the problem in Walter's hands, taking notes of good work done and mistakes made. These he later discussed with the squad.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Heat and Chiggers*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 12.—On the surface there seem to be two chronic complaints here among Hawaii troops with the 442nd combat team. Neither cause of complaint can be seen, but each can be felt after its fashion.

One is the heat, and the other is the chigger, that malevolent insect which digs its way into the skin and sets up the devil's own itch a few hours later.

Talk with any Hawaii boy here about army life, and without variation comes the answer, "Plenty hot—plenty."

It is. Compared with Hawaii's temperature of 70 and low 80's, plus humidity, the thermometer here is in the 90's or over the 100 degree mark, with humidity. The boys tell of one day when it was 122 in the sun.

It is a steaming heat. The humid Gulf of Mexico lies less than 100 miles to the south. There are a few alligators in some of the streams in these parts, so they say.

Many of the islanders and mainlanders visit New Orleans on weekend pass, and go swimming in Lake Ponchartrain there. They like it—especially the girls, who seem to have made a great impression. But they say Lake Ponchartrain is too warm—not cool like Waimanalo.

The heat provides them with an obvious, surface complaint, and thereby may serve a good purpose.

It is a medical fact, however, that they have adjusted themselves physically to the heat, however much they may gripe about it.

At first some of them had to fall out on marches. Water "control," as it is called, was not the best during the first days here. Some of the soldiers gulped down cold water and became sick.

That doesn't happen now. Their own experience and the advice of

their officers have changed that. Regimental doctors say that heat cases almost never occur. Nobody dropped out when the combat team marched in review the other day under a baking afternoon sun. Nobody dropped out on yesterday's march into the field.

This is the hottest time of the year here. Winters are cool, and sometimes uncomfortably cold.

As for chiggers—well, the Hawaii contingent will take centipedes any time in preference.

People here say that the minute the Hawaii troops stepped off the train on their arrival last April, they started looking around the station for snakes. They are still on the lookout for them, and they find them.

Aside from heat and chiggers, there is a third standard remark about army life. "Plenty tough," they say.

It isn't easy. The men were up at 5 o'clock yesterday, preparing to march into the field for five days training. The day's work did not end until long after dark. At 5 this morning, with stars still shining, they were routed out by bugle call for another day.

In camp the day is not as long. Right now the troops in the field are training under "tactical conditions." In other words, they are working at war in earnest—and, supposedly, there is an enemy nearby who doesn't observe the eight hour union day when he directs his artillery fire and times his assaults.

And so the day in the field is long—a 24 hour day for the organization, though less for the individual soldier.

The training day is not one of ceaseless activity. A platoon may be sprawled on the ground, resting, or listening to a talk by the second

lieutenant. Ten minutes later they may be moving across a field toward an imaginary enemy position.

They alternately wriggle forward on their bellies, run doubled-over in swift bursts toward the next tree or shrub, and hurl themselves down on the ground—pack, rifle and all—like a football player diving for the ball.

\* \* \*

An hour later they may be lying under the trees, hidden from view, as if they had nothing to do but loaf and debate the question whether the girls at home are being true—a much debated point, we understand. But nearby are sentries.

**Someone is responsible for the safety of the squad. This is not play. There is battle ahead for**

**these boys from Kona, Kaimuki and Lahaina, and from Seattle and Portland, Ore.**

And so the day goes, with bursts of activity interspersed with what might be called vigilant relaxation. After 16 or 17 hours of it in the field, at 90 to 105 or 110 in the shade, a day's work has really been done.

"Plenty tough"—sure.

Regimental officers say that one of the outstanding characteristics of these soldiers is their willingness to learn, their ability to learn fast, and their spirit. You get that from the second lieutenants on up through the battalion commanders to Lt. Col. V. R. Miller, the executive officer, and Col. C. W. Pence.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Letters from Home*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 13.—Letters from their homes in Hawaii mean more than anything else to the islanders who are in combat training here as troops with the 442nd combat team.

That is the opinion of Private First Class Tadashi Morimoto, who formerly was in the territorial department of public welfare under John Wilson and whose wife is living at Lihue, Kauai.

Tadashi, who graduated in 1941 from the New York School of Social Work, Columbia university, speaks with more maturity than most of the boys. He is 31 years old, as compared with an average age in the early 20's among the men here. He is personnel classification specialist with the 442nd.

"My message to folks back home is this: write to the boys here. Remember their birthdays and the special events in their lives. It really touches the boys when they get cakes on their birthdays.

"Letters are the best thing the people back home can do for their

boys here. If one of the boys misses getting a letter from home, he says, 'I lose fight.'"

\* \* \*

A lot of mail does come in here for the soldiers, but it can never be too much, to judge by their eagerness for word from the islands. Tadashi urges friends as well as parents to write, and write often.

We asked Tadashi whether the men think much about the implications of their service in the United States army—what their record for better or for worse means with regard to the future of all Americans of Japanese ancestry and aliens in Hawaii and on the mainland, and what their battle record will mean in terms of psychological warfare against the Axis.

That's a mouth filling sort of a question that you can't casually ask a soldier on contact in the field. He isn't going into a lengthy discussion of his ideals—and as a man who is making a practical demonstration of his faith and has volunteered to prove it in battle, he doesn't have to say anything.

But we were interested, and sought Tadashi's opinion, as an older man, as to the way the soldiers in general felt about it.

"If we want to see our children and our grandchildren lead the sort of life we want them to have in America," he said, "we feel we must do something about it right now. Really, the feeling is pretty basic with the boys.

"Once in a while one of the younger ones will say, 'we were born here in this country. We feel we are Americans. Why do we have to do something special, to prove we are Americans when we are Americans?'

"To them we explain, 'Yes, you are a good American, but you are like something new that has been discovered. You wouldn't feel sure about a new airplane that has not been tested in battle. You have to try it out. Well, we HAVE to prove what we are'.

"We explain it to them graphically that way. But not many need that explanation.

"The spirit with which these boys came here is what is holding them up. On the whole I give them a great deal of credit.

\* \* \*

"They are peppy, and full of life. After a hard day's training you would think they would hit the

blankets. No, sir! They want to do things. They want to go to Hattiesburg on weekend leaves, or New Orleans or Jackson. They really look forward to those trips.

"I think in many places they are making a very good impression. In Bogalusa (a nearby Louisiana town) the people invited a lot of our boys to spend a weekend in their homes.

"They didn't know just how our boys would act. Now we have a standing invitation.

"The boys go anywhere here. You'd be surprised how far they travel.

"The 100th Infantry Battalion had a wonderful time in Wisconsin. They always want to go back there, to see their friends in Sparta and Madison and LaCrosse.

"If the boys feel like that about Wisconsin, there must be real hospitality there—gentleman type."

\* \* \*

There have been incidents here such as occur in any army camp and town. There have been occasional fights between individuals—between AJA's themselves, sometimes between AJA's and Caucasians. But they are infrequent.

"Our boys can really dish it out when they have to," bespectacled Tadashi said solemnly.

## CHAPTER IX

### *Hawaii Boys Earn Praise*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 13.—Brig. Gen. George Halloran, commanding officer of this sprawling army post, expressed the opinion today that "there is no reason why the men in the 442nd combat team should not make excellent soldiers. I think they are."

The 442nd, made up of Americans of Japanese ancestry from Hawaii and the mainland, is only one of many army outfits in training here, over all of whom Gen. Halloran is camp commander.

"But, you understand," he explained, "my job here is something

like running a hotel. I feed the men in this camp, clothe them and hospitalize them when they need it. But they get their training from their own officers. In the case of the 442nd, that man is Col. Pence.

"It is my understanding that the men in the 442nd combat team are adjusting themselves successfully to conditions in the army and in the community. There has been very little trouble from the MP angle.

\* \* \*

"I don't believe the men get involved in any more trouble than

the men in any other unit of the army.

"They go about all through this camp. You find them in every bowling alley. They are great for recreation. You see them in every restaurant and theater in Hattiesburg."

(Hattiesburg is the nearest town, 18 miles distant from the camp. It has a population in the 20,000's, and like every other community near an army camp, is jammed.)

\* \* \*

Gen. Halloran spoke of his tour of duty at Schofield Barracks and Ft. Shafter between 1912 and 1917. He was a second lieutenant when he reported there, and a first lieutenant when he left.

He recalls the day when the United States declared war in Germany. There was a German gunboat in Honolulu harbor that day—the Geier. The Germans tried to burn her.

A platoon of U. S. soldiers from Ft. Shafter boarded her to take her crew prisoners. The lieutenant in command of the platoon was the same Halloran who wears a brigadier general's stars here at Shelby.

He was last in Honolulu in 1934, as a through steamship passenger.

He said he remembered Alfred L. Castle, and asked if Stanley C. Kennedy is still in Honolulu. "They were young fellows running around on the beach when I was stationed there," he said.

## CHAPTER X

### *Hawaii Boys are Healthy*

CAMP SHELBY, Miss., Aug. 13.—The general health of mouths and condition of teeth among the Hawaii and mainland AJAs who compose the 442nd combat team in training here is superior to anything he has ever seen before, Capt. Wayland F. Hogan, combat team dental surgeon, says.

Capt. Hogan graduated from the Atlanta Southern Dental college in 1929, and until he joined the army practiced in Ocala, Fla.

"A Caucasian boy will come in with 18 or 20 cavities in his teeth," Capt. Hogan said, "but one of these AJA's will come in with 18 or 20 fillings. That's the difference.

**"This condition shows the results of early training in the home and school, and it shows that the parents of these boys have not spared anything to see that their sons had the best of dental care.**

\* \* \*

"There are three outstanding facts about these boys that impress me as a dentist. One is the training they have had in care of their teeth. Another is their personal hygiene, and another is their ability to stand pain. They never

flinch. You never even see their eyebrows flicker when they are in the chair.

"It hurts them just as much as it would hurt anyone else, but they won't show it.

"The dentistry they have had is excellent. Dentists of Japanese ancestry have graduated from first rate schools here on the mainland. I find these dentists with the combat team to be very conscientious, and eager to take advantage of every opportunity to improve their technique.

"Furthermore, they make excellent army officers."

\* \* \*

Among the combat team dental officers serving under Capt. Hogan are Lt. Edward Nakata of Honolulu, who recently graduated from dental school at Washington university, St. Louis, Mo., and Robert M. Miyasaki of 1935 Houghtailing St., Honolulu, who graduated from the University of Southern California dental school in 1941.

He recently was transferred to this outfit from the 100th infantry battalion, and is expecting his commission as a first lieutenant any day.