

EXCERPTS are taken  
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Q: This is oral interview for the Presidio Army Museum for the "Go For Broke" history project and book. We are doing an interview with Goro Sumida, and we are here in Honolulu, Hawaii. This is November 18, 1980. And I was going to ask, may I call you Goro? Are you married? Do you have a family?

A: My wife's name is Gladys Toyoko Sumida.

Q: How long have you been married?

A: Gee, let's see. From 1947 to now is about 33 years, 32 years?

Q: Do you have any children?

A: I have 3 children.

Q: And what are their names?

A: Mark Sumida, Sidney Sumida, and Beverly Sumida.

Q: Did your wife ever ask you about the war?

A: We used to have what you might call "tanemoshi." You heard that word, "tanemoshi"? That's the ones they get before the war they get all these boys together and they put up maybe so much a month. Then it's sort of a sociable club. It's not for money making or anything.

Q: With the 100th here?

A: All 100 boys. We had about 18 of us. And we used to meet once a month in one of the boy's houses. Just in case a person wants

to buy a washing machine instead of going to the bank or anything, they use that money to buy whatever house necessity they need without going to the bank. And it was more a sociable club. One person wants help, they want to build a wall or stone wall or something like that, we go over there and we help them. We all pitch in and give some kokua.

Q Some what?

A Kokua. Means help.

Q: How do you spell that?

A. K-O-K-U-A.

Q: Kokua?

A: Hawaiian word. That's a Hawaiian word, see.

Q: So the 100th boys have always been very, very close. Like brothers.

A: Right after the war, they get together, they all close.

Q. How about now?

A: Still very close.

Q. Are you a regular member of the 100th?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: You come here often. We are in the Club 100 right now where we are doing the interview. Right now there's a meeting going on, and they are having dance lessons.

A: They have dance class. They have orchid club. They got bridge club, they have physical fitness club, come down here to exercise. They even have sauna. They get card games you wanna play. Quite often they have beer bust party. And they have lot of island boys come down meeting here.

Q: Are your kids, are your children proud of you for being in the 100th?

A: Well, see, the kids they never really got interested until they started going to college. Then they found out people talk about the war and so naturally they got curious and they want to see what the war was about.

Q: Do they ask you?

A: They didn't ask me, but they ask one of my brothers. One day my kid brother kidded my son, number 2 son. He told him, "See our house door? It's got 7 stars. You know what that is for?" He said, "No." "That means that 7 of your uncles went to World War II, was in the service." Then he started research work; he's a minister today. Research work at the University, dig out all them old newspaper.

Q: About the 100th?

A: 100th, war, you know. And all those World War II stories.

Q: So he is proud of you.

A: Right now at least he learned something about that thing, see. We used to tell him about, our days, we make our own kites. When we make flying kites we don't go to the store, pay 5¢ and buy the

kites. And our toys were only marbles. We used to get peewee sticks. You know, broom handle? You ever see how they play that peewee? That's what we used to play with. But today you have so many different toys.

Q Would you ever tell your kids when they ask you war stories, what happened?

A: They usually hear them from our friends because they all at our house like that.

Q: But you never told them?

A: No, they never asked me, so they don't ask, I don't tell 'em nothing.

Q: Maybe you can help me with a problem I have. I'm a haole and whenever I ask my father war stories he would always tell me, but I understand that a lot of the Nisei soldiers, the Buddhaheads and even the katonks wouldn't tell their kids about the war because they wanted to be quiet about it, didn't want to brag. Did you ever notice that about your friends, they didn't want to brag? A lot of the Sansei kids, I have interviewed some Sansei kids and they don't know what their father did. They know they were in the 100th or the 442, but they don't know what they did or how much they did. Could you explain that to me, to people who are going to read the book, why that is?

✓ A: The reason why lot of these veterans they don't want to talk about the war, because if you talk to person who never been in a war, they will never understand. Among veterans they can tell you all

✓ the stories, but they been in action so they know, they can picture what it is. But the ones that never been in a war and they look at the movies, well, the movies is a lot of exaggeration. Until you actually see blood, you will never believe that that's war going on.

Q: So it's just that they wouldn't believe or you just can't tell a story. . .

A: Because they cannot believe what you telling 'em. Because they never actually see war like that.

Q. That's true of a lot of veterans. They won't tell. Like I did an interview with some members of the 101st, the airborne, and they said they wouldn't tell their kids because they saw a lot of death and a lot of things that they didn't like to talk about. As a soldier, you see a lot of death.

A. I seen quite a bit.

Q: How does that make you feel?

✓ A. The first time you cannot eat. I seen this knee, you know, the joints here? The front end of their feet is on the back of their neck and the bones stickin' out all pink. One day I saw my friend, he got half his head blown off. And you see all the blood, you know.

Q. What do you think?

✓ A: Well, if they die fast, they never did suffer, good luck to them.

Q: It makes you sick, though.

A: ✓ Yeah, it makes you sick, but you thank heaven they went fast. They don't know what hit them. You try to get some of them hit in the stomach and suffer all night and die. Some got hit with 50 caliber machine gun on the knee and they suffer until next morning and they die.

Q: It's hard to tell somebody that who hasn't seen that.

A You will never believe that. Human beings is one of the most smelly thing on earth. When they die, that smell will never go off. When it get on your hand or something, it stays there.

Q: A lot of people have told me about that. Could you try to describe that? Nobody knows what it is, though either, do they? When somebody dies they leave a smell.

A: In the wintertime it smell like dead fish. In the winter, the blood coagulate fast enough so you will never die of bleeding because it stop fast. But in the summer in 2 days that time when I was in Anzio the body get a, what you call it, whiteworm? What's that white worm. . . maggots. And the body it doesn't look like the person that's dead. It's all bloated up, purple color. Hard to look at 'em.

Q: When you see a friend or even a soldier, a dead soldier, what goes through your mind?

A. All you can say is, he's gone, that's it.

Q: If you think about it, you might go crazy though, right?

A: I seen person, their best friend die and all night they say, gee, they in a daze. You cannot put that person on guard. One night I had to take his shift, we had 4 hour shift. I had to stand 8 hours because I cannot leave him over there because he's still in a daze. He can't believe his friend is dead.

Q. This is a hard question. How do you adjust, because you suffered so many casualties? In fact, in doing the research for the book, the 100th suffered, and the 442, more than most units in the whole history of World War II, a tremendous amount of loss of friends and soldiers. What do you do? How do you feel? So many losses, and everybody knows everybody else. It's not like you are all from a different state, but you all are friends from Hawaii, and Hawaii is a very small state. It's like a small town, especially before the war, so you know everybody else. How do you feel?

A: Certain of them die, but they know quite a bit so you don't miss it that bad as if you only know one person and that one person die. You get 20 and maybe 2 or 3 die, you don't miss 'em that much. But when you get only one, that's when they start thinking about it and then they crack up. When you get 20 of them and you're gone, your time up, that's it.

Q: Did a lot of guys in the 442 get shell shock, which was normal?

A: So far you take an average, most of our boys, I don't think you find too many went crack up. They happy-go-lucky and they just think, "Oh well, it was just one of the guys." You be surprised.

One day we were on the bridge. There was an officer under the bridge.

Q: An officer?

A: Officer. He was in a safe position, under the bridge. Then you know what happened? The airburst here. We are on the top with no cover. We got shrapnel going between our legs, the pants, but we don't get nothing. But the one underneath, he have a concrete one, it just happened that that thing burst here so it went underneath, caught him on the head.

Q: Killed him?

A: Killed him. So his time was up.

Q: You just couldn't do it. You would take precautions, you would dig in, but could only do so much.

A: We get caught, we're moving in, and we get caught so no place to dig. We have to hit the bridge. We heard the Screaming Mimi's coming already.

Q: What was a Screaming Mimi?

A: Oh, they get a grinding sound, dakine sound. It's just like a multiple barrel mortar shell. When they throw they come in about 5 like that, bracket like that. They make funny sound, screeching, screaming sound. So when you get the ambulance, they grind that thing up. So it start come closer to you, just like a train coming closer to you.

Q: How did you feel when you heard the noise?

✓ | A: At first you don't feel too good. Gradually you get used to weapon sounds. The longer you stay on the line, you can tell it's a German gun firing or our guns firing. At first our artillery fire in back of us, oh, we couldn't judge which way coming in or going out.

Q: You had to climb a lot of hills in Italy, up and down and up and down. It was a lot of work and you were always exhausted. How do you keep going?

✓ | A: They tell you go, no matter how tired, you just keep on going, following them up the hill. You know at times we had persons standing up and sleep.

Q: Really?

✓ | A: Yeah. And we are in a foxhole with water this high, cannot sleep in there. Some sit on their helmet in the foxhole, just sit on 'em and fall asleep. At times where they have you pinned down, you can't even put your head out. They used to urinate in their. . .

Q: Helmet?

A: Not helmet, that C ration can and take 'em out. If you tell people that, a lot of people won't believe that. Can't put your head out. Snipers pick you off.

Q: Did you like your officers?

A: Yeah, I had good officers.

Q: You said that the Buddhahead officers were very friendly. And they were one of the boys.

A: Yeah, usually, field commission, like that, see. And we had a lot of good Caucasian bosses, officers.

Q: Did you call them bosses?

A: We kid each other anyway.

Q: Straw boss?

A: Yeah.

Q: What are some of the terms you used? "Boss," I like that. Was there a Hawaiian term for NCO?

A: They used to call 'em "honcho."

Q: Honcho?

A: Honcho. The #1 Boss is a honcho.

Q: #1 Boss? Was there a word for food? A Hawaiian term?

A: Kau-kau.

Q: Kau-kau?

A: Kau-kau is food.

Q: Was there a term for an officer other than boss? Was there something else?

A: So far, officer, boss, out there we just call them by their name.

Q: How about for the German? Was there a Hawaiian term for a German?

A: We used Italian word on 'em. Tedeschi.

Q: Tedeschi?

A: Yeah.

Q: How do you spell that?

A: I don't know how they spell it. We used to call them, every time we take a place, we see Italian, see buildings, we ask them, "Dove Tedeschi?" which means, "Where's the German?" If there's Germans around, see.

Q: I think it's T-E-D-E-S-C-H-E.

A: It's Italian word, eh? I don't know. That's what we always. . .

Q: . . .called 'em Tedeschi?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have a word for Italians? Paisan?

A: Paisano.

Q: How about for the French?

A: I don't know. Like us, we used to know French from before. We always talk of "froggie." So they used to call the French frogs.

Q: Are there any other terms that you used? I'll tell you why I'm asking for terms, because in the book I have a lot of pidgin English and we want to have a glossary for the haoles and the mainland boys who don't know. They could look up a word in the back. What are other words you might have used? Did they have a

word for a gun, rifle?

A: We used to use Japanese word. I don't know what the Hawaiians called guns, though. What do they call guns? Like Japanese got "po," that's a gun, see.

Q: Did you have a name for somebody who was a jerk? Was there somebody you didn't like, an eight ball in the unit?

A: They used to call them all kinds of names. Out here they got all kind of mixture of Hawaiian, they got Filipino word, Chinese word, Korean word.

Q: Did you have any sad sacks or eight balls in your unit?

A: Yes, they usually got some sad sacks.

Q: Were they always funny or sad? What did they do that was funny?

A: They always get gigged.

Q: What?

A: They always get gigged from the officers.

Q: For doing what?

A: They do all kinds of things. Suppose you even on close order drill, they make mistakes.

Q: Two left feet?

A: Yeah.

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Q: Did you have a name for somebody like that, who was an eight ball?

A: Everybody call them different names.

Q: What are some of them?

A: They call them "bakatare," Japanese.

Q: Bakatare means stupid, right? What's some other ones?

A: That's what I think we call. . .

Q: This book is partly going to be written for the Sansei and your kids. And it will be for their kids. How would you like the 100th to be remembered, yourself? Talk about yourself and then the 100th. How would you like to be remembered?

A: Remembered as a unit. Remembered as the 100th unit, the boys all sticking together.

Q: That you were brave?

✓ | A: They all stick together. I always tell my kids that Japanese people, the Nisei, they were noted for their honesty, hard working, and guts and I always emphasize. . .

Q. What, godsend?

✓ | A: Guts. And I always tell them, you know, Daddy had to travel quite a bit on the mainland. And I been in Japan, I been in Italy and I been in France. And I notice they all respect Japanese people.

Q. In Hawaii before the war things were real tough and the haole, the

bossman, didn't treat the Orientals very well and the Nisei very well. There was a lot of publicity that was going back to Hawaii, how good the unit was. I've seen hundreds of newspaper articles. When you came back, how were things different, because were you aware of all the newspaper articles? People say, "Boy, you were in a lot of fighting." Did they say that to you?

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A: No, when I came back actually we started from scratch, came back, have our club built. We had the privilege of going back to our old job, first preference. We were veterans and some people had preference in going to college to get good education. But we used to have bowling clubs, we organize bowling. I remember one year they had a politician where they had Republican year and they were our sponsor. They were surprised at what we used to tell them that, before the war we were dual citizen, we cannot get state job, federal job. Then even with our training at vocational school I think our class, we had all different nationalities, and I think Oriental boys make higher grades than all of these other Portuguese boys and you know. But to get in the Navy yard, we never did get a chance to get in there.

Q: Now after the war, things changed.

✓ |

A: After the war, changed. They found that the Nisei boys really work hard.

Q: Did you feel you were part of that?

A: Yeah, I feel that in fact people used to make comments about Nisei boys, they get too many top position. Well, today a lot of Nisei

boys got that job. Some of them kinda sore because they figure we getting extra treatment from the government. But actually that person told me that they had this Navy yard where they had RIF.

Q: RIF, Reduction In Force.

A: So he says if he had a chance, he would have gone to war. It was Chinese war, you see. I told him, "Naw, are you kidding me? You're making good money compared to what we are making and I don't think you would go to war." So just happened that they had a battalion made here of that race, so I told him, "Here's your chance to get your 10 points. Why don't you volunteer?" He never did say no word after that. Who would go, you making that good money and then try to get in that Korean War. That's foolish; that's not your war.

Q: Do you have any other things that you want to add? Any more things that are funny or humorous about being a soldier? I know it gets harder. We've been talking 2 hours now. It's hard to remember.

A: Yeah, if you ask me the question I can answer for you, but beside that it's pretty hard.

Q: Well, your friends really speak very highly of you. Everybody said that you were a very brave man. You always went on scout, that you volunteered a lot more than anybody else.

A: You volunteer mainly because you have your good friend out there. I know one night I went twice, from 7 to 5 in the morning, carry one ration. That's how far we went in the dark.

Q: How far?

A: That's about, I'd say, over 5 miles.

Q: In the dark?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where was this?

A: In Colli.

Q: K-O-L-I?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: In Italy?

A: Italy.

3rd Voice: C-O-L-L-I.

Q: C-O-L-L-I. Five miles in the dark, in German territory?

✓ A: Not German territory. We have 2 mountain. B Company is in the front; we are in the reserve. Every night they need their food rations, they need their ammo. So we in the reserve, we take them up there to that place in the night. That trip, going and coming back, take us from 7 in the night, 5 in the morning, go and come back. So I went 2 nights in a row, the 2nd one because the other person that's supposed to go, they shot one man. So just by thinking I got a good friend up there, I gotta bring up the ammo. So I just volunteer and go. By gosh, people like us, some good

↑ people watching over us.

Q: Are you religious?

A: No, but I think somebody watching us. We're still alive yet.

Q: So how do you think you made it?

A: I don't know. But I had a car accident, head-on. I had fish boat turn over, still swimming in the ocean for 45 minutes. Still we got out of that right after the war.

Q: Do you think you are a lucky man?

{ A: I think so. Maybe bad people live long. The good ones die early.

Q: Would you recommend our readers to live a bad life? Maybe they will live longer.

✓ A: I think so. But they always ask me, do you believe in heaven and earth? I always tell them, heaven is when you die. Your worries are over. Hell is you live today because you gotta pay your bills, you gotta pay your tax. You don't know what your outcome will be.

Q: Did you ever take any photographs when you were over there?

A: We have quite a bit at home.

Q: Do you? Do you have a picture of yourself?

A: Yeah, with Italian girl.

Q: I'd like to borrow it if I could sometime.

A: OK, but you're not here.

Q: Maybe I could meet you here tomorrow. Do you live close by?

A. No, but in the night after work maybe I can lend you some pictures.

Q: I'd like to see them. Maybe we can use some, because the book will be mostly photographs and we want to have a lot of good photographs. So if we sit down you'll tell me what's happening in the photographs, and maybe if it's a funny story or something, or a human story, I'd like to hear it. Any other things that you want to tell, any other stories, any other particularly funny stories? Ever pull any tricks on the frogs or the paisans?

A I'll tell you what the boys used to do. They used to sell cigarettes. Remember how the carton of cigarettes is? They have a match. It's made of wax cover, right? What they do is get the match, melt the wax, pull the carton out, put newspaper in there. That's how they were selling those cigarettes. The Italian girls were doing the same thing. They were putting gasoline in the cognac bottle and selling as cognac, so a lot of boys were getting sick.

Q: Why did they do that? To poison them or just to sell it?

A: Just to sell that thing as cognac because cognac has little bit kick. And out there everything was high. One egg used to cost us 50¢ American money. One small chicken like that, \$10 American money.

Q: Did you know that the 100th Battalion ran a whorehouse in Leghorn? (sp?)  
Were you there?

A: My squad wasn't there. They took 'em under the Germans.

Q The girls?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Did you ever visit it?

A: We're the boss, so we get it all free.

Q: Really? You're the 2nd person to admit that, you know. Could you tell me more about that, because Colonel Kim told me a story how he set it up, and Mark Clark knew about it. It was OK; there was authorization from 5th Army to set it up. Could you tell me about it, how it was operated and all?

A: When we first went over there, we told our squad, half our squad, to take over the place.

Q. Leghorn?

A: Yeah, that prostitute house.

Q: It was already there then; it was already set up.

A: Yeah. They had a building with one madame, one lady, and 4 girls, good-looking girls. We had 4 bedrooms. It was a 2 story house. I was in the parlor and the sergeant was outside the door. He have a tommy gun, I have a tommy gun and we had a ~~[inaudible]~~ <sup>cash</sup> box and the lady sitting on the first floor, steps going up to the bedroom. Got 4 rooms, 4 girls. So we got 4 guards out there.

Q: Why were you guarding them?

*How do  
run a  
whore house*

A: They have to guard the door so they can direct which girl finished, take 'em down and call the next person up. So they got 10 of them sitting on the first floor, all on the chairs in the parlor. They pay 50¢ to the lady and then they go up. And the line was from 7 in the morning 'til 5 in the afternoon. So the girls have to use Vaseline. It never ends; it's just continuous going. And some of the boys when in the morning they come around, afternoon they want to sneak in, pay us off \$5 to get in.

Q: Would you only let 'em in once a day?

A: Huh?

Q: Only let 'em in once?

A: No, you can go anytime, but they have to buck the line!

Q: Oh, oh.

A: Line was so long. You finish, you got to go to the back of the line again.

Q: Did the girls mind? They made a lot of money, though.

A: I guess, yeah, because it never ends. But they took 'em away from us.

Q: Who took them away?

A: The officers want to get their piece, too. And the best one, we had a colonel came in the next day. He was from I don't know what colonel he was, all white and had a big white mustache. He

came and said, "What's going on around here?" "Oh, this is installation guard. We got orders to watch this place." So he come barging in there. Here comes the girl taking a break, came down from the room. She only had her panties on. Her top, there's nothing on. So she thought he was a customer. So she goes over, says, "What's this old fogey doing around here?" All her breasts open. She just go over there and nudge the colonel. He turned beet red, the colonel. Next thing we know, we lost the place. They closed the place.

Q: How long was it in operation? How many days?

A: Two days.

Q: Were there any more 100th Battalion/442-run houses of ill repute?

A: I don't know about the 442, but I know we were one of them and we had that one in Leghorn.

Q: Did you have any more?

A: No, that's the only one I know of. One time, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, they threw a shell pretty close to the town. The girls came running out of that place, so the Germans must have girls inside that place.

Q: Otherwise they would have shelled it?

A: No, it was a sort of a historical thing, so they didn't want to shell 'em. Only one Leaning Tower in Pisa.

Q: The Germans were using that as a whorehouse?

A: Using that as an observation post, but I think that they pull their rank on the Italian girls and use them as, like force, prostitute them.

Q. Any other funny things that might add funniness to the book?

A. I don't know. If you put them in the book all the whites say, "Gee, these guys sure had a ball out there."

Q. You were human beings. There was a lot worse in other units. I think that'll make. . . you were all human beings, you were like everybody else. You like girls. In fact you liked the girls more than anybody else, I heard. The 442 and the 100th boys were good lovers, I understand too.

A. See in Africa they were worse. You know, they have formation and they have chicken wire fence. One morning an officer had us all on the line for formation. Here come this girl on the opposite, in front of the lineup, across the fence. She lift up her dress like that, nothing on top. All the men laughing and the officer says, "What they all laughing at?" He turned around, here's the girl.

Q: When he looked at her, she put her dress down.

A. Yeah. Girls, they don't think nothing of officer or anything. They are not in the service, you see.

Q. That was in Oran, North Africa.

A: Oran. Out there was a dirty town, you know. All the toilets you go to, they don't have toilet paper. They just wipe the thing all on the wall. So lot of the boys were using French money for toilet

paper. And that Christmas, funny part about it, everybody write home for toilet paper. And that outfit had so many toilet paper. After Christmas everybody had toilet paper and toothbrush, toothpaste.

✓ Q: What are some of the things you miss when you are in combat?

✓ A: In combat they used to give us C ration, but our boys, they cannot eat hash, what you call it, with potatoes?

Q: Corned beef hash?

A: No, what's that hash? Anyway, it's kind of oily. You gotta have fire to heat it up, but half the time we cannot make fire.

Q: You'll get shot.

✓ A: Yeah. So you have to eat it raw. Not too good, so half the boys used to throw it away. We only carry the light can. Then we look for chicken, Italian chicken and rabbit.

Q: Would you miss baths, hot baths?

✓ A: Hot baths, really we take a bath. Lot of boys lost their teeth because no water. They cannot brush their teeth. That's the hard part about it.

Q: And you miss sleeping, too.

✓ A: But you get used to sleeping on the ground. You go to the hospital after you sleep on the ground and have a hell of a time sleeping on a soft bed.

Q: Really? Why?

Ford

Beds

✓ A: I don't know. So used to the hard ground the bed give you a hard time to sleep. Too soft.

Q: We only got about 4 more minutes left, and then it's the end.

A A lot of boys was in the hospital. And the maids used to come make the beds. They find them all in the basement in the laundry room.

Q: Who was in the laundry room?

A The maids. They making love in the laundry room.

Q: Oh, tell me about that.

A They used to get hospitals, they used to get a lot of Italian maids used to come down. That's how they get used to a lot of Italian maids. They always come down and they making love in there.

Q In the laundry?

A In the laundry.

Q With the 100th boys?

A Yeah, 100th boys. Haole boys. And the nurses know the score, eh?

Q They became girlfriends or just. . .

A Just ordinary boy and girl. So the nurses always laugh and say, "How come all the bedridden guys going downstairs? They don't look like bed patients."

Q Any other things that are funny?

A: That's about all I can think of right now.

Q: I would like to thank you very, very much for being part of the oral history program. You have marvelous good insight on the everyday life of a soldier. We are going to be giving you a free book on it. I hope you can make it to the ceremony that we are having March 7 for the exhibit. And what I'll be doing is, we are going to type up everything you say and we are going to send you a copy of it. We won't use anything in the book without your permission, so you can read it and you can make notes on it.

So this is going to be the end of the oral interview with Goro Sumida. We are in Honolulu, Hawaii. This is the end of the oral history tape. Thank you very much.