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I am replying to your recent request for my experiences incurred back in my army days of the 1940's. I find that recalling and assembling all the facts and happenings is an experience in itself. To the best of my abilities, I will endeavor to record the following occurrences.

I was born and raised on a large Gresham, Oregon farm. After graduating from Gresham High School, I entered Oregon Institute of Technology where I studied auto and aviation electric, diesel and gas engines. I remained on the farm through 1940 since my army volunteering effort were all rejected. Finally in February 1941, I was drafted being the first Nisei draftee from the state of Oregon.

**MY DAD SAYS - WIDEN THE ROAD FOR THE NISEI S**

I was sent to Ft Lewis, Washington where I spent four days in the reception center. I was then assigned to Co A 58th QM where I was designated acting corporal in Heavy-Duty and Maintenance Mobile Co., which was made up of men from Oregon-Washington, Utah and Montana. These men, especially from Montana were a motley group—wild, drunk and bruised—they had arrived on a train in February with windows broken out—it was cold and freezing.

Basic Training was QM type and paid \$21.00 per month from which you purchased your own sleeping bag and supplies. I was assigned to the most awkward, clumsy and bungling group to drill. I put in hours of studying drill books in my endeavor to whip these boys into an adroit drill group.

In July, I was assigned to a Salvage Platoon where we demolished trucks that were of no further use to the army. Then we were sent on maneuvers to California at Fort Ord. I was assigned with my group to the worst possible barracks. Since my last barracks which was tops as far as inspections were concerned, this Ft Ord situation was a complete disaster. We did however, get it into shape and I received my permanent corporal rating after basics.

We had a Sgt from Spokane, Washington in the group that was quite intimidating as he was a pro wrestler. I was thankful that my father insisted above all else that we learn the art of Judo, Kendo and the Japanese language. This Sgt challenged me to a wrestling match and I agreed if it would be held in the sand. He was unable to throw me as I managed to hook him each time. Finally he fell. I found out later that he reported to the medics about his back. They at first would not examine him until he gave them the name of the party he wrestled. He did not tell them but finally helped him when he admitted that he was at fault. The 1st Sgt knew the story but said nothing to me about it. **MENS ASKED WHAT HAPPENED? SGT REPLIED "DOESN'T PAY TO PICK ON SOME SMALL ONE HERE"**

We moved back to Washington for maneuvers at Fort Lewis where I signed up for Mechanics School, but due to Pearl Harbor I had to wait a few months for acceptance. I was assigned to Ft Lewis main shop in charge of Electrical and Carburetion Dept 4th echlon. **DEC 7** I was moved from the shop and assigned to our own company trucks. Three blocks away, a stockade went up and it was filled up with Nisei. **400** I did not have to go due to the CO's orders. However, I was restricted to the Company area.

I was interviewed by the MISLS. In ~~February~~ 1942, we transferred to Ft. Leavenworth. The Captain in charge of the troop train had to remain behind which resulted in each car being governed by any army personnel they could find. The first speech we heard on arrival made reference to the Federal Prison that was adjacent to the area. They advised us to think before we do anything that would eventually put us in this compound. We were placed in the reception and the facilities were good. We got supply detail which was satisfactory. The boys were placed in platoons according to their height and they really looked good. In fact the major said that he would like to keep us right there for garrison soldiers. We did have a confrontation when we went to the main fort for some entertainment. We were met at the entrance by a colored QM who actually chased us away-- he was wielding a knife.

We were then transferred to Ft Riley—a compliment of 400 men. We were dispatched to a place on one side of a baseball field while the other side of the field was made up of a colored group. We were assigned to the main Fort Motor Pool of 200 trucks, office dispatching. It was apparent that everyone wants the Nisei group because they only have to be instructed once and from that point on it is smooth sailing. Whenever I issued a pass to anyone other than a Nisei I would assign a Nisei to that person's job. When the person returned from the leave, I would reassign him to another group.

**GOT SGT DANK —<sup>NEW</sup> UP FOR STAFF SGT**

I took a 50 truck convoy (25 men) to Ft Crooks. The trucks were big and we had considerable trouble due to the short legs of the drivers. With considerable stretching, grunting and groaning we reached our destination. We experienced considerable trouble on the return trip. We were driving jeeps and pick-ups. The lead driver was a very offensive Caucasian. He held up the parade of vehicles until he reached a long down grade whereupon he took off at the speed of 60 miles per hour. We endeavored to keep up with him by increasing our speed and blowing our horns. We finally caught up with him on the far side of a town which we just went through and right in front of a high school. He suddenly stopped dead which naturally resulted in rear end collisions. Seven vehicles were wrecked and one pickup was demolished. It was a wonder that nobody was hurt. Courtmartial proceedings were about to be instituted but I explained to the major what had happened and the case was dropped as far as the Nisei was concerned. I was asked by the Major to take over the Fort Riley's main shop but I turned it down since it was made up of civilian employees.

I was transferred to Camp Savage as the MISLS took me. This was really a first class HOB0 camp. Really dirty and filthy. We scrubbed from top to bottom but it was still unliveable as the camp was surrounded by swamps the mosquitoes were ever present day and night. The personnel made up of the likes of 4F officers, skinny 1st Sgt Vernon Peterson known as Venerial Pete and Lt Dalglish (Dog-Shit). The chow was not fit for human consumption and it appeared that there was just no organization. Paul Ono was the student 1st/Sgt and I was in B3 class (students were all volunteers).

The school Commodant gave us an inspiring speech about our situation. He said the road was wide open for us if we would work hard and get this job done. However, another speech was made by one of the group that implied that families and other relations were in the various camps and could be harmed if we didn't cooperate. These different views were equally divided by the group and nearly caused a riot. It finally settled down and the entire group began an extensive study program. You couldn't believe the way those boys studied day and night. Nights were quite unique as the lights went out at 9:30PM and as always the bed check at 11:00PM. Bed check always indicated several unoccupied beds. Only one place these men could be if they were not AWOL--the latrine--the GI runs. The missing men were all accounted for but they were sitting on the equipment provided with their pants pulled up and secured. This was the only study hall available and it was soon discovered and orders came down for the men to discontinue this study practice and go to bed.

IN MY  
BARRACK

After a short visit to Ft Snelling hospital for a leg ailment, I returned to Camp Savage and found my group had moved out. I was biding my time waiting for a new assignment when I ran into PFC Munemori and through him I visited the Commodant's office applying for overseas duty in Europe as Munemori did. I was transferred to Hd Co in charge of details. Lt Daghish jumped me about my visit to the Commodant accusing me of pushing ~~for~~ the 1st Sgt. I denied seeing the commodant as I had conversed with the Captain (Dowd) only. He also nailed me for not observing the bulletin board which for two days listed me as acting 1st Sgt. "MUNEMORI got the "CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR"

I was in charge of the mainland boys and Sgt Kanai was in charge of the 100th. There was a humorous incident at the school HQs where Betty, a school missionary's daughter, worked. She was raised in Japan and one day a group of Hawaiian boys were following her and one said "look at those DAIKON ASHI" (Japanese white radish legs). She immediately turned around and lectured them in perfect Japanese language. The boys fell back in utter amazement.

Kenneth Harano wrote me a letter asking about the school and I turned his memo over to Capt Dowd. A week later Kenneth was transferred to our school. BENNIE was the best drill sargeant ever--his drill formations were something to see.

I then received a new group of 285 Hawaiian boys and immediately moved my bunk into their barracks. Not for long though as Lt Daghish soon learned of this and I found myself back in the Non-Com Barracks. Lt Daghish was in charge of academic training and went wild on all the various training maneuvers--gas mask drills, road marches and night problems. As you can tell we were not too fond him. He was called "bakatale" (blockhead or flathead). He confronted me and Sgt Kanae in our office and asked what the word "bakatale" meant. I told him I didn't know but Sgt Kanae without hesitation said that it meant something "honorable". He smiled and left.

I was 1st Sgt for two companies and being the only unmarried Sgt, considerable chores fell on me. The office supply duty and the PA system schedule thru 9:00PM became my duty. I had to play the #5 record according to schedule which covered various bugle calls. Needless to say I made several snafu's when I played in error several Officer's calls.

2nd Lt Yasutake, direct from a field commission, arrived at our Co as Commanding Officer. At the same time we received a group of relocation boys.

These boys were very young and  $\frac{1}{2}$  non basic. Lt. Dalglish with his usual wild ideas, ordered these men out on Bivouac and various other procedures. I advised Yasutake that these men could not go out on these night problems without first receiving proper instructions. Yasutake contacted the Com- modant and gave his blessing to our idea of Sports and beer busts in the hills in lieu these army games. He even donated to the cause. Lt. Dalglish probably wonders to day who changed his orders. I went to many court-martials as a witness for the defense. In many instances I stated that these boys were educated volunteers and should not be handled like animals. I went to St Paul Federal Court as a witness to get citizen papers for the aliens that volunteered with Capt Tsukamoto. They got their papers.

I heard that the inspector General was to address us. <sup>ADVISED</sup> Lt Yasutake, went immediately to the Comodant requesting permission for a student to give a speech at the meeting as we knew only the enlisted men were able to speak. Permission was granted and our <sup>(1)</sup> student gave a terrific speech which was taped and sent to Washington DC. One week later, we received a message to send men (26 sent) OCS, Ft. Benning, Ga. It was then apparent that all branches of the service opened its doors to Nisei.  
*(SHORTEN THE WAR 2 YEARS + SAVED MILLIONS OF LIVES)*

I was transferred with Co E to the Casual Co (Turkey Farm). While waiting for a new group of boys, I went to Ft Knox to visit my brother, Henry, who was in the armored division. I talked him into volunteering for the 9 months school which he did. He later was sent to Tokyo. After returning to Casual Co I found the situation to be a mess. It was hardly civilized. Tar paper huts were the accommodations and that winter, we damn near froze to death. We had all the details of the student Co. The mail would arrive at our office and we had to distribute it to all the students where ever they were. Lt. Landau asked me how reveille was coming along. I replied that it was just fine (I did not tell him that we were sleeping in at that time). Before leaving, he advised me that he would be inspecting reveille in the morning. I received quite a dressing down when I told him the truth about the reveille situation--I had no time to warn the boys. I suggested he take my stripe which he refused to do since there were no replacements. *1ST/SGT*

I was married in August of 1945 and had to move my wife and several relatives out of their relocation center to Minneapolis. I returned to the Co which now had a compliment of 1700 men. This really developed into quite a mess. I was busy working 7 days a week and late into the night--sometimes 1:30 AM. Lt. Landau giving me hell for not showing up at 4:30AM to check on the morning detail. What a time I had with men coming in from relocation centers--men going out on 3-day passes--3 Companies of men all marching and drilling at once.

I got out in 1946--5 years to do one year of duty. When I took the uniform off, I was a JAP again. I made \$15.00 a week before I took advantage of the GI Bill. My folks advised me not to return to Oregon so I stayed in Minneapolis and attended all the trade schools under the GI bill that I could handle. I left the GI bill and went to work for the next 6 years at double the Journeyman Pay.

I returned to Oregon in 1954 with my wife and three children. With my various diplomas, I began holding clinics and then entered the Truck Electric field with the firm of Hartley & Zuercher, Inc. as an interested party. After 25 years with this Company, I believe this will be my last year.

THANK YOU  
Bennie K Ouchida  
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PS: On the day of discharge, we were subjected to the usual questions and answers for our records. Since the School was classified, I did not give any particulars regarding my activities in this connection. Consequently, after seven years, I received in the mail the COMMENDATION AWARD for Meritorious Achievement.