

\*\*\*Air Mail\*\*\*



VIA AIR MAIL

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Barrack "A"



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Dear Yuri-

Here is news ! Last night for the first time, a radio broadcast mentioned this school and its purpose. Till date the Army has kept mum on this camp for military secrecy. But last night, a Marine officer in an interview gave the graduates of this school a lot of credit. It all came about when the question, "What are the marine doing about this handicap of not knowing the enemy language" was asked. The officer answered that they themselves were not doing nothing but the Navy had a language school at Boulder. But the bulk of the work of interrogating, translating, and interpreting were done by army men. In short, nisei soldiers. When the interviewer asked about "loyalty", this officer answered that he'd rather have these boys instead of some "whites" he knew. And then he went into detail as to the importance of having these men. How battles in the Solomon area were successful because thru captured documents translated by the nisei, valuable information was obtained. Since it was a nation wide hook-up, the audience must have been tremendous. He didn't say Savage but said Military Intelligence Language School near Minneapolis, Minnesota. Also used the term "nisei" and explained it. Off-hand, I think the army didn't even want that mentioned. Even here at school, we are forbidden to even use the technical name for this school. Hence the School & Student Det. address.

Here is news ! For the first time, the Secretary of War announced that a Japanese-American combat unit will be formed. He said that it was the inherent right of all citizen to fight for their country. In short, all niseis in the army will shortly see active overseas duty if this plan materializes. No more army post gardeners. No more steady K.P. for others. Just think how much <sup>there</sup> this actual participation will have in post-war settlement. Also, it certainly is a slap in the face for those who have been riding the Japanese-Americans over here. Some of those crack-pot Californians in particular. Probably, they'll protest to the War Dept. but I think it's no use. To get men for this all Japanese-American unit, the War Department has already given orders to superiors in the Hawaiian Islands to enlist 1,500 niseis right away. Also, to each relocation center, the army has sent one man from this school. Due to secrecy, just what their mission is, I don't know. But have a hunch that it has something to do with enlisting for the army. (Not necessarily this school.) A sergeant Odanaka, <sup>is</sup> at Topaz. Maybe Kan will run across him cause he'll be there for a while. But his job should be related to Stimson's release. If so, they won't run into some of the opposition we had. That's because they can get into the major branch of service. ie infantry, artillery, engineer, medical, etc. Will resemble the all negro outfit which is making a name for itself in Africa.



To further aid understanding of the niseis, the Baltimore Sunday Sun recently ran an article. There's a condensation in this month's (Feb.) Reader's Digest. A well chosen title too, "U. S. Soldiers with Japanese Faces." If you can't get hold of a copy in camp, let me know. I'll be more than glad to send it to you. But if I recall correct, "The Reader's Digest", "The Coronet", "The Life" etc. used to catch my eye in your Alice Street abode. Two sentences in this article by Blake Clark has well-chosen words. They are, Quote, "These lads with Japanese faces and American hearts are intensely loyal to the United States!" and "Feeling that they have a greater-than-average stake in this war, the men of the 100th Infantry are better-than-average soldiers." I don't know what the circulation figures for Reader's Digest is, but it must be tremendous.

More News. Probably you've heard already but just in case you haven't here goes. According to the three column article in the Minneapolis Tribune, offices have been started in Ohio, Michigan, and West Virginia to place 10,000 men in defense and agricultural jobs. The main requisite being approval of FBI before leaving. Also, the community's acceptance of these Japanese-Americans. (Probably, each community will limit the number to prevent racial clashes.) How would you like to live in a community isolated from other Japanese-Americans? This job of relocating is certainly a nice field for energetic niseis. The contribution of nisei workers in defense factory will mean a lot too for post-war settlement. And it's things like that we need more of. For a while, I thought this worry rested on our soldiers leaving this school. But now, if Japanese-American combat units are formed, and if the niseis contribute to the Allied cause in defense jobs as well as on farm, we won't have a darn thing to worry about legislative actions challenging the intentions of we Japanese. Bet if they took another Gallup Poll on the same subject as the last, it'll be a cinch. Because during my 21 months in the Army, I've found that at heart, the Americans are human.

That you should be studying what I have been for the last six months, was sure a surprise. Not too easy is it? You asked if I had books for beginners? I have but we're not allowed to send it to anyone, not even to own families. Mostly because, it has military notation scattered here and there in them. Will see if I can find some that doesn't encroach on this so-called "military secret."

It's almost noon, so I'm going to take a pause here. Hope it's chicken.

12:45

Yup, it was chicken. Had two helpings. The coffee too was good for a change. Reading letters from the Solomon area, it all contains one advice. "To eat all the steaks and chicken while you have the chance". It seems that the meals are centered around "Spam" the pressed meat. The most prevailing disease seems to be malaria carried by nature's zero's. Just the other day, Masaru received a letter saying that one of our classmates lost his life thru that disease. Perhaps you know him too. Pat Hopper. His dad was the boy scout master at Tennyson when I was



going there. Seems a crime to have to train years and then to go down to the Solomon vicinity to lose your life in that way.

Been spending the last few weeks studying the nine men with me. And after reading the army's confidential records on them, I think I know more about them than they do themselves. And such a different personality group. Let me take a part of your time to describe them. They don't know about it, but I've been deliberately taking inventory of them. Without including Mt. Eden, the nine hail from seven different cities, two from Pasadena, Two from San Francisco, and the rest from Oakland, Fresno, Sanramento, Hawaii, and Utah. Four has had higher education, but their IQ is above the army average by a long shot. Four are kibe-nisei but they're just like us. As to personality, five can by my judgement be called extroverts. Their hobbies varies--plane making (Models), camera, reading, skating etc. Only seen two on a dance floor. Eight of them smokes while all drink moderately. Only one has seen the world. (Excluding Japan & U.S.) Three wear glasses, and two seem to have mastered the art of dating hakujin girls. Have seen only five of them do their own laundry. Only one person, W. C., do I know from pre-army days. Haven't discovered any pet idiosyncrasy that irritates me. Former occupations vary from farmers to super salesmen. Three strike me as being from refined families. Four can play the harmonica well while one is a pianist. (The latter being the only one I've seen from my group at symphonic concerts.) Three are good poker players, and two have mustaches. Have two old persons to stable our thoughts. One appears to be fairly wealthy. Only two knows how to play bridge. Could continue on and on but I guess that's enough for the time being. (Bet, I could write pages on each man, and if post-war, a book probably) But truly, if I don't get anything else out of my army life, I'm sure I'll remember these nine men. One can't help but. Don't you think so Yuri?

Your comment on "Mrs. Miniver" was very good. Short but was easy to grasp your thoughts. The words "foreboding" and "drains" especially. Maybe you don't know it, but from time to time have you ever noticed my piracy of your vocabulary. There's a lot those movies made along the same line. "War Comes to Mrs. Hadley" being the latest. In fact, during war time, everything turns to that trend. To me, every thing in US seems to turn towards sentimentalism. Take the various advertisement in the magazines and newspaper. They all use words and lines which tugs at one's heart. And the songs too. The most popular one seemed to be based on the thoughts which arise because the war has split up or better yet, separated loved ones. Eight of the ten songs on last night's hit parade could be easily as dedications by soldiers or by the ones left behind. Perhaps my observations or deductions are all wrong but I'll list them and let you decide. Starting from the number one tune and going down, "There Are Such Things", "I Had The Craziest Dream", "Why Don't You Fall In Love With Me", "When the Lights Go On Again", "Moonlight Becomes You" "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To" and etc. Perhaps, it'll



be hard for you to catch on to what I'm feebly trying to express. That is without reading the whole lyric. But I'll let it go at that.

Went skating Wednesday for the first time in years..... think I'll stick to the soft snow.

That fellow who said that "I believe that parents are not as concerned in the education of the children", is all wet. And you can tell them I said so. To me, the average Japanese is more concerned about the child's education, both at home and formal, than Americans. Why do you think farmers who are pitifully poor work from dawn till night to send their off-spring to college? Mostly because they feel that an education is the best way for living a more filled life. Perhaps because the circumstances of the camp are such, he drew such a conclusion. Perhaps, it is because he thinks in term of formal schooling only. In a Japanese family it's the schooling at home, the method of upbringing, that counts a lot. The main obstacle to the negro problem to me, or one at least, seems to hinge on the illiteracy. But their living conditions are so bad, that they can't even send their children to school beyond the primary. Travelling thru the camp, I have found that parents biggest problems were concerning their children. They're all afraid that the camp life will change their offsprings attitudes toward living. Even families having sons in the service, expressed fear that army life will make them lazy as well as giving them a chance to stray from the normal path. So I agree with you when you say that parents haven't had a change in heart and mind on that subject. The subject "The Environment-The Need of Improvement" should have been interesting. Strange that more didn't come out of it. (Using your phrase "Gosh, sounds like a lecture").

Read and reread the paragraph on the "Three Little Fishes" and "the Log Cabin Syrup Fable" but I'll be darned if I can figure out the moral to the story. Guess I'm slipping.

Curious to know which one won...the blades of grass. Regards to the family...hope your dad is better.

Just

Goshiki