

# Nisei Veterans Are Finding Reconversion Problem Hard

By ANN SHEPARD

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FORT LEWIS, Oct. 1.—A young corporal wounded in France has a pin-up picture and fan letter to put in the box with his Purple Heart and overseas ribbons.

The fan letter had been sent by someone who saw the soldier's picture in a newspaper with an account of his service in Italy. The corporal opened the letter they brought to his bed and a news-magazine picture of a dead soldier in the Philippines fell out. Clipped to the picture was a note:

"Here is a picture of a soldier who trusted Japs. You have a hat full of medals for killing white men. Why were you not sent to the Pacific to fight the Japs? Because Uncle Sam could not trust you! Remember, the only loyal Jap is the Jap who fought the Japs. Name one."

Corp. Henry Amano and his friends can't send the letter writer the list of Nisei soldiers killed in the Pacific, for there was no name signed to the note.

Amano, who enlisted immediately after Pearl Harbor ("My best friend was killed there"), still can't figure out why someone sent him the letter.

"I've been lucky, though," Amano said. "I've been home to Denver on furlough, and even though people stared at me and made cracks about Japs, I've never been thrown out of any place."

Pvt. John Deki Caive wasn't so lucky. The first time the Purple Heart-wearer went home to Seattle he stopped in at the drug store at 18th and Yesler where he used to hang out.

"Remember the pictures in the ads about the soldiers who go back to the old corner drug store. Well, I went back, too, and ordered a coke. The man asked my nationality. I said I was Japanese-American, and he told me they didn't serve Japs and to get out or he'd call a policeman."

## Truckers Wouldn't Help

Caive didn't tell his parents why he didn't come in from the hospital for more than a month after his first visit home. Finally the former University of Washington student had to go back home. His family was trying to open their vegetable stand again, and the local truckers' union had refused to haul their goods from the warehouse to the store.

"They said they didn't want to do business with Japs."

The Caives now rent a truck for

the daily trips and when one of their sons comes home for good—one of John's brothers just returned from Italy and the other still is in the Pacific—they hope they'll be able to buy a truck.

Pfc. Sanae Aageta of Auburn, Calif., is worried about his parents, too.

## Parents Too Old

"They're closing up the relocation camp in Wyoming where they've been since the war began. When my brother gets back from Italy, we may be able to rent the farm we had before the war. But right now, I've heard it's plenty rough there, and my parents are too old to go back alone."

Pvt. Frank Chikami, wounded in France, is afraid he can't find work after he is discharged. His wife came to Tacoma to visit him after he was sent to Madigan. Like most army wives, she wanted to find a job so she could live near her husband.

"She answered all the ads. It was just about the time that all the plants and offices needed help badly. But when she went to see the managers about a job, they always said her credentials were fine, but the other employes wouldn't want to work with a Jap."

After several weeks of searching, Mrs. Chikami found a job as a typist for the Army.

## Others Didn't Mind

"And none of the other girls in the office minded her being Japanese," Chikami said.

Staff Sergt. Dave Hirahari, Seattle, wants to go back home with his wife and daughter. After nearly a year overseas, Hirahari said he couldn't understand why people asked him why he hadn't been in the Pacific if he wanted to fight.

"People were killed in Italy, too, you know," he said. "I was there with Pete Fujimoto when he died. We went to Broadway High School together. We're like the rest of them—we went where the Army told us to."

Hirahari turned around and looked at the other soldiers in the room.

"My buddy, who sleeps in the bed across the aisle, is a white soldier who fought in the Pacific. We're friends even though my eyes slant. Maybe when more soldiers come home it will be better."

The private who'd been kicked out of the drug store stood up.

"Well, according to the papers, all of the soldiers who come back are having 'readjustment problems.' Maybe this is what they meant."