We are ready. Starting right when you terminate--

Terminate that. I need a terminator here. You see us going back and forth. OK, this is awesome. OK. Ready? Swatted all them.

OK. All set. Go ahead.

OK. This is Judy Weightman. And--

There's one crawling up there.

Ooh, God. I'm sorry. This-- for those of you who are listening to the tape, we're in the midst of a termite invasion. So if you hear me go eek or awk or anything, that's why.

OK. This is Judy Weightman. And I'm here with Mr. Michael Akamine at the residence at Carla and Walter Chotzen in Honolulu, Hawaii on June 21, 1989. And I'm going to start asking a few questions just to set us up here, Mr. Akamine. First, what is your address, your current address?

Current address is--

OK. And where is your place of birth and your date of birth? I was born in South Hilo, Waiakea, August 15, 1922.

And what was your ethnic background? What is your ethnic background?

Japanese.

OK, and what did your parents do in Hilo, or on the Big Island?

My father was a plantation worker, I remember. And we lived in a plantation camp for a while, and we moved to another camp outside of that, I remember. Oh, so that he could work part time as a stevedore and bus driver. If he lived in a camp, you weren't able to do that.

Why was that?

Plantation camp, they provide a home, you see. They provide a house.

So when you stopped working there, then you have to move off of the plantation?

Well, in order to work elsewhere, other than the plantation, you had to move away from the camp, out of the camp.

I see.

Were you in high school at the time they moved off there?

No, no.

Young.

I was about six years old.

Oh, little. Yeah. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

I have two brothers and two sisters above me.

OK.

I'm the youngest.

Oh, you're the baby. OK. You're retired now, but what were you doing before you retired?

Oh, my last job, I was an automobile metal inspector and estimator at Schofield Barracks.

Did you stay in the military?

No, no. That's civilian.

I see. OK. And I wanted to take you back to when you were living on the Big Island, as we contend with the termites here. Did you go to high school on the Big Island as well?

No, we moved here just about when I was six years old. My family moved there.

Oh, you moved to Oahu then?

Yes.

Oh, I see. OK. And where did you go to school?

You mean elementary school and so forth?

Mm-hmm.

Well, to begin with we stayed at Manoa for a while, Manoa Valley. And we moved to Waialae. I went to Waialae elementary school, Liliuokalani Intermediate School which is an elementary school today. And I went to McKinley High School.

OK. At that time was McKinley English standard or was McKinley-- were there mainly Japanese-Americans and locals that At McKinley--

Mostly. Yeah--

At that time?

--there were a lot of nationalities too.

Oh, really? And then what did you do after high school?

I worked for the United States engineers as a carpenter, construction worker.

What year did you graduate from high school?

1940.

OK, and did you go to the university?

No.

So you weren't in the territorial guards, or were you in the territorial guards?

No, no.

Where were you when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

I was at home working on the farm on Sunday. On the farm, you worked seven days a week.

Where was your farm?

Waialae.

OK. Oh Waialae? You mean Waialae, like Kahala Waialae?

Well, where Star of the Sea School is today. There were all farms there. [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah.

But it was years ago.

And what kind of farm did you have?

Egg farm, poultry eggs.

And did your family own the farm?

Yes.

Oh, I see. And so you were having your regular job, plus working on the farm too.

Yes, we have to help out.

So what do you remember about December 7, 1941?

I don't-- the timing may be off. But at that time, I was working inside Pearl Harbor on the construction. We couldn't get in on Monday.

You tried to get in on December 8? And what happened when you got there?

We just couldn't get in. That's all.

Who's we?

The construction workers. We're Japanese. They can tell who we are.

So did they say to you that you can't get in because you're a Japanese?

No, no, no.

What did they say?

They just said, you can't come in. That's all.

So what did you do after that then?

I don't recall what actually happened. I know later on we looked at Wahiawa.

At Schofield, or at--

No. Outside of Wahiawa town, not Schofield.

Did you lose your job completely at Pearl Harbor?

No. it was sort of a transfer.

I see. And most of the men that you were working with were Japanese-Americans at that time?

Mostly.

Were your parents born in this country, born in Hawaii?

No. Both of them from Okinawa.

Oh, I see. So they were still Japanese nationals at the time that Pearl Harbor was bombed. Did they talk to you at all about what that meant for them about for Japan to bomb Pearl Harbor?

No.

Was there any discussion about it?

No.

They weren't worried?

No. They weren't worried.

OK. Did you attempt to join the military at any time thereafter?

No. I was just 21.

Oh. And there were-- at that time I think it was a draft. I'm not sure whether I registered for the draft or not.

Sorry. We are here trying to do this at the same time they were being attacked by all these termites. But ooh, OK. Anyway, this is all on the tape too, you know? Me going ooh and whoo and everything is on the tape.

That's all right.

We'll cut it out. But I was getting back to that. You were 21 at the time. And then you did go into the military. So how did that come about?

Well, we volunteered to get in the army.

When did you volunteer?

I think it was early 1943.

Did they put a call out for you to come in, or had you--

No, no. Some kind of communication, I think there's a newspaper or people talking.

That they were looking--

Aboard this number two [INAUDIBLE].

Oh, that's where you joined up?

Yeah.

And then did you go right to Camp Shelby or did you go up to Schofield?

Went to Schofield.

And what happened up there?

Well, as I recall, we stayed there only a few days, maybe two days. And we got on the train, went on the Lurline. Went to San Francisco. I remember the Golden Gate Bridge. We're far out. I said, how can the ship go under there? Really. And we when we under there, the Golden Gate Bridge is way up there.

There's still plenty of room.

Plenty of room.

That was my first trip to the mainland.

Oh. Were you feeling good about going?

Yes.

What did your parents think about your going to--

Well, they objected in a way.

What did they say?

I don't remember what they said.

I mean did they say, you can't go, or did they--

No, no, no. I was of age already.

Oh. So you just said, I'm off. And then you went. And did your brothers, anyone else go with you at that time?

No. My brother above me, we call it a pineapple soldier. He was in the army, but stayed here.

Oh. Did he stay at Schofield?

I don't know. He had the same job as a civilian.

Oh, I see.

And then did you go to Camp Shelby then?

Yes.

And what do you remember about Camp Shelby? What was your best memory?

Camp Shelby. It was really hot, 110 under the shade.

Wow.

We have to have lectures, not only marching or fieldwork, offices set up. We stay in the shade, sit down on a helmet liner. So hard. We'd get drowsy. That's when I found out. I saw pictures I was younger. How can this Mexicans wear the big hats, sleeping like that.

Siesta.

One guy brought sunglasses, smart. We all copied him.

[AUDIO OUT]

We've to go back. But oh, God. This is-- I can't believe how many they have come in.

During the day you got the lawn mower.

The lawn mower, and at night we have the--

You know we did that.

You did?

But we got caught later on. No dark glasses.

Well, where did your friend get the dark glasses?

Well, I guess from the PX.

Oh, so they were selling them?

Well, I think so. Oh.

What's the story about the hat?

Well, we'll get back to that. Are we ready?

Yeah, we're going. OK. We're going now. Do you want to go back to the hat? What happened with the friend with the hat?

Hat?

That you were saying, wanted to sleep in the field, the sombrero.

Oh. Well when I was younger, how can they sleep sitting down like that? And I believe them now. Because we did it.

You tried to sleep? You slept like that with the hat over you?

No, with the sunglasses. You're so drowsy.

Yeah.

So hot under the shade, you can sleep.

You can just sit there and sleep?

Shut your eyes. Close your eyes. But you have to have dark glasses, otherwise the Lieutenant can see your eyes are closed.

Oh, so that's why you got the dark glasses?

Yeah.

So and you said one of the men had a pair of dark glasses?

Well, he started it. So everybody else bought the dark glasses.

So then what happened?

Well, we got caught later on. Everybody wearing dark glasses.

Because then they knew you were sleeping?

Yeah, closed our eyes.

Yeah. Did you ever go to any of the relocation camps, to Jerome, or--

No. I didn't go there.

Did you know any of the people who had family interned in Jerome or in Arkansas?

I heard about it. But I don't know who they are.

When you were back home on Oahu, did you know anybody who was relocated?

No.

You didn't hear about that at all? OK. What are any other experiences that you think we should know about from Camp Shelby before we go to Europe?

Well, I'd like to tell you about Louisiana.

Tell me about Louisiana. Well, the whole 42nd infantry didn't go to Louisiana maneuvers, but the maneuvers outside of Shelby. We went in December-- wet, cold. It didn't snow. Ice formed. So cold, just two blankets. One month we suffered.

Oh.

By the way, I like to mention this though. The 100th battalion from Wisconsin came to Shelby. They went summer maneuvers in Louisiana. They came back with chiggers. Ooh these--

Ew.

Inside the pores, you have to get needles to take it out. But we suffered from the wet cold.

So they should have turned it around because the Wisconsin people would have done better in December. And you could have taken the summer. So, you were together with the 522 at the time you went over to Shelby. You became part of the 522--

Yes, yes.

--field artillery battalion. Did were there any other people in your unit other than Japanese-Americans at that time?

Did I know?

Were there any Caucasians or Blacks or anyone other than Japanese?

No Blacks, but all the officers were Caucasians.

Were any of the enlisted Caucasians?

Well, they were part Japanese boys.

Oh, I see. OK. But with Haole names.

They were half Japanese then?

Yes, yes.

And they put those guys in the 522 as well?

Yeah, they were mixed. Maybe some in the infantry, some in 522.

I see. And then when you went to Europe, you went. I'm going to skip over a bit. And we're going to go-- we have a lot of the story from France and Italy. And then we're going to take you into Germany. But I wanted to know whether there was any particular story in France or Italy, that you wanted to tell. Is there anything?

We heard about the lost battalion. But we wanted to know if there was anything else that you particularly remember and want to talk about from France or Italy before we go to Germany.

Well, I think you heard it all.

You think I heard it all. This is called my battle with the termites. OK. When you went into Germany, I know you want to tell me about how you ended up in Germany. The 522 field artillery battalion was split off then from the rest of the 442.

Yes.

So maybe you could tell us about that.

Well, they went back to Italy. We were assigned by somebody high up to go and invade Germany. That's why they pulled us away. And there was, I recall, a mass artillery before we entered Germany. That's how we got in there. And so that's the reason, I believe, that we were separated. Going into their own homeland, I think, the high command, the American high command felt that we were going to have a rough time.

That's what I think.

So why did they want the 522 field artillery battalion to go with them?

I think we were-- not boasting too much, but we were pretty good. We had the best people, mathematics, mathematicians. The firing center to me, of course, we all have to be good right down the chain of command. The cannoneers has to be good too. But the firing center to me is the most guys that did a good job. That's why we're so accurate. So we were good.

What area were you in?

Pardon?

What area were you in? What was your job?

Oh, I was a battery agent. I represented C battery. But I stayed with headquarters right through overseas.

Oh, so what was your job with headquarters?

Something like a messenger. Battery agent is something like a messenger. So you would run from place to place, and pass messages?

No, I have to know where my battery is. We're not-- headquarters is here maybe, A is here and some other place. So that I can take messages to my battery.

And back again to the headquarters.

Yes, I stayed with headquarters all the time.

Oh, I see. OK. And then do you want to tell us a little bit about your battles in Germany, what happened when you got there?

Well, we just rode.

Oh, you were able to ride. You weren't walking?

Oh, yes. Artillery don't walk. We ride in trucks.

Yes. So what were you doing in Germany then?

What was I doing in Germany?

Yes, what were you doing as you were going through Germany? Can you remember any of that?

Well, every stop we have a command post. The batteries are lined up ready for action. We can move about three, four times a night, as they catch up with the enemy.

So did you-- you saw a lot of Germans as you were going through?

Not in Germany. We saw pockets of them, they had just left.

And what happened when you saw the pockets? How would you deal with them?

Well, you just let it go and you just proceed according to the command we had. I mean the orders we had. Just proceed. Let the rear echelon take care the pockets.

I see. And then I wanted to talk about when you got up near Dachau. We had talked before. And you said you had heard

about concentration camps before you went to Germany. Could you tell me about where you heard about that, and what you heard?

I saw in Life magazine, before the war I believe it was, pictures about a concentration camp. The Auburn I think it was. I'm not sure. It's long, long time ago. But there were pictures of a concentration camp.

And you knew also about-- this was before you went to Germany. So it could have been any time after '43.

I was a civilian then.

Yeah. Yeah, up to '43, any time up to then. And do you remember talking to anyone about that?

No. I don't remember. Maybe I did, but I don't recall.

So what was your response to the Life magazine article? What were you thinking?

Well I'll tell you this. It was unbelievable, but yet I believed it, because I'll tell you a story. My dad told me when he was brought here as a contract laborer, what they call cut cane, cut the cane. Today, they burn it by machine. He was a cane cutter. And there was a Lula on a horseback, riding a horse with a whip. But actually he didn't use the whip. But my father told me that he didn't see he use it. But I could tell the comparison, that is one man treating another man as such, just like a slave, hurry up and work. Too slow guy, you whip him. I don't think he did that.

So in relation with that, I believe when I saw those pictures, men did those things.

That people could do that to other people.

Yeah.

Did you ever experience any anti-Japanese feelings at all when you were growing up either on Oahu? Probably you don't remember from the Big Island, but on Oahu--

Well, as I said earlier, I was only six years old.

So probably--

I grew up mostly on Oahu.

And do you remember anything, any anti-Japanese?

Any prejudice?

Yes.

Against me? No. No.

There were enough of the Japanese here that you didn't feel--

Oh yes.

OK. And so when you were in Germany then, what was the first thing? You remember going to Dachau or seeing Dachau. Did you see any of the prisoners before you got to Dachau?

No. No. I didn't see anybody.

What did you see when you went to Dachau?

When we got there, it was snow. I don't know how many inches. But there was snow on the ground. I think the following day, the snow melted. There were men all over the place, with striped pajamas, you know, striped both. They were dead.

Where were they?

On the ground.

Oh, gosh.

What did you do at that point?

Well, I seen dead man. Well not ours, to Japanese boys, they pick it up fast. But I remember in Bruyeres, we moved at night and next morning, I seen a lot of Germans in the forest killed. So it didn't bother me. So you get numb, you know?

You'd already been around a lot of the death before?

Oh, yeah.

And you had mentioned that Captain Taylor was around in that area.

Well he was in headquarters. I believe his job was to scout ahead where the guns could be placed, and he was a skinny guy, very nervous, but well liked. He had a terrific job.

And he was a Caucasian officer?

Yeah, yeah, Taylor. Taylor Caucasian.

Not one of the halves, I meant. You're right. And you had mentioned we're bringing in the effects again. This is we tried to bring the airplanes in here just to add to our film. See? We're back now.

Back in Germany.

Back in Germany. The airplanes are coming in overhead. That's ours. OK. Now, you said that you saw the gate when you were--

Well I actually saw the barbed wire fence.

And what did you hear? You had told me something about Captain Taylor that was--

Well, Captain Taylor I believe, asked-- this is after what I heard. Because I didn't know at that time, asked the sergeant, get on a Jeep. And they went to the gate. And they shot it.

They shot-- they shot the lock off the gate? Captain Taylor and the sergeant?

Yeah, I don't know who did it. I think the sergeant did that.

And what happened then after that?

And the striped clothes I wouldn't say prisoner-- would you call them prisoners? They didn't do any crimes.

Well, no. They didn't do any crime. But they were in prison, the inmates.

Let's say they were internees, came out.

There were still men living then at that time?

Yes. Yes. Those are the ones came out.

Were they all men?

I don't know. They all that striped clothes. You can't distinguish them.

And then when did you see them? You saw them come out.

Yeah. They scattered. Some looked like they were in a daze. I think they were starving. They were not in their right mind, I suppose. They were hungry.

Did you talk to them at all?

No. We weren't allowed to feed them or talk to them.

Who told you not to feed them?

The officers. And they said not to feed them or talk to them?

Well, they said talk to them, not to feed them. So we didn't get close to them.

And then did you talk to anyone about these people at all that you saw, any of your comrades, any of your friends that were there did? Were there any comments made about these people?

My comrades, well they were all there and they saw it. So we don't talk about it.

You didn't.

But I seen this though. I guess they were so starved. In the army was this what we call sump, about four feet deep. We'd throw our leftovers, you know discarded from our mess kits. And the mess sergeant after the coffee, the coffee grinds were in there. I seen one well prisoner again, dive in there, with two hands, ate it.

From the garbage pit?

Yes. From the sump. You would do it too if you were in that condition. He dove in there head first.

He was by himself too?

Yes. Well, there were some others there. But he went in there.

He went in.

That much I recall.

What were you thinking then?

Well, I figured now, I'm not thinking at all.

Now, you know that they were hungry, right, from that?

Well, at that time too, otherwise you wouldn't do that. He's really starving. And they were very tall people. Well, we Japanese are short. But we can tell when they're skinny and tall. There have been Haoles, Caucasians that were short ones too. But they were all tall.

And do you know whether they stayed around in the area where you were? Or what happened after?

Well, like I said earlier, they scattered, or they didn't come to our direction. They were all over the place. I guess they were still in daze, like I said earlier.

And you were at that time right around still the Dachau camp, right there?

Right.

And you had mentioned that you saw shoes.

Oh, that was in that Life magazine.

Oh, OK. I see. That was--

Pictures, yeah.

Yeah. Did you stay around afterwards?

I don't know how many days. We didn't stay there too long. We moved. The war ended. So we moved back. And we made several stops I suppose. I don't recall how many. And we did some occupation duty.

Where did you stay when you were occupied?

Donauworth.

You didn't go back to any for displaced persons camps or anything like that?

No, no.

You didn't have that experience. Did you run into any other people, any Jewish people after that experience? I understood there was a tailor, a Jewish tailor that was attached to Donauworth somehow. Did you run into him?

Well, I was still with headquarters.

I see.

C battery, B battery, they were scattered, not in the town. But earlier, I didn't want to pull guard duty. So I signed up for school. And I was picked with two more others from our battalion, Went to Freising, Germany to attend school, agriculture school. So I stayed there for a while.

Oh. Did you stay in the military after for any period of time?

No. This was during occupation, temporary occupation. I didn't want to pull guard, like I said.

Yeah you--

I signed up and they picked me. So I was happy to go.

But most of the men from 522 stayed through December then, from May through December in that area? The war was over first week in May.

May? We came home here in December. I got discharged in January. So I don't know the sequence going back, how many months were there.

But at least four or five months you were probably staying around there. When you saw-- I'm going to take you back to when you first saw the prisoners or those that were interned in the concentration camps coming out of the gates. About how many would you say were there? How many people were still living at that time?

Oh, I'd just have to make a guess, about 200.

200.

And how many did you notice on the ground that were dead?

Oh, in our area maybe about 50 or 75. They weren't together. See they were spread out.

I see.

But still all around the Dachau camp area.

Yes, outside.

Did the military just leave all these people there? All the bodies there? No as I said, somebody picked them up. I don't know who.

Within a day or so?

No, no. It was cold. So no deterioration, so it didn't smell.

And that's true.

So once you were in that area, the kitchen was set up where you men were eating, did you just stay overnight in that area or were you there a few days? Do you remember?

I think a couple of days or three. I can't say for sure.

Did you see any Germans at that time?

No, no. No Germans. Were there any other Americans around there?

No only our battalion that I can recall.

OK.

And you remember or heard that Captain Taylor was with the sergeant, or the sergeant was the one that blew the padlock off?

Oh, yes.

And that was probably when at the end of April? Do you do when that date it was? It's hard to know.

End of April or May, or what. I don't know.

OK.

But it did happen. I think we stayed there two or three days. And within that time, because any firing, hear a loud 45 go out, you're going to ask questions. That's how we found out.

Did you hear the 45 go off?

Well, somebody did. That's how the word got around.

I see. And did anything happen as a result of that?

What do you mean?

Well, we heard that the military were not supposed to open the gates.

Oh, the captain was there, so there's no complaint.

Oh, that was OK.

Sure.

It was OK. OK.

Some men fed those so-called prisoners. What can they do? Court martial them?

Yeah. So is there anything else that you wanted-- you had been talking before about how people were saying that it never happened. And you wanted to make a comment about-- at least you did before.

Oh, you mean the Holocaust, how the so-called prisoners were treated in the concentration camp? Well, how can not people believe it? I don't understand it. It did happen. Why are they saying it didn't happen? I don't get it. I don't understand it. I saw it.

So you know it happened.

Oh, yes. Yes. All of us saw it, our battalion. Dachau was not the only one. There were outlying small camps. Dachau was the main one. That's where they killed him. How can man treat another man this way I don't understand. Sure, in war we kill each other. It's different. But unarmed?

[AUDIO OUT]

Are we rewinding?

Nope. We're going right now.

OK. OK, so this will be-- we wanted to get into what your feelings were when you came back to Hawaii and what happened with your life there. What did you do?

Well, we try to forget what we went through. Try to remember the good part. So we only talk about the funny part what we experienced.

Did you get together with the man right after? Did you keep in touch?

Not immediately. We formed the club. And we used to meet there and see our old buddies. We still do. We meet once a

month. And we have reunions, anniversary parties. We just had our 45th anniversary. We'll have a reunion with the mainland boys. They're coming down here in the corner.

Oh when are they going to be coming?

Next year. Last year we had it in Maui. So we get together.

And are you going to be going do you think to the next reunion?

Yes. I will.

You plan to be. Do you keep in touch with the mainland men at all?

Oh, yes. They come.

No, I mean other than at the reunions?

The whole battery. And we may not know the other B battery or service battery boys, names but we know their faces. They don't change that much, and loss of hair but.

That's happening?

Oh, yes.

Well, we won't say who's, right? And I wanted to ask what you did when you came back to Hawaii. You got married?

No, not immediately, no. My father still had a farm. So I worked on the farm until I got my thoughts squared away. He sent me to Hilo, on a vacation. And I worked for several companies. I even was an insurance claims adjuster for three years. Oh what a job it was.

On the Big island?

Here.

Oh here?

I didn't like it. So I left after three years.

And then went to--

I worked for Aloha Motors just prior to that as a metal mechanic, and later on foreman.

Oh. And then you went to-- did you become a civil service worker then for the military?

No, no. I went in there late. That was my last job, like I said.

Oh, OK. I didn't know how many years that was, whether you did that or not. And you have how many children?

Just one boy. And have you talked to him at all about your experiences during--

He's young. He's only 24 years old. And I'm in the late 60s.

Oh, well, the reason is my wife and I who passed away adopted him.

Oh. I see.

So we were old already.

So you really enjoyed him by then to have a late child. Huh?

When he was two years old, my wife passed away. So I didn't have too much to tell about my war experience. But he knows.

So did you raise him yourself for the most part?

Yes. Well, my mother-in-law stayed with me for about a year.

I see.

But most of the time I did it.

So you were a single parent for a lot of the time?

Yeah.

And do you have any advice for the others out there on how? It's unusual for someone in that generation, for a man, not for someone but for a man to be raising a child.

Well you get closer to him. Every place you went of course, when he comes to about the age of 18, he goes on his own. But I think that's the best. Anywhere you go, he has to go to. So you get closer. So it was just the two of you for a lot of the years?

A long time.

Well, I've really enjoyed talking with you today. And do you have anything else you would like to share with us, any other stories?

Yes.

Tell us.

Remember, I asked you why you want to do this thing. Well people don't believe or people forget, and I recall not too long ago, maybe two years ago, a local Japanese fellow who is in the reserves. I think his rank is major. He has suddenly asked me, what did you volunteer for? I was shocked. I couldn't answer him immediately.

I thought everybody knew why we did it. Then I told him the story of what happened, just one story, which I told my son, like you asked me. My son knew about those things.

What was the story you told him?

Yeah, I told his fellow. I'll tell you one incident that-- I don't feel mad or angry about it, but why I volunteered. I made a Hollywood stop once, and a local police officer stopped me. Before he gave me a ticket, he says, you know you guys are in trouble, he says. He shocked me. What kind of trouble?

This was during the war?

This was 1942?

1942. So from there you can more or less see or judge what other things may have happened. That's all I have to say.

And what did the man, the other the Japanese, the young Japanese man, a few years ago, what did he respond to that? Did he understand? When you told him this story--

Oh. Oh you mean the major?

Yeah, yeah.

The guy in the reserve?

Yeah.

He didn't say too much. Maybe he understood. He didn't respond. I didn't ask him a question I just told him what happened, what reason why, the reason why we volunteered. I mean I volunteered. I'm quite sure the others had some kind of incident or experience as such.

And so by doing that you were proving in a sense that you were like everyone else or that you were--

By volunteering?

Yes.

Well, we had to prove something.

You know, you guys are in trouble. Gee. What kind of trouble are we in? You guys are in trouble.

Because you're Japanese-Americans.

That's right. Local police officers, easily could tell who's Japanese or maybe he can't tell who's Chinese and Japanese, but more or less, give you a license. Anyway, the name is there. He knows your Japanese.

He knew you were from here too.

Well the license says so.

I really appreciate your sharing.

Go ahead.

I don't know. Did you get into how his family felt about him going into the--

Oh, they wanted him to go. Did you want to repeat again? He wanted to know how did your family feel about your going into the military. I did ask that question I think.

Did I answer that?

Go ahead. Go ahead.

Well surely, they didn't like it, but they couldn't do anything about it. I had volunteered already.

You had already signed on the dotted line.

And did they feel different when you got back about you going in? How did they feel when you got back?

They felt good. They made a great big party for me, yeah.

Did you write to your family whenever you were in Europe?

Yes. I did write. Somewhere in Italy, somewhere in France. That's the way we started.

So you didn't really tell them where you were, but just that you were OK.

Well, as long as they got a letter from me they know I'm alive.

Right. That was the main thing.

That's right.

OK. How would you feel about your son going into the military right now?

I think it would be good. It makes a man out of him. He's so sloppy.

He doesn't know how to do his socks, huh?

Well, his room. Oh, it's terrible, like a jungle. In the military, they'll teach you.

Overall, would you say that your experience in the military was a good experience, a positive experience for you as a young man?

Yes. it helped me quite a lot. We grew up fast, especially Louisiana maneuvers, where you suffered. We from Hawaii, go to Louisiana wet, cold, ice form on the trees, and the branches come down on your head. I mean you know it rains. Ice forms on the branches. Branches break and come down.

I didn't realize it was that cold there.

Wet, cold. It doesn't snow. Oh, I gotta tell this story. The army trucks have Canvas, right? Covered with Canvas, get a rope tie on, and hitch them. So cold, you take off the glove, you can't take it off. So cold you gotta put your glove back.

Wow.

Was that colder than in Europe actually?

Well in Italy, we're up the mountain. Well we use mules too. Did you know that?

No, I didn't.

To go to the observation post, OP.

No I didn't know.

Over that surface, we used mules because Jeeps can't go up there.

Oh.

Grab the tail of the mule and go up there. We got our binoculars with those woolen gloves, stayed there. Only for a few seconds. It's so cold.

And then you came back down?

Well, I mean your hands get cold, so you bring it down. That's what I mean. It gets cold. You can stick your hand in your pocket, go like this and get warm. But you should bring your binoculars and see. Your hands get all numb.

We know one of the reasons you lived in Hawaii all your life because of the weather, right?

Well. We didn't have the best equipment in a way. Maybe I shouldn't tell you this.

No that's-- we should know that, right? You didn't have the best equipment when you were in?

Sure, the rear echelon had better gloves than we did.

Who was that?

Rear echelon.

The rear echelon, why did they get better equipment?

I don't know. They had galoshes. We had only combat boots.

You mean everyone in the 442, you would say or 522, which would--

Infantry and us, we didn't have any galoshes.

Oh, for heaven's sakes. I didn't know that. Did you just have one pair of combat boots?

Yeah. What are we going to carry? Just one. Maybe in a duffel bag, well, the supply sergeant can get you another pair if you want to. That's all I need is one.

So you wore the same pair throughout the whole war? Yes, same shirt and pants too. You know what's an OD? The brown? We didn't use cotton fatigues in combat, the brown ones.

Yeah.

The woolen ones.

Yeah. What does OD stand for?

I don't know. I forgot. Anyway the color gets dirty. We used to wash them in gasoline.

Oh my. And then put it back on, well we dry it. It dries fast.

Does anyone have any other questions you want to--

Yeah, did you ask him about December 7, '41?

Yeah. We started with that.

Where he was and all that?

I was at home on the farm.

Yeah.

Yes, so that was your--

And he went to work the next day.

That was Sunday. There was no work. But on a farm you work seven days a week, you know.

And then when you heard about it, you asked him about that?

Yeah.

How was his feeling.

Well, I couldn't believe it. And actually, I couldn't think what it was. I was stunned. It's hard to explain what my feeling was. But some shells or bombs came in town, like McCully close by. Yeah, we heard about it.

Did your parents seem at all afraid of being non-American citizens at that time?

Afraid of what?

After being bombed-- after Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese, were they had all concerned that they were not citizens, that they were Japanese citizens?

No.

No, they didn't talk about that at all?

Afraid of what then?

Well, I wondered if they thought that they might have to go back to Japan.

No. No.

Never thought of it. OK, well--

They didn't mention it anyway.

They didn't talk to you about it.

Maybe they were afraid but they didn't tell us about it. They didn't show it. They were afraid of what, I don't understand.

Did any of your friends or teachers go into internment camps or--

No, I heard about some Japanese school teachers, some priests, but I didn't know any of them.

OK.

Did you ask him whether he experienced any prejudice after?

Yeah, he said he never did when he was growing up.

After the bombings?

Except for the police officer. The police officer, but yeah, but other than the police officer, when he stopped you for that

Hollywood stop, there was no other incidents that you can remember of discrimination against the Japanese, against you for being Japanese?

No, not to me. I heard of some others. But not to me.

That was--

I mean I don't call that discrimination. It's just he was not educated, I suppose.

We'd like to think that's what it is.

But being a police officer, I'm not going to argue with him.

Yeah. Better not to.

Yeah, give me a ticket.

Give it and move along, right? OK, thank you so very much. We really appreciate your being here with us. And thank you.

I hope I--

You helped an awful lot well, especially, it was very important to hear, again, about your experiences around the Dachau area too. Because we need to know that. And that ties in nicely with Captain Taylor's tape.

I think you heard that too because.

Yeah.

Headquarters people.

Right.

Like battery A, B, and C, they were outlying areas. Maybe they were close to another satellite concentration camp like Bad TÃ¶lz.

So even at that time, your groups were not all together, when you were around Dachau? They were spread?

In combat, you're not supposed to be together, ma'am. One bomb would kill everybody. Headquarters here, we scattered. That's why I say the firing center is most important guys. They know where the guns are. Captain Taylor goes first to find positions for us. That's why Captain Taylor is the one.

I see. And then the sergeant was his driver?

No sergeant was not captain Taylor's driver. This guy lived by my place. He's not a surveyor-- yeah, he's a surveyor. He's retired was his driver.

Oh, I see. What was his name? Do you remember his name?

It's on the tip of my tongue. I could find out.

OK. Yeah, I would like to know that.

And the sergeant that was with Captain Taylor at that time--

That's only one incident.

Yeah. Do you do you know who that sergeant was?

Oh, he died, Kajioka, he died.

Kajioka?

He was buck sergeant. That was the one that shot the he shot the padlock off. That's the one?

That's what he told me. I didn't see it. Well, everybody asked why that 45 went off.

OK.

Did you go into Shelby at all?

Yeah, we went through everything else, OK.

Judy, do you have that story about what he heard or how the lock was shot off.

He just talked about that.

He wasn't here. But he did.

I mean they heard.

They heard.

Yeah, he had heard somebody else had heard the sound of the 45. We're not supposed to carry a 45. But the officers and I think from sergeant up can carry 45, issued anyway. We carry carbines.

And you knew the difference. People could tell the difference when they heard the sound?

Oh, yeah. A 45 is loud noise but very inaccurate.

Oh, OK.

You have to be close range.

Oh, I see. Yeah, I don't know that much about 45s.

It's a side arm.

OK.

Pistol.

Yeah. I knew that part of it but I didn't know about having to be real close.

The Germans had better guns than we did.

Did you pick up any German guns along the way? There were a lot of booby traps. I had a P-38. But coming in home on that US General Brent-- are we still on tape?

Mm-hmm.

Are we? Oh shucks.

Well, you don't want to tell the story? Should we turn off the tape?

Let's let the tape run out. There's only just a few minutes left.

The 100th battalion and some others, we came home on points. Somehow the news traveled and came to us. We're in San Francisco ready to come home. We're bringing home souvenirs. Some people came home before us. Some guys got shot with it. So I threw mine in the ocean.

Oh.

A P-38.

What is a P-38, just for the--

That's a German gun.

A Luger?

A Luger is a Luger.

This was a P-38. They looked alike.

Oh, I see.

38 is the caliber.

And that's a better pistol?

Yeah, that's a nice gun back then, wasn't it?

We heart the arguments, somebody used it against their wife or--

Oh, my.

Got shot or something, so I threw mine in the ocean.

And you were saying that some of the weapons were booby trapped. Did you come across any of those?

Even wristwatches. You don't want it take it off on the dead German. What if it's booby trap?

Oh. You didn't pick up any binoculars or any cameras?

[INAUDIBLE] ahead of us.

Yeah. Yeah.

The forward observers.

No iron crosses?

No, we don't care for those things. You could buy it if you want to. Yeah.

OK, well thank you so very much, and that's the end of our discussion today. I appreciate your coming out so late at night to do this for us.

Good thing I had my dinner.

Yeah or you wouldn't have been so happy sitting here and driving out all this way? Yeah.

OK, and if there's anything else that you think of when we're doing, after the transcribing, you can look at it and then check for something if you think you want to change.

I didn't know the camera was still going on.

Well, they're finishing up the tape. It's how much time is left?

Well, we have a few minutes. We have-- let's see, we had three minutes.

You should should say pow again.

That's fine. Yeah, it's over now though, right?

Yeah, yeah.

OK, it's turned off now OK.