

**Summary of an Interview with
Neil Nagareda (HHP)**

Born on may 2, 1924 on the big Island in Hawaii. Lived on plantation-only about 100 people lived there - a mixture of Filipinos, Portuguese, Japanese, one Spanish family.

There were no anti-Japanese feelings at all . He was sixteen years old when the war broke out . He was out in the fields. I came back around 5:30 and heard that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

His parents were from Hiroshima , Japan. There was no family discussion about the bombing. they talked about joining, they were loyal to the U.S. We felt no discrimination.

The other nationalities called then "Japs" , but I took no offense. There was a mixed unit in the national guard, mostly Portuguese and Filipinos, but he was not interested in joining.

He joined army in 1943, at 18 years old. He was trained at Camp Shelby. When they got there equipment it was all dirty and messy. Camp Shelby was not completed. The entire group was Japanese. He was supposed to go to Camp Jerome but missed going. His friends parents were in Camp Jerome. No one really talked about an all Japanese unit .

His unit went to Europe and advanced rapidly. He had no idea about concentration camps. He and another soldier approached two German soldiers, and motioned for them to continue to their unit. Continued forward and walked right into Dachau. The people in prison garb were so thin that you could not tell male from female. There were no children. Then he saw the ovens. He felt very bewildered and could not understand why. He advanced very fast. There were no instructions of what to do with German soldiers . Orders were to advance ahead. There were prisoners wandering around - the prisoners did not know who they(the american soldiers) were. They were frightened.

He had never heard about crematoriums. He knew it was Dachau because of the sign that was up. he was just going down the highway and he saw a fenced in area with twenty to thirty people in it. He had no orders what to do. He just continued on and joined his unit - same

day.

What did you see?

He saw dead horses and a few prisoners . He did not talk to them. He thought his unit might be too far advanced.

There were no other Americans around. Later they met up with unit 522.

There were no orders on what to do with prisoners. They were a strictly communications unit. When they went back to the prison camp, the prisoners were still wandering around. He had still heard nothing about what was going on the concentration camps.

Wandered why they were prisoners. He couldn't tell the sex, everyone was too skinny.

From there, he went back to [Mechingan??] Germany. He did not deal with DPs. He was not even allowed to fraternize with them He did talk to a lady who showed him a picture of her brother. Neil thought he looked pretty young. One day while patrolling through town he saw a soldier who looked like the picture. He picked him up but he did not pursue it. The soldier was not an officer so he was probably not worth interrogating. He took him to the house where the lady lived that had showed him the picture.

He left Germany about six months after the peace, in December 1945.

When did you find out about concentration camps?

When they were in Germany. He didn't think much about it . He found out more about it after he got home.

People at Shelby had treated them badly and looked at us like we were in the zoo.. At Haddisburg in Mississippi people didn't think much of us. We could tell by the expression on their faces .Other soldiers and people tried to pick fights but the Colonel of the unit put an end to that. He thought it was because the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

It was very hard leaving his parents. It is tradition that the oldest son takes care of the parents. There was more discrimination in Haddisburg and in New york - on the mainland. After the war he felt he had done his share and would not put up with any discrimination. When he returned to France he looked for people who had befriended him. He had quite an experience finding them. Some

people were very helpful and he found them. He had a good but sad visit. The mother was sick but happy to see him. He had a dream of her before she died. His feelings for French caucasians was different then for other caucasians.

He talked about a Sgt. who looked as though he wanted to talk to him Finally, he asked about his experience in the service. They exchanged experiences. After discharge - talked about unit 442 (thought he meant 522) and maybe this caucasian pulled him out from the lost battalion(?).

Went back to lost battalion area. Saw Germans firing. Went back different way and saw our engineer boys sweeping for mines. That time we stopped - the Germans shelled them. They were out in the open. After the shelling stopped they proceeded to the forest. Neil says that they were lucky.

They approached a wooded area and realized that it was no good for communications. They found a hole for a shelter overnight. It rained, and his foot was numb, it felt frozen.

The command car got stuck. A caucasian came out from woods and helped him get car working. His name was Sgt Fox.

He doesn't talk to his wife much about war experiences. But when there is a reunion, she hears all. Did not talk to his children until his son saw an advertisement for interviews with his father's picture on it.

He knows no Jewish people in Hawaii. Went to the Punch Bowl where there was a service. did not talk to anyone about Dachau.

He tells his children to have compassion , show love, and to experience no discrimination.