

-TITLE-DON SHIMAZU
-I_DATE-DECEMBER 21, 1987
-SOURCE-HAWAII HOLOCAUST PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
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Mr. Shimazu was a member of the 522nd Battalion in World War II. He was born in Punei, Maui, Hawaii, and now lives in Honolulu. During the war he was a staff sergeant in charge of the battalion survey section, with the responsibility for accurately locating targets.

Until September 1941, Mr. Shimazu lived on a plantation on Maui. There the workers, of various non-Caucasian ancestry, were fairly equal, but there was a subtle discrimination against all minorities at the higher levels. He was aware that he was part of a minority; freedom of movement was very restricted at that time.

He began ROTC in university in September 1941. The ROTC cadets were in uniform a few hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The majority of Japanese Americans he knew were in ROTC. Pearl Harbor was the night after a big football game for his university. He remembers being woken early by the sounds of gunfire. He and others rushed outside and saw black puffs of smoke which told them that this was a real battle, because in a drill there would be white puffs of smoke. The radio announced that everyone should take cover, that this was a real attack by Japanese. He climbed a monkey bar tree in order to get a better look. He later found out that bombs had fallen very close to where he was sitting. His first reaction was to question why a tiny country like Japan would attack his big country. Immediately after the bombing, he experienced some animosity for being Japanese; he was very concerned about his parents, who were still Japanese citizens. He had been schooled in the Japanese samurai tradition, which taught him that he should have first allegiance to his home, the U.S. This was reinforced in his home. The samurai stories he remembers told of fathers and sons and brothers who had to fight one another to maintain their loyalties. This tradition he feels led to the successes of the 442nd and 522nd battalions, both composed of many Japanese-American, or Nisei, troops. His upbringing affected his decision to enlist; there was no real questioning whether he would or not. He enlisted before telling his parents that he intended to.

His first assignment was a post in front of the Honolulu library, where he was to stop all passersby and demand identification. He saw no real animosity until after this first unit was disbanded. He

began to feel that others looked at Japanese-Americans as enemy agents. He needed to find a paying job because he was working his way through college. The U.S.E.D. was one of the few agencies offering jobs. He was a carpenter's apprentice, helping to build ammunition bunkers and the like, but because of his ancestry, he could not work anywhere considered "sensitive."

He became aware of Japanese internment camps on the West Coast from the newspapers. He thinks it was fortunate that Hawaiian Japanese-Americans were not treated in this way. He thinks it was partly do to prohibitive logistics -- it would be too tough to send all the Hawaiians of Japanese industry to the West Coast. He also thinks that the Hawaiians were more level headed about the situation. Many members of the Japanese community were worried about their position in Hawaii. Those who had immigrated from Japan, many still Japanese citizens, were on Japan's side in the war. None of Mr. Shimazu's immediate family was interned during the war; some cousins who lived in the Tacoma, Washington area may have been. He feels that the indiscriminate relocation of Japanese-Americans was a terrible thing.

Mr. Shimazu volunteered to join the Army on March 24, 1943, in Honolulu. Every time the Army called for Japanese-American volunteers, they got an overwhelming response. He remembers seeing grown men crying when they were rejected. He feels that those accepted to the 442nd and 522nd were the cream of the crop. His serial number was 30104807. He entered as a "buck private." When the volunteers arrived at Camp Shelby, they found most all positions above "buck sergeant" were filled by mainlanders. There was tough competition for promotion, but after training, Shimazu was made second in command of his cadre. He was the youngest of seven. His division was known for being the most accurate artillery division. Their reputation was earned in action in Italy. They had a reputation for successful time-fire, or air bursts, which could destroy a whole German division if accurately fired. In boot camp, Shimazu felt a special camaraderie with other Nisei soldiers. They would call each other "24 karat gold." He lists the names of several fellow soldiers. He remembers being impressed with the diction of the mainland Japanese-Americans in comparison to his plantation-style speech. He had great sympathy for other Niseis who had relatives interned in relocation camps. He feels that the Niseis with intern relatives put loyalty to their country on a very high priority.

When they left for the war, they landed at Brindisi, in April 1944. They were put in cattle cars and shipped to an area near Naples. They practiced in a staging area and then went to the front. His Caucasian officers were not ambivalent or discriminatory to the Niseis under their command. The 522nd and 442nd followed the 100th infantry battalion into combat. The 100th had a tremendous reputation, and the 522nd and 442nd benefit from that.

In one instance in the staging area, while demonstrating their accuracy, an observation team was on a hill in the line of fire.

This team heard the shells come very close, and hit the ground. They were not hit, and this helped to establish the 522nd's reputation for accuracy. Shimazu recalls that the S2 officer, Billy Taylor, was very good in always placing the unit out of the line of direct sight of the enemy during combat, and so the battalion never came under return artillery fire while conducting operations.

The unit joined the battle near Grossetto. From there they went to Leghorn, where they engaged in a time-on-target firing in conjunction with several other battalions. This firing decimated the target. Near Castelloni, they destroyed nearly an entire German unit with a time-fire. They travelled through Pisa. They then came to Florence, where they were given orders to go to the French front. They embarked from either Leghorn or Naples, and landed in Marseilles. They joined the Seventh Army. They traveled through the French Riviera, through Dijon and Lyon, and joined the action just before reaching Bouyes. The 442nd was very successful, and took many entrenched enemy positions while taking very few casualties. Because of their success, they were given some rest time, but 24 hours into their break, they were ordered to hunt for the Lost Battalion. The 522nd took many losses in this search. In one case, the dense woods of the region caused the battalion to get lost. Shimazu was sent to the edge of the forest to regain their bearings. He and fellow soldiers crossed the forest, and looked back to see signs indicating they had crossed a mine field without knowing it. At one point in the search, the battalion was given specific coordinates to fire upon, but the battalion knew these coordinates were also the location of the Lost Battalion, and so refuse to fire, thus becoming the first battalion to save the Lost Battalion. Shimazu feels that if they had followed orders and ended up firing upon the Lost Battalion, they would have destroyed good relations between the Nisei and the Caucasian troops irreparably.

The 522nd was the only Nisei battalion in Germany. After rescuing the Lost Battalion, they were sent to Southern France, where they stayed until March 1945. They were sent to serve with various battalions, including the 63rd, 45th, 44th, and the 101st to assist in the Allied crossing of the Rhine. They covered Saerland at a rate of 7 miles per day. They crossed the Rhine near Berns with little resistance. They travelled through Mannheim and then crossed the Sigfried line. After crossing the Sigfried line, targets became fewer and more concentrated firepower was used. Several battalions would locate the same target. The 522nd was know for its ability to destroy the target before other battalions could range their guns. The battalion then approached major cities like Augsburg. By this time they were travelling on the Autobahn. German planes were using the Autobahn as runways, especially Germany's new jets. Because they had little range capacity, the jets would zoom in, strafe, and fly out. The battalion wasn't used to the speed of the jet.

The 522nd was one of the first American battalions to liberate concentration camps, especially Dachau. When Shimazu arrived at the first liberated camp, the gates were already open, and the prisoners were milling about in their striped clothing. When he

entered, he remembering seeing that there were no "homes" in the compound. They did enter the administration building. In their they found a man Shimazu refers to knowing from childhood as "Dr. Neimur." He was impressed by this emaciated man's sense of calm. The battalion was told not to feed the prisoners, as their digestive tracks would be unable to cope with the food the soldiers had.

Shimazu remembers that there was a pit in which to bury the scraps from their rations. As he scraped his extra food in the pit, he remembers the prisoners standing around the pit asking "Warum," why was he throwing the food away and not giving it to them? The people were like skeletons, with cropped hair, and sunken eyes, but they were very alert.

The battalion stayed at the camp only overnight. They went to Munich, about ten miles from the camp. There they "liberated a German brewery." From Munich, they made a path to Austria. In Warkirchen, Shimazu accepted the surrender of a German Major-General. He remembers having use of the German staff car until Headquarters requisitioned it.

He reached Dachau after someone had shot the lock. He remembers seeing hundreds of prisoners in their striped clothing. He didn't talk to any of them. In 1984, he and several others returned to camps like Dachau, which they had liberated, and he recalls that his experience in 1984 bore no relation to what he saw in 1945. Shimazu didn't see any of the extermination facilities. He had no contact with liberated prisoners, except the aforementioned food incident. He can't remember any real reaction by the prisoners to their liberators; he thinks they had been interned for so long that they didn't know what to do with themselves.

He sees some parallels between Japanese internment camps in the United States and the German concentration camps. Both are examples of man's inhumanity to other men. Had barbed wire. But the Japanese received fairly respectable treatment in the camps they got proper food and such. The German camps were extermination camps, he says. When he was there, he didn't feel the irony of an Japanese-American liberating the Jews in Germany. He does sort of see it now. He hopes that sort of thing will never happen again, and he hopes that in the future, people can live like brothers and sisters.

Shimazu had heard of the death camps before they actually liberated them. He thinks he heard about them in school or in the news. He feels hearing and seeing are completely different things. Those who saw the camps will never forget them. He had heard about how the Germans were trying to create the master race and were exterminating the Jews. He saw army training films about the camps. He may have heard of the camps before 1943. He has had no personal contact with people who don't believe in concentration camps, and he doesn't really believe that they could think it never happened. He feels today's children don't really know about the Holocaust. He feels that to prevent it from ever happening again, they should

show documentaries about these events over and over again.

(At the end, they have filmed the interviewer asking the questions to be spliced into the interview tape.)

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