



Judge Raymond Uno

United States Military Intelligence Service

Corporal

European and Pacific Theaters

Date Interviewed: 2/13/04

Location of Interview:
Eccles Broadcast Center, Salt Lake City, UT

Interviewer:
Rick Randle

AND

Dr. Shig Matsukowa

United States Army

Private First Class

European Theater

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THIS INTERVIEW IS NOT EDITED FOR CONTENT, LANGUAGE OR HISTORICAL ACCURACY

Rick: We have with us Judge Raymond Uno who was the district Judge for 15 years and then 10 years after that has also been serving part time as a Judge. We have Dr. Shig Matsukowa with us both of these gentlemen attended the University of Utah and attended and have been native Utahans and have a very interesting story to tell about the contributions made by the 2nd generation Japanese Americans in WWII. Gentlemen when December 7th, 1941 occurred at Pearl Harbor, as I understand it there were nearly 120,000 as I remember Japanese living in Hawaii and many of those were already in the service serving the United States as a territorial guard of the Hawaiian Islands. If you could just tell us about what happened to these guys and what it was like on the Island of Oahu to these residents after the attack by the mainland Japanese forces.

Shig: I think the fellows that were in the service at that time would put in menial tasks such as cleaning up the greens and I'm almost positive they took the guns away from them. As far as the whole island, like anywhere else, I'm sure there was great hysteria war hysteria and prejudice that went around but the Hawaiian Japanese differing from the Japanese that were here in the mainland, there were in the majority, here in the mainland we were in the minority so there was a little difference. But by the urging of many people in the islands the 100th Battalion was formed. (Adjustment)

Rick: They took a nucleus of those Japanese forces that were already in Hawaii and instead of bringing them back and treating them like illegal aliens they created a military force called that eventually became the 100th Battalion and as I understand it they took them from the Hawaiian Islands and sent them to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin which was in the middle of winter a very difficult change in climate for these young men but they did basic training and molded themselves into quite a unit called the 100th Battalion. And then what happened to them after that, after they left Camp McCoy and basic training then Shig do you recall where.

Shig: Well maybe Raymond but from Camp McCoy they went to Camp Savage in Minnesota and that was prior to their taking residence there was for the homeless. And I understand it was

in pretty bad condition, but then they outgrew that one and eventually ended up at the Fort Snelly and from there of course they would train to do their duties in the Pacific.

Raymond: But they continued on and I think they went to Camp Shelby in Mississippi and from there were shipped overseas.

Rick: It was my understanding that they 1st entered the battle zone at Sicily in Italy, now they may have been in North Africa before that but their main fighting started in Sicily. And I might mention that there were no Japanese Officers, all the Officers were Caucasian and there was some question whether the Officers were worried about their loyalty and how they were going to fight but when they got off the boats in Sicily and started fighting the stories I get, the Officers were absolutely amazed at how aggressive and what a good fighting force it was. When they had bayonet charges the Japanese battalion would not hesitate they just ripped into the enemy and fought harder and more viciously than anyone else. This was in the early days of the war and at that time they were bringing from the west coast the Japanese American citizens to about 10 interment camps on the mainland and Judge Uno we're so happy to have you with us because as I understand your father who is a veteran of WWI was incarcerated in this camp. Can you tell us about that and then a little about the camps that you spent several years in before you went in the service.

Raymond: My father was in the American expeditionary forces that went to France and he got his American citizenship because he was a veteran and when the war started he was very active in American Legion and he was incarcerated like everybody else. We were 1st sent Pomona Assembly Center in California where we stayed there temporarily for about 3 months and then they got the permanent camps built and we were sent to Hart Mountain, Wyoming from Pomona Assembly Center and we spent approx. 3 years in the camp. And my father died August 21st, 1943 while he was in the camp and our time in the camp was one in which, for young people it was kind of an adventure but for the old people a lot of difficulty because people lost their homes, they lost their property, they lost their businesses, they were interrupted in school, separated from family, and they were put into a strange place where the winters were really cold, if you know Wyoming we were in between Cody and Powell, Wyoming. And the summers were

really hot with just nothing but dust storms and for the older people it was very difficult and for people who were of working age you know they had lost everything and so it was very difficult for them to make adjustment. But in the camps you know we developed our own schools, we had our own hospitals, we started farms which eventually was given to GI's who were returning from the wars and property that was cultivated and made into agricultural land became really 1st class property and the people were so grateful that they eventually built a little monument there for the Japanese that were incarcerated there. And the people that lost their homes and they lost their jobs and things like that, the older people some of them never ever were able to rehabilitate themselves. The younger people, in certain ways it was what you would call a blessing in disguise because everybody was concentrated on the west coast and these people when they were allowed to be released from the camps, went to schools back east and looked for jobs back east so they went to Detroit and New York and New Jersey all over the United States and spread the Japanese population out in terms of being able to assimilate into the Japanese culture.

Rick: How old were you at the time?

Raymond: At the time I had just turned 12. I was there from 12 to almost 15, for 3 years.

Rick: How was the treatment? Were you treated with civility or was it harsh?

Raymond: Initially they told us that we were being put into these camps for our own protection but when we went into these camps there were barbed wire fences around it with guard towers and the guns were not pointed out they were pointed in and there were a number of incidences in which people were shot because they went beyond the barbed wire fences and apparently thought they were maybe trying to escape or something but they were just kind of strolling around. And our confinement in terms of the camp was exclusively within the barbed wire fences, but then eventually as we were able to establish our own self government, we had our own schools, own hospitals, own social activities, they gave us a little more freedom and like I said for the younger people it was a time of making new friends and having just like any other high school or elementary school, but for the older people in some instances you know people committed suicide and had mental problems. And some of the results of the incarceration are still being felt

by people who were placed in there and some are very bitter about having lost everything and lost family members and so forth. But on the other hand when the war came to a point where the 100th had established themselves as a fighting unit they started recruiting people from the camps and so we had almost all volunteers for the 442nd and Shig can tell you about what they did and I was telling you about a lot of people didn't realize that 6,000 Japanese Americans served in the Pacific and these people served in Military Intelligence and they served in every Theatre of war in the Pacific.

Rick: You know what's amazing to me is that after this even though in spite of the incarceration there seem to be a lot of these young men wanted to demonstrate their loyalty to America and the 100th Battalion was over in Italy at the Battle of Monte Casino there were 1,300 men that started up that hill and they lost 800 men coming back and the way that these guys fought was amazing, they had a reverse AWOL term where these guys would get wounded and go to field hospital and they would leave the field hospital without permission to go back to the frontlines and fight again. And this was unheard of the valor and the dedication that this 100th Battalion demonstrated and then as I understand that President Roosevelt decided that they were going to form the 442nd Regiment consisting mainly of Japanese Americans and these guys that were in these camps, like yourself, joined up in the 442nd and then as you say there were some called the military intelligence service group that went to the Pacific Theatre. So lets talk about the 442nd and what they did and we'll ask Dr. Shig if you could kind of update us on that, they served in Sicily and fought the battle of Monte Casino and then into Rome.

Shig: When interesting facts concerning the Neesay and the boys of the Japanese Americans, they were classified 4C, we had the classification of 4C until Roosevelt created this regiment to be formed. The 4C classification is enemy alien, so we were enemy aliens at that time but nevertheless they asked for volunteers and they got way more than they needed and they too were trained in Camp Shelby and here they were training, fighting, and ultimately later dying for the country which while their parents and wives and brothers and sisters and friends were still behind barbed wires. That's the situation it was when the 442 was formed.

Rick: Tell us about the Loyalty Oath that they were forced to sign.

Raymond: That was in these camps when they were trying to kind of determine the loyalty of the people, they had 2 questions 1 essentially said that would you be loyal to the United States and would you fight against any enemy of the United States but it was framed in such a way that it posed a real problem for many of the people so some of the people put “no no” on there and they became known as the “no no boys”. And essentially they were considered to be resisters because they refused to go to the draft and these people said that, “*We will not comply with the draft as long as you keep our family incarcerated. If you let our families go we’ll be glad to serve.*” These people were tried in the Federal Court as draft resisters and convicted and sent to Federal Penitentiary and served approx. 3 years in the penitentiary. And this people, subsequent many of these people served in the Vietnam War with valor but these people had this conscientious objector to think that, “*we’re not going unless you let our family go,*” and the government refused to let them go and they were convicted and they served the time in Federal Prison. I think President Truman did pardon them after the war.

Rick: Let’s get back to the 442nd, when the group was formed by President Roosevelt, they then sent replacements over to that 100th battalion as I understand it that were fighting in Italy and then eventually in France.

Shig: When the 442 was formed eventually the whole regiment went over and joined the 100th battalion and then the 100th battalion was attached to the 442 and became the first battalion but they were allowed by the war department to retain the name of the 100th because of the outstanding war record that they had established. The 442 and the 100th were in all the campaigns that you...you know eight campaigns – war campaigns and but eventually our tank company was separated and sent to southern France to help in that theatre and then the 442 joined them in southern France and probably...it was in France that they encountered probably the most fiercest bloodiest battles starting with Behere’s. It took them three days to recapture Behere’s; they lost hundreds of men and casualties...

Rick: They lost 500 men I think in that battle.

Shig: But shortly after that they were ordered to rescue the first battalion of the 36th division which had become encircled and had been in that strait for one week and they were ordered to capture them at all costs. In Terrasson, they had to go through the forest and so forth. When most people think of a shell coming in you hear the word *“hit the ground”* and because the shells will hit and burst upwards but in the forests the shells would hit the trees and shower down on the men so if you can imagine hot lead coming down on you – that’s what they faced. I think they suffered 600 casualties, 200 of them were killed so about 800 of them were lost to the battalion, I mean to the regiment and I think with that number I think they rescued about a couple of hundred of Texas boys. The lost battalion loss on the 36th division which was a Texas division...and there was a little bit of feeling I know where the men from my company *said “why couldn’t their division, the whole division, couldn’t there be...why couldn’t they go in and rescue their own battalion”*? Anyway that’s what happened and following the lost battalion they were ordered to take another hill and after these battles...

Rick: Let me just ask a question about this. I understand when...that they sent two battalions to try to break through those German lines before they sent the 442nd; the other two that were set up failed and the 442nd fought so fiercely that they lost, you mentioned that they lost 200 men [**Shig:** No, 200 were killed] 200 killed, but to say there were only I think 217 of that Texas Battalion [**Shig:** That’s right] and to me I mean that shows the kind of dedication and willingness to give all to do what they needed to do; so I think that’s very significant. All right, what happened after that?

Shig: Let’s see, after that...well there was a time when the General of the 36th Division, I think his name was General Dahlquist. He visited the regiment and he wanted to thank them personally for what they had done and so he asked the Colonel – Colonel Miller of our regiment to have the men of the regiment fall out and he noticed that we were just a few hundred standing up and so he asked Colonel Miller *“why aren’t...where are the rest of the boys”*, you know *“where are the rest of ‘em”* and Colonel Miller told him that that’s all there were. K-company for instance went into battle with about 150 men and came back with I think seventeen and I-company came back with eight. And most of the companies in the regiment suffered similar

types of casualties. It probably was the most notable war battle that the 442 was involved in called *“the rescue of the lost battalion”*.

Rick: And they were decorated more than any other battalion in any wartime. They received unit citations from the Italian Government I believe and Mark Clark – General Mark Clark gave them a unit citation and they went back to Washington DC and President Harry Truman decorated the unit as well.

Shig: President Truman pinned the final unit decoration on...gave the final unit decoration to the regiment. The regiment garnered I think seven or eight Presidential Unit Citations. Individual awards numbered over 18,000 and 20 of those were *‘Medal of Honors’* and if some outfit gets the Medal of Honor, that’s a big thing you see and in fact if it’s in the particular State or home city, there’s a big celebration that somebody in their ranks got the Medal of Honor. Our regiment got 20.

Rick: What do you attribute to that great dedication in fighting the battle as hard as they fought? What was the reason for that?

Shig: I think, I don’t know if I can be very accurate, I could give you my thoughts on it...I think partly maybe Raymond will agree or disagree through heritage you know. We were just handed the concept of doing well and I think that that Samurai spirit was in-borne in these young men too. Plus I think it was tremendous camaraderie to uphold your duty and to look after your buddy.

Rick: And you served in the 442nd for roughly I think in 1943 is that when the...

Shig: Yeah, I served there...when I joined them they were up in the French Alpines and they were on a holding frontline living in caves and so that was kind of...it wasn’t dangerous but it was kind of an initiation to have to live in caves...but there’s a couple of things that happened after I joined and...that stood out in my mind. First of all the veterans told me not to make a mistake and I thought *‘gee, everybody should be allowed to make a mistake’*, but they said *“no,*

you don't make a mistake because if you make a mistake somebody's gonna get killed". So that's what they told me and another thing, they had a church call and everybody from all over came down to the company headquarters, I don't care what they were Buddhists, Atheists, Gnostics, Christians, but they all came and the Chaplain drove up and jumped out of his jeep and read a scripture and jumped back in his jeep and he was gone. That was church call up on the front, but everybody came because they couldn't take a chance for in the next hour or so they might be dead so I remember the church calls quite well.

Rick: Was there a sense of trying to prove your loyalty to America after the discrimination that you're parents had received and perhaps you had received among those men?

Shig: Well what happened was before I joined the 442 I went to take basics – word had already come back that my brother had already been killed in the 442 and so my...I asked my mother what thoughts she might be having and she said that *"you're an American, so you go fight for America"* and I think most of them these days without a doubt never considered ourselves to be???? but Americans.

Rick: And Neesay is second generation Americans is that correct?

Shig: Native born yeah.

Rick: Well thank you very much.

There's another element that a lot of those of us who study the war have hardly heard of and that's a group of around 6,000 of Japanese Americans that were sent to the Pacific Theatre and I believe Judge Uno you were part of that group and maybe you could tell us a little of the history and what went on with that?

Judge Uno: This group is called MIS (Military Intelligence Service) and it consisted of people who were trained and knowledgeable about the Japanese language and they were essentially used as interpreters, translators, interrogators, and in certain instances they were used to go into the

battlefield and seek out information in front lines and they served in every Theatre of the war in the Pacific from Bermouth, India Solomon's Canal, Guam, Iwo Jima and then ultimately when the war was over they served in the occupation services. And a lot of people don't realize it but the success of the occupation and Japan becoming Democratic was and due part to a lot of these people who were served as interpreters and interrogators and these people served very bravely in many instances where they were exposed to the enemy plus they're exposed to the American forces because no one could identify if they were Japanese or American since they looked exactly alike. And so most of the time when they were in the front lines they were given guards to protect them from the American forces and not the Japanese forces because, you know they were not able to be identified. But they served like I said, in the front lines and were responsible in terms of intelligence because when documents were captured they were able to translate those documents so they were able to find out the field positions, the strengths of the enemy and in many instances they captured the Japanese prisoners and were able to interrogate them to get information and the Japanese were not ever told to be captured so you know, they expected to die while they were in the front lines and so when they were captured they were never told what information they should or should not give and it turned out favorably for the American forces that they were able to be interrogated.

Rick: Well that's interesting, and I heard that one of the major reasons that we did so well in the Pacific Theatre was breaking the Japanese code and I understand that some of the Japanese Americans served a very big role in that prior to the Battle of Midway.

Raymond: Like I said, when they were able to capture these documents and intercept the messages they were able to translate many of those things and eventually, I'm not quite sure they were responsible for breaking the code itself but they helped in terms of breaking the code ultimately.

Shig: One of the Generals said that the MIS men shortened the war by 2 years and saved millions of lives and I think that's probably true.

Raymond: That was General Willaby who was the head of G2, which is the Intelligence Service under General Douglas McArthur.

Rick: One of you were saying that probably the best kept secret that nobody's ever heard of the MIS so you appreciate you telling us first hand and especially those of you that lived it. I know you served following the war in Tokyo yourself Judge.

Raymond: I was the 2nd wave of MIS people who served in the occupation and many of the people who were in the Pacific and went all the way through the Pacific War stayed in Japan and continued the work in Japan and as I was telling you, we were military intelligence and many of us were attached to the counter intelligence corps where we did a lot of counter intelligence work in terms you know the things that are happening Iraq right now, you have to get intelligence from the people and that's one of things that we did was we worked with the local people and got intelligence to find out who were communists, who were not communists, and who we could rely on and we used double agents and we had a lot of informants. And this is one thing that in Iraq they were not able to do successfully, but in Japan we were able to do that and we were in every prefecture in Japan and we worked with the local police very closely.

Rick: Is there anything else either one of you would like to comment on.

Shig: The 442 probably suffered casualty since Southern France, but of the 20 United States Military cemeteries in Italy, 17 of them contained boys in the 442.

Raymond: From our camp our student body president was real nice looking, intelligent person, volunteered for the 442 and within several months of going over there he was killed in action and that really brought the sympathy of the people in Hart Mountain toward the war and the 442 people.

Rick: I must admit I've studied it for a long time and I had no idea until I really started to look into the 442nd and how valued they were and the contribution they made to the victory and we thank you both for being with us today.

