

Akira and his father were working in the field getting the last of the late fall cabbages picked, when Aya came running up with tears in her eyes. "Akira, Father come quick. I have just heard on the radio that the Japanese have bombed a base in Hawaii." Akira was sure that his sister had heard wrong, but did as she said and ran to the house to listen to the radio. Indeed it was true. The Japanese had made a very large surprise attack on a place called Pearl Harbor. There were many casualties reported and perhaps, it was reported, several naval vessels had even been sunk. It was obvious from the reports that the attack had left all of Hawaii in total panic. Akira was stunned. He sat there disbelieving. He gave no thought to the fact that he was Japanese. His only concern was, "How could anyone attack America, and what would happen now?" It was only later that he realized how worried his mother and father were concerning the possible direct impact on the family. "Would they be sent back to Japan, being that they were not citizens of the United States? Would they be arrested? What would their neighbors do and think?" There were so many possibilities, and few of them good.

Corporal Toki hung on tightly as the duce and a half bounced through the vineyard. That morning the new troops were being scattered out throughout the 442nd Regiment. Toki's group was headed to the 100th Battalion, which at the time was "attached to the 442nd. With one hand he tried to make sure his duffel and backpack stayed aboard. With the other he tried to make sure he stayed on the hard plank seat in the back of the truck. The driver and the sergeant in the front seat, both Japanese, seemed to be old friends. They were holding an animated conversation and would burst out laughing now and then. Toki had no idea what they were talking about. He could hear them well enough, since he was on the front of one of the benches arranged on each side of the truck bed. They were speaking in a language Toki could not discern. He was sure it was some dialect of English, but was not like any he had heard before. Then it hit him. He had heard such a language once before. It was the so called pidgin, the derivative of the English language spoken by the Hawaiians from Camp McCoy that he had met at his parents' home. There were nine men in the back of the truck with Corporal Toki. All were corporals or sergeants and all were Japanese soldiers that had served together since basic training. They arrived at the new unit's HQ and a sergeant escorted them into the tent. There they reported in to a Caucasian lieutenant colonel, LTC Gordon Singles.

"Welcome to the 100th Battalion," the LTC said after he returned their salute.

"We can't tell you how pleased we are to get some replacements."

Toki was relieved to find someone that spoke an English he could understand.

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There was a sudden flash and a severe blow to his head. He knew instantly that he had taken either a mortar or artillery fragment through his helmet. Blood began to flow freely down his face. His first thought was to yell for a medic. No medics had been seen in sometime as they were overburdened with the line of wounded men that dotted the slopes up the mountain. One of his squad (he can not remember which one) ran to his fox hole and treated the wound the best he could. He was not sure how bad the wound was, but he could tell by the look on his squad member's face that it was not superficial. He knew he could not sit out the night on the mountain without bleeding to death so he headed down slope. He does remember turning over his trusty tommy gun to one of the squad saying, "Well I guess I won't be needing this for awhile boys." The trip down the mountain was in a fog, but Akira still remembers his fear that he would not make it down.

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In the middle of a 7,400 acre government controlled plot, in a desolate high desert plateau, sat a large village of tar paper houses surrounded by guard towers and a barbed wire enclosure. The Tule Lake Relocation Center was a near mirror image of the other nine such camps in the United States. There was not a tree in sight, and, within the compound, not even a blade of grass. Mary for the first time felt fear. Up to then she had gathered strength from her mother but, at their first sight of this stark prison like compound, her mother dropped to her knees and cried. Mr. Shimasaki, however did not buckle to any emotions he may have had. He quickly hustled his family into line to make sure they secured family accommodations that were as good as possible.