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Typhoon of Steel, a Documentary Film

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Asian American Studies

by

Gena Sayoko Hamamoto

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Typhoon of Steel

A Documentary Film

by

Gena Sayoko Hamamoto

Master of Arts in Asian American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Robert A. Nakamura, Chair

Typhoon of Steel is a short community-based documentary film that explores the lives of two Okinawan American Kibei Nisei who served in the U.S. military as linguists in the Battle of Okinawa during World War II. While Japanese Americans on the West Coast were incarcerated in camps, these men risked their lives to prove their loyalty to America. Born in the U.S. and raised in Okinawa, their cultural and linguistic skills were a tactical asset to the military. But emotions ran high as they saved their own families, and witnessed civilian casualties and the devastation of the island they once called home. Supporting the film is a written analysis of the historical background, method, and creative approach that provides a “behind the scenes” look into the making of the film.

The thesis of Gena Sayoko Hamamoto is approved.

Lane Hirabayashi

Valerie Matsumoto

Robert A. Nakamura, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

DEDICATION

Typhoon of Steel is dedicated to the worldwide Uchinanchu community and to those who embrace the *Okinawa no kokoro*.

This is also for my mom, my dad, and my loving husband, Chuong. Thank you always for your support and encouragement.

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Filmmaking is never a solitary endeavor. *Typhoon of Steel* is a community-based documentary and, as implied by the genre, at the foundation of the film are the many academic, creative, and cultural communities that have contributed to the project. First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to the men who generously shared their stories with me—Hiroshi Kobashigawa, Frank Seiyu Higashi, Takejiro Higa, Herbert Matsumoto and Mike Miyashiro. Beyond their participation in the film, I appreciate the lessons I learned from them about humility, loyalty, and my own history. It is an honor to be able to share their stories.

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Last but not least, my loving family must be recognized. I am forever grateful to my mother, June Kurata, for her guidance, support and love, through thick and thin. Special thanks go to my father, Darrell Y. Hamamoto, who never hid the truth about the world from me. To my husband, Chuong Bui, I offer my deepest appreciation for his love, patience, support and commitment, and for making me laugh and keeping me sane. And of course, I thank my dogs Pocky and Wally for keeping me company for many hours while I wrote and edited.

SYNOPSIS OF TYPHOON OF STEEL

Typhoon of Steel tells the compelling story of two Nisei (second-generation) Okinawan American men who served as linguists in the U.S. Military Intelligence Service (MIS) during World War II. Takejiro Higa and Frank Higashi bravely embarked on a journey back to Okinawa, where they were raised, to translate intercepted Japanese military documents, read maps, and provide crucial cultural insight into Okinawan culture. As soldiers on the opposing side, these men encountered their Okinawan families, friends, and former teachers along the way.

Their decision to join the U.S. military came at a crucial time for Japanese Americans. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, sparked the U.S. involvement in World War II and, in turn, the incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans.^{1,2} In light of the incarceration of their families, friends, and Japanese American brethren, these men hoped to prove their loyalty to America by joining the U.S. military. Eventually, the participation of MIS Nisei soldiers was credited with “shorten[ing] the war by two years” by General Willoughby, General McArthur’s Intelligence Chief.³

While revealing the complex lives of these two men, *Typhoon of Steel* explores the themes of patriotism, race, family, and home. It speaks to the experiences of countless other Asian Americans who negotiated their place in America, their struggles, hopes, joys, and disappointments.

¹ Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 45.

² This is the estimated figure by the end of World War II and includes live births, internees from the U.S. West Coast, Hawai‘i, Alaska, and Latin America,

³ Go For Broke Monument, Los Angeles CA.

INTRODUCTION: UNDERCOVER FOREIGNER

“Where are you from?” is what I call *the perpetual foreigner question*. As a young child, when people asked me the dreaded question, I proudly answered that I am three-quarters Japanese and one-quarter Okinawan. It would be a few years until I understood fractions and about twenty years until I began my journey to discover what that racial ratio means to me.

After college, I moved to a small town near Nagoya, Japan, to teach English. It was a big step for me but I was looking for adventure and wanted to connect with my Japanese roots. In the first year, I struggled with the language, homesickness, and culture shock. By the second year, life in Japan started to feel real. I was able to converse in Japanese with people and develop meaningful relationships with them. I stopped myself from imposing my perspective on cultural differences and I settled in to life as an ex-pat. Just as I was beginning to feel at home, my teaching contract expired and it was time to return to California. I decided to make a little detour and take a month-long trip to Okinawa, where my father was a visiting scholar at The University of the Ryukyus.

Before my trip, I never gave much thought to Okinawa or what it means to be Okinawan. I knew that my Okinawan grandmother swooned over me, proudly saying that I looked like a Japanese princess, implying her relief that I didn’t look Okinawan. I knew the stereotypes that Okinawans are short, dark, and stocky, and that they have hairy arms. I knew that Okinawans are somehow *different* from the Japanese. I wanted to go to Okinawa to find out why.

I checked in to an extended stay hotel off *Kokusai Dori*, the epicenter of Naha, the capital city of Okinawa. Heading out into the summer afternoon heat, I began to explore the area. Strolling under the awnings that covered rows of open-air souvenir shops, I lined up in the shadows of light poles and hovered close to the convenience stores’ automatic doors to catch the

air conditioning as the doors slid open, quickly picking up on the local techniques to dodge the blazing sun and tropical humidity. People walked slower, dressed more casual. There weren't throngs of businessmen in boring grey suits rushing to the train; people were open and it was easy to make friends. The first meal I had was at a 1950s style diner. I don't even eat red meat, but I ordered a hamburger—my first in ten years. I had never seen a diner like that in Japan and was excited for this little taste of authentic Americana. A sign on the wall read, "We Accept U.S. Dollars." I realized then that the nostalgia I was feeling was not meant for me, but for the 20,000 U.S. troops living on the American bases in Okinawa, a legacy of the Battle of Okinawa.⁴

On the Japanese mainland, I could be an undercover foreigner until I opened my mouth to speak and my accented Japanese gave me away. And then, the inevitable *perpetual foreigner question* would immediately follow. When I explained that my great grandparents emigrated from Japan to the U.S., I was often met with remarks that seemed to indicate incomprehension - "So you're half Japanese? Is your husband Japanese? Why is your last name Japanese then? But you look Japanese!" In Okinawa, people simply nodded in approval when I explained that I'm Japanese American and my grandmother's parents are from Okinawa. A few times, total strangers corrected me and told me that my *kokoro*, my heart, is Okinawan. Okinawa was a place that encouraged emigration for centuries. Because of its central geographic location that linked trade routes between Southeast Asia and East Asia, "Okinawa became open to other cultures and borrowed freely from them," with the most marked influence being China.⁵ This was a place that not only understood but embraced hybridity and transnationalism. As a young person searching for identity, I welcomed this feeling of acceptance.

⁴ "Curfew for US Troops in Okinawa" *BBC* [UK], Feb. 20, 2008 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7254105.stm>).

⁵ Norman Kaneshiro, "Uchinanchu Identity in Hawai'i." *The Japanese American Experience in Hawai'i: Social Processes in Hawai'i* 41 (2002): 76.

On August 13, 2004, a U.S. Marine helicopter crashed into a building at the Okinawa International University. School was out of session for the summer so there were no civilian injuries, but the blackened building served as a familiar and painful reminder of the history of violence in Okinawa by both the Japanese and American governments. My father went to check out the scene a few days later. American soldiers surrounded the area as students protested against the backdrop of the disfigured building. After the proverbial dust had settled, we took another trip to the site. Warning signs plastered the barbed wire fence that was erected around the building, reminiscent of the miles of fences surrounding the military bases that take up twenty percent of the tiny island's land mass. I realized that militarism in Okinawa means more than the presence of diners and mega entertainment centers that cater to servicemen. It impacts Okinawans' land, safety, and livelihood.

This trip furthered my interest in Okinawa and the Okinawan American experience. In 2005, I had the opportunity to participate in an art workshop entitled, *The Shape of Memory: Okinawan American Art Installation*. I met a group of eleven participants who were diverse in age, socio-economic background, and personal histories, but who came with an eagerness to share and explore their identities as people of Okinawan descent. One woman brought in an action figure of a Japanese American soldier in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. She went on to explain that although the 442nd is widely celebrated in the Japanese American community as the most highly decorated unit of World War II, there is another team that was largely overlooked—a top secret team of Okinawan American Kibei in the U.S. Military who served as Military Intelligence Service translators in the Battle of Okinawa. I wondered, why had none of us heard about this part of history? As I began to research, I realized that due to Okinawa's colonial history, literature specifically regarding Okinawan Americans is severely lacking, as it is subsumed within the Japanese American narrative. But it is precisely because of Okinawa's

unique history that the Okinawan experience can and must be examined as distinct from and intersecting with the Japanese American experience. I wanted to know more about this story and I wanted it to be told.

GOALS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Through *Typhoon of Steel*, I aim to “authenticate new versions of history” in three ways: 1) by challenging the American historical narrative that largely excludes the stories of minority groups; 2) by expanding upon Japanese American history that further marginalizes the stories of Okinawan Americans; and 3) by disrupting the Japanese historical narrative that ignores its imperial legacy.⁶ Further, as a cultural production, the film invokes memories to recover these forgotten histories and assert Okinawan cultural citizenship in both Japan and America.

Diasporic Okinawans carry with them the experiences of being made and remade as citizens/subjects under Japanese colonialism, under U.S. military rule, and in their nation. As Thu-Huong Nguyễn-Vo notes, “for us, remembering in mourning, in commemoration, in symbolic local politics, is not a symptom of an incessant, pathological return to be cured with assimilationist remedies, but a way in which we can recover our histories which intersect, rather than coincide, with American nationalist history.”⁷ The recovery of these memories and the memory of Japanese nationalist history represent the process of self-making that poses a challenge to the national culture.

As tributary subjects, colonial subjects, and citizens, Okinawans have been represented in various ways that are mediated by the historical and political moment. When Okinawa was first

⁶ Kent A. Ono, “Re/membering Spectators: Mediations on Japanese American Cinema” in *Countervisions: Asian American Film Criticism*, eds. Darrell Hamamoto & Sandra Liu (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 129.

⁷ Thu-Huong Nguyễn-Vo, “Forking Paths: How Shall We Mourn the Dead?,” in *Amerasia Journal* Vol. 31 No. 2 (2005): 159.

claimed as a Japanese tributary state, its foreignness was emphasized to support Japan's dominance in the region. Later, the Japanese government reconstructed the national founding myth and emphasized the common genetic background of its subjects. This narrative shift served to omit the violent and coercive means by which Japan's (unrecognized) colonies were attained, thus naturalizing the Okinawans as subjects and forgetting their historical differences.

To challenge this historical amnesia, the film simultaneously invokes "postmemory" and personal memory. Because of Okinawans' multigenerational experience, which distances them from the experience of Japanese colonialism, it is fitting to employ Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" to understand their complex relationship with the past. According to Hirsch, "Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can be neither fully understood nor re-created."⁸ Thus, for most Okinawan Americans, the experience of the construction of Okinawans as exotic, foreign, and backwards at different moments during the Japanese nation building project is not a primary memory, but is one that carries over across generations through postmemory, which is "a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation."⁹ To build this communion, the temporal and spatial distance between members of multigenerational diasporic communities and the histories that tie them to the originating country are collapsed via the invocation of both memory and post-memory, creating an imagined community that is unbounded by time and space.

⁸ Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," *Poetics Today*, 17:4 (Winter, 1996), 661.

⁹ Hirsch, "Past Lives," 662.

Film is the most effective medium to capture these complex stories and social positions for several reasons. Through the use of film, I aim to encourage interest in Okinawan American studies and thus spark discussion in the academy. Within the tradition of ethnographic history, which combines biography and historical documentation, the use of film is a logical progression that utilizes cutting-edge technology to historically contextualize the multidimensionality of an individual's life. Further, to paraphrase Professor Robert Nakamura's words, film is an *affective* medium. Through the use of moving images and sound, the goal of a film should be to connect with the audience on an emotional level. Using film as the vehicle to relate a nearly forgotten history, I aim to make the story accessible to the Japanese and Okinawan American communities.

AUDIENCE

The primary intended audiences are the current and future generations of people of Okinawan descent from around the world. Although films on the Battle of Okinawa—such as the Japanese documentary *Battle of Okinawa* and the narrative *Okinawan Kessen*, and American documentary *Okinawa: The Last Battle*—do exist, none focuses on the contributions of Okinawan Americans. Filmmaker Janice Tanaka muses,

Film and television oftentimes play a major role in the process of subliminal inculturation by creating a criteria [sic] for self-evaluation... Somewhere caught between the crevices of concept and production lay the elements or perhaps the reflective shadows of who and what we are.¹⁰

I hope that this alternative image can merge with these shadows in the minds of diasporic Okinawans to help contribute to the continued growth of their identities and communities. On a

¹⁰ Janice Tanaka, "Electrons and Reflective Shadows," in *Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts*, ed. Russell Leong (California, UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 1991), 206.

wider scale, the film is intended for the Japanese American and Asian American communities and can be used in the classroom as a teaching tool to broaden the current understanding of the Asian American experience.

ACCESS

Copies of *Typhoon of Steel* and the transcripts of the interviews will be donated to the Okinawa America Association library, the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, and the Go For Broke Foundation. Furthermore, the film and full thesis will be made available in the UCLA Asian American Studies Center Reading Room/Library and the UCLA Center for EthnoCommunications archive. The film will also be easily accessible on Vimeo, which will provide global access to it. Finally, *Typhoon of Steel* will be submitted to film festivals such as the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Okinawans: Inside and Out

Prior to Japan's annexation, Okinawa was a prosperous, autonomous kingdom, known as the Ryukyu Kingdom. It was also called the "Middle Kingdom" because of its central geographic location that linked trade routes between Southeast Asia and East Asia. For over one hundred years, the Ryukyu Kingdom was a tributary state of China, which meant access to Chinese trade, but also stipulated the deliberate inculcation of Chinese culture in Ryukyuan society. To gain access to China's markets, Japan invaded the Kingdom in 1609, which constrained its

sovereignty. Eventually, in 1879, the Ryukyu Kingdom was officially annexed by Japan, which marked the “beginning of colonial violence toward the Okinawans.”¹¹

Subsequently, the cultural landscape in Okinawa shifted dramatically, as “the construction of a Japanese identity defined, protected, and supported Japan’s military designs and economic interests throughout the twentieth century.”¹² To forge a sense of nationalism, the government imposed the idea of a national culture that constructed Japan against “the creation of an ‘other’ that would clearly underscore the uniqueness of the Japanese people.”¹³ As a result, newly colonized subjects, including Okinawans, were labeled “*seiban*,” or aborigines, marking them as an uncivilized group to be civilized by the Japanese. In Okinawa, Japan applied a policy of *doka seisaku*, which “is defined in dictionaries as a policy in which a nation endeavors to make the life-styles and ideologies of the people in its colonies the same as its own” through the implementation of the Japanese schooling system and the standardization of language.¹⁴

Because Japan has never recognized Okinawa as a colony, the nation could uphold what Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu termed the “monoethnic myth” that “Japanese all come from a single ethnic background and form one great, intimate family with a special capacity for unspoken, common understandings and harmony and a unity in purpose that is all uniquely Japanese,” thus obscuring the validity of Okinawan culture and identity. While the “nation-building project involved a series of measures to make the Okinawans into ‘good’ Japanese,” attempts to assimilate did not result in the end of discrimination against Okinawans.¹⁵

¹¹ Koya Nomura, “Colonialism and Nationalism: The View from Okinawa,” in *Okinawan Diaspora* ed. Ronald Y. Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 113.

¹² Robert K. Arakaki, “Theorizing on the Okinawan Diaspora,” in *Okinawan Diaspora*, ed. Ronald Y. Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 40.

¹³ Ronald Y. Nakasone, “An Impossible Possibility,” in *Okinawan Diaspora* ed. Ronald Y. Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 18.

¹⁴ Steve Rabson, “Assimilation Policy in Okinawa: Promotion, Resistance, and Reconstruction,” in *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, ed. Chalmers Johnson (Cardiff, CA: Japan Policy Research Institute), 133.

¹⁵ Arakaki, “Theorizing on the Okinawan Diaspora,” 37.

In the 1900s, large numbers of Okinawans sought economic opportunities abroad, immigrating to places such as South America, the United States, and Hawai'i, where "in many instances, the diasporic Okinawans were forced to construct their identity against three axes of identity: the host culture, the Japanese diaspora, and the Okinawan diaspora. They were often both Japanese and non-Japanese."¹⁶ The Japanese culturally oppressive attitudes carried over to these diasporic communities, as "the very name, 'Okinawan' carried a derisive or contemptuous overtone."^{17, 18}

Asian Americans are and have historically been placed simultaneously inside and outside the American national polity and culture. To fulfill the economic needs of America at different moments, Asians have been "recruited to fill temporary labor needs, [but] they were denied civil and human rights to discourage settlement."¹⁹ Although the Japanese were first welcomed as laborers, Japanese immigration was soon curtailed through the 1908 Gentlemen's Agreement and later stopped completely by the 1924 Exclusion Act.²⁰ At the same time, they have been denied cultural and political citizenship through experiences of exclusion, racism, and imperialism, which are experiences that must be forgotten in the national narrative, as they stand in contradiction to American ideals of citizenship. From the American legal perspective, early Okinawan immigrants were not differentiated from the Japanese, riding the same tides of inclusion as laborers and exclusion as citizens.

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which precipitated the U.S. involvement in World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on

¹⁶ Arakaki, "Theorizing on the Okinawan Diaspora," 37.

¹⁷ Anderson Sutton, "Okinawan Music Overseas: A Hawaiian Home," *Asian Music*, 15:1 (1983), 56.

¹⁸ Okinawan communities in Hawai'i, the continental United States, and South America experienced discrimination differently.

¹⁹ Glen Mimura, *Ghostlife of Third Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 6.

²⁰ Wesley Ueunten, "Japanese Latin American Internment from an Okinawan Perspective," in *Okinawan Diaspora* ed. Ronald Y. Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 96.

February 19, 1942. Citing military necessity, this unprecedented order required the forced relocation of approximately 120,000 people of Japanese descent, mainly on the West Coast,²¹ who were “condemned by wartime fear and deeply ingrained prejudice to lose much of their property, abrogate their civil rights, and spend the war years in isolated desert camps.”²² To many Japanese Americans, this order was a direct act of discrimination that questioned the loyalty of America’s own citizens. The salience of Okinawan identity was further minimized as “mainstream America discriminated against all Asian communities equally, and, during World War II, Okinawans were lumped together with the ‘Japs.’”²³ The surveillance and incarceration of Japanese Americans racialized them as foreign enemies despite their citizenship status, which is an indelible scar on the notion of American democratic ideals that reveals the contradiction between citizenship and “alien” status.

As the Japanese on the West Coast of the continental United States were being sent to internment camps, only the educated leaders of the community in Hawai‘i were incarcerated because of the large numbers of Japanese in Hawai‘i and the reliance on their economic contributions to the territory. However, those in Hawai‘i did not escape racial targeting and the pressure to assimilate, even as American citizens. The FBI searched the homes of the Japanese on the islands, confiscating any materials that had a connection with Japan. Okinawans and Japanese were lumped together racially and shared the terror of FBI surveillance and the proximity to the threat of violence during World War II.

²¹ See footnote 2.

²² Stephen A. Haller, *The Last Word in Airfields: San Francisco’s Crissy Field*, ed. Susan Tasaki (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Parks Association, 2001), 114.

²³ Makoto Arakaki, “Hawai‘i Uchinanchu and Okinawa: Uchinanchu Spirit and the Formation of a Transnational Identity,” in *Okinawan Diaspora* ed. Ronald Y. Nakasone (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 132.

Your Country Needs You: Okinawan Americans and the MIS

In 1943, Japanese Americans were asked to volunteer for military service and were placed in segregated units, namely the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion. Due to the success of the Nisei in combat, the draft was later reinstated in the camps the following year. While their families, friends, and neighbors were uprooted and incarcerated, many young men complied to prove their loyalty to America. Others, such as the Fair Play Committee, resisted the draft, declaring that they “would not cooperate with the draft unless their citizenship rights were restored.”²⁴

Aware of the rising tensions between the U.S. and Japan, the military conducted a survey amongst the 3,700 enlisted Nisei months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, finding that only three percent were competent in Japanese.²⁵ Lieutenant Colonel John Weckerling and Captain Kai Rasmussen “conceived of a special school that would utilize the language skills of Japanese American soldiers as intelligence interpreters, interrogators, and battlefield translators.”²⁶ With \$2,000, they hastily converted an unused hangar at Crissy Airfield in San Francisco into the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS). Scouring the troops for recruits, they came across John Aiso, a Harvard Law School graduate who had the language and leadership skills that the officers were searching for. Aiso was hesitant to join. According to accounts, Weckerling was convincing:

“John,” he said, “your country needs you.” No Caucasian had ever called the United States “his country” before, and this inspired to [sic] Aiso to throw himself into his new role as chief instructor with astonishing aptitude and vigor.²⁷

²⁴ Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), 398.

²⁵ Clifford Uyeda and Barry Saiki, eds., *The Pacific War and Peace: Americans of Japanese Ancestry in Military Intelligence Service 1941-1952* (San Francisco: Military Intelligence Service Association of Northern California, 1991), 16.

²⁶ Haller, *The Last Word in Airfields*, 116.

²⁷ Haller, *The Last Word in Airfields*, 116.

Under Aiso's leadership, the first class of 60 students endured long hours of instruction and studied late into the night. In June of 1942, the school was relocated to Camp Savage, Minnesota, as Executive Order 9066 barred people of Japanese descent from the West Coast.

Sergeant Tom Ige, a Japanese American student in the MISLS, had the foresight to suggest the formation of an all-Okinawan American MIS unit. He recounts in his memoir:

I wrote a suggestion to the commander of the language school that a special team be created in the event that the invasion would be in Okinawa. I noted that there were some students in his command who had lived and studied in Okinawa before the war and that were proficient not only in Japanese but also in the Okinawan dialect, which is non-intelligible to most Japanese. These students were also familiar with the geography, as well with the customs and manners unique to the Okinawan people. I felt this special unit could be very valuable in the event of an American invasion there. My suggestion was well received by the commandant and his staff, and it was sent to G-2 headquarters in Washington and given the green light. I received a letter of commendation from the commandant.²⁸

Ten Okinawan American men from Hawai'i and California, mostly Kibei, were selected for the unit.^{29, 30} They embarked on a long journey that took them through Minneapolis, to Seattle, San Francisco, Hawai'i, the Philippines, and finally Okinawa, arriving in May of 1945, as the Battle of Okinawa was already in full swing.

²⁸ Tom Ige, *Boy From Kahaluu: An Autobiography* (Honolulu, HA: Kin Cho Jin Kai, 1989), 79.

²⁹ Tom Ige, *Boy From Kahaluu: An Autobiography* (Honolulu, HA: Kin Cho Jin Kai, 1989), 80.

³⁰ This number is cited in Tom Ige's book, *Boy From Kahaluu*, and in Takejiro Higa's interview. However, Higa does not appear in Ige's list and Higa did not personally know Ige. This indicates that the number of Okinawan American MIS interpreters may be more than ten. The exact number is difficult to determine, due to the secrecy of the group.

Tetsu no Bōfu: The Typhoon of Steel

From April to June of 1945, the U.S. targeted Okinawa because of its strategic location, which would allow them to launch attacks on the main island and cut off Japan's oil supply.³¹ Over the three-month span, approximately one-third of the civilian population was killed, estimated at over 100,000 civilians, 11,483 of them children.³² But this violence did not always originate from the American side. Former Okinawa governor Masahide Ota asserts that, "it was usual for the Japanese to slaughter Okinawans for conversing in their native tongue" for fear that they were spies.³³ To escape the violence, people hid in their family tombs or in natural caves in the mountains during the Battle, which was colloquially known as *Tetsu no Bōfu*, or the "Typhoon of Steel." Thus, Okinawans were caught between two aggressors, the U.S. military, which racialized Okinawans as Japanese, and the Japanese military, which differentiated Okinawans as inauthentic Japanese citizens. The Battle is indicative of the contradictions within the Japanese nation-building project, which makes Okinawans simultaneously Japanese to support the monoethnic myth and non-Japanese to maintain a sense of superiority against the "other."

For the Okinawan American linguists, it was intensely emotional to see the island where they spent the majority of their childhoods in ruins. Like the MIS soldiers stationed elsewhere, they were split up and attached to separate combat teams—the "first soldiers in history with body guards so as not to be mistaken for an enemy by our troops."³⁴ Their unique linguistic skills and familiarity with the terrain and customs were assets as they translated captured documents, interpreted maps, and interrogated prisoners of war. All of the men reunited with their relatives

³¹ Robert Leckie, *Okinawa: The Last Battle of World War II* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 3.

³² Masahide Ota, "Japan's Legacy: The Typhoon of Steel" in *Okinawa: Cold War Island*, ed. Chalmers Johnson (Japan Policy Research Institute, 199), 29-30, 33.

³³ Nomura, "Colonialism and Nationalism," 116.

³⁴ Kiyoshi Yano, "Participating in the Mainstream of American Life Amidst Drawback of Racial Prejudice and Discrimination" trans. Haruo Kugizaki in *John Aiso and the M.I.S.: Japanese-American Soldiers in the Military Intelligence Service, World War II* ed. Tad Ichinokuchi (Los Angeles: Military Intelligence Service Club of Southern California, 1988), 19.

and friends, sometimes as civilians and sometimes as soldiers on the opposing side. Ige remembers, “In the eyes of the frightened civilians hiding in caves or escaping on coral roads, we could sense the tragedies of these people and well imagine what the fate of our own families would have been like, if they had not emigrated.”³⁵

In late June, the U.S. military declared the island secured, but the duties of the Okinawan American linguists continued after the Battle during the mop-up operation. Many Okinawan civilians and Japanese soldiers remained hidden in the caves. The linguists were charged with coaxing the scared and hungry occupants out of the caves to safety. Accompanied by an escort officer, they stood far from the mouth of the caves, unsure if it held armed Japanese soldiers. Yelling in Japanese and *Uchinaguchi* (Okinawan language), they screamed over a loudspeaker, “Although I was born in Hawai‘i, I’m just like one of you, *Uchinanchu*, or Okinawan people... Come out, come out. We have water, food ready. And if you’re wounded or injured, our medic will take care.”³⁶ Sometimes their tactic worked and fearful Okinawan civilians and Japanese soldiers exited the cave, meekly waving white handkerchiefs. With no homes to return to, civilians were sent to refugee camps and Japanese soldiers were sent to Prisoner of War camps.

Just a few weeks after the Battle concluded, two atomic bombs were detonated on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Shortly after, Japan announced its official surrender on September 2, 1945. The Okinawan American linguists returned home, were re-stationed elsewhere, or remained in Okinawa to work with the U.S. military government. Ige reflects, “in addition to the physical aspect of the war, the spiritual toll war took was even harder to bear.”³⁷ Despite these hardships, most of the men returned with a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to help their families and the Okinawan people.

³⁵ Ige, *Boy From Kahaluu*, 93-94.

³⁶ Takejiro Higa, interview with author, July 21 2006.

³⁷ Ige, *Boy From Kahaluu*, 93.

Changing Hands: From Colony to American Occupation and Back

Following the horrific Battle of Okinawa, the U.S. took over civil administration of Okinawa for the next twenty-seven years. The U.S. military government forcibly seized people's private property to enlarge Kadena and Yomitan airbases and create new ones, often without providing compensation. But this shift in regime and ideological shift was not a smooth one. Many Okinawans resisted by staging unsuccessful protests against the unfair acquisition of their land. In order to maintain its control of Okinawa, the U.S. encouraged the idea of Okinawan separatism in respect to Japan, referring to the territory as "Ryukyu" and the people as "Ryukyuan," thus remaking their position again, this time as subjects in opposition to Japan.³⁸ While Okinawans who felt betrayed by Japan questioned the loyalty that Japanese colonialism carefully constructed through intellectual colonization, many did not embrace the idea of Okinawan separatism and sought reunification with Japan through organized protests. To further ensure its control, the U.S. Administration pushed for emigration, which "was seen as a means to defuse the anti-U.S.-occupation sentiment that had resulted from the seizure of land by the U.S. military" and as a way to alleviate overpopulation, stimulating a second wave of emigration.³⁹

In 1972, Japan and the U.S. negotiated the reversion of Okinawa to Japan through the Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty. Although Okinawans hoped that reversion would at least result in the reduction of military bases, forty years later these bases occupy twenty percent of the total land area in Okinawa.⁴⁰ In constructing the reversion, "U.S. Occupation authorities and the central government in Tokyo conspired to sacrifice this chain of southern islands to the needs of

³⁸ Nakasone, "An Impossible Possibility," 12.

³⁹ Nakasone, "Impossible Possibility," 17.

⁴⁰ Nakasone, "An Impossible Possibility," 13.

the postwar order led by the victorious United States,” thus placing Okinawa in the tenuous position of being both an unrecognized Japanese colony and a U.S. military outpost. As subjects/citizens in this position, Okinawans are subjected to “violence in the guise of democracy,” as made obvious by the much-publicized rape of a twelve-year-old girl in 1995 by three U.S. servicemen.⁴¹ Okinawans now must deal with the contradictions of both Japanese and U.S. democratic ideals, as both governments sacrificed the welfare of Okinawans for political goals, imposing violence as a means of control. Again, the question, “Are we really Japanese?” which has haunted the question of Okinawan identity formation throughout centuries and the diaspora, is recalled in the present day.

Post-War: Reclaiming *Uchinanchu no Kokoro*

Because few Okinawans in Hawai‘i were incarcerated during the War, the community was able to develop both financially and culturally. Therefore, “with a new affluence in the Japanese American community and the local community at large, Okinawans were able to gain a new respect” due to their wartime experience.⁴² In Hawai‘i, the post-war years saw the unification of Okinawan locality clubs, forming the United Okinawa Association, or UOA (now known as the Hawaii United Okinawa Association). The purpose of the association was to provide relief to Okinawa, which was devastated by the Battle.⁴³ The clubs also functioned as networks that strengthened “their morale and in-group cohesion, thus enabling [Okinawans] to withstand ostracism from the nonOkinawan [sic] out-group.”⁴⁴ Through the experience of exclusion from white mainstream society and the mainland Japanese community, the Okinawans united as a

⁴¹ Nomura, Koya, “Colonialism and Nationalism,” 117.

⁴² Kaneshiro, “Uchinanchu Identity in Hawai‘i,” 86.

⁴³ Arakaki, “Hawai‘i Uchinanchu and Okinawa,” 133.

⁴⁴ Okamura, *Japanese American Contemporary Experience in Hawai‘i*, 83.

means of resistance, mutual aid, and self-definition. The unification of the UOA marked a new era for the Okinawan community in Hawai‘i, signaling the beginnings of a less regionalized, more collective identity that was concerned with the welfare of Okinawans globally.

Sharing the post and personal memories of Japanese colonialism, American military domination, and American racism and exclusion, Okinawan Americans have forged an imagined connection with Okinawan diasporic people in recent years. With globalization came “the decentering of the nation-state and the declining geopolitical dominance of the West [which] have created spaces for new forms of cultural politics to emerge.”⁴⁵ In addition, increased access to international travel, communication, and media combined to allow Okinawa’s diasporic peoples to embrace their identities and form an imagined community that extends beyond national and spatial boundaries. In 2006, Peru hosted a 100th anniversary celebration that marked the arrival of its first Okinawan immigrants. Among the attendees were the mayor of Naha, the capital city of Okinawa Prefecture, Okinawan Governor Keiichi Inamine, and about 700 other Okinawans from around the world.⁴⁶

In 1984, the Okinawan newspaper *Ryukyu Shimpō* began a daily series entitled “*Sekai no Uchinachu*,” or World Okinawans, which proved to be a popular column. Okinawa Prefecture followed suit and began to promote its image as “oceanic frontier people,” “peaceful traders,” and “a people bridging the world” to include overseas Okinawans in its culture.⁴⁷ In 1990, Okinawa Prefecture organized the first Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival. The word “*Uchinanchu*” is an *Uchinaguchi* term meaning a person of Okinawan heritage. Set in relation against the *Uchinaguchi* word “*Yamatonchu*,” used to refer to mainland Japanese, and the

⁴⁵ Kathleen Hall, *Lives in Translation: Sikh Youths as British Citizens* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 8.

⁴⁶ “Ceremony Honors Okinawa Emigrants to South America.” *Japan Update*, February 3 2006, <http://japanupdate.com/en/?id=6740>.

⁴⁷ Arakaki, , “Hawai‘i Uchinanchu and Okinawa,” 130.

Japanese word “*Naichi*,” literally meaning “Japanese heartland,” “*Uchinanchu*” is a politically charged word that reclaims the unique history and culture of Okinawa.

The reclamation of this word testifies to the ongoing “attempt to recover the Okinawan voice, resist the violence of Japanese nationalism and the more recent American global imperialism, and raise questions about modernity and the nation-building project.”⁴⁸ In grappling with these complex questions, the Okinawan diasporic community answers by imagining the formation of “a global, hybrid, and inclusive *Uchinanchu* community that is neither ethnic nor national.”⁴⁹ Since it was known as the Middle Kingdom, Okinawa has been historically inclusive of other cultures. Now, with a multiethnic, multicultural, and multigenerational community, the *Uchinanchu* diasporic community continues to be inclusive of multiple histories within its diaspora.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Avoiding “Drive-By” Filmmaking

Typhoon of Steel is an outgrowth of the tradition of Asian American independent filmmaking, which evolved in the 1960s. In the EthnoCommunications class, Professor Nakamura often reminds the students that, “We aren’t making Hollywood films or making art for art’s sake.”⁵⁰ This sentiment can be traced back to the Third Cinema movement, which influenced the major moments in Professor Nakamura’s filmmaking career. Third Cinema, a film movement of the 1960s and 1970s that emerged from the worldwide anti-imperialist struggles of the time, rejected the “First Cinema” Hollywood model of filmmaking and the “Second Cinema” European *auteur* approach. Instead, Third Cinema “not only attempted to

⁴⁸ Arakaki, “Theorizing on the Okinawan Diaspora,” 40.

⁴⁹ Makoto, “Hawai‘i Uchinanchu and Okinawa,” 141.

⁵⁰ Paraphrase from Professor Robert Nakamura’s lectures.

reclaim national integrity and restore cultural identity, but also to move, mobilize and reposition images of their peoples in relation to their colonized past, toward future effect.”⁵¹ In response to student sit-ins and protests during the civil rights movement, the UCLA film school formed the short-lived Ethno-Communications program, an affirmative action program that “enabled radical students of color to seize film as a tool for social justice and social change.”⁵²

Nakamura and other students of color were recruited to the program and were exposed to these concepts, which had a profound influence on Asian American, Latino, African American and Native American filmmakers.⁵³ Asian Americans began to take control of their own images and stories in the media in order to “forge an oppositional cultural practice that contests a mutually reinforcing system of race, class, and gender oppression within national borders.”⁵⁴ According to Professor Glen Mimura, Third Cinema was “a generative force in the conceptualization and formation Asian American independent film in the 1970s, and of the community-based media centers that have sustained its development and growth since then.”⁵⁵

In 1970, Nakamura and a small group of Ethno-Communications graduates and pioneering Asian American filmmakers banded together to found Visual Communications (VC), an Asian Pacific American media arts center. Immersed in the Civil Rights and Anti-War movements of the time, VC’s founders produced a wide array of work ranging from educational films, feature narratives, and biopics, with the aim of building a community and consciousness within the Asian American community.⁵⁶ VC continues to uphold this mission through its programs, most notably the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival. Decades later in 1996,

⁵¹ Leong, “To the Open Future,” xi.

⁵² Mimura, “Ghostlife of Third Cinema,” 37.

⁵³ Professor Nakamura in the first class of recruits in the Ethno-communications program at UCLA.

⁵⁴ Hamamoto, “Introduction: On Asian American Film and Criticism,” 16.

⁵⁵ Mimura, “Ghostlife of Third Cinema,” xviii.

⁵⁶ “Mission and History,” Visual Communications, accessed March 2012, <http://www.vconline.org/alpha/cms/default/index.cfm/about-us/mission-history/>

Professor Nakamura established the Center for EthnoCommunications through the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, which similarly seeks to document, preserve and present the submerged stories of Asian Pacific Americans. Having been involved with VC for over a decade and as a former student and current staff member of EthnoCommunications, I feel that the legacy of Third Cinema continues to influence my work.

Unlike journalism or documentaries seen on PBS that claim to report from a neutral perspective, community-based documentary acknowledges and embraces the filmmaker's subjectivity.⁵⁷ As an Okinawan American filmmaker, I had a particular position in relation to the subject matter. My personal experiences and academic research on Okinawan diasporic experiences inevitably colored my approach to the film and I had specific points that I wanted to make. To me, the film was not just a story about the Okinawan American MIS interpreters during World War II, it was a vehicle through which to relate the much longer story of Okinawa, its past and current state of violence, militarization and domination by Japan and the U.S., and to illustrate the Okinawan American experience as distinct from, yet overlapping with the Japanese American experience. From conceptualizing the project, selecting the interviewees, writing the interview questions, to conducting the interview, selecting b-roll and music, and editing the film, I could frame the film to make my point. At the same time, it was imperative to find the fine balance between my own perspective and maintaining the integrity of the subject's voice.

According to the late Third Cinema scholar Teshome Gabriel, "Memory does something else beside [sic] telling us how we got here from there: it reminds us of the causes of difference

⁵⁷ Subjectivity and objectivity in social research has been discussed at length for decades, with Gunnar Myrdals' 1969 book, Objectivity in Social Research, being one of the foundational texts on the topic.

between popular memory and ‘official’ versions of history.”⁵⁸ In *Typhoon of Steel*, I sought to invigorate popular memory by intentionally avoiding the use of scholars, high ranking officers, politicians or “historical experts” in the film, relying instead on Higa’s and Higashi’s thoughts and analyses, thus giving voice to those who would otherwise be marginalized by the texts of “official” history. The late independent film pioneer Loni Ding wrote:

“Ordinary people” of no particular position—not heroes, stars, celebrities, scoundrels, criminals or monsters—are yet capable of doing extraordinary things. Individually and collectively they can have the power to engage us: to hold our interest, draw us nearer, fascinate, instruct, and charm us. Possibly they have this power because we empower them with our attention... Perhaps the gaze of the camera does the same, in the hands of someone who turns towards the camera subject with respect.⁵⁹

In earlier cuts of the film, a text card proclaimed that the interpreters were “the invisible heroes of World War II.” But I never felt comfortable using such a loaded term to make a bold claim. Upon further reflection, I realized that calling them heroes was a convenient, and ultimately unnecessary, convention to demand respect and admiration for the interpreters. By removing the text card, I allowed the stories to speak for themselves, to empower them through their “ordinariness,” and for the viewer to decide on his or her own interpretation. Further, I avoided the use of “voice of God” narration and used text cards only to fill in historical gaps in the story, centering and giving weight to the characters’ own memories and allowing for the recovery of popular memory.

I deliberately included multiple interviews to illustrate the parallels and overlaps in their stories. Similar to ethnography, in which case studies of individuals can be representative of a community, Higa’s and Higashi’s stories are uniquely personal, but also reflect historical trends.

⁵⁸ Teshome Gabriel, “Third Cinema as Guardian of Popular Memory: Towards a Third Aesthetics,” *Teshome Gabriel: Articles and Other Works*, <http://teshomegabriel.net/third-cinema-as-guardian-of-popular-memory> (accessed March 2012).

⁵⁹ Loni Ding, “Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker,” in *Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts*, ed. Russell Leong (California, UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 1991), 48.

Thus, one can infer that other Okinawan American interpreters shared similar experiences of immigration, racism, and internal conflict. On a larger scale, the major themes of loyalty, family, citizenship, and displacement are universal, which “is more than an expression of shared experience; it is a mark of solidarity with people's lives and struggles.”⁶⁰ I steered away from dragging the narrative down with historical data and dates. Rather, I placed emphasis on the interviewees’ narrative, reflection and emotion in order to encourage genuine emotional connection with the characters, with the aim of piquing the audience’s curiosity to seek further information.

One of the foundational principles of the EthnoCommunications methodology is that community-based documentaries are made by ourselves, for ourselves. Coming from within the community not only provides a filmmaker with a unique perspective, but also with a level of trust and responsibility. Early in my search for resources, Wayne Osako of the Go For Broke Foundation wrote in an email, “Are you of Okinawan descent? This would be an ‘in’ for you as you attempt to contact people. This, of course, is not a requirement. But it can help.”⁶¹ Being Okinawan American did in fact help me gain entrée into the community, as I was at least bound by culture and ethnicity to the community. The long chain of contacts that I collected was built upon a sense of trust that “the person interviewed [would not be] ‘used just to tell a story,’ nor ‘mined’ as an ‘information source’—as with journalism—but instead [would be] offered a vehicle through the film to be a tribal storyteller.”⁶² In other words, I would not be a “drive-by” filmmaker.⁶³ I was committed to treating the interviewees, the subject, and the story responsibly and respectfully.

⁶⁰ “Third Cinema as Guardian of Popular Memory”

⁶¹ Wayne Osako, e-mail message to author, April 19, 2006.

⁶² Ding, “Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker,” 49.

⁶³ A term that Professor Nakamura coined.

In making a film for a particular community, I was able to take certain liberties with the content of the film but still strived to provide a wider audience with enough information to understand the historical context. I did not need to insert definitions of certain Japanese words such as Issei and Nisei, which refer to first and second-generation people of Japanese descent, respectively. Similarly, when Higashi is explaining the history of the relationship between Japan and Okinawa, I use the image of the iconic Japanese imperial flag to refer to Japan's violent history of domination in Asia. As an editor, I made careful decisions about what historical information to include and leave out.

Making a film "for ourselves" was both an inspiration and a challenge. The outpour of support from the Okinawan American community, the interviewees' compelling stories, and the need to tell them pushed me forward. Throughout the process, Higa's words echoed in my mind, "I guess it'll be good to have our descendants to know what we went through. Not only what the Isseis went through, but my kids and grandchildren might want to know what Niseis did."⁶⁴ The film would be for current and future generations of Okinawans around the world to gain a deeper understanding of their histories.

As a filmmaker, I often grappled with the perceived weight of the responsibility to the community. I felt that the film was never good enough to present to the community and the interviewees. I didn't want to let down the many individuals who had so generously lent their time and efforts to the project. Instead of propelling me forward, I allowed this fear to paralyze me and delay the completion of the film for many years. At times, I got lost in the process, not knowing if the film made sense anymore, as I felt numb to the narrative that I had seen over and over. I hesitated to show even my friends the film, but the gnawing awareness that I had to complete it finally pushed me to seek outside perspective. Upon sharing it with a few friends, I

⁶⁴ Takejiro Higa.

realized that it wasn't as bad as I thought. I also realized that it was my ego that was holding me back. I imagine that for any creative person, it is difficult to know when to say "I'm done" and put a project to rest. I also imagine that when the project is put to rest, the creators rarely think, "Yes, this is perfect." So in its imperfection and despite my ego, I humbly present *Typhoon of Steel* to the community to which it is dedicated.

Making Movie Magic

To me, "movie magic" is not creating illusion or using big special effects. Instead, the magic of filmmaking is in the process itself. Although I researched, directed and edited *Typhoon of Steel* myself, behind the scenes, many moving parts converged and the film took on a life of its own. Looking back, it was a humbling experience to receive the assistance and support of many individuals, communities, and organizations that were integral in bringing the film to life.

When I first stumbled upon the story of the Okinawan American Military Intelligence Team, my knowledge of and involvement with the Okinawan American community was limited. One of my first challenges was finding interview subjects. Because the team was top secret, books and scholarly articles provided little information.⁶⁵ Starting with a small pool of contacts, I followed every lead, and through a lot of luck and persistence, I learned through Jane Kuniyoshi, an acquaintance who was involved with the Okinawa Association of America, that the governor of Okinawa would be recognizing the Nisei MIS interpreters from California at the

⁶⁵ Other military units, such as the Navajo Code Talkers and the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion were similarly kept top secret and were forbidden to discuss their work. The Navajo Code Talkers' work was declassified in 1968, but much about them remained unrecognized until they received the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2001 (http://navajocodetalkers.org/code_talker_story/). The 552nd Field Artillery Battalion (a unit of the segregated Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team) liberated the Nazi death camp, Dachau. However official Army records do not reflect that the 552nd was ever there or even existed (http://articles.latimes.com/1991-12-01/news/mn-872_1_nazi-death-camp). This pattern of excluding the contributions of people of color from the military historical record raises the questions: whose stories have been repressed and who receives recognition?

New Otani Hotel in Los Angeles on June 7, 2006. Mrs. Kuniyoshi generously provided me with the names and contact information of the veterans who would be in attendance, as well as contacts in Hawai‘i, where a separate ceremony would be held.

At the ceremony, Japanese and Okinawan American community members and leaders packed the ballroom. Actress Tamilyn Tomita was the host of the event and several speakers preceded Governor Inamine’s speech. As the veterans walked across the stage, bowed, and solemnly accepted a certificate from the governor, the weight of the event suddenly hit me. These men, who were now in their late seventies and early eighties, waited for sixty years to be thanked and publicly recognized for their efforts in Okinawa. I later learned in my interview with Higa that the Okinawan government wanted to recognize the veterans for many years, but the government was unable to gather their names and information through governmental channels. He recalled, “They ask me several times if I can get the names, but my only answer was because of the secrecy surrounding, I don’t think I can get the name for you.”⁶⁶ The honorees’ steadfast faces did not betray a sense of pride or joy, but rather reflected qualities that I would later come to appreciate in the veterans I met—patience, perseverance, and gratitude for the opportunity to help the Okinawan people. Following the ceremony, I approached two veterans, Hiroshi Kobashigawa and Frank Seiyu Higashi, who happened to be long-time friends since they lived together in a boarding house in Los Angeles following their return from Okinawa to the U.S. as teenagers seeking economic opportunities. Both men agreed to allow me to contact them for interviews.

Knowing that I wanted to interview MIS interpreters from Hawai‘i, I cast a wide net and contacted every Okinawan American person I knew there, as well as scholars and organizations, including the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, Go For Broke, the National Japanese

⁶⁶ Takejiro Higa.

American Historical Society, and the Okinawa Association of America, hoping for any clues that might lead me to a connection. The enthusiasm for the project that I received confirmed my belief that this story is one worth pursuing. After many emails, phone calls, and meetings, Bonnie Miyashiro of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association connected me with Takejiro Higa and Mike Miyashiro. With grants from the Institute of American Cultures and the Gold Shield Alumni Association, I travelled to Hawai'i in the summer of 2006.

Miyashiro invited me to his home in Oahu and welcomed me with great kindness and hospitality. Careful to abide by Japanese cultural traditions, I brought *omiyage* (a gift that is given when one visits another's home). An unofficial historian of the MIS interpreters, Miyashiro meticulously cataloged decades of newspaper clippings and books, which he shared with me. Nearly blind, he handled each article carefully, explaining in detail the contents of each one. Unfortunately, Miyashiro was camera shy and I was unable to capture his wealth of knowledge on tape.

A few days later, I picked up another MIS veteran, Herbert Matsumoto, to interview him in a nearby park. As a novice filmmaker who was unfamiliar with the area, I made the critical mistake of conducting the interview in a loud environment. Birds chirped incessantly, the wind rattled the microphone, and finally, it began to rain. Moving under a veranda, we continued the interview, but I knew at that point that the interview was a loss. Reviewing my tapes later, I was saddened to admit to myself that this was true. Still, Matsumoto's passion for collecting and sharing this story provided invaluable background information and encouraged me to pursue it further.

My second interview was with Takejiro Higa. I heard of Higa's story through Hanashi Oral History Program, an archival project of the Go For Broke Foundation that collects videos of Japanese American veterans. For this interview, I was able to secure a quiet location at a

friend's office at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. Like Miyashiro, Higa was a living treasure trove of information about the interpreters. With Higa having a knack for storytelling, his interview was two hours long, and I was enthralled the whole time.

Upon returning to California, I conducted two additional interviews with Hiroshi Kobashigawa in Los Angeles and Frank Seiyu Higashi in San Jose. Kobashigawa's interview was the most emotional of the four. He spoke with great compassion for the Okinawan people and was passionately anti-war. Higashi was informational, as he was knowledgeable about Okinawa's history and recalled with great detail the names and dates of significant moments, but seemed to find it difficult to reflect on his experiences. Together, I felt that the three usable interviews that I had would be a good balance—Higa was an energetic and entertaining storyteller, while Kobashigawa had the heart and soul, and Higashi could provide the more concrete details.

Mining for Gold

After completing the interviews, I set to work on the tedious and important process of transcribing. The transcripts would not only be an asset in the editing process, but also could serve as a document to preserve the life histories. I then mined through the sixty pages of transcripts, highlighting key ideas and phrases. Using the old-fashioned literal cut and paste method to group the dialog into major themes, I arranged and rearranged the bits of paper—throwing some aside, searching through the transcripts for others—and finally came up with a loose story structure. This process, called a paper edit, allowed me to synthesize and organize the overwhelming amounts of information, figure out what I was missing, and get an idea of the additional visual materials (b-roll) that I might need to track down, beyond the few personal photos that I collected from the interviewees.

Slim Pickings

During the interviews, I asked the men to bring photos of their childhoods, photos from their time in the military, and current photos of with their families. Since cameras were rare and expensive at the time and their unit was top secret, they had very few photos from their childhoods and military days, and none from their stint as interpreters. I would have to be creative in finding images to illustrate their experiences.

I was very lucky to come across some of the key archival video through professional connections. Working at the Japanese American National Museum, I had access to the many tapes in the Media Arts Center. There, I found newsreel footage from the National Archives of Japanese American soldiers in training. Professor Lane Hirabayashi suggested I contact filmmaker gayle yamada,⁶⁷ producer of the documentary *Uncommon Courage*, on the off chance that she would share her extensive research with me. She went through a lengthy and expensive process to hire a researcher at the National Archives for her own film. She generously shared the footage with me, a complete stranger. This footage filled in crucial gaps in the Battle of Okinawa scenes, such as shots of civilian evacuations, interrogations, and environmental shots of the devastated island, which otherwise would have been impossible to fill through personal photos.

In the not-so-distant past, producers like yamada had to travel to the National Archives and hire a researcher to find materials. Luckily, online still and video archives have made the process much more accessible and cost effective. Other new developments such as Creative Commons, which provides a platform to easily search and access un-copyrighted materials to promote the free exchange of information, have changed the research game. I was able to easily

⁶⁷ yamada does not capitalize her name.

download additional public commons photos and video through the Internet Moving Images Archive, Prelinger Archives, and the Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives for no or little cost.

On the Cutting Room Floor

Before the advent of non-linear digital editing, film was painstakingly cut and spliced together, frame-by-frame. The parts that were discarded ended up on the cutting room floor. Today, this process is but a useful analogy for the difficult decisions an editor must often make in cutting out parts of the story.

In early cuts of the film, Higa, Higashi and Kobashigawa played off each other the way I had envisioned it, with Higa being the lively storyteller, Higashi providing background information, and Kobashigawa contributing the emotional reflection. But after showing cuts to Professor Nakamura and my friends, I had to admit that Kobashigawa's interview was unusable. I was intimately familiar with his dialog after hearing it played back ad infinitum, and his Okinawan American Kibei accent was easy for me to understand. But because he has a low, raspy voice and the sound recording was poor quality, other people could not understand him. I desperately tried various ways to avoid cutting him out of the film by adding subtitles and consulting with two sound editors, but in the end, I realized that nothing could be done. I felt guilty because Kobashigawa had shared so much of his life with me in the hopes that other people could learn from his experience. But I took comfort in the idea that nothing is wasted in digital video, even if it is on the proverbial cutting room floor. I still had his full interview and transcript, which could be used as historical documentation.

Being Honest

As mentioned previously, documentary is never objective and I had specific points that I wanted to make through the film. But I often felt the tug of the mainstream to present the film as solely factual. I questioned myself, wondering if certain text cards or the juxtaposition of images was too pointed or obvious. Through the process, I realized that trying to hide my subjectivity is less honest to the viewer and the subject matter than letting it show.

One issue that I wanted to include was Okinawa's colonial relationship with Japan through evoking sympathy for the Okinawan people and using language as a metaphor for their subjugation. In the opening battle montage, bombs, rockets, and battle ships destroy the island, images that focused on the machinery of warfare. In contrast, the scene closes with the striking image of a female civilian jumping to her death to escape the war. During his interview, Higa recounted a story about saving a teenage girl who sought refuge with 200 others in a cave. Hiding along with them were Japanese soldiers, who gave each person a grenade to commit mass suicide. Higa recounts:

Then I appeared near the entrance of the cave. I start using the megaphone, you know, portable megaphone. I start talking to them, see. And then, she says there was one elder man in the group... He said, "You guys still young. Don't throw your life away. Go out. There's an Okinawa boy waiting for your guys. He ain't going to lie to you. Go out. Safe." So, afterwards, they all came out, I heard.

Fifty years later, Higa reunited with this woman at a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Japan. She brought her adult daughter along.

When daughter tapped me, "Thank you. Because of you, I'm also here." Hey, that kinda hit me. So, I don't mind telling you, I told them "Thank you." And I had tears on my eyes, so happy.⁶⁸

As an editor, it was heartbreaking to cut out such moving stories in the interest of staying focused. I was not able to explain that Japanese soldiers forced countless civilians to commit

⁶⁸ Takejiro Higa.

mass suicide for fear of spying and in order to steal their provisions. But through the conventions of film, I was able to at least visually reference this in the opening scene. Later, at the end of the Battle, another montage of Okinawan refugees marching across the devastated island highlights the effects of the war on the civilians.

The use and loss of language was a major theme throughout the film. In fact, the film was originally entitled *The Language of War*, but I changed it to go with something with a more poetic edge. Following the Japanese invasion of Okinawa, a policy of assimilation was imposed upon the Okinawan people. In the second scene Higashi explains, “In those days, you go school, you had to start speak Japanese because no Japanese understand Okinawan dialect. That was a really bad taste.”⁶⁹ For example, “there are countless stories of students being ridiculed by having to wear a sign around their neck, ‘I speak Okinawan,’” which signified the repression of the Okinawan language and culture.⁷⁰ In the colonial and neocolonial relationship, “If you want to be a man, says the oppressor, you have to be like me, speak my language, deny your own being, transform yourself into me.”⁷¹ Similarly, the experience of discrimination and shame that carried over with immigration to the U.S. resulted in the loss of the Okinawan language in America. In Hawai‘i, Issei parents were made to be linguistically flexible, speaking Okinawan with each other and their Okinawan friends, Japanese with *Naichi* (non-Okinawan Japanese people), Pidgin with whites, and a combination of Pidgin and Japanese with their children. Ironically, the Okinawan American translators are called upon to use this very language to bridge national divides, save civilians, and provide military intelligence. I intentionally included the

⁶⁹ Frank Higashi, Interview with author, January 3 2007.

⁷⁰ Kaneshiro, “Uchinanchu Identity in Hawai‘i,” 79.

⁷¹ Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema” in: *Movies and Methods, An Anthology*, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press 1976), 44-64.

Okinawan language in the voice over in one of the final scenes to further demonstrate Okinawa's unique culture and history and to reclaim the language that is nearly lost.

Similarly, the military bases are one of the obvious metaphors for Okinawa's troubled condition as both an unrecognized Japanese colony and a U.S. military outpost. As a filmmaker, I wanted to illustrate Professors Setsu Shigematsu and Keith Camacho's assertion that: "As a territory that has been colonized by Japan and the United States and continues to remain under de facto shared rule by the U.S. military and Japanese government, Okinawa represents the coarticulation of this complementary and dual neo colonial system."⁷² The interviewees were very passionate about the removal of the bases from Okinawa as well. Another tough editorial decision that I made was to cut out Kobashigawa when he informs the audience that Okinawa has no history of war and that he is firmly anti-war himself, stating, "to keep peace in this world, you have to be like Okinawan people, very peace-loving people [crying]... Men's life is most precious thing in this world. Life of a human... Don't hurt anybody, that's teaching from ancestors in Okinawa."⁷³

Earlier cuts of the film included a section that showed the wreckage after an American military helicopter crashed into Okinawa International University, endless barbed wire fences, and de-militarization activists staging protests. The final line ended with Higashi asserting, "No matter what we do, there's no war on Okinawa."⁷⁴ But again, I was faced with cutting out this very pointed message, as it felt out of place and, in all honesty, could have been its own film. Instead, I settled on including some of the images of the bases and text cards explaining the

⁷² Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho, "Introduction: Militarized Currents, Decolonizing Futures" in *Militarized Currents*, eds. Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xxxvi.

⁷³ Hiroshi Kobashigawa, Interview with author, December 1, 2006.

⁷⁴ Frank Higashi.

legacy of the bases in the credits as an epilogue. Although I was unable to fully make the case that I had hoped, I feel that it was the right decision for the film.

The closing song, *Fences*, poetically concludes the film. Using the fences that surround the bases as a metaphor for Okinawa's dual colonization and oppressions around the world, such as Guantanamo and the prison industrial complex, the singer laments, "Everywhere that I can see, chain link fences, barbed wire. Are we inside or are we outside? I can't tell. Can you?"

While *Typhoon of Steel* is about a particular time, place, and group of people, I hope that in its specificity, others can relate to this notion of fences, which bind us, separate us, keep us out, and are broken down at overlapping and various moments in history. Through the film's depiction of the struggles and achievements of two men who unwittingly became heroes, perhaps others may be inspired in some small way to do the same. In the final moments of the film, the singer leaves the audience with a feeling of hope: "Even in these darkest times, I will shine, shine through. No fence can hold us in."⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Anonymous, *Fences*.

APPENDIX A
Takejiro Higa Interview Transcript

TH: Takejiro Higa
INT: Gena Hamamoto
Camera: Kristine Gonzales
July 21, 2006

Tape 1 of 3
Side A

00:00

INT: This is an interview with Takejiro Higa on July 21, 2006. First, can you first tell me your full name?

TH: My name is Takejiro Higa.

INT: Okay, and when were you born?

TH: April 22, 1923.

INT: Where were you born?

TH: A place called Waipahu, on this island, Honolulu Hawaii.

INT: What generation are you?

TH: Second generation.

INT: What were your parents' names.

TH: My father's name was Takeo Higa. Mother's name Ushi, U-S-H-I Higa. Higa married Higa.

INT: Oh, two Higas.

TH: Yeah, I mean, the village got a lot of Higas. They come from the same village in Okinawa.

INT: What village are they from?

TH: Small village called Shimabuku. Presently Kita Nakagusukuson.

INT: When and why did your family emigrate?

TH: I have no idea. I think it was just, I think my father came just before that immigration act was enacted. I don't know, I think early 19 or late 1917 or 18 area I think. And then mother came before the immigration law went into effect of course.

INT: So did they come separately?

TH: Separate. My father came, actually, I found out, my grandfather came here first. Then my grandfather called my father over. And then, later on, my father called my mother, after he married her and he called her over to Hawaii. I found it out recently, checking the record at the Honolulu Japanese Counsel General's office.

INT: That's interesting. So, where did they settle when they came to Hawaii?

TH: Probably Waipahu, I have no idea.

INT: Do you know what they did?

TH: My father had a small, little grocery store. Other than that, I have no idea.

INT: Okay. And what was life like there for you as a child, in Waipahu?

TH: Well, it's a long story. From what I heard, at the age of two, my mother took three of us, three kids. I have an older sister, six years older than me, an older brother, three years older than me. Three kids, she took to Okinawa to see first time grandparents. In the meantime, father remained in Waipahu and operated a small grocery store, hole in the wall grocery store, I understand. Very small store. Then, three years later, when I was five, my father went to Okinawa with the idea of bring the family back to Hawaii. But unfortunately, when he got to Okinawa, he found that my mother was sick with Pleurisy and could not travel anymore. Yet, the father has a store in Waipahu. Ask one of his good friend to watch for him until he goes to Okinawa and bring the family back. So, he has to go back and take over the store. So, after family discussion, they decided father to bring back my older brother and my older sister with him. I'm being only five years old, and still needs mother's care. And he couldn't leave a sick wife alone. So, I was left behind. And my mother and I live with my paternal grandparents. Then, tragedy struck early in my life. When I was eleven, my father passed away in Hawaii with a stroke. Then, a year later, when I was twelve, my mother passed away in Okinawa due to illness, sickness. And within the same two year period, my grandparents also passed away. So, at the age of twelve, I was really orphaned. And luckily, my father's younger brother, my uncle, took care, took me in. And from his home, I finished the elementary school, seventh, and eighth grade, two years. And after that, I worked for uncle and did the [?] job for approximately two and a half years. And when I reached aged sixteen, he created, wrote a letter to my sister in Hawaii, please call me back to Hawaii quick before Japanese send me to Manchuria. The reason being, that in those years, at that time, Japan was sending healthy young people age sixteen to nineteen, to Manchuria, under the Manchuria Mongolia Development Corps. It's supposedly a voluntary group, but after the war, I found out from my grade school teacher, although it was under the misguidance of a voluntary basis, in effect, it was a disguised compulsory. Because if not enough volunteers come forward, national government allocated to each prefecture number of people. And the prefecture, in turn, allocated to a certain number to each township. So, in a way, in a sense, it wasn't voluntary basis. Sort of a misguided or disguised compulsory

recruitment. I didn't want to get caught in there, so I literally went away from Okinawa at age sixteen. Then, coming to Hawaii, at age sixteen, not knowing one word of English, few times I complained to my sister, "I wanna go back to Okinawa and live my life over there with uncle." Because Uncle told me, "If you go to Hawaii, you don't like it, you come back anytime. You can live with us." So, I was ready to go back, but my sister stopped me. "If you wait another year, you might get used to it." So, that's how I stuck here and saved myself. Who knew a couple years later, we were going to have war with Japan, with the December 7, '41 attack. So, fortunately, I listened to my older sister and I saved myself. Otherwise, I'd probably be dead either in Manchuria or during the Battle of Okinawa, who knows?

INT: It was your fate.

TH: It was fate, I guess.

INT: What was it like coming back to Hawaii and not knowing English? How did you learn English?

TH: I tell you, it's a real sad story. The first English words I learned, I spoke, was profanity language. Umm, my father's cousin, she's about four, five years older than me, came to see because I just came back from Okinawa. I greeted her with one F-words, not knowing any better, you know. She said, "what did you say?" I repeated the same thing. She grabbed my neck and said do you know what that means? "I think so, doesn't that mean hi, come over, what not." She explained to me what that meant. I wanted to hide under the table. And I never used that word until I went in the army. In the army, a few months later, you know it's a second language, the F-words, yeah. The words I learned was the F-words. I thought it was a greeting because it's the only words you hear among the young kids in the neighborhood. Either other word's F, yeah? So, I meant to say hi, come over or something, hello, similar to that greeting words. I didn't know any better. But she straightened me out real fast.

INT: That's funny. So, were you in high school then?

TH: No, no, no. I started English class from the very beginning. In fact, you might even say pre-kindergarten. I didn't even know ABC then. So, I enrolled at a special school run by a Japanese lady by the name of Mrs. Suehiro. She had a special class for those people came over from Japan recently. It was probably a Japanese language school facility. She had a school, English school from 8-12, five days a week. I enrolled there, and started learning English. And lucky for me, I got a job, only available job not knowing one word of English, as a dishwasher at one of the restaurants. Lucky for me, I got the job at the Nuuanu Y cafeteria. Nuuanu YMCA cafeteria. Old Japanese people, after the war, they called it *arubaito*. *Arubaito*. So, I started working. From, as I said, school was from 8-12, so after school, school was very close to the YMCA on Nuuanu avenue, just a five minute walk away from the working place. And I started working over there. And lucky for me, the cafeteria had very convenient hours. After the lunch service, between 2 and 4, after the evening, work starts about 4 o'clock. We had two hours just about for free time. I used that time, I joined the YMCA small kids club, youngster's club because my own age group, they won't even bother me because I cannot even speak English and they just ignore me. So I started playing around with the young kids, swim around, playing basketball and whatnot. And I got to know one young kid, Japanese kid, I practiced on him what

I learned in school, language yeah, English language. And many times, he wouldn't understand what I'm saying. So, very next day, I go to class and I ask my teacher- I had a very good teacher, by the name of Mrs. Nash. I believe she was the wife of a serviceman and she was teaching us English at Suehiro special school. School principal was by the name of Mrs. Suehiro. So, I asked her, "I said this to this kid yesterday, this English word. And he didn't understand what I'm saying. What am I doing wrong?" She corrected me whenever I'm off and very afternoon, I grabbed the same kid, repeat. And this repeated day in, day out. Every damn day, to be honest to you. Because of that, I picked up English pretty fast. So, this special school, I skipped second grade, jumped to third grade, I skipped fourth grade, and jumped to fifth grade when the war started, December 7th. With the coming of the War, school was closed up by the military because it was run by Japanese lady and using Japanese School building. So, I was stuck. I have to go somewhere. So, somehow, someone told me, there was a special school run by Christian faith, Seventh Day Adventist School, religion, under the name Hawaii Mission Academy. And there was one special class taught by Mr. Gima. So, I went to apply. So, the principal tells me, if you can pass minimum aptitude test, I'll let you in. So, I got nothing to lose, so I took the test. And some reason I passed minimum aptitude test. So, they put me in the ninth grade. Beginning, second semester started in December, yeah. So, second semester, December. So, I got into second semester ninth grade. And then I studied, I'm sure three/four times more than other students. I studied, really studied, to be honest with you. One day, as I was eating my sandwich, Spam sandwich, in the classroom, English teacher by the name of Ms. Wakem, saw that and she reported to the principal, the principal's name was Mr. Rice. So, I got called into principal's office for tongue lashing. So, I said, "why am I being lectured on?" Then Mr. Rice says, "I understand you were eating Spam sandwich." So, thinking nothing wrong with it, say "Yes, I was eating Spam sandwich, minding my own business." And then he tells me, "Our religion teaches us that it's not necessary to kill other animal to satisfy your stomach, hunger." But then, I knew Seventh Day Adventists is allowed to eat fish and chicken because my father's cousin, the lady that spoke to F-language, she was saying Seventh Day Adventists believe in. And knowing that they eat chicken and fish. So, I retorted to principal, "Mr. Rice, you say that your religion teaches you not to, it's not necessary to kill other animals to satisfy your hunger. Is that right?" He say, "yes." "Then your religion believes that chicken and fish are not animals?" I guess I was real rascal, yeah. So, Mr. Rice got stuck. He didn't know how to answer that. He say, "As long as you are in this school, please follow our religious belief. Try not to eat any meat, avoid eating meat." I got no choice but to say, " Yes, yes, okay." So, I went back to class and continued studying. And then several weeks later, one Monday morning, English class, subject was composition and instruction was: write about something interesting you did over the weekend. I thought about it and I just couldn't think about anything good to write, so I wrote about western cowboy pictures. See, I used to go to cowboy pictures quite often because western pictures, you don't have to know English completely to understand the meaning by looking at the action. So, I wrote about it. And another reason I used to go quite often was, one reason was, you don't have to read English to understand. Another reason was very reasonable. Old Roosevelt theatre, located at Manakea Street. The admission was only about 10 cents or 15 cents, so because of the cheap admission, we used to go quite often. So, I wrote about it and again, I got called into principal's office. This time, I got scolded again. So, I asked him, "Why am I being scolded this time?" Then he says, "Oh, our religion, we believe in Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ, as long as he had any free time, he studied the Bible and he did not go to the movies and whatnot." Again, I think about it now, I guess I was real rascal too. Mr. Rice, even if he wanted to go to movies, I believe in those days, we did not have movies to

go to.” By this time, I was totally disgusted with the school, the difference in the religious belief. So, I asked my brother, who was at Farrington High School at that time. I asked my brother, “Hey, ask Mr. Holden, the principal at the high school, who happened to be the teacher at the school when my brother was going to Central Intermediate School.” So, he went and Mr. Holden that, “If your kid brother can pass minimum aptitude test, I’ll let him transfer.” Again, I took the test. Again, I don’t know how I passed it, but I passed. So, September 1942, I started going to Farrington High School. I spent just a little over half semester at the Mission Academy, ninth grade, and jumped to tenth grade at Farrington High School and then finished first year 1943. Just about that time, there was a movement to recruit Nisei, the famous 442 Regimental Combat Team volunteer group. Anyway, my brother was then going through university, going through freshman class, doing ROTC and everything, so he volunteered right away. I did not. So, he questioned me, “Hey, everybody going. What you going to do?” Couple times, he just kinda pressed me into it. “Hey, brother, I didn’t want to get into the army. That’s why I ran away from Okinawa, come over here. And with my deficient intermediate English knowledge, you expect me to go in army. Hey, you kinda asking me to much, aren’t you?” So, kinda retorted his pressuring me. But then, a little while later, I realized that the government rounding up all Japanese schoolteachers and ministers of religion and community leaders and throw them into [?] re... concentration camp. Here, I’m only come back from Okinawa, Japan, a couple years before the War started. They might throw me into the relocation camp, so finally I said okay. I volunteered. But fortunate, or unfortunate, I wasn’t selected for 442. My brother was already selected to go into 442. I wasn’t selected for the original 442. So, that’s that. To be honest with you, I didn’t know how to feel, whether I should be sad or happy being not accepted. Happy because I didn’t have to go in the army. Sad in the sense that am I being suspected as a disloyal American. So, I had a kind of mixed emotion. Then, about three months after the 442nd boys left for mainland for basic training, I got the letter from what is now Defense Department, the War Department in those days. I got the letter saying this time, we’re going to organize Japanese language soldier’s group. The content was, are you still interested in serving your country. That kind of put me in a real dilemma because if it’s Japanese language, after the training’s over, it’s understood that I would be sent to Pacific Warfront. The big concern was what if I meet up with someone I know at the warfront- my relative, my classmate, or my friends. What am I supposed to react, you know? That was my big concern. So, it kinda took me quite awhile to decide yes or no. But thinking over, I had already said I gonna volunteer for combat team, I could not say no now. So, I did volunteer. I sent in the response letter. With the letter, came the response saying yes or no. I sent them in. Then a few weeks later, letter number two came from War Department. And this time was report to room so-and-so Dillingham building, which is located on Bishop Street. Dillingham building, room so-and-so, on a certain date. So, I reported and there was one army intelligence officer and one FBI agent waiting for me to interview me. Then they ask me all kinds of questions. Then a few minutes later, they should me, I don’t know what kind of article it was, but they show me one Japanese article, certain pages of some book, I don’t know. Said, “Can you read this?” Oh, Japanese no problem. I had enough eighth grade training. “Do you understand what it said?” “Yeah.” I translated, may not be perfect English, but I translated what it means. And they just started asking me a lot of questions. They seemed to know more about me than I knew about myself! So, I was real surprised. My guardian FBI. I had the highest respect for FBI at that time. So, they asked me and I said “I don’t remember.” So, they looked in their book, “No, you were doing so-and-so and doing it there and there.” Real surprised. A lot of things I forgot. So, I had the highest respect. So, after that interview, they say, “Okay, we’ll let you know by letter whether we accept

you or not.” Then, a few weeks later, a week or two, I forgot the dates, third letter came. This time, it said report to room so-and-so, building so-and-so, Schofield Barracks on a certain date. So, I reported to the building and I placed as directed and there over 200 people, Niseis, all lingering around. They were all volunteers for the language school, selected already, enlisted. You’re in the army now! And from there, original group of us from Hawaii, 239 of us, were sent to Camp Savage, Minnesota for training. I don’t know how much you know about interpreter’s school, but I have a book, a history book if you’re interested. It actually, you have to give American army, especially army command in Western division, the anticipated possible conflict for Japan, November 1, 1941, they were even a month ahead of the war, they started this special school at Presidio, San Francisco, using old, abandoned hangar building. They started a class of language school. Fifty, I think, was it fifty or sixty students, among them, a few Caucasian students. History book tells you everything. I forgot the exact number, I think fifty, other than that forty-five graduated. Fifteen was rejected after the training because of a deficiency in language. So anyway, the first thirty five were the beginning of the first language school started in Presidio, building four-something. They’re restoring the building for historical purpose right now, MIS Club of Hawaii and Southern California MIS club, combined effort. We’re asking donation now.

INT: Can you explain why that school was closed down?

TH: Now, why the school was closed down early 1942: FDR issued Executive Order, I think it was 9066, if I recall, forcing all Japanese, including American citizens relocate from West Coast, everybody. So, school has to move too. For those military school because the Japanese involved, Nisei instructors, as well as students, has to move. They’re looking all over the place and they found at Camp Savage, what used to be old triple C. You know what “triple C” stands for, yeah? Civilian Conservation Corps. Civilian Conservation Corps- we call them a triple C. And happily, luckily, the facility was open, so the school moved to Camp Savage, Minnesota, a few miles away from Minneapolis and St. Paul. First class, I think was July ’42, I think. Finish over there. And all in all, completely, when the school was completely closed down... oh, back up a little bit. After a number years, more people trained over there, the facility got too short, so the school moved to Fort Snelling, more permanent military post, overlooking the Minnesota River. It’s a beautiful campus. Permanent post, like Schofield Barracks. And combined, they trained over 6,000 people, according to the book.

INT: What was it like at Camp Savage? What were the living conditions? How long were your classes?

TH: Eight months. We had intensive training in Japanese language, primarily based on, the textbook was based on the Japanese military academy textbook because military terminology we had to study. Tactic as well as terminology, yeah? So, our class, the original class was 239 from Hawaii. And, later on, they added some more from Camp Shelby, Mississippi. They recruited more from Camp Savage. How many of them came over, I have no idea. And my brother was in training in Mississippi when I was in Minnesota. And I was corresponding with him, yeah. And he used to write about Minnesota, how beautiful the campus is, nice and green. And we had all the fresh milk we can drink because it’s dairy country, fresh egg, all the milk, and that’s the surrounding. You know, army camp is the worst place you can think of basic training. So, when the recruiter went to Camp Shelby, my brother was one of the first group to sign up to go to

Camp Savage. So, he came over and he became a language student like me. Training wise, language school, I was ahead of him because I started earlier. Then, after the school training, all of us, we got basic training. We were sent to Camp Brandy in Florida for infantry basic training. And, normally, basic training consists of sixteen weeks of intensive training, but because the need for interpreters increased tremendously in the Pacific War front, our training was cut down to half, eight weeks. But we have to cover everything that you normally learn in sixteen weeks. So, from training area to training area, we didn't march, we rode the trucks. See, the training, marching is part of the physical training but because time was of the essence, we rode the trucks from area to area. Then after eight weeks of training, we came back to Minnesota. And by then, my brother folks finished schooling too. Their classroom work cut down quite a bit too. I think they went only six months, I think. So, after that, they make up a team, started. Just before we left the mainland, there was a big incident, sad incident in the South Pacific. Probably you heard about it. The famous Sullivan brothers. Five brothers got killed one time. They were the crewmembers of a cruiser; I forget the name of the cruiser. But, got torpedoed and five brothers got killed one time. So, after that, I was told that military has a policy not to assign two brothers to the same combat team same time. But my brother and I were assigned to the same combat team. And the reason why, I found out after I came back from the warfront, my sister requested army to put the two brothers together because she was worried about me. My English was still weak. So, with the two brothers helping each other, can survive better. That was her idea. We didn't know that until we came home why were assigned to the same combat team. Everybody ask me, "how come you guys assigned to the same combat team?" We say, "I don't know." We have nothing to say. We were just assigned to the 96th Infantry Division.

INT: Was your brother named Les? What was your brother's name?

TH: Warren. Warren Takemitsu Higa. Takemitsu because father's name is Takeoe, so my older brother's name is Takemitsu. I'm the second son, so I'm Takejiro.

INT: Are you cold? Okay, so in Camp Savage, what were the living conditions like?

TH: Oh, it was a wooden building. So, for heating in the winter months, we had a potbelly wooden stove. One barrack building had about three, with space apart of course. I was very lucky, I was very close to the potbelly stove. So, many times, it was so hot, I used to turn the blanket over because the headquarters company, the so-called workers, it's soldier, but the orderlies, used to go to the barrack and feeding the stove during the night, see. So, sometimes the coal got very cold, the coal burning red hot. If you're sleeping next too it, it gets too hot. But I was lucky because I was close to the potbelly stove so I didn't freeze to death. Outside, 10/20 below zero.

INT: That must have been a big adjustment from Hawaii.

TH: The first snow, I still remember, all guys from Hawaii ran out to the [inaudible] area, play around in the snow, roll in the snow, throw ball each other. But later on, after winter got colder and colder, just stay inside the building. But first snow, all of us play around in the snow. Something we never seen before, yeah. I still remember that.

INT: Were the barracks or living quarters, were they segregated?

TH: Oh no, we were all, first of all, the trainees, we were all Japanese anyway.

INT: Was there a division between like Okinawans?

TH: Oh no, no. No segregation. Everybody all the same. We had a quite a few from mainland, the relocation camp too, by the way, mixed around you know. So, I give them a lot of credit. They volunteered from the relocation camp. That's why I take my hat off to those guys. If I were in the relocation camp, if somebody came to recruit me, I probably give them finger, you know. I'd say, "You guys throw me inside the concentration camp and you want me to volunteer for army? Here!" That's the attitude I would have, I would think. But some of them, quite a few of them, came out, I don't know the exact number, but quite a few came from relocation camp. Even my own team, we had two from California, California boys, yeah.

INT: Why do you think they volunteered?

TH: Well, like everybody else, they wanted to prove their loyalty to America, being a citizen, even though their parents are locked up. That's why I give them a lot of credit. I respect their decision. I salute them really. As I said before, if I was in the same boat, I probably would never have volunteered. So, I give them a lot of credit. Quite a few of them. I don't know the exact number that came out.

INT: Do you remember what it was like during World War II. Actually, let's first start with Pearl Harbor. Do you remember what happened?

TH: Well, over here, Hawaii, after bombing started, nobody knew what it was all about. Everybody thought, funny, there was nothing in the news about maneuver. You can heard that sound, yeah. Alongside Nuuanu Avenue, several [inaudible] I came down and exploded because [inaudible] gun, as you know, supposed to explode up in the air after so many seconds or so many feet up because they're supposed to mess up the airplanes. The effective shells landed along Nuuanu Avenue. Where it came from, I have no idea. Some people died on Nuuanu Avenue. In fact, a bunch of local boys hanging around in front of coffee... *saimin* stand, on Kukui Street, a couple of them died, I think. And some of them even lost their limb. Somebody told me their leg was hanging on a tree or something. Of course, I didn't see them. But I heard the sound. So, not knowing that it was war, but the sound was definitely something wrong. We say, "Hey, there was nothing in the news about maneuver. Funny, yeah." Look in the direction of Pearl Harbor, you see the black stuff, and the smoke coming out. So, I went up to the second floor of the YMCA building where my cafeteria boss used to live, top floor yeah. With his binoculars, I looked into Pearl Harbor direction. And every time the plane dived and come up, black smoke come up yeah. By golly! Just like something real different, today's maneuver. Before that, about, I forgot what time it was, but anyway, right after the bang bang started, one Caucasian lady come in, asking for cup of coffee, shaking like this. She say, "War! War! War!" something like this. She was shaking and excited, she said, "War! War! War! I just saw my husband off at Pearl Harbor."

Tape 1 Side B

So we looked at each other and thought, this *wahine* a little bit off, I think. So, we give her a cup of coffee, she was shaking so much, I think half the coffee was fell out of the cups, fell to the floor. Not knowing what was going on, all of us looked at each other that worked at the cafeteria. Looked at each other, this *wahine*, *wahine* you know, this lady, be a little off yeah. Then, I think it was about either 10:30 or 11:00, I forgot the exact time, when the second wave came. By that time, radio announcement came. Public radio, "This is not maneuver. This is war." So, when the second sound came, instead of going up, we all went to the basement [laughs]. And then later, December 7, blackouts started. Nobody's allowed to be on the street after certain hours. And all the automobiles, headlight have to be blued out, just a small opening just to see a little bit. Everything gotta be blacked out and nobody's allowed curfew.

INT: So, like all the windows had to be...

TH: All the windows shaded, all closed.

INT: What did you think, being a Japanese American about Japan after that?

TH: We couldn't believe actually war started. Everybody, must be something wrong. Some people in the countryside actually saw the airplane marking, come in. Of course, I never saw. The way I saw the plane, I could not identify what kind of plane it was, just plane diving and come up. Some people actually saw pilot wave at them or something.

INT: So, did you feel differently about Japan or being Japanese American?

TH: First I couldn't believe. And then, I felt sad. Why? I don't know how to describe that. I can't find the words to describe. Sad. Unbelievable. Just couldn't believe actually war started.

INT: After that, was your house searched by the FBI?

TH: No, I was never been interviewed by FBI, except on the interview after I volunteer for MIS school. After that, nobody bother me. In fact, in order to go out at night, you have to volunteer for block warden. You patrol your area, make sure everybody close their window and no lights, yeah. Just to go out to play with my friends, down, a couple blocks down the street, I volunteered to be block warden. So I could walk around with the special permit. We had the arm band- "Block Warden" yeah and we could walk around. My only purpose was to go play down several blocks down. I'm supposed to be watching the neighborhood, but that wasn't the purpose [laughs]. So, I enjoyed block warden, doing nothing.

INT: Skipping ahead to the language school... Actually, what did your sister think when you volunteered for the army?

TH: My sister? I don't remember what she told me. I don't think she liked it, but she didn't say anything to me because my brother volunteered already. He was taking ROTC at the university and so, she may have had an uncomfortable feeling, sending two boys, two brothers go in the army and possibly go to war. But she never told me anything.

INT: Why did you want to go? Why did you decide to volunteer besides because your brother told you to?

TH: My only reason was because I didn't want to be locked in the Staten Island. That was my afraid because, as I said, FDR was rounding up all the Japanese schoolteachers, ministers, and community leaders yeah. And I'm only coming back to Hawaii only two years before the war, sixteen, so they might suspect me, like an enemy alien. So, that's the reason I volunteered.

INT: What were your expectations going? Volunteering?

TH: Well, once you go into army, you can't think of anything else but follow orders yeah. You just gotta follow whatever they tell you.

INT: ... [break]

End Tape 1 Side B

Tape 2 Side A

INT: Can you give me a brief history of the MIS? Do you know the history of it? Like, who started it? How did it come about?

TH: From the beginning? Well, according to the book I have, it started November 1st, 1941 at the Presidio, San Francisco. Because a few intelligence officers of the fourth army command recognized possible conflict with Japan and they needed people converse in Japanese. So, they started class at Presidio at one of the abandoned hangar buildings, at Crissey Field, was it? With fifty students, primary, I guess, the Nisei who studied in Japan maybe, I don't know. It included some Caucasian officers. And according to the book, history book, MIS history book, 35 students graduated, 15 was rejected for lack of academic proficiency. And they are the nucleus of the original language officers. And with the issuance of Executive Order 9066, the school has to move inland somewhere. And luckily, the old Civilian Conservation Corps facility at Camp Savage was available, so the school moved there. And it continued lots of, thousands of people. And the facility was inadequate. The school was moved to Fort Snelling. Fort Snelling's a permanent army post, located by the Minnesota River, few miles away from Minneapolis. I don't know the exact distance, but quite far, I mean quite close. And then eventually, after Fort Snelling, I understand they moved back to West Coast. It became what they now call Defense Institute, or Defense Language Institute. I don't know the exact, complete name of this school. But now, it's the Defense Language Institute, they call it, I think. They teach all kinds of foreign language, not only Japanese, Korean, Chinese. Detail, I have no idea.

INT: Okay, um, so can you give an example of a typical day at the language school?

TH: School, yes. From Monday through Friday start class at 8 o'clock, end about 4 or 4:30. And about two hours we have a free time. And after dinner, another couple hours of night study. Saturdays, I believe was a half a day and half day afternoon. Sunday of course free. But we had lots of studies to do, nighttime.

INT: How late would you stay up studying?

TH: Well, I could only speak for myself. See, in the army, lights out at 10 o'clock. After 10, you cannot study in the barracks or classroom, so I used to go to the latrines. Latrine is a toilet, you know, army language, latrine. Latrine, lights on all night. So, I used to go over there. But then, every now and then, Charge of Quarter, we call "CQ," goes around the campus. And if he sees anybody hanging around latrine, they should go back and sleep. So, whenever he comes around and catch me, I gotta go back. After several weeks of being chased out, I pretend I'm doing some kind business in the toilet. Take my pants down and sit there above toilet bowl, so when the Charge of Quarter catch me, he say, "What? You again?" "Yeah, I don't know what I ate today, but I guess stomach upset and I'm sitting over here." It's actually BS, you know. So, that continued on few days and then somehow he found out why I'm study so damn hard. I'm studying English, by the way [laughs]. Others all studying Japanese, I'm studying English to catch up with them. So after that, he found out why I'm studying so hard after hours, he didn't bother me at all, after that. Whenever he sees me he says, "You again?" "Yes, Sergeant." [laughs]. So that's how I manage get through.

INT: You were a good student. Who were your main friends? What did you do in your free time and with who?

TH: Oh, couple guys with the weekend pass, we went together. But after the Camp Savage, we had absolutely no contact. Overseas assignment. Once you're assigned to one particular team, we got no contact with others because the very existence of our kind of unit was kept secret. So, absolutely no contact with others. So, we only know same guys, bunch of guys, assigned to the same team.

INT: But you were still allowed to go out, right?

TH: Yah.

INT: Oh.

TH: And again, we were never allowed to keep any notes or a diary. This is the American army. Japanese army, they encourage you to write diary and that's very good source of military intelligence.

INT: Who were your teachers at the language school?

TH: The elder Nisei, many of them educated in Japan. Some of the instructor's name I still remember: Oshida, shucks, a couple more others, but I forgot. Oshida was one. Only the other day I was review them I remember but several different people teach different stuff- translation, one guy teach how to interrogate prisoner, interrogation, interpretation, translation, and one guy teach Japanese military set up. All specialized training.

INT: How did you get involved with the all Okinawan, or the Okinawan language unit?

TH: As far as Okinawa, see, the first of all, October 10, 1944, there was a carrier base bombing of Okinawa. First big bombing. And after the bombing, reconnaissance plane took thousands of

pictures. And what they saw, intelligence officers, what they saw, frightened me, frightened them. Army knew that I grew up Okinawa for one thing, but later on, I found out, actually, my brother volunteered my service without telling. The reason being, one day, we were sitting in Philippines at Lette... Well, first of all, 96th Division landed on Lette, Philippines, October 20, 1944. The first Philippine invasion, ne? 96th Division and 7th Division together, part of 24th army corps. We landed in Philippine. And October 10, '44 they had the big air raid of Okinawa. And after, they took thousands and thousands of pictures of Okinawa and what they saw frightened them. Then one day, my brother happened to go to Division G2 Sergeant's tent. And on Major Sergeant Murphey's desk, he saw one [inaudible] book, title "Ryukyu." Being son of Okinawan immigrant. See, Ryukyu was what is now Okinawa, known as Ryukyu for many years, almost 500 years, see. So, being son of an Okinawan immigrant, he was curious. So he asked Sergeant Duffy, "Hey Duffy, lemme take a look at that book." So, Sergeant Duffy, thinking nothing of it said, "Eh, take them." So, my brother brought the book back to our tent, right next door to our tent, G2, all around the same place. And he was about to open the book, just enough to open the book cover, Duffy walk in and he says, "Hey, Warren, where's the book I just loan you?" So, Warren, my brother says, ah, on the desk. So, Sergeant Duffy sort of grabbed the book and as he was leaving the tent, my brother told him, "Hey Duffy, if we going to Okinawa, maybe my kid brother can be some help, you know. He lived there for fourteen years, you know." He didn't tell me that until we left Philippines to go to Okinawa. Then, few days after that incident, he had the chance to open the book cover- "Top Secret." [laughs] So, all the more he was curious and he wanted to see the book. Duffy thought nothing over it, but he realized how important the book was, so he came running back and came to our tent. "Hey, where's Warren? Where's the book I just loaned you?" He grabbed the book. As he was leaving, from behind, "Duffy, if you going to Okinawa, my brother can help maybe, you know." So, soon after that, I forgot the exact days, but day or two, anyway, I got a call from our G2 Colonel Lindsey, our top boss, G2 intelligence, yeah. "Hey Junior." Oh, I tell you why they call me Junior. "Junior, go to Corps Headquarter right away. Captain Fernandez." Captain Fernandez was my escort officer. He oversees whenever we leave our division area, headquarter area. One Caucasian officer gotta be assigned to bodyguard us, otherwise we might get shot from our own GIs yeah, mistaken. So, Captain Fernandez was my constant bodyguard, escort officer. So, Colonel called me on the phone, "Junior, go to Corps Headquarter at once with Captain Fernandez." Now, why they call me Junior. My brother has an English name, Warren. I don't. Haole officers and the non-commissioned officers in the headquarter have hard time to pronounce Japanese name, Takejiro. I forgot which Sergeant, but one Sergeant was tried to call me one day, "Take, Take-something." He was struggling, ne. Pardon my expression, but at that point, he said, "Oh shit! You! We call you Junior now." So, I was known as Junior Higa. And age-wise, I was probably the youngest in the group anyway, only twenty years old. [laughs] So, I was known as Junior by all the haoles in the division headquarter. So, I was ordered, so I went to division headquarter, a few miles away from our headquarter. As soon as I walked into G2 tent, in the middle of the tent, there was a huge map of Southern half of Okinawa Island. I look at that, I froze because my instinct was oh, next target Okinawa. I had cold sweat, I tell you, by looking at the map. Looking at it, like a damn fool. And the officer call me. He says, "Junior, come over. Sit down." He took out one area picture about the size of that [inaudible], you know, blown out picture. Lay in front of me. I look at that. At first glance, I didn't recognize them. After careful look, it happens to be Naha. Naha is the capital city of the Okinawa Prefecture. October 10 bombing burned the city completely. Only a few recognizable structure remaining. So, after careful look, I found out it was Naha. So, I explained to the intelligence officers complete detail

about Naha. I knew little bit about Naha, see, everything. I knew Naha quite well, so I explained to him in detail. Next he asked me, "Where did your grandparents live by the way?" So, I pointed general area on the map. And he took me out another complete picture of a area. I recognized it instantly because it was the same village that I grew up in fourteen years. And this village has no military value, so no bombing, nothing. Remained a city as I remember, 1939. So, I looked at it, located my grandfather's home. From there, I finger traced every relative's home. Everything intact. Okay. Then, he took out another picture. This time, one hillsides, lined up with the traditional Okinawan burial tomb, built with concrete building or stone building, shaped like a back of turtle. We call it a turtle back burial *haka*, burial tomb, yeah. So, I look at it, and probably looked at the intelligence officer, "What's the big deal about this picture" kind of face, you know. Oh, I got scolding, you know. "Goddamn it! Look carefully. We think the whole island is fortified." So, I realized this misconception this intelligence officers had about the hillside. I gave them crash course in Okinawan culture and everything about the burial tomb. So, he tells me, "Junior, you gonna help us from today on. For that, whatever you see, whatever you hear, whatever we talk about, not a word to anybody, unless a need to know basis." So, I was on a secret order, engaging the, helping them, November 1944, five months before the invasion. Probably I was only Nisei who knew about the invasion, coming invasion. But knowing, talking to them and watching what's going on, I knew exactly where we'd be landing. Only thing I didn't know was exact day of landing. So, I was on a tight order not to say one word. Even to my brother, I couldn't say. And he wasn't being funny. When he say "Don't say anything," all the more you wanna talk about it. So, it was real difficult five months for me. So, the day we left the Philippines. The date, March, I don't know, I don't remember the date we left Lette to go to Okinawa invasion. A couple days after we left the island, announcement came out, "We are now on the way to Okinawa invasion." So, I told my brother, "Now I can tell you what I was doing." Then he tell me, "I had a hunch. Why only you called to Corps Headquarter everyday and you could not talk about what you doing over there. I had a hunch." Then he told me about the book case, the book he saw. Before that, he never tell me anything, the book he saw at the G2 Sergeant's desk. He had a hunch, "Must be Okinawa because you're the only one called every time and you are on a strict order not to say one word to anybody." So, I filled him in on everything. Probably, I was the only one Nisei knew five months before the invasion that we're going to Okinawa.

INT: How did you feel knowing that? And knowing you had...

TH: Very sad. Ever since I saw the picture, I used to dream about Okinawa every damn night, my uncles, aunties, cousins, my classmates even, and some other friends. I used to get nightmare.

INT: How many other Okinawans were in your group?

TH: Only two, my brother and myself and included two from Hawaii and the rest of six. Ten men, people assigned to one division, see.

INT: Did you ever read Boy from Kahaluu, Tom Ige's book?

TH: No, I didn't read.

INT: Well, he mentioned how he suggested having an Okinawan team. Did you hear about that?

TH: No. Anyway, he's reported to have said this, I don't know the truth but, during the Okinawan invasion, he suggested to the upper echelon commander, "why don't you organize one special team- all Okinawan surname boys, all assigned to Okinawa." And I understand the idea was approved. And a special, I don't know how many people were involved, under the command of Lieutenant Wallace Amioka. That's what I heard later on. I think it's documented.

INT: So, what was it like once you arrived in Okinawa?

TH: Well, the day of invasion, actual landing, as the boat getting closer and closer to the beachhead, I recognized some of the land feature. I tell you, I had tears on my eyes. Why am I in this spot that I gotta invade my ancestor's homeland. I'm a GI, I had an obligation to perform. And because it's a war, I might have to kill somebody, kill somebody that I know, or they kill me. I had a very, very mixed feeling. Hard to describe that particular feeling. All I can tell you is that I had a tears on my eye, as the boat getting closer and closer. But once transferred to the landing craft, my only thought was try to stay alive, be alert, nothing else.

INT: What kinds of jobs were you assigned to do?

TH: Well, other than translation and interrogation of prisoner, my biggest job was to try to convince all the natives hiding in the caves come out. So my practice was this: each cave I went to, first, I introduced myself, "My name is so-and-so. I was born in Hawaii. My parents and grandparents come from certain village in Okinawa. Although I was born in Hawaii, I'm just like one of you, Uchinanchu, or Okinawan people. Over and over in standard Japanese first. And then, I explained to them, the Americans are not savages. You are being brainwashed. Of course, I didn't use the brainwash. So, "Come out, come out. We have water, food ready. And if you're wounded or injured, our medic will take care. I repeat over and over. And right away, turn around and same thing in Okinawan lingo. Over and over, over and over. And my name, being short name, one lady, fifty years later, she still remember my name. And when I went to 1995, fiftieth anniversary memorial service, she contacted the newspaper company to arrange a meeting with me. I have a picture of the lady. And she still remembers me because my name is so-and-so, short name, Higa, and because I spoke in Okinawan lingo, she remembers. At first, she had an adverse feeling about me. But now, because of me, she was saved. So, she wanna say thank you face to face. That's the only I saw face to face, thanking me.

INT: What was that like when you met her?

TH: I told her, "thank you." Until then, my only wish was that I was some kind of help to some people. Because I never saw one come out of from cave because I cannot stay there for long time. I have to go to next cave. I said so many things, all repeated, at the most ten-fifteen minutes, then gotta go next cave. I never saw. Then at the 1995 meeting with the lady, she said she was one of the over 200 people in that particular cave, all group into ten-fifteen people. Each group given one hand grenade to commit suicide, mass suicide. Then I appeared near the entrance of the cave. I start using the megaphone, you know, portable megaphone. I start talking to them, see. And then, she says there was one elder man in the group, she was still a

young girl yet. Fifty years later, she must have been fifteen, at the most sixteen/ seventeen at the most. Anyway, there was one elder man, he said, “You guys still young. Don’t throw your life away. Go out. There’s an Okinawa boy waiting for your guys. He ain’t going to lie to you. Go out. Safe.” So, afterwards, they all came out, I heard. I don’t know how many exactly came out. There were over 200 people, grouped together 10/15, each with a hand grenade, ready to pull. So, at that time, she brought her daughter along. When daughter tapped me, “Thank you. Because of you, I’m also here.” Hey, that kinda hit me. So, I don’t mind telling you, I told them “Thank you.” And I had tears on my eyes, so happy. I can show you the picture now.

INT: Yeah...

[...]

TH: Name is Sawada, Toyo Sawada. I look at the pictures, it was in a Kentucky Fried Chicken, fast food store. We had a cup of coffee. Until then, I thought it was another chain, but I look at the cup of... Kentucky Fried Chicken cup. The newspaper lady... She contacted the newspaper lady first and they arranged a meeting in one of the coffee shops, Kentucky Fried Chicken coffee shop.

INT: I read another article about you saved another woman and her granddaughter.

TH: That was the very first day. Soon after we landed, I would say ten/fifteen minutes after we landed on the beach, as I was going up the hill, something seemed to move in the small dugout, the footpath. I jumped back, my heart was pounding like that. I aimed my carbine to the [inaudible]. I start talking, saying, “come out, come out.” In the excitement, I don’t know what I spoke, either Japanese or Okinawan lingo, I wouldn’t be surprised it was some Pidgin, Hawaiian Pidgin. Not, no movement, so I tried to squeeze the trigger. Then, one thin leg came out. I look at that. Cannot be soldier, so I kinda regained my consciousness. This time, I calmed down a little bit. I yelled, talking to them in Okinawan lingo. An old lady came out and after that, her granddaughter, about five/six years old came out. So, I questioned the old lady, “What are you doing over here?” “Well, our family members all took off because afraid. But me, I’m so weak and cannot follow them, so I decided to hide over here with my granddaughter.” So I told them, “Don’t you ever go back over there now. Just sit over here. Somebody will come and escort you to the civilian compound. Don’t move. Don’t go inside now, stay there.” But I almost shoot them. If I didn’t see the thin leg come out, I would have shot them I think. And you know, such a close range, I couldn’t have missed. Just a point blank into the entrance. So, I told myself to find out who she was. I said “Hooo! If I ever killed the old lady.” Nothing wrong, hiding there, probably a bit crazy. So, each time I went back to Okinawa after the war, I was looking for the girl. Girl, if I remember, and is healthy enough. She was in her twenties or sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, twenty. But, never did find out. And each time I go back to Okinawa, Ryukyu Newspaper, Ryukyu Shimpō, used to write about my visit to Okinawa and looking for this lady. So, a lot of people read about me, knew about me. So, this lady too, read about me, and after fifty years, she decided to contact me. She’s still healthy, lives in a small town by the name of Ginowan.

INT: So, what were the civilians hiding from? Who or what were the civilians hiding from?

TH: Nothing in particular, just hiding from the war. Just hiding in the cave, so they don't get shot either way.

INT: How did the Okinawan civilians feel about American troops?

TH: Oh, they been brainwashed for so long, they thought the Americans were savage, so they were under the impression that, of course, nobody told me in so many words, but they been brainwashed that they all the woman will be raped and get killed. Men and boys will get killed right away. So, they commit suicide instead of getting killed later. That's why they're all willing to commit suicide. Biggest group suicide they found was in Karema. One week before American invasion, 77 Division landed on offshore island known as Karema. And this is where they found a mass suicide, first group of mass suicide. One week before the invasion of the main island, Okinawa, March 26th. I didn't know that about landing.

INT: How did the Japanese troops treat the civilians?

TH: Japanese troops? I guess more in surprise. They didn't think that we had Japanese speaking American soldiers fighting them. But, other than that, they didn't show any antagonistic attitude. They were more surprised than anything else.

INT: What was your experience interrogating? You were interrogating military men, right? What was your experience interrogating them?

TH: What the purpose? Try to find the military intelligence, of course. All kinds, not only one. Japanese soldiers, especially low-ranking soldiers, they do not have any counter-intelligence training. The only training says you fight until death for the Emperor. See, Americans, during the basic training, they teach you in case you're captured, international Geneva Convention requires only three things: name, rank, and serial number. You don't give any information about your unit, intelligence information. That's American training. Japanese, they're trained to die, fight until you die. So, they cannot turn around and say just in case you're captured, you're supposed to do this. So, they spill out everything. Only ranking officers and non-commissioned officers know the value of military intelligence, so they clamp down. If they talk, they give nothing but BS.

INT: What happened to the soldiers after they're interrogated?

TH: Interrogated. Send them back to prisoner of war camp.

INT: Did you ever run into any of your friends or family?

TH: Yeah. Within first two weeks of landing, I met my former schoolteacher. He was caught one night digging potato for the family and he was thrown into the stockade. But he has a nice physique and firm, so the MP thought the guy might be disguised as Japanese soldier. So, I was called to interrogate him and I recognized him instantly. So, my first, when I look at him, "Sensei! Teacher!" He look at me, "Oh, kimi ka? Oh, it's you!" After that, we couldn't talk to each other. Complete surprise. So, I explained to my escort officer and my MP, "This guy used to be teacher at grade school, seventh and eighth grade. He's not a soldier, so please send him back to the camp where his wife and kids are retained... detained. That's it. And then, that's it.

And then, after the war, I made several trips to Okinawa. And I went to see him. And from him, I learned a lot of things of what happened in the Okinawa Battle. And then, almost to the end of the Okinawa Battle, we had no idea the war gonna end that fast, but counting backwards, about two weeks before the organized resistance, two shabby looking soldiers were brought into division headquarters for interrogation. They were near starving, yeah. So, I gave them, I offered them chocolate, candy. We call it D ration. About the size if quarter pound butter. And I offer them to eat. They won't eat. So I questioned them, "How come you don't eat?" "Maybe it's poisoned, spiced with poisoned." So, I said, "God damn you, idiot!" In Japanese, "Bakatare!" So, I chew a little bit, show them it's not poisoned. I give them. Oh! They eat up in no time. So, invasion, when we landed on the enemy beachhead, each guy get two D ration, invasion ration, chocolate. You eat one of those chocolate and drink enough water, it's equivalent to one meal. I had mine so, I didn't have to use them. Me being at division headquarter, quartermaster was with us, so we have a regular canned goods to eat. So, I had them, I give to them. They won't eat. But after I tasted a little bit, oh, they gobbled up in no time. So, I asked my brother, "Hey, you guys got any more D ration left?" So, I got two more and gave one each. They gobble up. So, after I gave them a lot of water, relax a little bit, cool them off. And I start questioning- name, rank, serial number, and where they come from. And the name, Okinawa name, yeah. So, I say oh, "What village you come from?" And each response seemed to indicated this guys' my classmate- name, the age, and the village they come from, approximately I know we're same age, village come from, the name. So, I questioned deep, deep, deep. "What school did you go to?" Same school I went. So, next question is, "Was this teacher named so-and-so?" They look at me, "How come you know about this Sensei?" "Well, I tell you, I'm a graduate of American Military Intelligence School, non-commissioned officer. I know everything about you guys, so don't lie to me." [stutters] I start further questioning. Knowing that we went to same school, about the same age, and knowing the school?" They looked at me, "How come you know about him?" "Didn't I tell you? I know everything about you guys." Said, "Yes, there was a student." "Where is he now? Do you know where he is?" One guy said, "You know, we haven't seen each other so long. I don't know where he is." The other guy said, "I think he went back to Hawaii." So, at that point, I knew definitely my classmates. So, I looked at them straight in the eyes, in perfect Okinawan lingo, I said, "God damn, don't you recognize your own classmate?" They look at me, they start crying, see? "Why are you crying?" "Well, until now, after this interrogation is over and our usefulness is over, you guys might take us over the hill and shoot, kill us. Knowing that one of our classmate is on the other side of the group, we figure our life will be saved. We are crying for happiness." That kind of put me in a new, funky feeling, yeah. I don't mind telling you, three of us, grab each other's soldier. I cried too because if I didn't run away from Okinawa when I was sixteen years old, I might be in the same spot. Somebody might be interrogating me. To this day, when I think about it... have you seen this? Japanese soldier surrendered, with the request to marry this company nurse assigned to him.

INT: Oh, he wanted to marry an American nurse?

TH: No, no, no, Japanese soldier, Japanese girl. This is a local girl. I understand her brother was fighting in Italy, 100th Infantry. I don't know her name. But her surname is written over here. The wife's name is Arakawa Shizuko. And Japanese officer's Kimura, Second Lieutenant Kimura. If I was a little smarter, I would have stand over here someplace, my picture would be there. Captain Fernandez were standing close to the Chaplain, facing them, our picture's not in

it. I think I'm the only guy saw this, Nisei. And because my officer in charge was a CIC officer, front part of the FBI in the army, so he knew lot of stuff. So one day, he came to my tent. He said, "Junior, let's go out." "Where we going? Where we going?" He drove up to the hillside, ceremony was about to start. I'm the only guy saw that, I think.

INT: What's the name of that book?

TH: "The Last Battle of Okinawa."

INT: Nihon...

TH: "Nihon Saigo no Tatakai." It's book one. There were more book, continuation, but it's all picture, picture book. And the pictures, this publisher went to War Department, got the Signal Corps pictures.

INT: So, they're American pictures.

TH: American Signal Corps pictures. He went to War Department and got the permission to reproduce all the pictures from American GIs. See, this used to be our Division Headquarter. And I know this place quite well because it used to be experiments, the farm experiments station before. EPO96. During the wartime, it was converted to some sort of education office, association office. See, our division army post is 96. EPO96. This is all pictures taken from army photographer.

INT: Where did you get that book? Did you buy that here?

TH: No, I bought it in Okinawa.

INT: Oh, that's a good book. Can you show that building again?

TH: 96th Division?

INT: 96th Division.

TH: Shucks, now where was it now?

[...]

TH: Over here, Army Corps EPO 96. And the one on the left, right side rather, shows EP, 96th EP Command Force. See? Division headquarter. Hard to see this, small.

INT: Can you explain what your shirt is?

TH: My shirt? Oh, this is our club golf shirt, first golf shirt we had. The shape of the Indian head represents Camp Savage. The Indian head with the book represents Camp Savage. But, later on, we had to change that because the connotation's bad- Indian head and the savage. So, we eliminated the Indian head. Now it's just called the MIS [laughs]. Just MIS.

INT: What are the pins?

TH: This is the Presidential Unit Citation. This nothing because our friend from Canada send me this centennial Saskatchewan because we befriended this Canadian girl during our trip to Canada. We stayed in touch. This is a pin, MIS pin. This, I don't know what the hell it is. Nowadays, support the troop, I guess. Nothing else to put, so I just put it on without any meaning. This is the Presidential Unit Citation. Incidentally, Federal Government never recognized the existence of our unit officially until April 2000 was still considered secret outfit. So, in 2000, president was what, Clinton, yeah, recognized. Presidential Unit Citation normally given to combat unit for the extraordinary accomplishment. Ours is not combat unit. But because of the tremendous part played during the campaign, government recognized us as a group, not individual, as a group. Represents 6,000 plus people. Like the 442 have several Presidential Unit Citation. Each major battle, get the Unit Citation because they did such a tremendous accomplishment, sacrifice and accomplishment. As I said, Unit Citation usually awarded to the combat unit.

INT: So, was there some kind of ceremony?

TH: Yes, the representative from our club went to Washington to accept the Unit Citation. So, the club made a reproduction of the original and gave to each one of us. I have it at home. Same thing, Secretary of Army, he gave a congratulatory message for [inaudible] together, with Citation. I have a pin at home. Each one of us got copy. Original is at clubhouse.

INT: Can you tell me about your MIS club?

TH: Yes, but not everybody joined the club. I don't know why, but now most of them getting old, dying off every year. Active members getting less and less. Not everybody joined too, so it's getting hard, yeah, for some reason.

INT: So, after the Battle was over, what did you do?

TH: After the Battle of Okinawa, I think Division left Okinawa late part of July, '45. Went back to Philippines for short R and R, rest and recuperation. On the way to Philippines, we arrived at Mindo [?], Philippines, it's a small island, exact location offhand, I cannot tell you, but small island for destination. We arrived there on August 15th, the day Japan officially surrendered unconditionally. So, war ended. But on the way to the Philippines, in the boat, our boat, there was some kind of rumor. How it started, I have no idea. But after a short break, our next landing would be someplace in Kyushu on November 3rd. How true this was, I don't know. It was just a rumor going around. So, as soon as we landed in Philippines, Mindoro, August 15, war ended. So, since there's no need to go anywhere, I asked my colonel, G2 Colonel, Colonel Lindsey, to send me back to Okinawa again because I may be useful over there yet. So, the colonel looked at me, says, "Junior, I'm sorry, I cannot send you back to Okinawa because I'm gonna send you to Korea." So, Korea... 6th Division was sent over there. "You be sent to Gwangju and your job will be interrogate Japanese evacuated from North Korea, present North Korea and the Manchuria area." So, I went to Korea early part of September. I believe it was September 3rd, until December 22nd, '45. I was in Korea three months interrogating Japanese

evacuating from the North. Then, came home a couple days before Christmas, 1945. And early in January '46 I got discharged and I returned to Farrington High School. Second semester just started, so being a returned GI, I was given credit for a semester without going. I went right into second semester.

INT: And then, after high school, you went to University of Hawaii?

TH: Yeah.

INT: Okay, why... I know you've participated in a lot of interviews and you've written some articles and stuff, so why do you feel like it's important to tell this story?

TH: Well, I don't know exactly [laughs]. I don't know what to say. I was just asked to participate in oral history. Other than that, I don't have any particular reason for being interviewed. I guess it would be good to have our descendants to know what we went through, not only what our ancestry, our deceased went through. But, my kids and grandchildren might want to know what Niseis did. For that alone, I accepted the request in being interviewed. Other than that, no particular reason, nor to say I want to be part of the history. No, farthest thing from that. I just did what I'm supposed to do, that's all.

INT: What would you tell future generations about the things that you learned from your experiences?

TH: Since you're American citizen and this is your country, in spite of your parents or grandparents might have come from another country, this is your country. And you have to do what you're supposed to for the country. That's about all. No particular reason attached. If your country asks for you, you're supposed to do whatever you're asked to do.

INT: Well that's pretty much all I have. Do you have anything else you want to add? Do you have any other things you want to add or any stories you want to tell?

TH: No, just as long as the future generation realizes how lucky they are being American and living in this country, where you have a right to speak out, even against your own government without having any fear of being thrown in the brig. That, I think, says a lot. You have a personal freedom to speak out, even though it may not be what the leaders, the government want to hear from you, but you have the right to say. But, luckily, our great Constitution gives you that privilege, even you don't agree with what the civilian leaders do. That's about all. Although we do have a conflicting opinion about the current Iraqi war, I think it's a mistake too, but I would not go against protesting government action. That's why our own Hawaii lieutenant Watada, I think he's wrong. By the way, lot of people forget one thing, he volunteered to go into the army. He volunteered, and he asked for, and he got his wish to become a officer candidate student, got commissioned. And, as an active member of the army, he has a perfect right to have a free speech privilege. But I don't believe he has a liberty to decide for himself what war is just and what war is unjust. It's not for him to decide. Civilian leaders who decide that. As an active member of the military, he has only one duty to perform, to me, obey any lawful order given to him. So, I believe his stand, I think is wrong.

INT: Okay, well, that's all the questions I have. Do you want to say anything else?

TH: No, I said enough [laughs].

INT: Thank you so much for everything.

TH: Out of all that, just leave two sentence. [laughs] I gotta show you one thing. This is the citation Okinawa government gave us.

INT: Can you explain what that is?

TH: Okinawan government is so appreciative what we did. Through the knowledge of Japanese, we saved a lot of people from unnecessary death from the came, you know that came out. And it includes after the war, reconstruction, acting as a interpreter to facilitate revert of Okinawa. That's what it says nutshell. One side's English, one side's Japanese.

INT: How did that come about? How did they get that recognition?

TH: Okinawa government wanted to express their gratitude for long, long time. But they had hard time securing necessary information because of the secrecy surrounding the so-called MIS. Then, finally, they had the opportunity to get the names. So, they honored us on June 5th ceremony over here. Unfortunately, not everybody came.

INT: They had ceremonies in other places too, right?

TH: Not that I know of, other than the President's Unit Citation. Our president and field representative went to Washington to accept the citation.

INT: They had another one in LA, Los Angeles.

TH: For the California people. Yeah, I think they did. Because there were some from mainland serve in the Battle of Okinawa. So, all-inclusive. They finally got some of the names, not all of them, from the official sources, so they decided to recognize officially. I know they wanted to recognize for a long, long time. But, as I said, the inability to get he necessary information to honor them individually, they delayed until this date. So, even names, you know. Over here, Japanese name. Japanese words are so different, there's so many ways to read. That's why they didn't put the kanji over here. Same kanji can be written several ways, so rather than a mistake, just katakana. There's no mistake about that. So, this is the official seal of the governor, Inamine, Keichi Inamine, he's the governor, present governor. I know for a fact that they wanted to say thank you for long, long time. They ask me several times if I can get the names, but my only answer was because of the secrecy surrounding, I don't think I can get the name for you. The only way you can get is through government agency, government to government. I suggested to work through the High Commissioner's Office Ryukyu, Nimitz' office. See, after the war, Okinawa was renamed Ryukyu. Before that, Okinawa was a kingdom. Then, the emperor Meiji era, Meiji Restoration, the so-called abolishing the samurai base of the administrative unit, prefectural system came into being. At that time, Okinawa Kingdom became Okinawa ken. And then, until 1946, it was known as Okinawa Ken. Then, with the

occupation, Nimitz renamed Okinawa Ryuku. And then until May 5th or May 15th, 1972, when Okinawa reverted to Japanese government, Okinawa was known as Ryukyu, like Ryukyu Command.

INT: Do you know why they renamed it Ryukyu?

TH: I have no idea why Nimitz renamed Okinawa Ryukyu. I have no idea. Okinawa had several name changes.

[...]

TH: Two more books I wanna show you. This one, about ten years after the Battle of Okinawa, two men from newspaper, Mainichi, Tokyo Mainichi Newspaper, came to interview me. For two days they interview me at one of the hotels in Waikiki. And note was to be published in newspaper daily in a series. But when the chief editor of the Kodansha, Kodansha is one of the big publishing company, saw that material, he suggested to the newspaper reporter, Horie, why don't you put me in one book.

INT: Wow. Is that you on the cover?

TH: Yeah.

INT: So, is it all your story?

TH: My interview report was published in that. I don't know when it was published. '72, I don't know.

INT: Is it available in translation?

TH: I don't think so. What I heard was, even the book is out of print in Japan. In fact a professor at Ryukyu, Ishikawa, wanted to translate this into English by his own English students. But he asked my permission, but I say, "Look, mister, doctor, I have no right to this book. You talk to Korie at Kodansha." I have no idea what happened.

INT: What is it called? Aru Okinawa Hawaii...

TH: Aru Okinawa Hawaii Imin no Shinzuan. I'm not an Okinawan immigrant, but I guess that's what sells books.

INT: It's probably too complicated if you put Nisei on the cover.

TH: This way it's easier to sell book than Hawaii Nisei, I think. Horie Seiji was the reporter. Setsumi Katsuo was the photographer. One photographer and reporter came from Mainichi Newspaper. And it was suggested by the chief editor of the Kodansha Publishing Company, Kobayashi Nabehiko. He was the editor in chief of the Kodansha. He thought enough material, so suggested publishing book form.

INT: That's great!

TH: And this book.

INT: Oh, I have that one.

TH: After reading this, I found out a lot of things about Battle of Okinawa. Very interesting. This man is a smart man though. He correctly forecasted the date of invasion. He knew where we were gonna land. Knowing the American past history, he knew exactly what we were gonna do. Amazing. Amazing, that man. So, you have to give him credit. Japanese officer, but he was one of the smartest officer. I guess that's it.

INT: Yeah. Thank you so much.

TH: If I can help, I help.

INT: You've been a very, very big help. Your stories are very interesting.

TH: Yeah, I guess none of the guys had the same experience I had, interrogating own schoolteacher and two classmate in the warfront.

INT: Actually, do you know the names of other Okinawan guys who served in Hawaii?

TH: Except, my own brother. Oh, you know Tom Ige, Doctor Ige. He was one of them.

INT: But you were all separated.

TH: All separate unit. Oh, another guy, Leslie Higa. But all separate unit.

INT: I saw three Higas so I was confused.

TH: Leslie Higa was part of Dr. Ige's team. And there was another guy, late Taro Higa. He was a member of the 100th Infantry Battalion. He fought in Italy. And after VE Day, he came home to be eligible for immediate discharge. But, seeing that non-combatant civilians suffered over there in Europe, he postponed his discharge and volunteered to go to Okinawa. And he came to Okinawa. Date, when he came, I have no idea. I figure it must have been sometime in June, May, something, VE Day, see. After that, he came home and from there he came to Okinawa. So, gotta be sometime in June. And after he came back, he discharged and he went on speaking tour for Okinawa relief, asking for donations or whatnot.

INT: Like Pigs from the Sea?

TH: No, he was not part of that group. Primarily, Doctor Yamazato and Doctor Yamashiro, veterinarian. These are the real legacy people of Okinawa relief, those four. Yeah, Taro Higa went on a speaking tour to the neighbor islands, Kawaii, Maui, and Big Island, not only this island, at his own expense. Not too many people know about that. And, as far as clothing drive, people did really, but Reverend Yamazato.

INT: Taro Higa was...

TH: Taro Higa was one of them.

INT: He passed away already?

TH: Oh, yeah, long time ago. I know him quite well. No relation, but he grew up in Okinawa too, see. He's about five or six years older than me.

INT: Lotta Higas.

TH: Oh, Higa is Smiths and Browns. From one end to the other end.

INT: Okay, well, thank you.

APPENDIX B
Frank Higashi Interview Transcript

FH: Frank Higashi
INT: Gena Hamamoto
Camera: Chuong Bui
January 3, 2007

Tape 1 of 3
Side A

INT: First, what is your full name?

FH: My name is Frank Higashi.

INT: What generation are you?

FH: Second generation, Kibei.

INT: Where are your parents from?

FH: From Okinawa, Japan.

INT: Do you know when and why your parents came to the U.S.?

FH: They or me?

INT: Your parents.

FH: Originally, he went to Mexico, way back in 19... I think 8 or something, moved to Southern California, Los Angeles area. So, he came to Mexico and then he transferred to United States.

INT: When did your father come?

FH: To States or to Mexico?

INT: To Mexico.

FH: According to passport, about 1904, I think.

INT: Why did he come?

FH: Reason was, you know, 19... immigration, door was closed for United States. So, I guess since Okinawa very poor, you have to go out to foreign country. So, he saw the ad Mexico mine company looking for laborers, contract laborers. He applied, accepted, and he went to Mexico.

INT: So, your parents were in Okinawa when it became part of Japan?

FH: Yeah, those days, even though Okinawa was part of Japan, but in a lifetime they don't go out of Okinawa, they just stay in their own village.

INT: Do you know anything about how that happened? Okinawa was once independent, right? And then it became part of Japan. How did that happen? Do you know? Before Okinawa was its own and then Japan took over. Do you know how that happened or when?

FH: Oh, well according to my memory, which I learned from history class, I guess, before Okinawa feudal lord, called the Okinawa king, but Kagoshima, part of Japan, you know Satsuma invaded Okinawa. They subjugated. So, they took the King to Japan. Since then, Okinawa became like part of Kagoshima, but was still not a prefecture. So, those days, Kagoshima lord put a lot of heavy taxes and the people was really suffering from that. So, not so good days. I was told many people was suffering because Okinawa as a prefecture, they don't produce much like sugar cane and sweet potatoes. Not much to send to foreign country, except they been trading between China and Southeast Asia. So, from that trade, they made money to make the Okinawan Kingdom, you know, fairly prosperous. But after Satsuma invaded, that was gone. So, when my father applied for immigration, that area was very poor.

INT: Do you know anything about how that affected the Uchinaguchi or Okinawan language?

FH: In those days, you go school, you have to start speak Japanese because Japanese government had a policy to "Japanize" Okinawa, but when you come home, you speak Okinawan dialect. For that reason, it's just like old Niseis, you speak English at school, when you come home, you speak Japanese, you know both ways, fairly good bilingual, old Niseis. So, us, same way, we spoke Japanese in Okinawa when I was... up until 18 years, finish high school.

INT: Are those two languages similar or can you understand?

FH: Mmm... It's more or less a dialect and no Japanese understand Okinawan dialect. But when writing, you know, it makes more clear because it's old Japanese, which they've been using a long, long time ago. When they came from Japan, you know, through the small islands, they brought a lot of cultures to Okinawa. So, old Okinawan language is Japanese.

INT: But the writing is the same? They use kanji?

FH: Yes, we do use Chinese character and we learn the Japanese hiragana and katakana at the school.

INT: So, moving onto you. What was childhood like for you? Actually, let's start with: where were you born?

FH: I was born in Baldwin Park, Los Angeles.

INT: What year?

FH: 1918.

INT: And what was childhood like in Baldwin Park? What was it like for you in Baldwin Park, as a child?

FH: I think my hearing is pretty bad today...

[...]

INT: So, you were born in Baldwin Park. What was life like for you there?

FH: You know, I left with my family when I was three, you know. To tell the truth, I don't remember anything until I get to Okinawa. I was three and my brother was two. So, my early life until three years old in Los Angeles, I have no recollection what was going on.

INT: What were your parents doing there, in Baldwin Park? What was their job?

FH: Job? They were working the farm, like growing strawberries, vegetables, and finally, before we went to Okinawa, I think they were growing squash. Made pretty good money in squash, so that's the reason they decided to go back to Japan.

INT: When they went back to Okinawa, were they hoping to stay there?

FH: My father, in fact, my father went back to get married in Okinawa. They married, I think in 1913 or something. They left him with my grandmother on my mother's side. So, they came back 1917. So, for my mother, it was her first time. But for father, it was just reentry. So, they work 1917 about 1921, I think about four years, my mother stay and my father work together in the farm.

INT: And when they went back to Okinawa, they wanted to settle back there?

FH: You know, those days were the Depression, after World War I. And even the Depression really affected the lives of Okinawan people. Even though my father made about \$5,000 in American money, which equivalent to about 10,000 yen in Japanese money. Well, with the family growing and the Depression, so I think my father decided to come back again about 19... That was after new immigration law passed in 1924. No Japanese, Orientals, allowed to head to United States. This new immigration passed, so he couldn't come. So, I guess, much, much later, they decided for me and my brother, I had a brother, you know, sent to United States. But my father, you know, he couldn't come.

INT: So, what was life like in Okinawa for you?

FH: Well, it was pretty good for me because it's such a small town and father made a lot of money for the small village. He built a nice, big house and bought a lot of rice paddies and fields. He even hired a maid. Even up to when I came back to the United States in 1937. But life was pretty, kind of, you know, rough. He kept servants because he had a lot of farm to care

and then look after small children. But, financially, I think, it was pretty tight, I guess. That was the main reason he sent myself and my brother here, to help family financially.

INT: What did Okinawa look like at that time?

FH: Well, it's... when I think of Okinawa now, it's really a big city now. But when I was growing up, it's a real country village. Even though our village had an elementary school there, we had a city... township office, some tax office, but people was very poor and most of them working there in the field, as a farmer, and some maybe school teachers, and some maybe voodoo officiants, like that. And, so, even though, you know, the town itself, it's center of the northern part of Okinawa and supposed to be largest township in northern Okinawa. But people's life wasn't very, very financially... very, very low standard. In fact, they couldn't even pay elementary school teacher's salary regularly, so my father used to take me to my sixth grade teacher's house. Because he couldn't get any salary, so we have to bring some rice or some Japanese sake, just to encourage. So, I think that itself had effect of American 1914, so those Hoover, Depression, you know, so life of people around us was very, very poor condition. But I enjoyed school life. I did pretty good in school. So, my [inaudible] life, was, I was pretty happy.

INT: I read some things about if students spoke Uchinaguchi in the classroom, they would be punished. Did you ever encounter that?

FH: Punished?

INT: Yeah. Like, if they spoke Okinawan dialect...

FH: Oh, yeah, yeah. That was after we went into school. They called it *hogenfu*. They have some kind of plaque with a string attached to it. And it was very, very strict from the prefectural government. They had order from the education department of Japanese government said: Okinawans, they have to speak Japanese. They tried to discourage speaking Okinawan dialect, see. So, whenever you're at school, teacher is very, very alert, students not to speaking one word of Okinawan dialect. But if you do, they place this plaque around your neck. Then, if you cannot find someone else speak Okinawan dialect, he came up with some kind of punishment like you have to stay after class, clean up the classroom or something like that. It was very effective because, you know, us, during our six years of our elementary training, everybody learned perfect Japanese. So, I think that was very successful, but I didn't realize, but that was a little bad taste to discourage own Okinawan dialect. But now I hear it's coming back. Some people wants to bring that Okinawa dialect back, but I don't think that is possible. But, still we can learn a lot of thing as Okinawans through Okinawan dialect. But, as you mentioned, that you know, the hogen, Okinawan dialect, and the punishment was one of the thing I still remember.

INT: Why do you think they discouraged Okinawan dialect?

FH: Hm?

INT: Why do you think the government discouraged Okinawan dialect?

FH: I guess, like I explained a little while ago, Okinawa, you know, was still, you know, until Japanese government, you know, annexed Okinawa. They didn't know if Okinawa belongs to China or Japan. For certain time, Okinawa had their own king. It was an independent, you know, kingdom. But, as, you know, I guess, culturally and physically, I think they are Japanese. But, old fashioned in Okinawa, you know people, who lived during Okinawa king days, they rather want to be with China, not Okinawa. So, I think people were caught in between Japanese government and, you know, Amer... Chinese interest. So, you know, I went to Okinawa in October this year. I visited the Shuri Castle. It's after the war, they reconstructed. I saw one, when you go into entrance, one side is a big building which Japanese official had office. On the other side, Chinese official had. So, Okinawa, you know, when Chinese official were there, you know, they do a lot of business trading, stuff like that, with Okinawa. When they had to deal with Japanese government, they both know Okinawa was caught in between. They tried to gifts to please each other. But I think through this trade, Kagoshima, you know, Satsuma made wealth through the trade of Okinawa with China and Southeast Asian countries. In turn though, guess Okinawa itself received a lot of benefits from this trade. So, it was worked for both way. But sort of a, you know, the identity, you know, a little unclear. But I guess, as an Okinawan, the characteristic is sort of... Even though they had their own culture, identity, but still, belonging, caught in between two countries, they were really in a tough spot. That's reason, I think, Okinawa became a less and less, I guess, start losing their own not only dependency but also their own pride, I guess, you know. Because a little bit later, King was taken to Japan, stay there. And with the king. So, up until... Still, we kinda criticize Okinawa people, you know. Not too sure. Some people is a very, very poor Japan and some people are still, you know, I think, you know, they think they are being prejudiced by Japanese government in many ways, in [inaudible], economy, and every other ways, they get prejudiced treatment. And sometime, every day they're under looked as a prefecture, much more in the poor, and sort of a less, I guess standard. This feeling was existed even when they came here because some older immigrant, they couldn't speak good Japanese. Some, they couldn't even write the Japanese. Those kind of handicapped Okinawan people, in the older days.

INT: So, what were the Japanese peoples' attitude towards Okinawan people?

FH: You know, Japanese government appoint the governor. I don't know how many, but when they do appoint the governor, the prefectural government, they call governor, I don't think they had a vice-governor, but they had all department heads. All department heads, they bring from Japan. They don't give opportunities to Okinawan people. Under department section, Section Chief, the highest Okinawan people could get, no matter how good you are. So, that was, you know, really unfortunate, this condition I guess prevailed even until the Second World War II. So, in that sense, Okinawa peoples are really mistreated. So, American, you know, use the disdain, try to separate Okinawa from Japanese. Okinawans are not Japanese, they said, you know. So, they tried to influence Okinawa to be more cooperative to American Occupation Forces, to maintaining bases. Maybe, Okinawa, let them express their feelings, "Oh yeah, we don't want to go back to Japan. Maybe we want to go just like Hawaii or Philippines." Come under the American protection subject. But such a feeling was there, but you know, after many years of military American occupation, people start feeling a lot mistreatment from American forces too, American government. Now they say, "Oh, now we wanna go back to Japan." That was about 1972, reversion of Okinawa to Japan. There's a lot of fight, struggle there, especially the teacher's group. America didn't provide any good education system for a budget to really,

you know, I guess equivalent to Japanese standard. So, they organize a big, you know, prefecture-wide committee, say, "We wanna go back to Japan." So, I guess he succeeded. So, for that reason, I guess, Okinawan people, like I said, go back and forth because if Japanese government mistreated, they were kind of angry. But, Americans stayed so long, you know occupied the [inaudible], land, and made Okinawa into the bases. Now they have that, they say, we don't want America, so get out. So, right now I think it's a middle, 50% of people wants America to stay, other 50% say, "No, Americans [inaudible] out of there." So, that feeling's, I guess, always coming back. Now, especially now, Okinawan people, once American here too. At least, you know, make, reduce the bases, which Okinawa has 25% of American bases in Japan on Okinawa alone, 75% of bases. It's a heavy burden for Okinawan people is great. I guess, I said too much, but that's the feeling I think Okinawan people has toward Americans and Japanese.

[...]

INT: I went to Okinawa two years ago and a helicopter crashed into Okinawa University and there was a big protest...

FH: Yeah, yeah, Futenma, yeah. It was in the middle of the big Ginowan/Futenma City. It's bound to happen because it's so close. And oppositional people, you know, military, you know, they don't care because they have all the from the higher up and they have an agreement between government, you know. It's a political thing that they have a right to whatever they want within whatever the two government agreed upon. So, the people are the one get suffer, you know. They have nothing to say about. "Oh no, American government and Japanese government agree to have this here." So, you have anything against this, you just, you know, appeal to Japanese government. And so, people are just, you know, even though they do protest, it doesn't go farther than that, except when Governor Ota was there, two/ three marines raped a eight years old school kid. At that time, whole Okinawan Prefecture stood up, back up Governor Ota, ask America to leave Okinawa. But, he came back to United States, you know, visiting Washington, all over, you know. But, even though he went back, I think Premier Hashimoto was very disappointed because the thought he could make American military base agreement become true, you know, no problem. Now, Ota say no. So, he was really caught in between. But, after he went back, Mr. Ota's tour. He said, footing condition, he say okay, see. So, even though different political ground, like Hashimoto is just like a Republican and Ota is more socialistic stance, you know, background against American occupation. But, even though it's two different party, it kind of, at the end, you know, had to agree with, you know, Japanese government say, also you know [inaudible] from American government because they offer a lot of economic assistance, to you know, rebuild up a city. In fact now, from Futenma helicopter moved to Nago, near Camp [inaudible], they tried to, you know, I guess really rally [?] assistance to the city so they can really help finance the, you know, I guess, growth of economic level in Nago City, which they wanted. So, a lot of people work in the bases. Since they got the job from American bases, so they want Americans to stay there. But people who, you know, take it away, they allowed it, but American side, they wanted them to leave. But, I think those political thing is going on even now, and even I go, I think the new Premier Abe, he just taken over Koizumi's government. So, kind of get along pretty good with American Bush administration. So, for Okinawa, good or bad, everything they are in, caught in between American government, Japanese government. And the people, they don't have much to say.

INT: I'm really interested in those kind of current politics about Okinawa too, but let's go back to you. When you were... So, how old were you when you left Okinawa to back to the U.S.?

FH: I finished high school, when I was about 18, I guess. So, I came back to the States in 1937. Yeah, 1937. I was about 19 years old.

INT: And how did you feel about that? Were you excited or...?

FH: Oh yeah. I wanted to continue my education in Japan, but my father said, you know, I had about six or seven younger ones, you know, after me. So, my father figure it's almost impossible for me to go to higher school. See, Japan, compulsory education is up to eighth grade. Then, high school up, you have to pay your own tuition. So, he maybe, you know... I had the hope, you know, maybe, I work, maybe I go school too. But there was agreement with my father, you know, if my brother and myself send maybe about ten to about twenty dollars a month, you know, that'll be sufficient for my parents to send my younger brothers and sisters to school. It might to help finance family household expenses too. But it didn't last long because after three years, war broke out. I sent three years every month, you know, twenty dollars once. But, uh, when war broke out, everything stopped and... But, I guess, my father, he did pretty good without our support, they sent all my, you know, younger brothers and the youngest sister to high school, I guess high school. So, somehow they managed, you know, financially. So, for me, even though working the, you know, farm and the later, moved to Los Angeles, was doing gardening work. So, I enjoyed, you know... Because, you know, as a Kibei, with a handicap with language, we couldn't get any good job. So, just have to stay, you know, in the farm and gardening work. Nighttime, I still went night school, continue my education.

INT: So, how did you learn English? In night school? Where did you study English?

FH: Well, you know, of course we learned five years of English in Japan. They teach high school, five years, you know, basic English. When I came here, for six months, went to English school. Then night school, you know, in Los Angeles. But those weren't sufficient because when I was inducted in 1941, I really had a difficult time, you know, in the basic training, you know. But '41 to '48, seven years army life, you know, I really had good training in learning English because at the base, you know, you speak nothing but English, you know. [laughs] You don't speak Japanese. So, I think I picked up most of English during my army, army days.

INT: So, in the three years before War, who was your main community? Who did you hang out with when you were gardening and farming? Who were your friends? Like, Japanese guys?

FH: We just lived in a Japanese community. Japanese, you know, they just formed their own community. Especially Okinawans, you know, within the Japanese community, we have Okinawan community too. So, we didn't have any trouble finding good [inaudible], even Okinawa people. And even make a smaller, Nago people get together all the time. Have our own, you know, good time. So, it wasn't necessary to speak English. You know, all Japanese-speaking. I guess that's the reason, you know, they just stayed in their own community. Those days, there's still, even Nisei, they are job opportunity was limited, you know. They couldn't get any good job, even university, college graduate, they're working at the fruit stand, you know,

stuff like that, you know. So, it's more for us Kibei. We didn't have any [inaudible] to get a better a job. Can maybe work in a fruit stand, or market.

INT: Do you think, um, any of those attitudes, like in Japan between Okinawa, do you think those attitudes carried over to the community in the U.S., in L.A.?

FH: Attitude what?

INT: Like, you said, people looked down on...

FH: Oh! You know, when I came here, you know, I didn't notice, but if you go to... I was working in Lodi, Stockton area, in old orchard, you know, picking fruit, you know. I went to Delano area too, also, working the farm. That was way back in 1937, 8, 9. There's still a lot of Okinawan Isseis who doesn't speak very good Japanese. I think, some, some, area, I head, you know, they kinda looked down, you know. But for me, it didn't bother me because high school graduate and speak and understand Japanese, you know, even better than they do. So, in a way, they respect us. So, I didn't have any problem, any prejudice because of my Okinawan, you know, heritage. But I heard some cases, there were still, you know, some kind of thing, you know, prejudice was going on. But, yeah.

INT: Okay, so, when you... When the War started breaking out, what were you doing? When the War started, what were you doing?

FH: I don't know if this is exactly exciting in those days. I mean, you know, you're young, and you know, I'm free to do whatever I want. Because in Okinawa, from morning to evening you just study, study. When you come home, you help. So, I think, sort of parents very strict in watching us, not to misbehave, you know. But, I guess, you know, free from those restrictions. So, I was free to do whatever I want to do. But, you know, our Japanese, Oriental, philosophy, obligation, oh, you know, our parents send us here to help the family. You know, that sort of shook our freedom, you know. You could enjoy a little bit, you life, but you still have a lot of obligation to your parents. So, end of 1937, 38, 39, 40, part of 41, three and half years, four years, I guess, always without going to any... with the wrong group, you know. Just kept working, you know.

Tape 1, Side B

FH: And have a small, good time with the Okinawan group. I think that was my life, coming back to the States and before I went into the army. I think I associated with mainly Okinawan people after I returned to the United States.

INT: Do you remember what you were doing on December 7th? Or how you felt about Pearl Harbor?

FH: Oh, well, of course, I was inducted into army October 1941. That was two months before Pearl Harbor. So, Kobashigawa and myself, we were inducted same day at Fort McArthur in Long Beach. Then, I was sent to a camp in Illinois, so, I think, about after two months of

training of October, then December 7th, you know Pearl Harbor attack. So, our training was stopped. That was almost end of our thirteen weeks training. But training was stopped. So, all Japanese in the campground, I guess Camp Commander said you have to stay in the camp. And very, very, you know, I guess, not to be too anxious or anything and not to disturb anything, you know. So, about... after three/ four day, not even one week, all Japanese Niseis got put in a train. And all Nisei soldiers were shipped to San Antonio, Texas to be assigned air corps and airfield in Texas. So, after Pearl Harbor, I guess all Japanese American soldiers were taken all rifles, which they used for, you know training, they took away us and we just assigned to medical basic training to become... to work mostly in the hospital. So, Pearl Harbor stopped everything for Niseis as a soldier, for the mainland Niseis, which is different in Hawaii. But us, until we went to Camp Savage for Military Intelligence Service language school training, we work as, some work in like hospital, as truck drivers, ambulance drivers. But us, worked mostly outside the building, like yard duty. They take away your original job as hospital attendant. The reason was a lot of Americans came back from Pacific who was shell-shocked, you know, patient. When they saw us working in the hospital ward, they thought Japanese soldier. [laughs] [inaudible] get excited. That's not very healthy so they removed us from work inside the hospital. They put us outside mowing the lawn, clean up the barracks, you know, stuff like that. For three and a half years, until we were sent to Camp Savage for training.

INT: How did you feel about that?

FH: We didn't like it, but what can you do? At first, our group, our complaint was each time we changed like the Cherry [?] Field, Moore [?] Field, and each time we go, they ask, we have to you know, say that "Are you a loyal American? Which country are you loyal to? Are you loyal to Emperor or United States?" We are in United States because we wanted to, you know. If we're not, we're not going to come here, you know. But for some reason, they keep asking same question. It's kind of, you know, fed up. So, we went to Commander's place, you know. We were talking, you know, feeling. He said that, "No, it's not me. It's just order from higher up." So they have to do what they were told. And nothing was, you know, like, when Mrs. Roosevelt came Fort [inaudible] for some kind of inspection. At that time, they told us, "Don't go outside the barracks. Just stay in the barracks, you know. We want you guys clean the field." They had a parade, so they didn't want us to go and disturb the peace. "Why?" I said. "I don't know, just order from above. They thought maybe you might go out, approach Mrs. Roosevelt and do something." So, we were kind of mistrusted in all the way, you know. So, which was, you know, we felt that's not right, but we couldn't do anything. We had about eight Kibei in the old time, all kind of stick together. So, after the regular duty hours, we just go town, you know, drink and, you know, we'd share all gripes over beer or something. So just, you know, I guess, clear our inside build-up steam. But, those thing, I think, just because of a war. And it's not awful, but we could not [inaudible], even soldiers couldn't [inaudible]. Wearing the same uniform, you know. But a lot of Americans were nice to us, but still, they didn't like the Japanese, even in uniform.

INT: We're going to change the tape really quickly.

[...]

Tape 2, Side A

INT: You were already... what made you decide to join the army? The military?

FH: Decide to...

HH: When you were inducted. So, she said, how. What happened?

FH: Oh, it's funny. In a way, a lot of people went in the army to get away from what they were in. But, I was happy, myself. But, somehow, I guess a Selective Service passed in 1940. Then, we had the physical examination in about April/May, 1941. You know, I was looking forward, you know. But when we passed the examination, oh yeah, maybe because we didn't even suspected actual war gonna break out, see. So maybe it's a good experience, you know. We were kind of looking forward to go into army, you know. So, with our handicap with language, but I still wanted to experience American through this army life. We thought maybe just two years, maybe it's a good experience. But ended up, you know, stay seven years, you know, in the army.

INT: So, Selective Service volunteer, or draft?

FH: I mean it used to... Selective Service is, you know, everybody drafted, yeah. Because within the four classes, A1... Unless you have any good reason, you know, you have to go. But I said I'm willing to go if I was drafted.

INT: I think the microphone is...

[...]

INT: So, when did you meet Mr. Kobashigawa?

FH: Let's see, when I went to West Los Angeles, I think '30, I mean 1940, I was in a boarding house. In the boarding house, Harry Kobashigawa and his two older brothers was there too doing the same gardening job. The middle one, Hideo, was working part time and he was going, I think art school or something. But when we stay in the boarding house until we were drafted.

INT: And then when you were drafted, you went with Mr. Kobashigawa?

FH: We were always together. [laughs] Went to the Long Beach together, then went to campground together and from there, ship out to Texas together. Texas, I think, only three or four months, he was sent to Brookfield something and we were sent to Bofield [?] and we got together again at Bofield. And from there, I think Harry went to Camp Savage a little earlier than our group. Our group of three went about six months later. Harry went earlier. I don't know, in army system, we cannot tell. They didn't come to us, you know, to take an examination. Maybe they didn't trust it. [laughs] But Harry was a nice, good boy, so he went before we did.

INT: So you guys were together the whole time.

FH: Yeah, whole time, yeah. Even Okinawa, you know, same team, we're all together.

INT: So, what was basic training like and where did you do it? What was basic training like?

FH: Oh, basic training at the campground in Illinois was pretty rough because we were drafted October 7 and then I... We stayed there until end of December, early part of January, '42, after war broke out. Really cold, you know, Chicago. I came from Okinawa, you know, warm country. And Los Angeles. It was freezing, especially field training, you know, digging fox hole and making a small pup tent, you know, stay in there for some training reason. And as a medical basic, we have to do like caring for wounded soldier out in the battlefield. So, it was really freezing weather. I really didn't like it, over there in Chicago. But, other than that, other training as a medical, medic soldier, was okay with a handicap, but we learned pretty good. But in the middle of training, training was, you know, stopped. But, I think three, three months of you know, army life was, I think I enjoyed, except the freezing weather.

INT: Were there a lot of other Japanese boys?

FH: In our group, you know, we had a lot of Japanese. I don't know why they sent so many. Our company had a lot of Japanese. And, maybe, thirty section, they bring together, but some are you know, sent to infantry basic. But big [inaudible] was a special company was so many Japanese soldiers. We didn't have any difficulty communicating. We had a good fellowship with friends. So, I think, you know, that part of life, I guess I enjoyed.

INT: So, you talked before about Pearl Harbor. And then, after Pearl Harbor, you know, Japanese were interned in California. What did you think about that- you're in the military, they're in the camps?

FH: You know, everybody went into camp, but us, even in the army, we didn't have a chance to come back to California, just stay Texas. One year, come back to campground, not campground, Camp Savage and Fort Snelling. But, I think, you know, out, those... We went directly to Okinawa, see? You know, we stayed in Okinawa three and half years, so people coming out of the camp came back to California had a very difficult time adjusting from relocation center. But we didn't go through that kind of hardships. So, when we came back end of '48, you know, fairly people were settled down, you know. So, for that, I think it was very fortunate because a lot of people came out of the camp, they met a lot of difficulty. And even still, people, kinda anti-Japanese feeling. We didn't experience that type of experience.

INT: So, how did you first get involved with the MIS?

FH: Let's see. I think, they kept us intact for long, long time. We heard about MIS, you know people going, but they didn't come out to our camp. But, I think 19... early part of 1944, they came to Fort Sam [?], Houston, have a test you know, for Camp Savage, you know. Caucasian also came, ask you know, Japanese American Niseis, you know, come to the certain place. Have a test, you know, Japanese. So, yeah, we took Japanese. I guess '44 is already, you know, in the Pacific, and war's almost, I think, past mid-way. They really needed interpreter, translator, interrogator because America was expanding the warfront. But, they didn't have enough

linguists to meet the needs of forces in the field. So, when they came our camp, said, just take these tests. So, we passed Japanese language test. Then they ask, if you wanna go. We had eight of us. I think five say no, they don't wanna go. So, three of us, you know, went to Camp Savage for training.

INT: Why did the other guys decide they don't want to go?

FH: Like I explained, mistreatment of American Army's Japanese soldiers. It's hard to, even Sansei, Yonsei, Japanese descendant, those people, even born in Japan and raised in Japan, you know, and still have part of family living in Japan, they were brought up that way at the school. They don't want to do anything to do any kind of damage to Japan. Even Kibei Nisei's mind, they still have some kind of loyalty type thing to Emperor. Six year, eight years in elementary school, five years in high school, everyday they were taught to worship Emperor, even as a god, you know. We didn't have, you know... If nothing happens, it's okay, but something happens, but if it comes to it, are you really against Emperor, to deny Emperor. They hesitate, yeah. There's of course, you know a really strong for Japan war, "yeah, I don't want to go." But three of us, you know, we're not very kind of still frame of mind, you know, which side I should belong to. But the difference is American citizen, even though Kibei, we have all family member in Japan, but we wanna do as American citizen. We wanna serve for the country. So, three of us went to language school accepted, out of five. They said okay maybe you folks, you know, I know they don't do any damage to America, but they were kept in Texas until the War end. Those people, just like in the relocation camp, "no-no type of citizen," say "no, no, no." But us, sort of, you know, kind of middle. Even though we're not too in between, we'd like to help American win the War. So, we accepted and send us to Camp Savage.

INT: What did you do at Camp Savage?

FH: We had nine months of academic training. But for us, Japanese language training is too simple. They had about, I think twelve classes, eleven classes maybe, one to eleven. And, one is strong in Japanese and English. Two is strong in English, but a little bit weaker in Japanese. So, about middle is not very good at Japanese. Us, strong in Japanese but not very good in Japanese [English]. Those were mostly Kibei guys. So, we have about every day from morning to evening, seven/ eight hours training, mostly language training, plus military term, they call the *heigo*. Also, study the textbook of Japanese WestPoint, the textbook because that teaches how officers train. How to train, tactics, strategies. So, when we captured documents, we know to understand, you see, well it says it. So, captured documents translations, we had to have some kind of knowledge of Japanese officer training schools, you know, manual. So, we learned that quite a bit. Then, toward the end, actual captured documents come to us. If they use clear handwriting, no problem. But some of them, they call *soshoo*, it's kind of short hand or long hand writing which is very difficult for ordinary, even Kibei, some of us hard time to read that. So, we had a specialist they teach us how to read *soshoo* writing. So when we capture document written in the *soshoo*, bring to Kibei who are supposed to be expert in reading Japanese. They're the one do translation. So, that type of training. Then, interrogation training. That was, I think was based on soldiers, POW captured, two or [inaudible], they made us [inaudible] a manual, you know, how to proceed an interrogation with prisoners, try to get the information we wanted. So, they type of technical training of interrogation. But translation I think is mostly job of Kibei because you have to read the Japanese first before you translate. But interpreters, interpreter

training was for everybody because when you see somebody, capture the soldiers, you have to kind of organize and maybe have to instruct what to do. So, that one, that easier kind of conversational training is interpreter one. So, that's three- translation, interrogation, and interpreter training. And those three training you learn during nine months of training. And those three, three men makes a good team. If you say ten men team, eleven officers in a team, but three men makes three teams out of one team. So, wherever you go, if you send those three people, they can do a job. One is strong in Japanese, one strong in English, one, you know, anyway, very good something. So, I think they were, I guess, set up like that- one team with three sections. Because we didn't have enough language specialists to send to each unit in the Pacific, you know. So, we could not send to less than maybe... battalion mostly regimental basis, but later, when language need increased, they were sent to even company, they cannot send three. They just want two each unit. So, if they find everything difficult, they send everything to us and division headquarter. So, division headquarter, we have a pretty good staff and good in Japanese, in English. So we do the translation sent to higher headquarter. If high headquarter decided it's very important military value, then they send to higher, much higher. Sometime you really come to, like a, Japanese army's organizational chart. We've been looking for a long time. It just so happened that some Japanese unit, I guess, maybe some not too security-minded, they didn't burn anything when the unit was disbanded. They should burn so, you know, shouldn't leave anything. But sometime it happened. If you find that little piece of paper, find the organizational chart of the Japanese army in the area, it doesn't happen all the time, but sometime it happens, it's the job of us translator. Some interrogator, they can you know, read some of the information we already have, they can give some kind of question. If he tries to deceive us, we can find out because we have a pretty good idea of where he come from. If he said, "Oh, we come from China." "Oh what unit was, you know, April?" Then maybe he's kind off guarded if I say right answer. Some try to deceive us. "How come you say you're from here and you're sent over here? You sure you are telling us truth?" Then he kinda think, oh, they know, we know already see. Then he kind of open up and give us real information, give us a picture of the unit he belongs to, see. So, that was the job of the, you know, language team. So, I think it does help, you tremendously, I think some, even higher up, but mostly on the battlefield. Immediate information, we get. That helps right away. We're probably not division's fighting in front of our 27th Division, then who is the commander of that and have any strengths, you know. Those things, I think, is the work of our language team's job. That's why I think they really valued toward the end. It help tremendously information Camp Savage graduate, you know, American forces in the Pacific, you know, helped. So, that's, I think the training. Nine months we received a lot of type of training. [...]

That's why, you know, my father came to them. He called me right away, see?

[...]

INT: Okay, are you ready? We were talking about... Umm... So, in the language school, how many people were in your class?

FH: Eleven class, I think. Eleven class is most strong in Japanese class and I think we had about, around, one, two, three, I think our class, close to thirty/ thirty five, I think. But entire school must have about 600 or something. When we were there was toward the end, so I think they started bringing a lot of soldiers for training.

INT: Who were your teachers? Who were the teachers of the class?

FH: Well, we have all different who teach *soshoo* Japanese writing, and who teaches *heigo*, military terms, who teaches translation of documents, and who... I think we have four different instructors, you know, come to our class during say about nine o'clock to... Well, evening is own study. But during eight hours of regular training class, I think about five different teachers who teaches.

INT: Were they Nisei or white?

FH: Mostly Niseis, like some people really need English, translating documents into good English. So, we had a good English instructor who does help, you know, translate Japanese into good English. Of course, *heigo* is really military terms, so we had a kind of specialize in that field. *Soshoo* is also, you have to read, really read Japanese writing. I think this area was mostly [inaudible], then later, teach the actual, you know, interrogation technique and also actual translation of actual document. I think, basically four class just kind of expanded study.

INT: So, what was life like in Camp Savage?

FH: Mmm... Well, some people, I guess, I think a percentage was English-strong Nisei was the majority, I think. I mean, they loved to, eager to learn, but I know it was very, very difficult for them to complete a nine months course. But, toward the end, they would be trained as a fairly efficient linguist. In one barrack, about thirty or so people. A portion of the company, our classes divided to our conversation. We learned not only conversation, but many things. But, I think those training, for those Nisei, strong English-speaking Nisei was very, very difficult. And they became fairly good interpreter and interrogator, some are translator. And for us, they just go to class because they were sent to it. So, some of them not too enthusiastic about learning. But, you know, they finished the nine months training and sent with the team as a key member of the translation. Kibei usually helps read documents, stuff like that. So, some of them is very, very, you know, put their heart for training. Those became like section leader, team leader and sent out as a leader for overseas.

INT: How did you get involved with the Okinawan unit?

FH: I think everybody in mind, some tried to help, but actually, Tomas Ige, I think at that time... He's a Okinawan Nisei, graduated from Hawaii University. I think he was working for PhD at, I don't know, Wisconsin or someplace. But war broke out and his friend sent to Europe and Camp Savage and no longer he can resist. So, he came to Camp Savage. He's the one that gave the idea to Camp Savage commander, Colonel Russell, see. So, I think, after invasion of Philippines, he figured maybe next American invasion will either be Formosa or Okinawa. So, that time he approached commander. Okinawan language, you know, a little difficult for all other Japanese to understand. So, there's a lot of Okinawan Niseis came from Hawaii. He wanna organize a special team, you know, of Okinawans. I guess Mr. Ige's idea was maybe they can help as a regular translator, interpreter, but when convincing Okinawans hiding in the cave, we can bring them out by speaking Okinawan [inaudible], you know. So, anyway, camp commander thought maybe this very helpful, because Kibei, since they were raised in Okinawa, they know the history and the area of Okinawa and custom of Okinawa, so it might help

tremendously in carry out, you know, language specialist working. So, it was accepted by camp commander and then it went to War Department, G2 Section. They approved. So, just ten men Okinawan team, with one who are officer, approved, so he organized them. So, we wanted to go before Okinawa invasion, but it's such a small group and they cannot send this Okinawan team to this team invade Okinawa. It's kind of, sort of, I guess secret. They want to keep secret, you know. So, they didn't mention anything until actually America landed on April 1st, 1945. Then they say, "Okay, you folks go." So, we're in Formosa after our graduation and we waited for our shipment to Okinawa. So, I think Mr. Ige got some kind of commendation from school commandant, I think. I think we, the ten men team, not like other language specialist, did some kind of good work as Okinawan Nisei. Our Okinawan background helped in some area, especially, I guess, our feeling "We'd like to go and help the people hiding in the cave and bring out see. Because all Niseis maybe feel the same way, but especially for Okinawan Niseis. So, that was originated by Tomas Ige. He became a professor of economics at Hawaii University.

INT: So, when you first found out that you were going to Okinawa, how did you feel?

FH: [laughs] Well, you know, we weren't so eager to go. But at the last... From Guam that morning fly into Okinawa, it took about seven/ seven and a half hours, we thought, "Boy, we're going to Okinawa, you know." But no escort, you know. But, hey somebody Japanese, fighter plane come shot us, what we gonna do? Say, "Don't worry," they said. But really a lot of expectation. But anyway, we finally approach Okinawa, see a lot of American battleships and transport, you know. That... In the afternoon we landed Yomitan Airfield. Anyway, we could see the actual war going on. Just fly over the battleground in central, southern Japan. So, we landed in Yomitan Airfield. And so, we thought oh, "We're finally in Okinawa." Actual war going on down south. Then, I look at Northern part because that's where I come from. Northern part is all covered with green. It's all covered with mountain. But central to southern part is nice farm ground. But the War really [inaudible] and air bombardment really scrape out, you know. Looks sad, you know, looking, you know, battleground. But northern part of Okinawa, where I come from was really peaceful, you know, even with all that going on there, you know. But, I think that was the first day of landing and that day started our involvement as Okinawan interpreters assigned to here and there and finally assigned to 27th Infantry Division for mop-up operation of northern Okinawa from April, I think May 18th to August 10th, I guess, about three/ three and a half months mop up operation. But, you know, three of our team, eleven men team, we were assigned to headquarters. So, even though we were actually advanced Division Headquarters, but I mean, we don't know what's going on because right there gonna attack, you know, mop up operation going on, Japanese soldiers dying, you know. During mop up about 1,000 Japanese soldiers killed, I think about 500 captured. But to us, it's nothing because we don't hear anything. We just, you know, they send the document, we translate. If they capture POW, we interrogate, send a report, you know. See, if we were assigned to a front line, like a regimental battalion, then we have maybe, we might feel what's going on, you know.

Tape 2, Side B

FH: But, staying at the headquarter is, I think, even though actual battleground, you think you're already safe at the Division Headquarter, and do just the monotonous translation, sometime, you know, interrogation. But during this three/ three and a half month assignment with 27th Division was, I think, actually our language team's work for the division because we worked in the other

military government helping natives, you know, to set up their own compound in their own places and scrounging food, some material for them. Those type of thing is real different from our ordinary work, you know. Other than... But we did that too. Then, I guess after mop up operation finished on August 15th, war ended, so our 27th Division supposed to go to Japan. So, our ten men team, we requested we wanna stay on Okinawa because we met, we found, all ten members found our family on Okinawa, so request was approved and everybody stay to help our family. Everybody went home after, I don't know, three or four months, but I stayed another three and a half because I had my father and a big family and work was very interesting, you know. After the War, I was assigned to army military government with Okinawan civil government, liaison work. So, work was very interesting and very worthy cause, so I signed up for regular army one year. After discharge, I got civil service job. Got the same job for two years until I come back to the States in 1948. So, so I guess, even though war was ended, but I still did the same type of language work in the army and the military government.

INT: Okay, can you give just a historical background of the Battle of Okinawa? Like why did they invade Okinawa and how long did it last?

FH: Well, I guess, according to the history, I guess, they invaded March 23rd, around that time, invaded Kerama and those outlying islands. That was maybe a surprise to Japanese because Japanese had a suicide boat. They figured, see, they might come to mainland. So, when they come mainland, those people on the outlying island with the suicide... what do you call that... I think one-man ride that one. There's one, I think, it landed on Pearl Harbor, during the Pearl Harbor attack. And one navy lieutenant was, I think, captured. But that type of thing had a... what do you call that... they had a base there, so when the American ships come to the Okinawan water, they're the one waiting for them, you know, to attack. But America took surprise for Japanese. They first occupied those outlying islands. Then, April 1st, actual landing started in Yomitan and Kadena area. But, Japanese, I think, Imperial Headquarters, they made a mistake. They put out one of the strongest division out of the Okinawan central, Formosa. So, you know, they had three basic division. Tenth army had 62nd, 24th, and 89th Division, and plus all kinds of naval and air. I think not more than, I forgot the exact figure, but it's a little small, maybe altogether about 100,000. But they pull out the most strongest division out of there and sent to Formosa for some kind of change in the plan. So, Okinawa no doubt changed their tactics. They figured, when the Americans land, they gonna really put all forces to [inaudible] Americans. So, they want to defend Okinawa with full forces. But when they pull out one strong division, they weren't strong enough to even meet Americans at division beachhead. So, they just pull out everything and then just wouldn't send back the Shuri area, which is where they had the 32nd Japanese Army Headquarter was. Maybe watching from the high hill American landing, but they didn't do anything. They just let them keep going. But when it came to, I guess, central area, then Japanese start keeping a real resistance. But in a way, good thing they pull out this 9th Division out of Okinawa to Formosa because if 9th Division was there, war would have lasted much, much longer. See actual Okinawa War started April 1st to June 25th, about three months. Even though that three months, Okinawan people alone died 200,000 dies, and men, you know. If this 9th Division stayed there, maybe all Okinawan might die from not only battle, but starvation. They didn't have any food left, you know, toward the end of the war. Japan, all ship was sank, so [inaudible] about 100,000 soldiers, they're scrounging for food from the natives. So, people must be died from, not only from war, as they were casualty, but also from starvation. So, but fortunately, war ended after three months. But, through our interrogation with POWs,

there were many, many POWs. They put all in the Yaka [?] POW Camp and surprising, you know, we were told the Japanese, they weren't expecting to become a POW. So, for some reason, when they became POW, they weren't told how to react. American army said, "If you're captured, just give your name and serial number, that's all." But Japanese soldier, they never expected to become POW, so they weren't trained how to react. So, I guess, they must feel shame. But they start giving a lot of information voluntarily to American forces. So, that was early part of our, I guess, during Okinawan campaign. But when that ended, I think next was rescue of Japanese soldier and the civilian hiding in the cave. It's, I don't know, Western and European war. Okinawa is nothing but the caves. Even army Headquarters, everybody in cave, strong, natural caves. So people just hiding there. They don't come out until I guess central section of Okinawa defense time. That's the time I guess Japanese start sacrificing a lot of soldiers because they decided they come out of the caves. But still, people was hiding in caves, so that was our second assignment. We didn't do much during the war, you know, rescue, except American captured Japanese soldier in Okinawa. If they give information, there's a lot of soldier, Okinawans in the cave, then we make a special effort to rescue them, even during war. But most of our rescue work started after the island was secured, after June 23rd and after war ended on August 15th. So, August to about December, about three months, we were involved...

Tape 3, Side A

[...]

INT: So, the nickname of the Battle of Okinawa is the Typhoon of Steel. Can you talk a little bit about that? Why is it called that?

FH: Well, because in Japanese they call it *Tetsu no Bofu*. *Tetsu* is iron. *Bofu* is actually, it's a storm. So, what's it in English, you said?

INT: Typhoon of Steel.

FH: Typhoon of Steel, something like that. I guess, naval bombardment shells and bombs, all kind of thing destructing Buddhist stuff like that, you know, fall on Okinawa, just like, in this case it doesn't say rain, but the *bofu*, because a typhoon is a natural, destructive force in Okinawa. They expect expense every year. They just, "Oh, another *typhoo*." Especially that year they said really so many typhoons came, not before, afterward, maybe. But there was so much damage, so they said *typhoo* is Okinawan people, they just have to accept. It's natural, nature's, I don't know if it's a punishment, but just come to Okinawa because of their geographical situation. Always a *typhoo* pass through Okinawa, Japan. So, this time, *typhoo* is America's [inaudible] typhoon. It was a military power, especially symbolized in naval bombardment. October 10th is Okinawa is air raid. It came just like a typhoon. Okinawan people, you know, they didn't want it, they didn't expect it, but it just came. But damage is so great, so that they said, this typhoon is not like a natural typhoon, but this is a typhoon of steel. America really sent a steel typhoon to Okinawa to destroy, you know, the island. I think Japanese people, they like to express anything in a kind of poetic way. [laughs] But, you know, I think everybody understand much, much better, *tetsu no bofu*, Typhoon of Steel, more than any other expression. That's a very fitting expression. I don't know who invented that word, but they've been using that word. Even now, they're still using that word, which Okinawans experienced Typhoon of Steel, 1945. Now, they don't want to experience the same thing in the

future. But I think, in a word, I guess younger generation doesn't, maybe could understand what [inaudible]. But people who went through that war, I guess they realize that all these are very, very fitting to express the feeling they experienced during the three months Okinawan campaign, which destroyed the entire island, you know.

INT: So, when you were doing the mop up operation and you were rescuing people from the caves, what was that like?

FH: You know, mop up operation down south, they didn't have any mop up operation because they went through all Japanese were destroyed and Commander General and Chief of Staff committed suicide, war ended. The little remnants was hiding, you don't call anymore mop operating. This is just a rescue type thing. But mop up was, which 27th Infantry was engaged, 27th Division was involved I guess bigger part of central section of Okinawan battle. But, I think when this Okinawan invasion planned, 27th Division was, originally it was supposed to be a garrison type of thing. Maybe not the frontline because they already fought in Saipan and Iwo Jima, so this was supposed to be maybe not on the frontline, maybe garrison in case something needed, they might go to frontline. But some reason, they were involved and maybe suffered a lot of casualties. So, we they conquered Kakazu and Machinto [?] area, they were relieved from frontline. Say, "You folks now go mop up operation over in northern Okinawa." Which they already once, at the initial invasion, they all went through, from Yomitan to the northern part of Okinawa. Actually, marine went through the all Japanese soldiers, you know, northern section. But Japanese Imperial Headquarters decided to put much soldiers in the northern section. There's was only maybe less than one regiment, you know. So, they didn't have much to fight because they put all forces to central to southern section. So, this mop up started, and they figured maybe about 3,000 hiding from Onotake farther up to Hedo [?] Point. But, that area relieved 27th Division was sent to do just mop up operation. But somehow they met opposition when they come to Onotake, it's a fairly high mountain. So, entire division has to pull back to basically Ishikawa. But anyway, I don't know how they realized it, but they figured about 1,000 Japanese soldiers and capture about another 500. So, they, I guess, occupied that area. So, from around to, going to Nago, Motobu Peninsula, and finally Hedo [?] Point, and there was Colonel Udo [?], Colonel is usually head of regiment. So maybe he must have had not regular army, but maybe sort of Japanese... Okinawan defense unit, not regular soldier, but kind of secondary class, you know equipment and the training. They're the one, you know, the first opposition, they're all hiding in the mountain. But they still figure there's still about maybe 3,000 left in there. So, 27th Division was sent for mop up there. So, they figure they finished. We were sent to Headquarters May, May 18th. And our advance Headquarter was in [inaudible] Onotake and it lasted maybe two or three weeks. Then after Onotake, it was no problem because there's no organized resistance. Only thing, Onotake was... guerilla activity was so strong, our division had to full back. But after Onotake, operation was so smooth, so entire division mop up Onotake, Nagotake, and Iyaitake [?], and all the way to Kunigami [?] and northern point, they called it Hedo [?], when they reached Hedo [?] they came back. It took about May 18th to, I think August 5th or something. So, our division and everybody, I guess they said whole island is secure now. But still, a lot of stragglers hiding in the mountain, but they figure they won't do much damage, you know. So, they came back and came back to region, or area, where we started, Onotake area. So, 27th Division thought when June 23rd, when Okinawa campaign was over, they were supposed to go to Japan, invasion of Okinawa, you know, the earliest stage. At that time, we requested you know, we wanna stay in Okinawa because you know. When 27th

Division came to Onotake area for next movement, that was about August 10th or so, and August 15th Japan surrendered. So everything over. Some people, you know, I guess had enough points to return home. But the rest of Division were ready to go to Japan as Occupation forces. So, from there, I think we were completely detached from 27th and we were sent back to Island Command. Then Island Command sent us military government. So... After military government, I mean Island Command we were sent back and from there, we started August, September, and October, I think about four months, I guess, three or four months we did, came to cave, rescue thing. Yeah.

INT: Can you talk a little bit about when you went to the caves? Getting people out, what did you say?

FH: Yeah. Especially like southern, central to southern area, like in Oroku [?] neighborhood caves, I think 200 people came out one time. But we had to go in there [laughs]. It's like a mystery because we know by then if we could trust it or not. So, we had the help of a POW team. We had one captain and ten other non-commissioned officer and privates. Finally the negotiation was [inaudible]. They gonna come out, so they ask us to come in to see how they lived. So, we went in there because we knew then that they decide to come out. And I think we were doing some kind of Japanese candles. We heard live shots, you know. And then one of our POW, you know his team, was shot from here. Lucky it missed the area, but it missed, so we heard it and we came out of the cave. But, anyway, this one of I guess soldier who was drunk you know, he did. But I guess they talked among themselves and finally they came out. I guess in the group was another naval, altogether under the leadership I think navy commander. We had to do ceremony. I think about 275 or something soldiers and also Okinawan civilians came out at one time. And a number is small, but in many areas they came out like the Shuri caves. I think toward the end, among soldiers, they talk each other. They say, "Yeah, it looks like Japan lost the war." Because we have some kind of newspaper sent from Japan, so we take those news and cigarette and the candies and just leave at the entrance of the caves with a little note, you know. "If you wanna come out. The following morning, we're gonna visit, so be ready. And if you not trust, you know, we take you to Yuka [?] POW camp." There were thousands Japanese soldiers. [inaudible] is a colonel, you know. So, if those doesn't trust, we take them to Yuka and show them, say, "Yeah, this is a POW camp." They find their own friends there, so they decide to come out. So that type of you know, operation, I don't know exactly because it was just us, you know, other unit also did their own cave, you know, rescuing work. So, through the operations only one incident. We had three POW teams, we had thirty people. Two captains had their own team of ten men each. Last one was ten non-commissioned officers team. They went in to convince those soldiers in the cave, but one really hard head Japanese second lieutenant, all ten those non-commissioned officers who was you know, tried to persuade to come out. Boy, he shoot all ten of them. Then he came out a few days later. He thought that nobody knew what he did. But one of the area team noticed, you know, he the one actually killed. So some kind of information, so when the rest of the area team saw him, they tried to... because he was kind of segregated from the rest of us. They said they're gonna kill him before they go back to Japan, you know. But our officer in charge decided that it's up to Japanese government, you know what they wanna do for this officer who killed the team of soldiers. So, secretly we sent this officer to Japan to save him from mob persecution. I think during cave hunting, that was one sad case that happened.

INT: Can you close your bottom button?
[...]

INT: Okay, we're almost done. So, when you went to the caves, what did you say to the soldiers?

FH: Well, really, in a way, according to how the other party acts, you know. But most of the time we didn't do actual [inaudible]. We let the captain in charge of the POW team. Sometimes under him there's another about ten guy, you know soldiers. So, if they knew someone inside is a little friendly, let them talk. I think just convince the war is ended and soon they are all going back to Japan. America, you know, they're gonna send them back to Japan. It's already arranged. So this is a good chance, you know, to come out. If you don't come out, anyway we're going to either seal or blow the cave, so you're not going stay there. But they know [inaudible]. But sometime it happen. So, but, so primarily work they do and I think most satisfactory that way.

INT: So, what was your job?

FH: So, one case there was a navy, a naval team in Noroku [?] it's a really big cave, wide open, you know. And I see about three or four in the dark. They're standing there. So, a naval, I guess petty officer knew him, so he start talking. But he give us hard time. He doesn't come out. I get so mad, you know [laughs]. I went in there and say, "Hey you, this war is already over. It ended. You didn't die for Emperor, you know. Now, why you try to say you were very, very proud, you don't want to be a POW. This is not POW anything, you know. You just your chance to go back to Japan." But I think he must have been drinking, you know. So, I told him, you know, any Japanese soldier who missed the chance to die for the Emperor should brag about it. He was getting mad, you know. He starts [laughs], I hear this sound, looks like he start shooting me, see? So the naval chief, officer, said, "Hey, everything was going smoothly. Don't just spoil it." So I pulled back. And after they talked nicely, then even this guy okay. Then we went inside. I think they have proud. If you say, "How come you know so hesitant to come out and go home? Good chance, you know, you can go home safely." Maybe sometimes we loose patience too, our anger is some lost sometime explode. This was an incident, I think later, my officer said, you shouldn't do that. But being raised in Japan, know them, and know how they feel and so many people died, yet, people who are cowardly didn't die still boasting, you know, I just couldn't stand so I just told him off, you know. But I realized I shouldn't do that because he himself realized that and I shouldn't remind him. But other cases ran smoothly for three months our rescue work. I don't know how many, but a lot came, not only soldiers, mostly civilian.

INT: So, how... can you talk a little bit about saving the civilians?

FH: Yeah, civilians, they were kind of scared because they been helping soldiers maybe to scrounging food or doing odd job for them. But for that, they're protected by soldiers. But soldiers might threaten them, see? If you go out, become a prisoner, leaving them behind, they might do some damage for them, you know. So, they got no choice to stay with the soldiers. But for us, separate the soldier and the Okinawan we just use our own language type thing. We know even by facial thing or the way they act, you know we could tell right away, oh this is

Japanese soldier and this is Okinawan. If they still insist they're Okinawan, see, then we give some kind of conversation with Okinawan dialect and then right away [laughs] they show they're not Okinawan, see. So, they were sent to Yuka [?] special POW camps. Because American say, there was very, very strict order, don't leave any Japanese on Okinawa. They send all Japanese soldiers back to Japan because they want to keep Okinawa Japanese-free Okinawa. So, it's for their own occupation policy, I guess.

INT: So, you mentioned you found your family. Can you talk a little bit about what your family was doing during the Battle?

FH: My family was, my original intention was, when May 18th we were told, we were assigned to 27th Division, which headquarter is in Nago. So, we're going to Nago. Then we were assigned to headquarters, where I go to high school is. See, that was, we landed April 30th. The order came May 18th, so less than three weeks I was told I could go Nago, maybe even look for my family, you know. [laughs] I was so surprised and I was glad, you know. But anyway, west coast of Okinawa, three of us team also returned, I mean, who was strong in English and typists, myself. And, even though I said northern part of Okinawa is all mountainous, green, but once you go there all villages was destroyed. We couldn't see it, but when you're traveling around coastline all villages are burned and bombed, destroyed. When they came to Nago area, my grandma had a store along Nago bay. That's the first I noticed because as soon as came Nago at southern end of Nago City, I was looking for my grandma's store. It was, you know, a concrete [inaudible] with a nice house. She was selling some household items, some foods. But eight years before, 1941... See I was there 1937, you know. So it's only eight years passed, so still my memory was good. But house was all destroyed by naval bombardment. There was nothing there. Just go around the corner and see Nago Village. I lived there about eighteen years, until I finish high school. And there was nothing along big central highway. I look, when we pass where my home used to be, but there was nothing there. All destroyed. So, just with a really sullen feeling, passed there and then arrived in Nago where I go to high school and where our headquarter was. So, soon as I got there, I got off the Jeep and I look from the hillside and it's overlooking entire Nago village. I look for my home village and place where should... my home used to stand, but I couldn't see anything. So, that was I guess first day of arriving Division Headquarters in Nago. And from next day, mop up started, so I forgot everything because work was pretty busy. We moved to Onotake area, set up tents, and then unit was already fighting in mopping up Onotake. So, I forgot everything about my family. I think two or three days before entire Okinawan Island was secured, June 22nd or 23rd, a friend of you know, my family, she used to live in Los Angeles and I guess now she was working as interpreter for Navy lieutenant who was I guess governing in Nago township. She sent someone, you know, maybe she heard from someone I am here with the 27th Division. So, she sent a message she knows, you know, where my family is. And she also mentioned one of my younger brother got wounded. So, right away I contact and met her. She gave me a pretty good description what part of Nago mountain my family's hiding in. So, next day I ask a G2 army intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel Veratwerp [?] if he can organize a patrol. So, he gave us ten men with a major best to go to the area where my family was hiding. But somehow, we searched all area but we couldn't find. You know, getting kinda late and we didn't want to stay too late because a lot of Japanese soldiers were hiding. So, we came, returning to the headquarters. I met, we met, a little girl about ten years girl, you know. And I ask, you know "where she come from?" She has to be neighbor's girl. So if she knew our family. "Yeah," she says. We try to say, "Don't worry, I'm gonna take you." But

tomorrow if she can take us to, you know, where my family lives. Say, "Okay." So, you know, we put her in the civilian compound, you know, safe place. But that night her grandfather was worried because you know, granddaughter didn't come home. So, he went to nighttime, you know sneak out and he went to the compound her, found her, his granddaughter, took her back! [laughs] We didn't know. But I guess from her, my father found out one of two sons, either myself or my younger brother is here with the 27th Division. So my family asked him not to go because it's too dangerous, you know. But he decided, so he came down from the mountain. He thought it's maybe safe, you know. So, he came down the mountain, hit our 27th Division, what do you call that... sentry was standing, usually I guess, they don't want enemies infiltrate division area, so they you know, they have a password. If he doesn't come back with the password, they gonna shoot. But it was already kind of daylight see, they see some look like Okinawan, old man with a kind of shabby hat and an old, broken clothes, you know, speaking sounds like English, you know. So, they stop and they brought him to military police, you know CIC area where Hiroshi works, you know, Kobashigawa. See our station was a little above the MP station. So, he calls and says, "Hey, your father is here." [laughs] So, he came and I met my father first time in eight years. So, after, you know shed tears and we ask, you know, is it okay to bring everyone from the hideout. Finally okay. It was kind of late, but we went with the same patrol group we had yesterday and day before. So, we went and met all rest of my family and try to bring them down. But there was two/three family was there. But my father, he didn't want to bring them down because those days people say, "Oh, Higashi's father brought American to bring us from hiding place." My father was kind of hesitating. So, then we talked to Major Best. If [inaudible] said no, no take him down. But finally he agree, okay, so just I think five or six of our family brought them down to put them in the civilian compound.

INT: So they left the other two families.

FH: Yeah, so I think the lieutenant, captain, gave my family, not in the big camp, away from camp, one house was still standing. Owner was living there, so he asked to share my family to maybe half of the house. It's a nice house because they built before the war. So, they stayed there until they were allowed to go back to their own village. They start building their own new home.

INT: So, did everyone in your family survive?

FH: Yeah, so one wounded brother, he was in high school.

Tape 3, Side B

FH: ... a senior. Just a soldier. Regular soldier, there wasn't enough, so they just use high school. They had a high school five years, but I think from that year, they were supposed to graduate, but they changed to four year high school. But he was a senior, so he actually, you know, took a rifle, just like a regular soldier. So, they were, I think patrolling, they encounter face to face a marine. I think four of high school, four or five high school and the marine I think they met on the trail. I mean, they heard, so they were hiding, I mean my brother, hiding. But I think this marine spotted them, they fired at them. They killed two of his good kids and my brother was shot, missed by about half inch/ inch by heart. And bullet went right through. Then, I think they returned fire too, killed I think two marines too. So, from now on, I guess, his high

school friends I think took him to a mountain hideout and my father and younger brother came, took them back to their own mountain hideout. But you know, no food, no medicine to treat. So, when I met, there was still a lot of thing was losing skin. Just like a mold, you know a dirt, because no sanitation. So, I think just worse condition, you know, everything. So, but he was still afraid because he was wounded fighting a marine. But he told me, you know, nothing to worry because war already, Okinawan war is almost ending and there will be, we'll be taken care by military government. So, finally he agreed to come down by his own willingness. We sent him to American dispensary and they helped us give a special care. And I think within six months, his skin turned back to normal and his wound completely healed. You know, he about, that's 1945, five years later, he passed what do you call, Fulbright Scholarship, you know. And American army offered scholarship for young students who will become future leader of Okinawa. 50, I think 52 of them came in 19, 1950. And they took some training at Mills College and went to Los Angeles and went to med. School, finish one year there and then transferred to UCLA second year. From there, University of Iowa, bachelor at University of Iowa. Then went back to Okinawa, had to teach. He had obligation, receiving a scholarship, he had to serve about two, two or three years at school. After that, I think he came back and he went to med. School, I mean, got a master there. He went back, started teaching at Ryukyu University. I don't know how long he taught. But this time, he got scholarship from, wasn't university... His classmate was already study at state University of Washington. He was teaching over there already. So, he arranged a scholarship for a lot of students who came with them. So, we went back over there. Finally, he got the PhD from University of, you know, University of Washington.

INT: Wow. What was that like being... he was in the Japanese Army and you were in the American Army, what was that like? You know, two brothers in a different army.

FH: You know, he avoiding, I was avoiding. We never talk about war because we hate to touch you know, that part. So, he don't want to talk about nothing. I don't know when we actually start talking about the thing. But I read things he and his classmates, you know, Japanese you know once in a while reunion type thing, I think he wrote a lot of those war experience in his classmates' grade book. In that he mentions his feeling. He didn't even talk to other classmate because when he caught the marine, you know, even though they killed two American, the two other, their own classmates was killed, you know. That's not his fault, but he still feel guilty that he was survived. So, he doesn't talk anything about the war. I didn't want to talk about why I went Okinawa, you know, because they know you came back to your old native land to fight, to kill own brothers and sisters, you know. But finally, I don't know how many years ago, I went four times back since then. We talk about war, you know, brother and sisters, we I guess accepted each, this was war, we couldn't do anything, you know. So he understands. I don't know deep in his mind if he still feel that. I think he is forgetting [forgiving?] what I did. So, I still have one, two, three brothers and it's two sisters surviving. Six, including me. So, we still have four brothers alive, so each time we go, we just talk about things we shared when we were small.

INT: Okay, one more question. How do you think your background, being Okinawan, helped you during the Battle of Okinawa, like your language skills, culture skills, and all that stuff?

FH: Well, those rescue type, only thing I guess, you know, it wasn't original intention anyway. When we volunteered for Okinawan team, we didn't want to become heroes something, we just wanted to help our family, see. So, only [inaudible] we just did that and did for good of those people, not just my family, but all other Okinawans. So, it was always hurting because Americans, you know, were like my step auntie's brother was killed, you know. He was raising hand, marine was coming, so he showed he got nothing, no weapons, anything, just surrendered. But this young marine killed in front of rest of family, you know. And when I met them, went over there, they mentioned. It was really sickening because just for fun, fun, fun, you know. I mean for this young, he didn't mean anything, this innocent middle aged, not soldier. So, when I heard, this sickening, sad thing, you know express you know, to me. I was really sick. And another one of my, another relative, he was soldier so you know, he can't help. But even soldier, you know, met Americans, you know, kill. But his wife didn't speak one word to me during my stay there. She always avoided me. It really hurt me. But I couldn't do anything, just you know, I'm sorry. This was war, you know. I just came here to help, but those thing happen to my own family and own relatives and this is really a different story. But anywhere I go, if I encounter those thing, I just take as a personal thing. They are not my friend or family, it was a you know, hurt my heart to see those people suffering. And during the war, we couldn't help, but in '48 when I was returning to United States, I guess about three years after the war ended. Everybody says it feels like going back normal. Still, they are suffering, but at least our people get a little peace of mind and accepting the hardships as it is and try their best to forget the past and build a new life on Okinawa. But right now, my feeling is we don't want another war, which puts Okinawa, as long as American bases there, that's the first target, North Korea, wherever, you know, within the reach of any kind of missile. So, we want to, if possible, try to remove all military bases from Okinawa. We don't want to put America, I mean Okinawa, same suffering go through, they gone through before. So, as I think, the peace, more than anything, peace on Okinawa. And the first step is Japanese government and American, they agree to remove as many bases. Is there anything else?

INT: I think that's it. Thank you very much.

FH: You're welcome.

APPENDIX C
Hiroshi Kobashigawa Interview Transcript

HK: Hiroshi Kobashigawa
INT: Gena Hamamoto
Camera: Mark Villegas
December 1, 2006

Tape 1 of 3
Side A

INT: So, first let's start with the easy questions. Where were you born?

HK: I was born in Phoenix, Arizona.

INT: When were you born?

HK: February 14, 1919.

INT: What generation are you?

HK: Japanese.

INT: So, you're Nisei?

HK: Nisei, yes.

INT: Where are your parents from?

HK: From Okinawa, Japan.

INT: Do you know when they came to the U.S.?

HK: My father originally came to Mexico as a mineworker, 1905 or something like that. I'm not sure.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: My father made a little money from Mexico and came Arizona. The coalmine was so bad condition. A lot of people got killed. So, my cousin and two of them cross border to Arizona. And eventually, he started farming in Arizona. He made a little money, so he went back to Okinawa and married my mother. But he was married to another lady before he went to Mexico. They had two children already, so we have a half brother and sister, you know. But when he went back, she had a boyfriend [laughs].

INT: So, did you grow up with your half brother and sister?

HK: Umm... Oldest brother, he, my father, bring from Okinawa. Start farming with my father in Arizona. But he never succeeded at farming and after I came back, came back here, I worked with him and another brother above me, three of us worked grape picking and those kind of work, farm work. But eventually, we starting farming in Orange County, near Garden Grove, growing strawberry, but that didn't really make money at that time. After that, we kind of separated. I came to Beverly Hills for schoolboy, try to go to school, but I was already seventeen years old, so I couldn't go to grammar school [laughs].

INT: First time in school when you were seventeen?

HK: Well, when I was farming, I was going to grammar school too. But, I decided make money and go back to Okinawa. I like to go to Okinawa so much. [laughs] So I started working, come to West Los Angeles, where my second brother was working in garden, you know gardener. Stay in boarding house and work for somebody bi-monthly, you know, gardener's helper. So, that way up until 1941, when war started, you know, and I got drafted.

INT: So, are you Kibei?

HK: Kibei, yes.

INT: When did you go back to Okinawa? How old were you?

HK: Went back first time went back during wartime, of course.

INT: Oh, during World War II.

HK: Yes, MIS.

INT: Oh, okay, so you weren't raised in Okinawa.

HK: Until seventeen. From two years old, to seventeen years old I stayed in Okinawa.

INT: Oh, from two to seventeen, you were in Okinawa.

HK: Yes.

INT: How was it when you went back, to Okinawa?

HK: During wartime, so it's all wrecked. It was about almost one month already American soldiers landed Okinawa. After one month, we went there as an interpreter. But we were all MIS boys already with fighting group, already so we didn't actually go fighting in the frontline, we didn't go. We stayed in the headquarter most of the time, translating documents, captured documents. But after war was over, then we went to mop up operation, they call mop up operation. That time we went with fighting group. We try to bring soldiers out of the mountains. Mop up operation.

INT: Oh, mop up operation.

HK: Yes.

INT: Can you talk a little bit?

HK: Hello? Hello? Sound not so good?

[...]

INT: So, let's go back a long way. Why did he leave Okinawa?

HK: You know, Okinawa very poor, all around. Sometime so poor they don't have enough to eat, people die because no food. Every year they have hurricane, they call *nihyaku tokai*, 210 year, 10th day of year. Strong hurricane comes. They call it two hundred ten hurricane. That's the name of it.

INT: At that time, was Okinawa part of Japan?

HK: Oh yes, already 200 years.

INT: How did you father feel about that, as an Okinawan in Japan?

HK: Oh, most, see Okinawans very peace loving people. They just from Kagoshima, Japan, with rifles. They didn't have any rifles, just karate and just stick, and stick, they have stick. That's all they have. So, only three day, took over whole island. [laughs] Only two/three days.

INT: When was that?

HK: I don't know exactly, must be about 200 years ago. It was Meiji Era, so must be about 200 years ago. But that's why, you know a lot of Okinawan, old people, don't go to school, they can't speak Japanese, own dialect, Okinawan dialect. So, he didn't go any school, my father. He couldn't write anything. But he was a very smart character, you know [laughs] I noticed.

INT: Did he speak Okinawan or Japanese, or both?

HK: Oh, a little bit Japanese, but mostly Okinawan language.

INT: When you were growing up, what languages did you speak?

HK: Oh, we went to school, so at home we spoke Okinawan, but at school we talk in Japanese [laughs].

INT: What was it like being... I'm a little confused, so you were born in Phoenix, Arizona and when you were two, you moved to Okinawa.

HK: Whole family.

INT: Whole family moved to Okinawa. And then when you were seventeen, you came back.

HK: Before I came, my two brother above, three of us born in Phoenix, Arizona. They came one by one before. First one came here, he started going high school, but my father don't want to stay too long because the war going on with Japan and China. And if we wait two, three more years, we get drafted Japanese army. So, that's the main reason they quit high school.

INT: I see. So, you came back to the United States when you were seventeen. And that's when you did the gardening?

HK: First I was picking grapes and I joined with my two brothers.

INT: And that was when you were seventeen. What was it like when you were seventeen and you came back. Did you speak English?

HK: I didn't know any English. I, I and me, that's all I knew [laughs].

INT: Wow, that must have been hard.

HK: Very hard.

INT: Did you have a community of friends or other Okinawans or Japanese that you hung out with?

HK: In Okinawa?

INT: No, here.

HK: Oh yes. My brother was here. I got three brothers already was here. See, three boys was born here. And I have more brother and sister born in Okinawa after. But up to me, they couldn't back, they weren't able to come back here.

INT: And your parents stayed in Okinawa.

HK: Yes.

INT: Okay, did you ever feel like different, being Okinawan in California?

HK: May I ask again?

INT: Did you ever feel different being Okinawan in California?

HK: No, I didn't feel. It's [laughs]... If you don't know language, you can't communicate anywhere you go. Kind of hard.

INT: How did you learn English?

HK: After I came to West Los Angeles, I went to night school here, Uni High. Daytime I work in the garden and night school they had class, Americanization class. So, that's not so strong language, I mean class, you know just reading book or like that.

INT: When you were a gardener were there a lot of other Japanese gardeners at the time?

HK: Oh yes, so many in West Los Angeles. Japanese like me, you know, come back from Japan. Those guys was working as a gardener. And the old Issei too.

INT: So, were you a part of that community?

HK: Yes, not actually community involvement. I just stay in boarding house, that's all. I didn't participate in any community involvement. You know, I didn't do any. But after the War, I involvement, after I come back from service.

INT: So, was there any... Did people ever care that you were Uchinanchu, living with these Japanese guys?

HK: No, I didn't any uncomfortable or anything. Maybe old time, I hear bad story about Okinawan people don't know Japanese or something like that.

INT: What other kinds of stories were there?

HK: Well, like they don't know any Japanese, they kind of look different, but they got along okay.

INT: So, in 1941, you were drafted, right?

HK: Yes, '41.

INT: So, in California, were people being interned at the time?

HK: Interned? No, interned started after. In '42, around, around spring maybe, early spring, I think they started interned, intern camp. So my two brothers went there, about two brothers. I was already drafted. And I drafted on October, I think was October 1st, about two months before Pearl Harbor, I got drafted. And I was sent to medical corpse in Camp Grant, Illinois.

INT: How did you feel when you were drafted?

HK: I told them I can't speak any English, you know. I didn't know much English, but they drafted me anyway. They gave me some kind of test, special test. Some kind of memory test and I passed, I guess. They took me. I went to medical corpse. It was two months before Pearl Harbor.

INT: What did your family think when you were drafted? Did you tell your parents?

HK: No, they don't know anything about it because they are in Japan, Okinawa. And my brothers don't say anything.

INT: They didn't say anything? Were you scared?

HK: No, my friends, my friend was drafted same time as me. He was a year older than me. Higashi, Frank Higashi. We got drafted the same time from West Los Angeles, same place, same time. [laughs] We went to Texas first from Illinois, after finishing medical corpse, we went to Texas. They had so many airfield, you know, in Texas and each airfield had station hospital. That's where we worked in hospital. But Texas, you know, I didn't know, they had so many discriminating against color people. Maybe it's different now. But that time, if you go to public toilet, restroom, it's separate for color and whites. And inside, separate seats for color and whites. I was so amazed. I didn't believe.

INT: They didn't have that...

HK: That the United States had such a discrimination because California doesn't have that, other place doesn't have that, like Illinois, but Texas is southern state, I think, it's different, not only Texas.

INT: It's a different world. So, as a Japanese, which side did you go into?

HK: I go any place [laughs]. White people look at me. They didn't say anything, but they look funny. You look Oriental but you go to that side. [laughs]

INT: So you went to both white and...

HK: Yeah, yeah, any side. They didn't say anything.

INT: That's funny. So, did you have to go to basic training?

HK: At medical corpse basic training just Pearl Harbor, that time, I just finished basic training for medical corpse. That's why we went to Texas on a train. On the train, they close all the windows. [laughs] I don't know why. We went to Texas on the train.

INT: So, as a Japanese person, how did you feel when Pearl Harbor happened?

HK: Well... A lot of people all different ideas, thinking, some people [inaudible] United States because you're fighting. But, it's all different, some people. I don't want to go to fighting. I don't want to fighting, I don't want to kill anybody, so they got a medical discharge, some boys, some Japanese boys. But I thought, if you wanna stay in the United States, you gotta help do your duty as a citizen if you want to keep living in the United States, especially in time of war. If you don't do, you're going to get discrimination all around. Because before the war, Japanese people got all kind of discrimination. They couldn't lease farm land and they start coming from Japan, you know immigration, all those thing. If you don't fight time like this, you know, maybe we never can live in this country peacefully. That's what I thought [laughs.]

INT: So, you were fighting to gain equal rights.

HK: Right. Because we were immigrants from Japan. Immigrant transferred, moved, to another place, *imin*, *imin* they call it. You moved to another country. And if you move, you gotta your own future, you gotta make yourself to make you, this country to what do you call... life worth living, you know. In this country, gotta think about future. You gotta think about your kids too. So, for future, even it's for Japan, you gotta join the service and serve your country. That's what I thought. But I have brother, just above me, he do art, small things, eager to drafted too after I drafted, about a month later. He told commander he doesn't want to carry gun, he doesn't want to kill anybody, he's more interest in art. He got discharged. So, that's why Japanese boys discharged as they called medical discharge. It happened some Japanese boys. But I thought I'm all ready, so I thought I can serve the United States.

INT: How did that affect your relationship with your brother? Did you ever talk about it?

HK: We didn't talk about it much. But my brother, the one got discharged, he said he wrote letter to me: do same thing I did. Get discharged. [laughs] I couldn't.

INT: How did you feel though, when the Japanese Americans were being interned and then they were still being drafted into the war. How did you feel about that?

HK: That's... One reason they interned was they afraid Japan might come invade in California. They gonna invasion. When they invade, Japanese American, you know Japanese people living there, they gonna aid the Japanese army, invasion army. But that excuse... I don't know it's an excuse or they really afraid of them or not.

INT: Do you think there was something to fear?

HK: That's I think that's a way you can think about it too. But I don't think it was only for the discrimination. I don't think so. They afraid the Japanese army invade the United States, you know. That's why they... You see, if they discriminate, then all other states the Japanese people, they bring the camp, but only the west coast, California, Oregon, those states. Arizona, they didn't have to go camp. I have a cousin, family in Arizona, they didn't have to go to camp. It's only around coast they say that it's because they afraid the Japanese going to come invade the United States. That's official reason, I think.

INT: Did you ever visit your brothers in camp?

HK: Oh, no. Only thing camp was, no I didn't go to camp, visit them camp. But Arizona, my, she was there. Gila, Arizona. So, I didn't visit her, but my cousin took me to Arizona. He was farmer there. He took me to see the camp, how it is in camp.

INT: What did you think when you saw it?

HK: It's not that bad I thought.

INT: What was life like there? What were people doing?

HK: They didn't mind, I guess. A lot of people, Kibei, especially Kibei, like go to high school, English school in camp and have a chance like it's a good something or bad something. It's not only bad, I don't think.

INT: So, when you were in the medical corpse, when you were in training, I heard some of the camps were segregated. Was yours segregated?

HK: No. Mostly Japanese and I didn't see much Mexican or colored people. But mostly Japanese and *hakujin*. I don't know why, come to think about it. [laughs]

INT: So, who did you hang out with? Who were your friends? Did you hang out with the Japanese guys?

HK: Yes, mostly, because I couldn't speak much English. I have good friend with all the time, Higashi. But at the Texas we got separated. He went to another airfield, I went to another airfield. Then, finally, we met at one place together. We return to Mexico border. They opened up new airfield. We stayed there for some time. But they didn't like Japanese boys. My friend said because a lot of soldiers, wounded soldiers, come back from war and the hospital stay, they didn't like Japanese boys [laughs].

INT: Because they were in Japan, right?

HK: Yes. They were wounded and sent back to mainland. So, we kind of [inaudible] And some people just, what do you call, cleaning up the latrine, toilets and some yard work, like that.

INT: So, they kind of hid the Japanese boys. Did anybody ever say anything to you, like the wounded soldiers?

HK: Well, not like me. But I suspected one man, you know, I went there to *oshinko*, waste, *oshinko* you know, empty those thing. He saw me, he didn't like me it looks like [laughs] expression. But the didn't [inaudible] three months here, three months there. But I did a lot of medical sick call. Boys come to ask sick, take care those people or sometime ambulance driver I did, sometime. I did more than other Japanese boys, I guess.

INT: So, among the Japanese boys, was there any difference between the Hawaii boys and the California boys?

HK: Those days, no Hawaii boys, just American.

INT: So, all California, or mainland.

HK: Yeah.

INT: Was there any distinction between the Naichi and Unchinanchu boys?

HK: No.

INT: So did you all speak Japanese to each other?

HK: Oh yes, Japanese. Some people, like us Kibei, some Japanese boys doesn't know Japanese, so...

INT: Can you explain what does Kibei mean?

HK: Kibei: American boy grown up Japan and came back America. That means Kibei.

INT: Okay, so after that, you were in the medical corpse and then how did you get sent to Okinawa?

HK: Ah, we was around, as I told you, I [inaudible] Texas airfield, and finally we ended up at Fort in Texas.

INT: What is it called?

HK: Old Fort Sam Houston [?] Old fort, you know. They have a, inside fort they have hospital and draft station, draft, what do you call it, draft station, I don't know. You know, in that they do all process, those place. It's not medical corpse anymore. Induction center.

INT: Oh, induction.

HK: Oh, we did inductees, making record, you know, those kinds we did. And sometime I draw record, sent back to town, draftees first day give oral examination and sent back to home, then they send back to come, to join at process at that place, you know, making record. That's the place we pushed around from medical corpse. Then, after five/ six months, I guess, they understand that I got order, just myself, go to Camp Savage, Illinois, Minnesota. Camp Savage, Minnesota, for the language school, military language school. So, I carry this order and I went myself, got on the train, you know. But every train station, they, I ask them, show me how to get there. So I didn't get lost or anything. [laughs] It's a order for me to go.

INT: Wow, so they don't have a train for the soldiers to go? You have to go by yourself?

HK: Just an ordinary, ordinary train.

INT: So, what was it like on your trip across the country.

HK: Oh, I thought I might get lost. I was worried about I might get lost. But I asked how to get there. I didn't know about the train, how to get on.

INT: Were you wearing your uniform?

HK: Oh yes, of course.

INT: How did people treat you?

HK: Oh, people treat me okay.

INT: People didn't treat you differently because of...

HK: Only thing sometime I feel at a restaurant, they don't serve you. All the time, just waiting, waiting. So I think maybe this place, they don't like Japanese boys, so I just walk out. But I hear a lot of those kind of story. Some went some other state and boys went restaurant, but they don't serve, you know. So, they told them, "We don't serve Japanese boys." [laughs] And this boy reported to commander. The place got closed up because of. I hear this story.

INT: That's good, I guess. And then, what was it like at Camp Savage?

HK: Camp Savage is very old camp. Kind of cabin-like, you know. Cabin structure, very old countryside camping ground-like. And it's not building like, you know. But it was okay. Only thing, everything inconvenient there because it's kind of far away from town, you know, countryside. And I had one incidents, I have, they have, in the camp mostly Japanese people, boys, you know. Mostly all Japanese people. But there, I know I understand Michigan University, they have the Japanese course in the college. They finished that, they become officer. But, Camp Savage, you graduate, but you never become an officer there.

INT: Why is that?

HK: I guess, I don't know. At the Michigan I guess, there's so many years you have to take Japanese course, I guess.

INT: So, at Michigan, were they mostly *hakujin*?

HK: *Hakujin*, yes.

INT: Do you think that had to do with it?

HK: They had Japanese people teaching, I guess. School, it's course, they get credit, so they become officer, I think.

INT: Were you at Camp Savage in wintertime?

HK: I wasn't sent there in wintertime. But later it winter came. First time I saw snow there. [laughs] Okinawa never snow, you see. And California, you know, only place you gotta go up north to see snow. So, first time I saw snow in Minnesota.

INT: Was it cold? I heard it was cold.

HK: It was really cold. I got all over my ears, frostbite, you know, itchy. [laughs] It was no fun.

INT: What were your days like at Camp Savage? What time did you start, eat breakfast, go to school, stuff like that?

HK: It was okay, you know. Life in the camp itself it was not bad. Only thing is it's kind of far from town when you want to go to town. It's very inconvenient, you know take bus, take to Minneapolis it's far, pretty far. But other thing I... They had, one thing I made something, idea. They have idea box in this school. I dropped my idea in the box. They accepted my idea.
[laughs]

INT: What was your idea?

HK: Idea was, they had very poor cleaning, especially winter uniform. It's wool, winter uniform, so they had to do the dry cleaning. So, winter, you know, you wear uniform to all class and they get dirty because they burn the coal inside the barrack. They heat, heating all burn the coal, you know. So, it's air all dirty and the uniform get all dirty because you burn all coal in barracks, you know burn coal. Whole area become kind of dusty from coal burning. So, I suggest because of cleaning facility wasn't so good.

INT: Sorry, we have to change the tape. Hold that thought.

TAPE 2

INT: Okay, please continue your story. So, you were saying the cleaning facility was bad.

HK: Yes, cleaning facility was bad. So, my idea was to wear fatigue uniform, you know working clothes. They have working clothes, regular uniform, you know. Fatigue for classroom if it's not against the regulation, maybe because we don't have good cleaning facility, you know. That's my idea, let's wear fatigue and we can wash ourself.

INT: So they accepted it.

HK: They accept and then they give three-day pass. [laughs] But I don't know any place to go, so maybe next city, you know. It's called Duluth, Duluth Minnesota. It's a lakeside town, Duluth, Minnesota. It's what do you call it, Michigan Lake, Lake Michigan. Around there it's Duluth. So, I decided to go there, just sightseeing. I hitchhiked [laughs]. Then one station staff, this man is from, is a minister, it's come back from summer came or summer camp, camp, summer camp, going home, so you can get on this take you to Duluth. So, he took me, and first he took me his house and he gave me dinner and stay there, you know, that night. Then, next morning, let's go fishing. [laughs] Took me fishing. Small boat and a small lake, I thought. We got a small boat and we got start fishing. I thought I can cast better if I stand up [laughs]. I cast fishhook, you know, casting. Then he said, "No, no, no! Don't stand up! The boat will tip over!" he said. [laughs] I never been fishing because I lived in mountains in Okinawa and I have no knowledge about fishing or boat riding. I don't know anything. But he took me fishing and next day, he took me downtown, through the town. Introduce me to store owner.

INT: Wow, people were friendly back then. That wouldn't happen today. So, in language school, what was your daily life like? What time did you eat breakfast? What time did you go to school?

HK: Oh, school was about three or four hour class a day, every day and weekend off, you know. It wasn't so difficult. But because I didn't have enough English knowledge, I had a hard time, you know. But language school people learning Japanese, not English. [laughs] It's not for me, not good for me because I don't know any English lesson, you know. But other people tried to military language, Japanese language, they have code, you know military code, and all those teach at Japanese school. But it wasn't... I like language course.

INT: So most people were studying Japanese and you were trying to study English.

HK: Right. Yeah. And a lot of Kibei too. My friend is Kibei too, Higashi.

INT: How did they choose who is going to the language school.

HK: I don't really know. I guess they know the history of each boys, they check the letters, they communicate with friends, relatives. That must be the only way they can check individual people on how they think about, I don't know, maybe something secret. [laughs]

INT: But so they mostly just chose Japanese boys on purpose. So, the language school, it was a secret?

HK: Not was a secret, but it wasn't open either. I think, originally started at the Presidio, San Francisco. That's where it started, I think.

INT: Do you know why it moved?

HK: I don't know. That's a military matter, I guess.

INT: I heard it moved because, you know it's San Francisco, so at that time they had to evacuate all the Japanese, so they had to move to Minnesota.

HK: Oh, maybe so.

INT: So, what did you guys do for fun?

HK: Just go to town and [laughs] they don't have a Japanese restaurant. Chinese restaurant, they have. Go Chinese restaurant and eat Chinese food. We miss so much Oriental food in the military, you know [laughs]. Sometimes we like to meet.

INT: How did you get chosen to go to Okinawa? Do you know Tom... What's his name? Tom... Okay, how did you get chosen to go to Okinawa?

HK: Higashi, he the one who told me at the school, chosen Okinawan, related Okinawan boys go to Okinawa. I didn't know. But Tomas Ige, team... team leader, Tomas Ige. Ige, Tomas Ige.

He died about ten years ago, I understand. But he was a professor at University of Hawaii. After he got out, he went to school, continue college, economic course or something. He became professor.

INT: So, how many people, how many Okinawan boys were in your group?

HK: Ten. Ten boys, mostly from Hawaii, eight were from Hawaii. Two from, myself and Higashi, that's all. Ten boys.

INT: Do you know Takejiro Higa? He has a brother...

HK: I know Higa. First name, I think different.

INT: He has a brother too. Les, Leslie Higa.

HK: Leslie Higa, yeah, he was our group.

INT: Do you know how you were chosen to be in this group?

HK: I don't know anything about it.

INT: So you never received like an official letter.

HK: No, no. But when we went to Okinawa, already, after we learned that, I learned that I was picked to go to Okinawa, we had to wait and wait.

[...]

HK: Amemiya. Amemiya.

INT: So, what did you know about the MIS before you left?

HK: Not too much because we were medical corpse, so I didn't know anything about the MIS.

INT: Did they tell you anything, like what to do?

HK: They just told me that you know Okinawan language and you know Japanese language, so you go to Camp Savage. That's all. That was order. So army, if you have order, then you gotta go. You can't say no. [laughs]

INT: Did you go to basic training?

HK: Camp Savage we had, I thought it was just one month, but according to book Frank Higashi wrote and I got a book, about his history, two months this camp, according to book, we had two months basic training.

INT: At Camp Savage?

HK: No, at Alabama. Camp McLellan, Alabama.

INT: How was basic training?

HK: It was okay, but when I went hiking, long hiking, I was the first one to drop out. [laughs] I couldn't take it. A lot of full pack and carry like a stick. Then, we come back to base, lower place where we started, then we eat lunch. And I failed to go up, I had to go back again after eat. That time I did pretty good. [laughs]

INT: So after basic training, what did you do?

HK: Then, overseas assignment, you know back to Savage. Then waiting period. They moved from Camp Savage, moved to Fort Snelling. Fort Snelling is between Saint Paul, Minneapolis, it's a big port. They moved there when we went from there to Okinawa.

INT: How long were you at Fort Snelling?

HK: Oh, less than month, I guess, less than a month. Not very, two weeks. First we went Seattle, Seattle, they had a camp there. Then from there, no, from there we came to San Francisco, then we waited two/ three days there. Then we got on an airplane, went to Hawaii, then Guam, then Philippine, then later on it was mistake. [laughs] Then went Guam again, then went Okinawa. Waste a lot of time there. So, when we went, it was, frontline was almost near Naha, Urasoe, a place called Urasoe. Yeah, frontline. So many soldiers dying. Very, you know, fighting. A lot of American soldier just leave trench dug by tractor just wrap around camps or something. We camped near cemetery, grave sight. Yeah, kind of sad.

INT: What did you first see when you arrived?

HK: We saw so many boats, so many warships already. And... Surrounded the island and a lot of cannon, from the boat, ship, a lot of cannon. We saw so many, so many Okinawan civilians I think dying there. Because if they already escaped to northern part of island, they are safe because a lot of mountains, heavy wooden area. Those people are safe. They don't have much fighting there, only once in awhile fighting, fire but not like south in Okinawa. They have very heavy casualty. All civilians die. So many soldiers died both side. So not a pretty sight when we went there.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Yeah, I figure it's mountainside, I figure it's not many casualty, so I thought it's okay. Maybe small amount of casualty, hit by shrapnel, so not many casualty. I thought so, no casualty.

INT: What was your job?

HK: First, they told us we are save for after the fighting, not actual fighting because there are already interpreters with units, fighting units from Australia and around there, they had already

interpreters. So, they didn't require our service as interpreters. So they told us after the war, you are needed.

INT: So, when did the Battle start?

HK: Battle started... it was already fighting when we arrived. It was about two weeks old. Frontline was near Naha already. And we didn't see actual fighting frontline. We hear cannon go over the... you know cannon fire.

INT: So, what was your job?

HK: Translation headquarter. Translation of all the military secret, Japanese military secret documents, all kind of... I wish I could have saved, helped those people suffering, civilians suffer from war. But army, you can't say, you know, what you want. You gotta obey the order, that's all. You can't say what you want. So, that's the way, that's the way... And, after the one time when's the end of the war, then they have mop up operation, you come back again and get all cleaned up, all soldiers left behind, hiding someplace, they call mop up operation. That time we participated in that.

INT: So were you rescuing people?

HK: Yeah, rescuing people, Japanese soldiers. They all disorganized that time, all separated. And one incidents, I was that time, I was working CIC, CIC means, I think Civil... anyway, civilian government's division, or something like that. I was working there as interpreter. It was in northern part of the island, Nago, place called Nago. And one old teacher where I went to school, you know, grammar school, his name is Shinjato, Sietako Shinjato [?]. I remember him. He wasn't our teacher, but he was our schoolteacher. I remember him. But he came. Somebody told him I was CIC, working for CIC, so he came over and he told me when he was close mountain, other side is called Kushi from Haneji, close the trail, you know, mountain trail, he met two Japanese soldier. And they both sick, one malaria and one injury in the leg, kind of infection in the leg. So, we have to, he'd like to bring the people. They are ready to surrender. And by himself it's kind of hard, so if you can help me, help him. So... taking too long? [...]

Tape 3

INT: Did you go with your teacher?

HK: Yes, we went in the mountain, way inside. It's just trail, mountain trail. Then, we went there and these guys build a little shack around a stream. Then they stayed there, digging some potato and those thing for eat, for eat. And first time we went, they were not ready to surrender yet, kind of their condition. So they want us wait, come back a week later. So, couldn't do anything so, we went back the next day and the next week, we went back again. But so much inside the mountain, I was kind of unprotected, nothing, you know, no armament. So, I borrowed from my commander pistol. I carry pistol. So, I told the Japanese soldiers, "Today, I got from my commander. I bring today. No more excuse to come today." And I ask them how they end up in the mountain, just the two of you. They say their boat got sunk near the northern

part of island. Boat got sunk, so they swim to island and they went to mountains. They told us they are not the fighting group. Some kind of, what do you call it, labor unit? Labor unit. Not actual fighting unit.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Oh yeah, they didn't know war is over. It was war over already. They didn't know way because they don't have no radio or nothing.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: I told them I was born America but I was grown up in Okinawa from two years old to seventeen years old. (Pointing to guest) Her brother came.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: So, they ready to go with us and they were already ready, but they're too... not good condition so cross the hill, climb half way and then I look sorry for him. They have to take a break. Take a break and then rest until ready to start. I told them, I carry the one to top. [laughs] I carry the one guy, soldier. And before that, he want to see the pistol. I take the bullets out and I show the pistol.

INT: Was he scared?

HK: He was a little scared. But just curiosity what kind of armament America had. So, we started, I carry him up to top of the mountain and then my teacher, he carried the other guy. [laughs] Because it was getting late, maybe it was, day was getting short. So, we went back. When we went down mountain, where we started, it was already dark, pitch dark. So I told him, my teacher, let's sleep here and then go your place tonight. I can ask for transportation to camp far away, about 20 miles, about 20 miles away. So, next day I get the Unit Commander, talk to the commander, get their transportation. If I take myself with two guy, someone, maybe someone hiding and give what do you call, hard time for me maybe.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Yes, I didn't go... Cave one time I went. A lot of smoke coming out of cave. It was a big cave. But smoke come out. Smoke was all time coming out. I thought ask the commander, "they didn't do anything, but smoke come out of the cave." I talk the Okinawan language, "It's safe to come out. I was born America but I was grown up in Okinawa. And I know American soldiers and they don't do bad thing. Just come out and we give you enough food, enough place to sleep. So, don't worry, just come out." But no answer. Either they got suicide or what, I don't know. I thought I want to go inside the cave, but my commander, "No, you can't go. It's dangerous." So, I couldn't go inside the cave. And another incidents was my village was a place called Izumi, was the name of the village I grew up. Side of village, far away... my family was central town, central village. Way up village too mountains in big valley like this. And some small communities. I have a classmate came from around there. I think it was his mother I kind of rescue. Because when I went there some POW, you know, Prisoner of War, he give me some

information some Japanese soldiers, group of Japanese soldiers, hiding that village. So that Izumi, where I grew up, same village, but kind of far away. So I don't know too much around the village because one or two time I went there when I was small. But I didn't know too much, I wasn't familiar. But at the end of the village, in the mountain is Japanese soldier groups, maybe dozen soldiers. And they're the one sometimes come out to Haneji, where they keep civilian refugees, they kept the refugees in Haneji. They come out and those people with American soldiers, what you do call, they coordinate, you know helping American soldiers, they kill someone. They come out the nighttime, come to the camp. They took away and kill in the mountain.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Uh huh. Yeah. Because they help Americans, you know. I don't know what... How they help American soldiers, I don't know. But they know from information from other civilians.

INT: So, they Okinawan civilians...

HK: Because if anybody listen to the incidents... one school principal, he's from our village, Izumi, his family has three/four teachers, educated. Three/four teachers from his family, one was principal. And during this war, I guess lot of civilians, kids too, got together in the mountain, was hiding because a lot of cannons, fighting. You stay in the village, kind of dangerous. They escape in the mountain. So, one time, American soldier, I guess, with loudspeaker, "Come surrender. Come, we have food and everything. We take care, so come. It's safe to come. Come over." So, this principal, his name Teruya Tsue [?], he step out with some handkerchief, you know, something. He step out from his hiding place. He tried to signal the soldier. Then, Japanese soldier slit him from behind. He died immediately. So, that way, you're afraid which way you go. If you go surrender, you dangerous too, you stay there, you dangerous too. Very confusing, over there.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Yes, my father died when I was sixteen years old, maybe fifteen years old. He died, age 50 years old. Very young, but he was heavy drinker, so he died young. My mom was already, my family was already Haneji in civilian refugee camp when I went to see them. It was about... after the war was over, fighting over, I went to see. Because from Naha south to where I grew up Motobu, Izumi, is quite a distance. And mountain, you never know when Japanese soldier are there.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Yes. Somebody, before that, some guy told me my family was safe.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Somebody told them I was, you know, in Okinawa.

INT: What was it like when you saw them?

HK: We were all excited, can't talk, anything. Just tears come out, that's all. We couldn't say anything. So happy to see you. But they're, they're so happy to see me. No casualty from war, my family, but I learned my young sister died two/three years back from sickness.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: But not many casualty. I met one man, shrapnel hit here, just scars, that's all. I never heard about from my village, I think nobody died from my village.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: All separate from, never get together. One leader, Tomas Ige, he was, went on a mission to find some Japanese soldier in this island near from Motobu, Izumi Township. Now they have bridge now, but those days it was separate island. They had, mission, they got some Japanese soldiers hiding, some wooded area of the island. So Tomas Ige went with this patrol. He step on a mine, blew up, big injury and we never see him again. He was sent back to Hawaii hospital and then later military hospital. He went all kind of operation, then okay, he got okay. He was smart guy. He went to college, Missouri or someplace, economic and later became professor in Hawaii University, Tomas Ige.

INT: I read his book.

HK: Oh yes, I read too. My friend, my niece lend me. He died about ten years ago.

INT: What did your family do after the war?

HK: Oh, yes. They lived a temporary living quarter. You know Okinawa, they give each other help, make a house, neighbors help each other.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Oh, eventually, yes. At camp, you know, they all taking care, you know, wood, the necessary stuff. I don't know about clothing, I don't think. But food mainly.

INT: How did you feel...

HK: Oh, it's I think more happy they found American soldier help very good. Of course, young boys, any country, they mistreat the girls. Japanese soldiers, same thing. They did a lot of bad thing in China, Japanese soldiers. But they found the American soldier very friendly and they gave enough food and drugs. And they take care of wounded people. Even they gave them blood if they need.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: They're happy, yes. I guess so, I can't say. But they're good soldiers, not do what Japanese soldiers told them, if they get captured they get killed. They told them, that's why afraid to go out from cave.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: We were so happy when war ended. First time I fired my carbine rifle they gave, you know carbine, it's a short rifle, it's a semi-automatic. Everyone fire in the sky [laughs] when Emperor announced they surrender. So, sky was fourth of July, fourth of July-like. Everybody happy.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Then, we're compared to other boys, we're more senior so we got discharged. We qualified to get the discharge. So, if you wanna stay Okinawa, Red Cross, they have Red Cross there too, you know, Red Cross ask me to stay Okinawa more. No, I want I like to go home. I didn't say I don't like military life, actually, I didn't like stay in military. So, beside, it's not fair just whole family, just taking care of own family and rest of people I can't. So, I decided to get discharged.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: I didn't know much about atom bomb, you know. I didn't know so much casualty caused by atomic bomb. I didn't know it was terrible thing, but according to Truman, president, it's a tried to save more lives. That's the purpose because if you don't use, you keep fighting like this. So many boys get killed, civilians. Before Japan, invaded Japan, so many people died. So Truman said that's why atomic bomb. Either way you look, I guess, it's a shortened war. It saved so many lives actually if you kept, you kept going, you know, it shortened their lives [war]. So you can say it's good, you can say it's bad. I don't know. There's always two sides.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: American soldiers took care so good. All highways, they fixed nice highways and they paid all land use owners pay, so rent, you know. So, they are satisfied with Americans. Of course some young soldiers, some mistreating girls, like, you know. But, I think anywhere you have to have those things because young soldiers, you never know.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: I think, how many years become Japanese? Go back Japanese government? I think two years later, four years later. I forgot. But some people want to stay under the United States, but some people they like go back to Japan. But there's always two sides.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Oh, yes, six years ago. My brother, he was a painter and he, his life, after he got out from camp, I told you about military discharge, after that, he went back to camp. Then, war ended and he went to Brooklyn, not come back to Los Angeles, Brooklyn to study painting. He was...

before the war he was going to art school in Los Angeles. Working daytime, you know, and some day he go to school, two times a week, or something like that. And after the war, he went Brooklyn and he worked Japanese restaurant as a waiter who bring from kitchen with... Oh, dumb waiter, something like that, he was doing that in Japanese restaurant. And while he was doing, he go museum and study art too. He stayed in a small government owned apartment, very cheap rent, mostly color people there, he said. He was doing the art work. He got sick at the end, like 19... after the war, about seven years ago. After got sick, we went after visit my brother in San Francisco. And some writer from Japan, he was looking all kind of people, Japanese people in United State, you know, all kind of special thing. He heard about my brother, about he doing painting. And my brother he don't want interest to other painter to have exhibit. That's waste of time. He just keep drawing picture. He married too, he met at camp. And they married, but after five/six years, they separated. She wanted a divorce. They separated and he was alone. I think they married about twelve or thirteen years. She is a painter too. Still she is a painter too in New York. Anyway, when last time I went it was... Okinawa people, Okinawa government want to have exhibit in Okinawa. This was Mr... I don't know his name but, he's a writer, he's the one who tried to make exhibit in Okinawa. He wrote many article in Okinawan paper, so many days, so many weeks, you know, keep writing. Then, one time, Lieutenant Governor from Okinawa came here. That time, my brother was already got stroke. His leg wasn't working. So, we decide to move him from Brooklyn to here. Put him in nursing home in Lincoln Heights. They have a nice Japanese nursing home. I went talk to them and then okay. We went. And that time, NHK, Japanese television, they came with this writer, Shimojima, this writer's name, Shimojima. This writer and NHK, they came from, with this writer and to bring my brother to over here from Brooklyn. They went with us. So, it was... so many people went. Then, we put him over there. He can talk, but his leg, he couldn't walk. He stayed there over a year or so. While he was there, the Okinawa government want to have a show, his exclusive artwork in Naha and Motobu, where we grew up. They have two show. So, he couldn't go. Doctor says, "no, don't take him, even if put him chair. Don't take him." So, I took my daughter, where we stay now and another son, lives in San Fernando. Three of us went. So they want to see Okinawa too. But this Okinawa government paid all fair and hotel.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Oh, we found very... So much change. Before that we went two/three times after the war already. My wife, we both went. Japan Sea side of Japan, Kyoto, and then came back. We went three times before that. But every time it change so much. Even countryside village, Izumi, all house, all American style house. They have pipe, electricity, telephone. We never had that when I grew up, we didn't have that.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: I think that's they're afraid of China, China or North Korea. I think they have to have bases to protect Japan because Japan doesn't have enough armament. If North Korea attack Japan, they don't have enough power, either China or North Korea. So, I think it's nice to have military. I think in Japan they know too. I think.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Okinawa, if another war, like with China or Korea, maybe they might get invaded too. That's they're afraid. They're kind of worried. But they can't do anything.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: You know, I was thinking... I'm not highly educated, but to keep peace in this world, you have to be like Okinawan people, very peace-loving people [crying]. They're ancestors from all educate from ancestors, it's life, men's life is most precious thing in this world. Life of a human. You don't hurt anybody with your temper. Don't hurt anybody, that's teaching from ancestors in Okinawa. But as you look now, now religion, among religion, church they're fighting now. Religion doesn't take care the world peace, to keep the world peace, you know that. But armament, you never solve problem through fighting. You gotta make all people among themselves love each other. That's only way keep peace in the world.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Yes, they like peace. Peace-loving people, Okinawan. But, I don't believe in war. War doesn't solve problem. Religion is just God says so, you know. People made it, human made it. They never made the God, they just guessed what the God said. I don't think religion does keep peace in this world. Maybe if you have powerful United Nation, might keep the peace. But as now, it's no solution to it, I guess. The way it looks. It's kind of sad, people killing each other. Look Iraq, you know, so many people die, so many soldiers die, so many young people. Why we have to go Iraq? It's just waste, I think.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: If I was president [laughs] [inaudible] war outside. If you United Nation army require to keep peace, you know, then maybe they send the army or something. If they don't obey United Nation's order, then we can't send without United Nation's order. Don't go just fight. That's my thinking. It's not proper, I think.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: It's small Okinawa, but there's a lot of thing we can learn from people from Okinawa. That's what I think.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: Not over here, though. Not over here. But my brother was president one time of Okinawa Association over here. We have a Okinawa Kenjinkai. They have in Gardena. Once in awhile I go there too. They have every year, they have a dinner or something like that.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: I thought maybe they missed. They didn't do anything after the war. They didn't do any thank you to the Nisei interpreters, you know. They tried to make up or something. They missed, even after sixty years later. I think, that's all I think.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: It's okay. Doesn't mean that much to me after sixty years. But, you know, when I had my brother's art show, he gave a special art book. He called me to capital in Naha, he send a car and pick me up and went to there. And he remember, it was six years ago. I ask him, "Do you remember me?" I ask him. He say, "Yes, I remember you."

INT: I think that's all...

HK: If you have something, you know, let me know.

INT: [inaudible]

HK: My tear come so easily. Sorry about that. Emotional time.

INT: Thank you.

HK: You're welcome.

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