

Battalion?

JL: I was a volunteer. After I got the word at Anderson's headquarters, Anderson wanted to question this thing about who _____. I'm sure Joe ^{Deville} ~~Neville~~ (sp?) was one of those who applied. He was a Major, and Turner said he was going to go in and Anderson didn't want him to go, and so I said I might as well put my name in too, but I didn't get any consideration I think, then when ^{J. LAUGHTON} ~~Jay Lock~~ Collins told Anderson and told Turner that he had chosen him he asked him how about selecting my officers.

TT: Turner asked, told 'em that?

JL: Asked Collins.

TT: Uh, huh.

JL: And how about, because we knew they were supposed to pick nine of "haoles" and so many all of the AJAs in there. So when he asked Turner that, Turner says, he told Turner you can take whoever you want. That's how.

TT: Part of the 298th?

JL: Yeah. So he went back and he told Jim Anderson. Anderson said to Turner don't you think you ought to ask Lovell first before you make up your mind? Turner says he already knows that. We felt, I felt, we felt bad for Anderson. You know, shoved him around, and he became a brigadier general, and they called an inspection on him. They did a really a tough inspection on him and they booted him out, busted him back and moved him out to Texas, and that's his son Billy who was killed in Normandy.

TT: Your feelings about joining this provisional battalion of all "niseis," you had any hesitation or doubts?

JL: Well, I was, you know, we were trying to get around on this. Lot of the boys came and talked to me from the, you know, that had been brought in there that knew me and then so I think that partly influenced me, but I was anxious to get going because they had just turned me down. Anderson had just turned me

down for a job as Assistant G-3 at Shafter, and this position I'm going to be sent there _____ shooting match look like. I wanted to get out of there. This was taking a chance because I didn't know where we were going anyway. I was just ready to move, anxious to do something but of course I was influenced, and I think I mentioned it in some of the writings before, like Frank Nose from the bank and moved out of Wahiwawa, came down and made a special trip down to you know Tom Nose came down asked me to please take care of him and by that time I had lot of other people wanting me to take care of 'em too. I was anxious to go. I thought it was a good deal.

TT: But lot of these guys you had known from Washington Intermediate and McKinley?

ST: Ah, Jim, how were the officers selected, you know, people who actually made up the personnel when we had to organize in June of 1943?

JL: We looked for. . .when they told 'em to pick nine officers yeah, so he went down through and he had the five company commanders and they had to be "haoles."

They couldn't be AJAs, couldn't be that but they could be these others.

TT: Who imposed that requirement?

JL: It came on the wire. That was in the wire, and Johnson. . .so it went to Johnson, MacKenzie, Peck, Brenneman(~~sp.?~~) and Clarence Johnson. That was the five they picked for captain, and we could've forced the 298th to let these go but when they went down through for any objections we had more who wanted to go than this. Mendonza was almost crying.

TT: Who, *Duffie?* ~~Nopi~~(~~sp.?~~)?

JL: Yeah, *Duffie* ~~Nopi~~ wanted to go so badly and several others, but those were the five captains for them and that was done just because Turner's consent, or Anderson's consent, Turner's selection and I think the "Old Man" had in mind that so he can move this around because the first time he got a chance he moved *two captains.* As soon as he got a chance long before and nobody said anything about it. And, let's see, he had. . . Brenneman was C Company on Hawaii.

ST: Maui.

JL: Plantation.

ST: Oh, yeah, yeah, C Company.

JL: They called him "Muscle Blast." He get all talked in
the men. ^{Drolet} ~~Drouilhet~~(sp:?) was another one.

ST: Fraser(~~sp:?~~)?

JL: Fraser got hurt at Officers School one night. He
tried to stop his .45 by using this stop on it. You
know, if you push the barrel back it won't fire, but
you don't put any bullets in there when you're
practicing, and he puts it up there and he pushes it
back again and pulls the trigger, "Bang," a hole.

ST: He was sitting right next to me.

JL: Two of these guys left us. Clarence Johnson, well,
he went to. . .when we were at Camp McCoy he was sent
down to Benning, and they put him in a transportation

outfit and this guy was a "crackerjack," and that was his life work and they kept him there, and then they took this guy Corals(sp.?) from Hilo, the radio man, he was a well-known, outstanding radio. . .

ST: Marques. Harold Marques.

JL: Marks, yeah, M a r q u e s.

ST: Yeah, yeah.

JL: And that leaves us with Drouilhet(sp.?), Rocky, Rocky ~~Marizoni~~^{MARZONE}(Sp.?). There was quite a bit of conversation about Peck. There was two Pecks--Phil Peck who was a captain and he became a company commander; there was a Major Peck who was an S-4 of the 298th/9th, and he went down under to Guadalcanal with the 298th.

J. Loughton

TT: What was Jay Collins' position or rank?

JL: Well, he was a. . . I think he was *a Brigadier General, Chief of Staff under General Emmons.*

TT: Was he under General Emmons?

JL: Oh, yeah. Emmons overall but Collins would be the
Hawaiian. *Department commander of all ground troops.*

ST: Wasn't he a colonel then?

JL: Huh?

ST: He was a colonel then?

JL: Who?

ST: Collins.

JL: No.

ST: Wasn't he the military governor?

JL: Green.

ST: Green, yeah.

JL: Russ was commander of the Hawaiian area, commander or
something like that they called him--Hawaiian

Department, Hawaiian Department.

TT: You mentioned some of the officers that were picked. You said there were about nine "nisei" officers--now Sakae Takahashi would be one of them. Who were some of the others? Do you have them?

JL: I brought my notes.

ST: I think if my figure is correct there were 17 but. . .

TT: That went up to Camp McCoy?

ST: Yeah. I may be wrong.

JL: AJAs: Tanimura, Suzuki, Fukuda, Tanaka, Kainuma, Otani, Kawano, Sakai, Mizuta, Koga, Mizuha, Kawasaki, Sakamoto, Matsu. . .

ST: Matsunaga.

JL: Matsunaga, Kuramoto, Tsubota. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. . .16. That's

more than he said. I think he said so many men.

TT: These were all fellows who were in the 298th already?

JL: These were all in there.

TT: Uh, huh, and lot of them. . .

JL: They weren't. . .Kometani was sworn in that day,
and. . .

ST: Well, Taro Suzuki and John Tanimura were with the
same outfit. . .

JL: At Shafter. They were on duty.

TT: How did Kometani get in?

JL: Fielder mostly.

TT: Did "Kome" volunteer?

JL: Oh, yeah.

TT: As the boys were gathered up to form into this provisional battalion and then shipped off on June 5th, do you recall generally what the feelings or the attitudes of the boys were?

JL: Well, would be. . .

TT: The morale. . .

JL: The morale was all right, and there was a curiosity was getting the best of them all. You know, they take a guy out and put 'em on the boat and take off, boy, anybody is liable to wonder what's happening to me. I think that was the thing and then, of course, guys always you know, like the old thing say that one good one and one bad one and everybody picks the bad one--where are they taking us? They're going to put us away some place, and that seemed to be foremost in many minds and the guys' attitudes was wait and see. I think as soon as the word started to getting around about, you know, we were preparing for something that looks like we were gonna really be used, we were not going to be labor troops or something, I think they got that spirit and the way the people treated them

in Camp McCoy and people in Spartan~~/~~, I think they remembered World War I, the people of Spartan~~/~~, when Germans really got the treatment in many Wisconsin towns, and there were some boys coming back here that's to be sure to be taken care of. And they really got taken care of. They were invited to homes all the time, at church, a lot of them went to church, of course, they went to dinner afterwards. They got good treatment from everybody.

TT: Did the boys. . .did you sense that these fellows wanted a chance to fight and to show their "stuff" so to speak?

JL: I had that feeling, and I think there was enough evidence of it that expressed by boys: I wonder what they're going to do next? How come we're doing all of this training and looks like everybody's coming with, as it was said many times, we were the most inspected and examined outfit in the war, and they didn't spare any time like they came at midnight, that one gang with 50 officers at midnight and take us out instead dark in the morning. Remember that morning, cold as hell, and. . .

ST: It wasn't only, it was cold.

JL: I remember seeing the guy handing this slip what his orders were. But we were up there that night before you know. when they called, I answered the phone, 11:30, and you and Turner, Robinson's headquarters as soon as you can get here. So we went up there and we found there were 50 of them. We'll have a full inspection, daylight and tomorrow morning, so they handed each one, each company a problem. One of the highlights was that thing, this General from the Sixth Corps where these were from, and the General who was a Major General, he later became a parachute, general parachute outfit in Manila, and when they went in to inspection of the kitchens he took them and he was walking along there and he come to Company A, they were the first one, and he went through it all, but they had the company commanders come in when he went through there and Peck went through his company and everything was 100 per cent. I guess Peck got carried away when he got such a good grade and he said, "Thank you, Sir," and the General said, "Very good," and Peck said, "Thank you, Sir. Would

you like to see anything else?" Gee, you never do this, and the General said, "What's in those boxes up there?" And he said, "I gotta call the Sergeant over and find out what's in those boxes." The General said, "Let's take a look." They've had cherry pie the night before and if you ever see anything that make some messes--the cherry juice had slopped over and they got all these pie plates that hadn't been washed put away without being cleaned. You know that little shrimp that guy was the little shrimp, the Major General, and he turned around at Peck and said anything else, you know. He showed him this and took it away and said, "Who's the second in command here?" Willis, Willis was there. Willis says, "I am, Sir." He said, "You're in command of this company now. Captain Peck, you will dismiss yourself." Poor old Peck, you know, they took him over to the 85th, General Wayslip's(sp.?) outfit, and they sent him down to Fort McClellan and made him an umpire for maneuvers. He had a bad back, you know, and that poor bugger slept on the ground. He slept out on the ground, he just take his stuff and go with him to maneuvers over here and the next week maneuvers here, and next week maneuvers. . .wore the poor ole bugger.

ST: We go back a little bit, Jim. When the outfit left Schofield Barracks to go to the mainland and on to Camp McCoy, the unit was designated as the 100th Infantry, excuse me, the Hawaii Provisional Infantry Battalion, right? Didn't that indicate that we were gonna be infantry trained some place on the mainland?

JL: Oh, I think the connotation was there in that.

ST: And then when was it that we were designated as the 100th Infantry Battalion?

JL: At Oakland.

ST: At Oakland?

JL: At Oakland when we landed at Oakland, so we were only the other one only for a few weeks, not a week, few days.

ST: Just for the trip across from Honolulu to Oakland?

JL: Yeah.

TT: This feeling of the boys--they sensed that as "niseis" they were on the spot and they had to prove themselves or show themselves, this was. . .

JL: I think this word went around through everybody by some of the leaders among the men, not necessarily noncom officers but somebody like "Kome" on the other side of the pit said, "Wait a minute. What are you doing?" or something he sort of looked back to that as morale officer, and there was one occasion where out on maneuvers the boys got into somebody's stereo or something and they started singing loudly and "Kome" had to go and stop the singing at night. He had the respect and that so he told them looks like we're gonna do this or we're gonna do this so. And I think word got around enough like when they did a certain new thing like ___ something's happening, huh.

TT: You said the 100th was probably the most inspected outfit in World War II. Why were they kept in training so long and inspected so much? Would it be that the War Department was also looking the

Battalion over?

JL: I think there's two--I think one is because they didn't know what to do with them. That had brought up the long time at the front. Then when they did find out what they were gonna do with them, they wanted to be sure and, you know, this kid wasn't copying his answers from this kid, that he was learning this himself, and they wanted to be sure that there wasn't a chance for them to fail, that they could be good enough to be a success. I don't think the Army could have stood it if they had been a failure. You know, but some guy's neck would have got chopped probably.

TT: It's been said that one of the main reasons why the War Department in January of '43 approved the idea of forming an all-"nisei" combat unit which turned out to be the 442nd was in great part due to the superb training record of the 100th at Camp McCoy.

JL: There's no question about that. That's printed in documents all the way through, and our liaison man, 298th's liaison man, Major Bill Overbeck(sp.?), used

to be in McCoy every week, then go back down. He reported personally to ~~Bandolier(sp.?)~~ ^{General Ben Lear, Commander Second Army} some of his findings. I think ~~Bandolier(sp.?)~~ ^{Ben Lear} wanted to come down and see it but he was too big a guy to come down and fool around with a little battalion, but Overbeck(sp.?) I've got lots of folders at home on Overbeck(sp.?), went out and took him on field kitchens and he loved the boys. He went around with them but he would come almost every week, and he'd make a report of what we were doing, what they did this day and he followed the ^{weekly} reports, all went on back to the 2nd Army, General ~~Bandolier(sp.?)~~ ^{Ben Lear}.

TT: Seen any of these evaluations of the 100th that went back to. . .

JL: I didn't see them. Handwritten reports but I was told what was in it. He was very open with us, but and if he thought that there was going to be something big gonna take place that we better do this kind of planning. He wouldn't tell you to do it. He said I suggest that maybe you ought to clean up your act a little bit in this or something.

TT: What is your overall evaluation of the Camp McCoy phase of the 100th's history?

JL: I think the Camp McCoy phase was a series of learning lessons, and gradual adoption of the boys into a plan of successful soldiering that produced a highly-trained, efficient outfit made up of very serious individual soldiers who were trained and ready to perform numerous jobs rather than their number one job. I'd say that any officer was very fortunate that he had command of such men.

TT: That Camp McCoy training is where the 100th developed its cohesiveness and effectiveness as a fighting unit.

JL: I don't know whether you want to put this down but there is one comment I should make with this, that except for the arrival of the first group of officer replacements, I think a mistake was made at that time when Colonel Turner asked for these soldiers to come from noncoms at Schofield. As it all turned out they were all over age in grade, seven or eight of them, so they all had to be promoted right away so they

were all promoted from 2nd lieutenant to captains, and they immediately became captains to the companies, and this was a bad one. This feeling of _____, I think for Mits, I think Mits never. . .

ST: Mits and Dick Mizuta. Fortunately, in my case I had Jack Mizuta as company commander. He was the only one allowed to be company commander because he had the rank of captain, but. . .

JL: Arnold took Mits' place, whatcha call it? The Jack Johnson's place, Christopher.

ST: Yeah.

JL: And these guys were all high-ranking noncoms, and immediately jumped two grades over everybody else. That's a hard one to play with.

ST: Jim, what's the restriction with regard to "niseis" being company commanders still in effect then?

JL: We never. . .the subject was never broached. Turner just took it upon himself to change it. I think he

figured and felt it worth it and let's see if anything happens. Nothing ever happened.

TT: So what you're saying is that the officers that were selected from the 298th that went up to McCoy in effect were superseded by these recently-promoted noncoms from back in Schofield?

JL: No, it was the same group of these guys here that were all. . .they had just finished officers' candidate school, and they came to us as 1st lieutenants.

TT: On whose order or whose idea was this?

JL: Oh, we needed officers. We were going to get a full company so Turner asked for more men, and contrary to the next one, got the finest bunch of men you could ever want--guys like Key(~~sp-?~~) and. . .

ST: *Schemel*
~~Schavell~~(~~sp-?~~).

JL: Yeah.

TT: This was up in McCoy?

JL: Yeah.

TT: And then they were not competent or efficient or they didn't get along with the boys or. . .

JL: Overbearing and too many places figured like--well, I'll give you an example of what one of them said one of the types of guy from the next group. He said, "I'll stack arms and bodies when the shooting starts." Well, when the shooting started he took off backwards, running. He was going to be stacking all the German bodies when the shooting starts. And we had another guy who got yellow fever, yellow jaundice, every few minutes--Smith, that guy Smith. He went down with yellow jaundice how many times. That guy Blood(sp.?) was gonna stack bodies and guns in Manila, and they finally arrested him over in the 36th Division in France. His wife wrote Turner about money. She wasn't getting any money, been cut off. Found out he was over in Michigan at the disciplinary barracks.

ST: Wasn't he one of the originals that Turner picked
from 298th?

JL: Smith?

ST: Arnold Smith, wasn't he?

JL: Barney.

ST: Barney Smith.

JL: I don't have him any place on my list.

ST: On my. . .

JL: But I questioned that once because I couldn't figure
how did we get him.

ST: Yeah, my recollection is he was with us when we
shipped out of Schofield Barracks.

JL: You know, I have him on some list. I don't know how
he got there.

TT: So this batch of officers, did they go overseas with the boys or. . .

JL: Oh, yeah.

TT: They did? And how did they turn out in combat?

JL: Two or three of them turned out pretty good as. . .and I think as individual soldiers some of them would have been all right, but Christopher, Jesus, he couldn't get along with him. I saved Mits from going to courtmartial by moving him out. I just found out about it in a roundabout way that Christopher was having the courtmartial all made up and ready to sock him, and I got an order to transfer him to another outfit where. . .

ST: Jim, do you remember in the list of these officers that were battalion guard from Fort Benning one Victor Bowman?

JL: Bowman, yeah.

ST: He was one of those.

JL: Yeah.

ST: Yeah.

JL: Little short Frenchman.

ST: Yeah.

JL: Yeah, he's on here.

ST: Well, he was assigned to take over Jack Mizuha's place.

JL: Oh, yeah.

ST: Of Dog Company. Excuse me, F Company. Jack was company commander of F Company.

JL: Right. He's on here. ^{Bowin} Bowman. Another guy I lost track of is Raider(~~sp??~~). A German, he was made a captain.

ST: He was commanding C Company for a while.

JL: One day while in field with Colonel Turner, we met General McNair. This was out on an open field where maneuver areas.

TT: This is in McCoy?

JL: This was down at Shelby, and we questioned him and about where we're going, what's happening? And we learned firsthand we were just about ready. The chief thing that had to be done for the battalion would be issue new equipment and this, of course, was good news to us and we were going through maneuvers at this time. We had done the minor series under General ^{Haislip} ~~Haisley~~(sp.) of many maneuvers, but this was with the Big Boys and under scrutiny of top-ranking people in the ground troop area. Just like we were doing this I think was a continuation of the reasons we had before was to give them sufficient training to be sure that all items had been covered, but the other Big Guys _____ was that the outfit was going to have to stand alone because it really was a "bastard" outfit, and standing alone mean that there would be times when they would be pulled out of their own