

CHAPTER 2
LIFE IN THE ARMY

***** ON THE WAY *****

Those of us on the "Big Island" who had enlisted and were ready for active duty were told to report to the Mountain View School yard at 11:30 a.m. on March 27, 1943. Everyone had also been told not to bring any extra clothing so all we carried was in a small case with a few things such as shaving gear. When we arrived, they gave us leis and a coffee and donut party. Finally, someone formed us up in a big formation. There were probably over 150 of us. Afterwards, the soldiers put us on trucks and drove us to the Federal Building in Hilo where we got off the trucks and back into ranks. We were then sworn into the Army. After that, we climbed back on the trucks for a short drive to the docks where we boarded a ship for an overnight cruise to Honolulu on the island of Oahu. It was a small ship and slow, slow, slow! I don't really remember, but I guess there must have been someone in charge of us. As the ship pulled away from the dock, I never expected to see my family again. Fortunately I was wrong.

After landing in Honolulu, we were again loaded on Army trucks and driven to Schofield Barracks, about 15 or 20 miles north of Honolulu. We only stayed there for about five days or so. Here we got our first issue of Army uniforms. Probably, they started making our personnel records and finance records and made dog tags for us to wear. I remember a short medical exam, but it wasn't much. There were some Nisei sergeants in charge of us now. There were lots of other sergeants running around Schofield Barracks.

One day we grabbed our duffel bags and were then loaded on trucks again. We were taken back to the Honolulu docks where we climbed aboard a troopship and headed for San Francisco. The Nisei sergeants were still with us and maybe there was an officer or two. It seems like they were Nisei guys from the university ROT unit. It was a boring five day trip. Some of the guys spent a lot of time gambling on the way to San Francisco.

Once our ship docked at San Francisco, we immediately boarded a train for the trip to Mississippi. We rode in Pullman cars so at night we had a decent bed to sleep in. We had to go

all the way up to Chicago before going way down south to Hattiesburg, Mississippi to where Camp Shelby was. No one ever told us why we had to go to Chicago first, but it sure made for a long, boring six or seven days. The train went fast enough, but there were a heck of a lot of stops on sidings while other trains went by us. We were really glad when the train ride was over.

*** THE TRIALS OF BASIC COMBAT TRAINING ***

Once at Camp Shelby, we started our Basic Combat Training, or Basic for short. The training started on 4 April and ended in November. All of us were being trained to join either the 100th Battalion or the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. In these two organizations, all the enlisted men were Nisei, but there were some that were part Japanese and part Chinese, Korean, or Filipino. Only boys who had at least one Japanese parent could be in these units. At first all the officers were white, but later there were some Nisei officers too. Colonel Pence was the regimental commander, and he was very good. He really stuck up for the boys! Some of the white officers didn't seem to care much for us early on but they later learned to like us, and we actually got along with all the officers very well. Some became so attached to us that they actually cried when a bunch of us went overseas to join the 100th Battalion and they couldn't go with us. They had to stay and train more Nisei soldiers.

We lived in the standard wooden barracks that were built during World War II. They weren't in really great shape and had a coal stove for heat. Everyone had a single metal cot to sleep on and a footlocker at the foot of the bed to keep your stuff in. There was also a clothes rod on the wall to hang your uniforms on. It wasn't like being home at all.

There were times I'd go to the day room and lift weights for recreation. I don't know who owned them. There were about ten guys that I used to see there that were really into weight lifting in a serious manner. Sometimes a couple of us would get together and have a beer, but not too often. The USO Club always had dances, but the place was crowded, and I didn't know how to dance so I only went once or twice.

I wound up being a bugler. I had never done that before, but they taught some of us how, and it really wasn't all that hard. Being a bugler kept us from having to pull KP so that was a

bonus. When I became a bugler, I was promoted to Pfc. Now I could wear one stripe on my uniform sleeves and get a little more money each month.

The basic military training was very difficult, especially for the people who worked in offices and did light duty. Since I had worked in the sugar cane fields and was in very good shape physically, it was like play to me. Even the road marches before breakfast, three miles out and three mile back, or the 15 mile road marches were easy. There was lots of other physical training too. We called it PT for short.

Of course we had rifle training. We learned about the basic infantry rifle, the M-1 Garand and the lighter M-1 carbine that the officers and some others carried. It was really bad, though, as no one had their own rifle. There must have been a shortage of rifles as each squad of 12 men only had one rifle. When we went to the range to fire, it was very slow. It was bad when we had to qualify because everyone had to fire from 100 yards, 200 yards, and 500 yards. I was lucky just to hit the big target as they didn't give us time to adjust the rifle to yourself. It was awful!

The cadre taught us other things like grenades and how to read a map. We had to run through obstacle courses too. We got up pretty early every day in order to do everything on the schedule.

Sometimes there was trouble between the Nisei from Hawaii and those from the United States. The boys from the States spoke very good English whereas many of us from Hawaii spoke Pidgin English. Some of the Hawaiians seemed to think the guys from the States that spoke good English were looking down on them and trying to show them up. It never bothered me, but a few boys, especially some from Honolulu, would get mad and go start a fight or something. My friend Johnny Akimoto was a good boxer and when some loudmouthed guy tried to start something, he had big trouble!

The biggest problem was with some of the white soldiers. There were many units at Camp Shelby, not just ours. There were a lot of fights down by the gate and on the way into Hattiesburg after we were allowed to go into town.

I got in a big fight one night right down in the barracks area. I was really mad over this thing! There were always part of our guys out on night exercises and they wouldn't get back till 10 or 11 p.m. One night about in the middle of our training, someone asked us to go over to the USO Club, which was about four blocks away and see if we could get leftover sandwiches for the

boys that were coming back in late. It was about 10 p.m. when my friend Shig Hashi and I went over and the USO girls gave us a whole bunch of sandwiches. We were heading back to the barracks with an armful of sandwiches when we saw three guys coming at us. Even in the pitch dark, you could tell they were pretty drunk by the way they slurred their words. Before I knew what happen, this guy grabbed me by the necktie and said, "What time is it?" Before I could answer, I was flat on my back on the road. The sandwiches went flying everywhere. It was so dark I couldn't even see him. When I tried to sit up I felt the air rush by me as he swung at my head and missed. I dove at him and smacked him in the stomach. I couldn't even tell how big he was. I got my arms around him and held on tight. My arms could hardly get around this guy, but I was trying to throw him down. He kept trying to gouge my eyes, and I wound up with a lot of fingernail impressions all around my eyes. I jabbed him with my head and we rolled into a ditch by the side of the road. I knew there was a lot of white sand in that ditch. He had a headlock on me and I couldn't move until I got some leverage with my knees, and when I did I slammed a handful of white sand into his face and started really pounding on him.

As soon as this guy starting fighting me, Shig went over and stood in the front of his two buddies and told them to stay out of the fight or else, and they did. While I was pounding this guy in the ditch, a car drove up with headlights on and stopped, but nobody every got out or said anything. I thought maybe they were officers. With the headlights on the fight, people starting coming out of the barracks to break up our fight. I was kind of loud by this time. The GIs from the barracks kept saying, "That's enough. That's enough." As someone pulled me off this big guy, I was really mad and yelled at him and his two friends, "Next time I catch you guys down here, I'll kill you!!" The two who hadn't fought helped their friend to his feet and then they walked off. Shig and I went back to our barracks. My hand really hurt and I learned that I had broken a bone in it so the medics put me in the hospital for three weeks.

After about four months in training, you could get a pass to go downtown to Hattiesburg. The people downtown treated us very well. We rode a big city bus which we called a *cattle car*. It seemed that there were always some loudmouthed white guys hassling the Japanese-American boys. One time a white bus driver was joining in with some white guys making derogatory remarks about us Nisei and the boys decided they'd had enough of that. They

kicked him around and threw him off the bus, and then one of our guys drove the bus back to post. The next morning our battalion had a special formation, and we thought that we'd get chewed out for sure. The 1st Battalion officer was a heck of a nice guy. He came out and said. "If you ever have that problem again, do the same thing; Kick Their Butts! Don't take nothing from nobody!" Well, we were really surprised when he said that, but after that, there didn't seem to be any more big problems.

Even though we were Japanese, we ate the same food in the mess hall as the other outfits, but near the end of the training things changed some. Our commander said, "If you boys want to eat something better, something that you want to eat, we can all pitch in five or ten dollars a month and the cooks can go out and buy rice and fresh fish and all that Japanese food." Well the cooks got together and then we started to eat very good. Once a month, the cooks would fix a really big supper and we could eat all we wanted. There were a lot of red snappers in Mississippi and the cooks would fillet them and make sashimi. That is a Japanese food of raw fish with no bones at all that is cut very, very thin and dipped in soy sauce and hot mustard. It is really good! When the white officers found out how good our food was, they stopped going to the officer's mess and started eating with us.

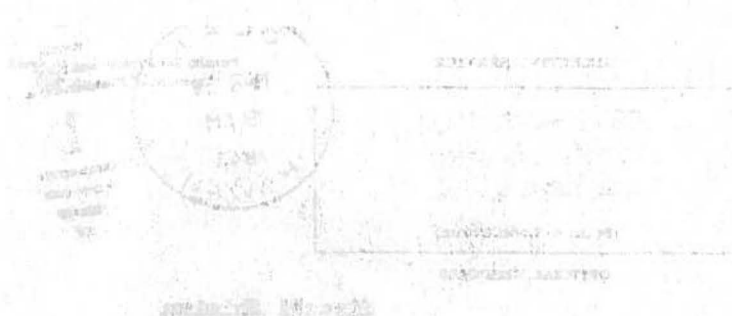
As the end of Basic came, we had a big maneuver to insure we were combat ready. Of course we were going to oppose other units at Camp Shelby who were white soldiers. They were really scared of us! For some reason, they thought we were going to cut their throats while out on the maneuver. Well we had to walk about two or three days before the engagement started. We in our unit slept very well, but the men in those other units were scared and they didn't sleep hardly at all. By the time the engagement started, they were so tired they couldn't do anything, and we beat them in a short amount of time. After the maneuver was over, those guys found out that we weren't going to cut their throats or anything like that, relations really got good between us.

In November of 1943, Basic was over and we all got about nine days of leave, but even on leave we had to wear our uniforms. Some of the guys went to Chicago, but I didn't know what to do or where to go. Finally Satoru Nakamura, the First Sergeant and a Maui boy, said to me, "I know a girl that works in the YMCA in New York City. Why don't you go there, and I'm sure she can show you around." So I went to New York City by

myself and stayed at the YMCA. I found out two years later, the First Sergeant married that girl.

On the way to New York City, I took the train through Washington D.C. I spent most of one day there looking at things like the Washington Monument or other major points of interest. The trains were very crowded, and I had to stand in the aisle most of the way as I never did have my own seat. Once I got to New York City I found the people treated me very well.

Some of the boys went on leave with hundreds of dollars. Now at about \$30.00 a month, you know their families had to borrow money for them to have so much. That was really bad! I wouldn't even have thought of having my sister Stella or anyone in my family borrow money for me.





The sugar cane field crew that Shimizu worked with before enlisting in the Army. He is directly behind the skull and crossbones on the sign.

SELECTIVE SERVICE

LOCAL BOARD NO. 7
Postoffice Building
Olea, HAWAII, T.H.
(SEAL OF LOCAL BOARD)

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Eiyoshi Shimizu

P.O. Box 156

Ht. View, Hawaii

Penalty for Private Mails: Avoid
MAR 26 9 AM '43
HAWAII

16-55716

CORRESPONDENCE POSTAL CARD

Your Order No. is 10794, Serial No. F-39

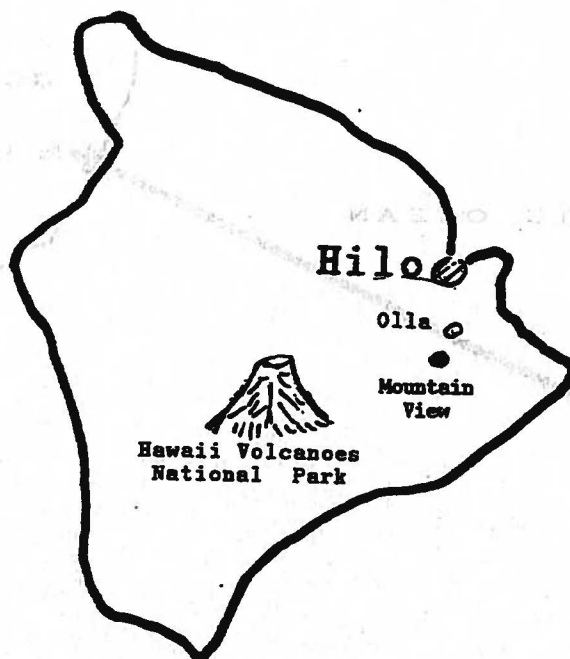
Always refer to these numbers when writing.

BE ALERT [Keep in touch with your Local Board.
Notify Local Board immediately of change of address or status.

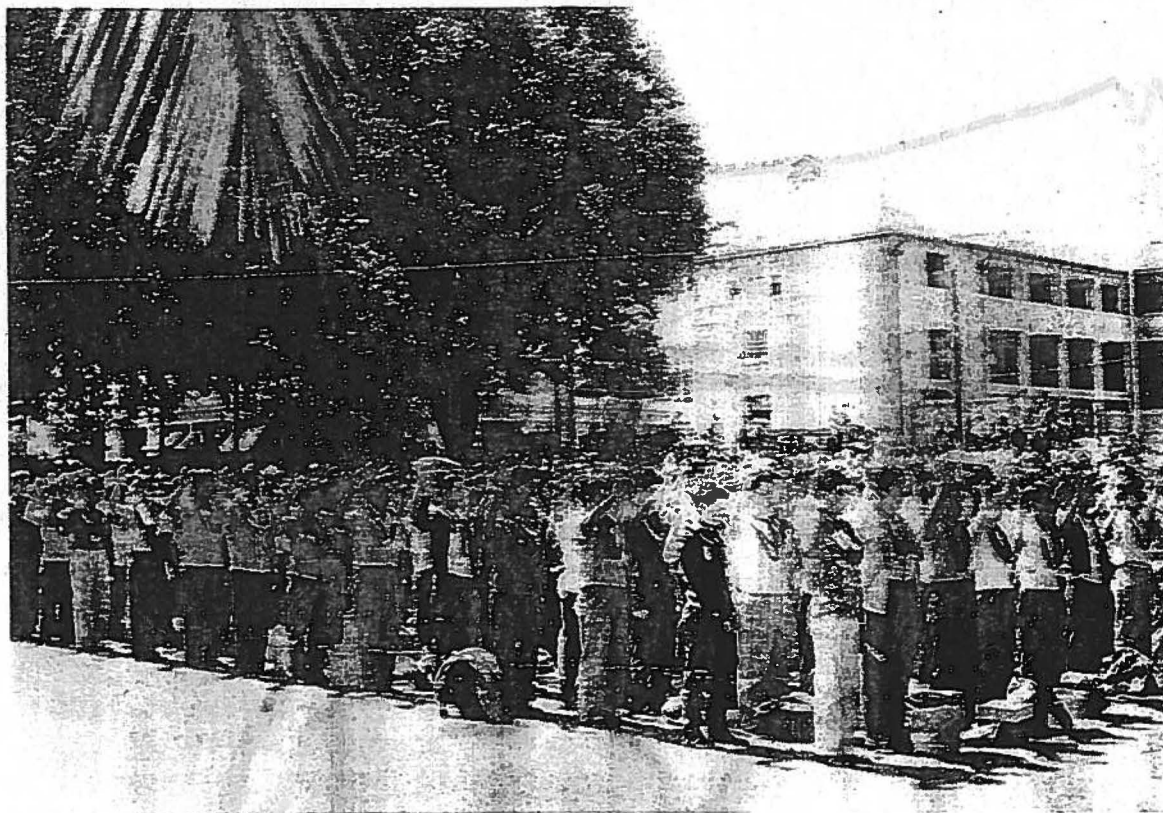
You are directed to report to the Mt. View School on Saturday, March 27, 1943 at 11:30 A. M. at which time you will be brought by Army truck to this Local Board Office, and then taken to the Induction Station in Hilo. Please give this matter your immediate attention.

Above and right: The Selective Service notice sent to Shimizu.

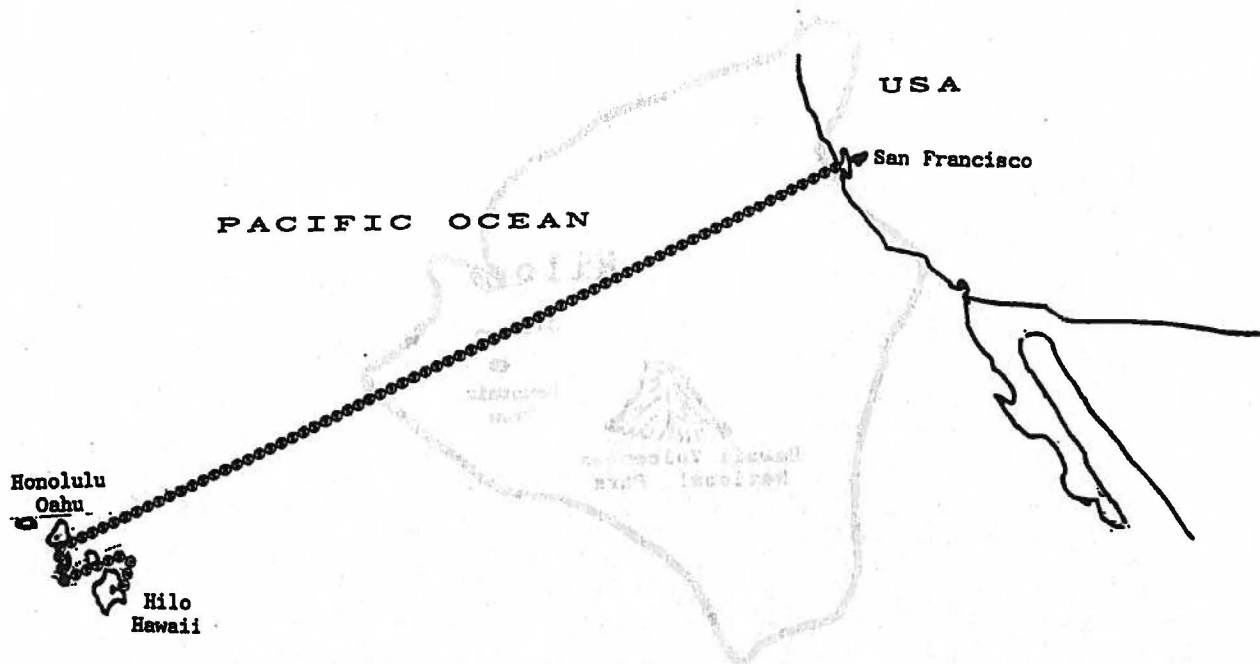
Hawaii Island



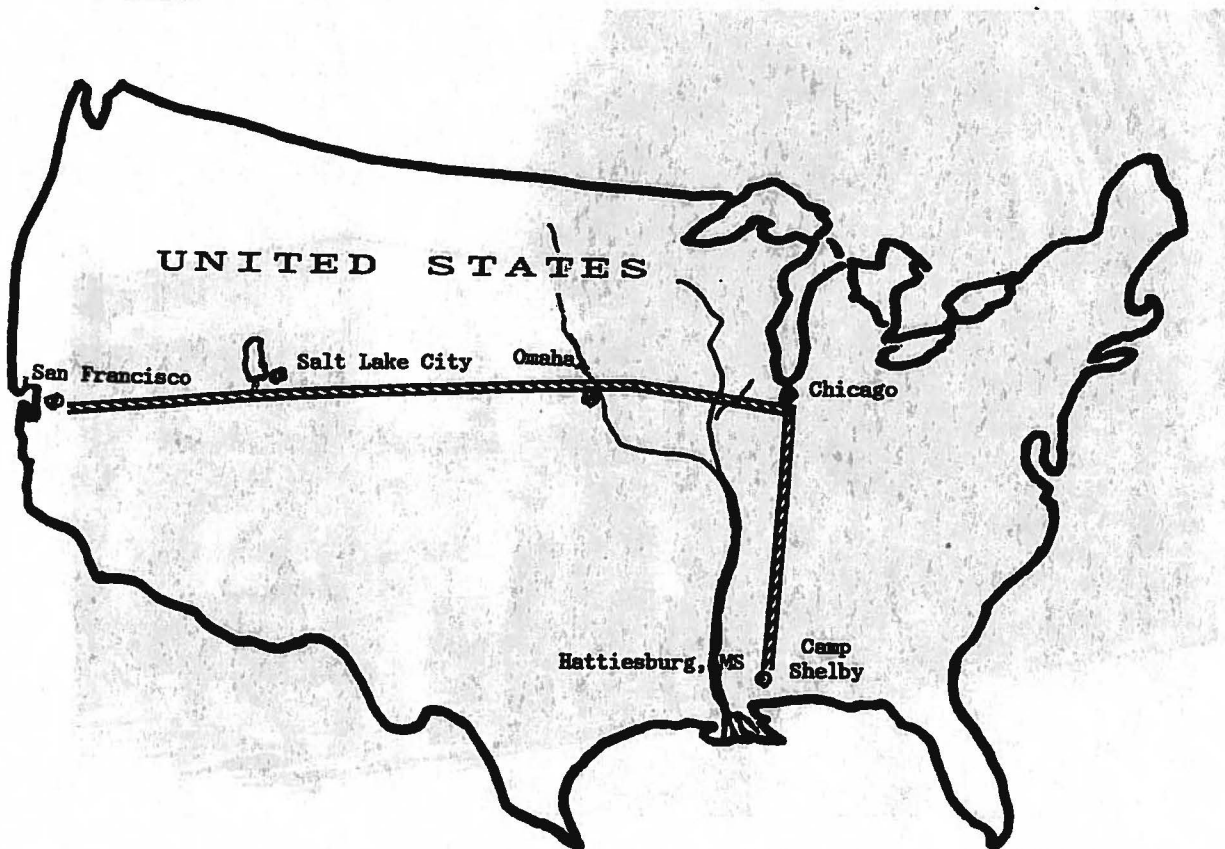
All the young Nisei from Mountain View who volunteered for the Army were taken to Hilo and then to Schofield Barracks on Oahu.



Harry Shimizu and over 150 other Nisei of the island of Hawaii were sworn into the Army at the Federal Building at Hilo on March 27, 1943.



All Nisei volunteers from the island of Hawaii were taken by ship and Army trucks to Schofield Barracks north of Honolulu before being transported by troopship to San Francisco on the mainland.



Pvt. Shimizu and his fellow Nisei were taken by train from San Francisco to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for Basic Combat Training.



Left: Pvt Kiyoshi Harry Shimizu in his khaki uniform during Basic Combat Training.

As we were getting close to the... were selected to be sent overseas... Battalion. That battalion had... needed a lot of replacements... everyone was pretty excited about... We were first sent to Camp... sea. The Army had no... to Camp Patrick Henry at Norfolk... issued our own M-1 rifles to... every day at Camp Patrick Henry... expedition to Europe. Finally... called a liberty ship. I think... ability easily. Our ship joined... I donated 100 ships in that country... horizon as we crossed the Atlantic... and...

the night on the way to Italy just the... depth changes resulting in... from Virginia to Naples, Italy. We... mean wasn't too rough, but it was a... We were really stuck in the ship... of bamboo on each level and the... ed packed. If you slept on your back... tionally looking your eyes. There... ship. We had to do calisthenics every... boxing matches or some other... was boring.

I... twice a day, usually outdoors. I... allied lounge sandwiches and the... he it was all grass around the water... at it. It was awful.

I was on Christmas 1943. Y... had somewhere between Camp Shelby and... being special about it in a number

Right: Shimizu in fatigues and steel helmet prepares for field training.

