

# ***NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR***

***Nimitz Education and Research Center  
Fredericksburg, Texas***

*Tsuneishi*  
***Interview with Warren Ueishi  
U.S. Military Intelligence Service  
Leyte and Okinawa***

## Interview With Warren Uneishi

This is Ed Metzler, and today is the eighteenth of September, 2005. I am interviewing Mr. Warren Uneishi. This interview is taking place in Fredricksburg, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Parks and Wildlife, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

**Mr. Metzler:** Let me start out, Warren, by thanking you for taking the time to share your experiences during this period of time with us today. I think it'll be a great addition to our archives. Let me ask you to start by stating your full name and when and where you were born and who your parents were.

**Mr. Uneishi:** I'm Warren Michio Uneishi. My parents are Satoru, S-A-T-O-R-U, Uneishi. My mother's name is Sho, S-H-O, Uneishi. They're both immigrants from Japan. My father was born in 1891 and my mother in 1893. My father came to this country in 1907 as an immigrant off of a rice farm in the prefecture of Kochi, Japan, in the island of Shikoku, which is the second island—if you proceed from Okinawa northward, the first big island is Kyushu, the next is Shikoku to the west, the next is Honshu, the main island, the next is Hokkaido. It's that part in southern Japan that my parents come from.

My mother was a school teacher, she had been selected by the prefectural government to receive training, normal school training, that would be twelve years, in those days. Then she had, because the government paid for her education, she had to give return service of three years as a teacher.

Now my father came to this country in 1907 headed to Webster, Texas, which was, then, a newly-organized rice growing colony by an entrepreneur from the same prefecture, Kochi, that my father came from.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now where was this located?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Kochi?

**Mr. Metzler:** Webster.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Webster, which is the town, area, between Houston and Galveston, as I understand it. He was quite an entrepreneur, and my father set out to, he established this colony in 1901 and it was almost an immediate success. Land was cheap, and he got quite a bit of acreage, and he was a man of some standing in Japan, he'd become a Christian, and he was also a politician. That part of Japan, incidentally, was where the Kochi Prefecture and three of the outer prefectures, where the movement began after the arrival of Admiral Perry in 1853 to open Japan, the movement began to oust the reigning shogun, and restore the Emperor to the position of head of state. So that prefecture had,

they were the ones who were talking about parliament and government of Japan and the formation of political parties, and the first political party, Jiminto, J-I-M-I-N-T-O, translated to the Liberal Party, was organized there.

In any case, that was the man, \_\_\_\_\_, who also came to this country to carry Christianity to—his goal was to go to the Yale Divinity School so that he could become a minister. But he got as far as New York City and the Consulate General, the Japanese Consulate General there, persuaded him to take another trip, and see what opportunities there were, so he took it, and he began this enterprise. My father converted also.

**Mr. Metzler:** So were you born there, in Webster?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No. That's why I said, I'm an almost Texan. Because my father was headed to Webster but he got as far as Los Angeles and it was so attractive there that he stayed, remained, and never got beyond.

**Mr. Metzler:** Never made it to Webster.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Never made it to Webster. That's why I refer to myself as an almost Texan. (Laughs) So he began farming, truck farming, strawberries, potatoes, and that kind of thing, and then in the 'twenties he switched to real estate development. And then with the crash he returned to truck farming, strawberries and berries and raspberries and blackberries and blueberries—uh, not blueberries—boysenberries. All kinds of berries. But that's how he earned a living during the 1930s.

He was inspired by the freedos he found in this country. Even though there was considerable discrimination against Japanese or Asian immigrants to this country, he looked at the brighter side of life, and I guess I sort of inherited that attitude toward, despite the rank discrimination we all felt, it's sort of like the South in many ways except that it was not a white/black, it was a white/Asian split in the communities, but not as bad, I don't think.

**Mr. Metzler:** How many brothers and sisters did you have?

**Mr. Uneishi:** My mother and father produced ten children.

**Mr. Metzler:** Wow.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Nine surviving. Tenth and last died in infancy.

**Mr. Metzler:** And were You the elder?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No, I was not the elder.

**Mr. Metzler:** Right in the middle.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Right. My father gave us all English and Japanese names. The first born was Hughes, he was born in June, 1916 at the time of the National elections when Charles Evans Hughes won the Republican race as the Republican candidate. He lost, at the last minute, when California swung to a Democrat. I came along a few years later in 1921, I was named after Warren G. Harding, of course.

**Mr. Metzler:** Teapot Dome Scandal.

**Mr. Uneishi:** (Chuckles) Teapot Dome Scandal. ‘ Twenty-one was two years before Teapot Dome.

**Mr. Metzler:** Yeah, well, that’s what bumped him out, I think. He died, as I remember, but it was ugly.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, my father was a poet, among other things.

**Mr. Metzler:** Poet?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Poet. He had a life-long love of writing haiku. He put himself through high school here and his English was good enough so that he was able to write sonnets—I don’t know iambic pentameter from what—but he could write very passable sonnets. He wrote “An Ode to Warren G. Harding.” Possibly the only Princeton so honored.

**Mr. Metzler:** And probably the only sonnet to, written for Warren G. Harding.

**Mr. Uneishi:** That’s exactly the case. (Chuckles)

And then, I had an older sister, Florence, was named after Florence Nightengale, of course. Frances was named after Saint Francis of Assisi. And the fifth in the line, my younger brother, was named Paul after Saint Paul, and then my brother Noel, he was born on Christmas, and then another brother, James, named after James in the Bible, and then Louis, named after a neighbor, Louis Maxwell, who was in fact our landlord.

**Mr. Metzler:** So let’s fast forward to 1941. You were still in California, and you were, in ‘forty-one you were how old then?

**Mr. Uneishi:** In ‘forty-one I was twenty. I graduated from high school, Monrovia -Arcadia-Duarte High School, in 1939 and attended at the UCLA, in part because Jackie Robinson was going. Jackie Robinson was a football star at Pasadena Junior College, nearby, about ten miles from Monrovia. And they used to play in the Rose Bowl. And my brother was a student at PJC and once took me to a football game. I’d never seen a more amazing

football game than that, and I can still see Jackie Robinson dashing down the sidelines, evading tacklers. And then, his third year, he transferred to UCLA.

That was in 1939, that's the year that I went to UCLA. Jackie Robinson was entered in four sports. Football, baseball, basketball, and track. In those days they had that underhand baseball—uh—basketball style and I can still see him doing that—but that's one of the reasons I went to UCLA, but the real reason is that it was essentially free. You could, my parents couldn't afford to send me to college. If you can believe it, there was no tuition in the University of California System. You had to pay student fees of twenty-fees dollars a semester, fifty-four dollars a year, and then of course you had to pay for books, and then you had to pay by month for room and board.

It was still during the Depression, and we didn't have enough money for room and board, so I worked as a, what they called a "school boy," essentially a servant, in a household where I got, in a family where I got my room and board in exchange for serving with the cook and essentially being a workhorse, cleaning up, that kind of thing.

So I finished there. By that time I'd decided that, my major was Political Science, my minor was English, by that time I decided that I wanted to have a career as a foreign correspondent. In Asia. If you wanted to be a newspaperman you had to go outside the country, to be a newspaperman. So I transferred to Berkeley because they had a good Japanese Studies program, Japanese language and Asian history, Chinese history, Chinese politics, Japanese politics, and that kind of program.

I was in my junior year of college, and I remember on December seventh I was in my room studying, and my roommate comes in and says "Have you heard the news?" I said, "What news?" He turned the radio on, Japan is at Pearl Harbor. I thought, Oh, geez, there goes my dream. Nothing but bad is gonna come down the line. And that's exactly what happened.

President Roosevelt and—well, first of all, after they rounded up all the potential spies and saboteurs, about twenty-five hundred, in the U.S. West Coastal states and throughout the United States, most of the Japanese population was centered between the West Coast states and Hawaii. About a hundrd and twenty thousand in the West Coast states and about a hundred and fifty thousand, a hundred and sixty thousand in the state of Hawaii, the territory of Hawaii.

So the FBI's responsible for domestic security, the Office of Intelligence, ONI,they were, Intelligence, they were responsible for military security. And both of these organizations had developed names of potential saboteurs and spies to be picked up in the event of war. The FBI listed about twenty-five hundred and the ONI listed about, there were over three thousand.

So they picked them up and put them in these detention camps for the duration. But we had no idea that we would soon follow.

In February, sixteenth I believe it was, of 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which permitted the CG, Commanding General, of the Western Defense Command, a man named Lt. General John L. DeWitt, capital D-E, capital W-I-T-T, one word—Genral DeWitt, to issue Military Proclamations. The very first one was on a curfew between eight P.M. and six A.M., and the second was a zone exclusion proclamation, all Japanese Americans are to be excluded from this zone, along the coastal areas of the three West Coast states. And the third was the evacuation itself.

And then we went into—I don't recall, yeah, I'm a political scientist, and had not taken any courses in Constitutional History at all, but I don't recall that I objected to the violation of my basic Fifth Amendment habeas corpus rights, you know, the Government may not arbitrarily take the life, liberty or property without due process of law. And I don't remember thinking, I think basically I accepted this as part of the kind of treatment I had received all of my life as a minority member, which was not held in high regard or respect by the generality of the West Coast population. Even though I used to think, I used to think, well, my parents were old enough to be in positions of political power, this evacuation selection and profiling, the avoid it nowadays, of Japanese Americans as possible spies and terrorists and disloyals and so forth—I don't think it would have happened. I came to that conviction because I didn't want to feel that my country was—I argued to myself that this country would live up to its fundamental values enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, and later in Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. That was, of course, much later.

When you come right down to it, what Martin Luther King is talking about, "I have a dream that one day my children will be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," and that is exactly what the Declaration of Independence and Fifth Amendment promises. Are "These truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" and that "They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and among these are rights to liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The Fifth Amendment says that the right to liberty and property will not be taken away from us.

So these are the basic core American values. And I believed in it at that time, I believe in it today, and that's what sustained me. This is an aberration, evacuation all of us in detention centers.

**Mr. Metzler:** Describe that evacuation if you will, please.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, notices went up, first of all on the restrictions, on curfew. And then the zones of exclusion also in the newspapers. And then we got notices through the press to, well, to

begin with, my family lived in Southern California and I should have gone down to join them, but this was May, I still—

**Mr. Metzler:** You were in Berkeley still.

**Mr. Uneishi:** I still had a few more weeks to go so I'd get credit for all my junior year, you know, you gotta be practical about it. So I stayed in my Berkeley lodgings as long as possible. By the time the evacuation came I was sent with the San Francisco Bay region contingent to a temporary holding area, a converted race track, in Tanforan, which is just north of Stanford University. I remember the contingent was told to meet at the Methodist Church in Berkeley which happened to be just a block away from where my lodgings were, and we were told to bring along only what you can carry. A piece of luggage or whatever you wanted to carry, and we all dutifully obeyed and—the Japanese Americans are a very dutiful people, I mean, you know, they're obedient people, generally. I started "I'm as American as you are," but then I think "Gee, there must be some Japanese cultural traits in you because you take this kind of thing, and a real American would say 'You can't do this to me'." (Chuckles)

Well, anyway, the good ladies in the church had coffee served to us. We were loaded aboard the bus and it took us about thirty miles to the Tanforan Race Track and what I remember about that is the barbed wire around that enclosure, the race track, converted the horse stalls to family apartments, and for bachelors like me, there were no housing barracks. Thirteen thousand all together. About a thousand of us were bachelors, they put us in the grandstand. Where the grandstand seats are, that's an enormous hall or room. And they put cots in there, to hold a thousand people. So that's where we were.

What happened is that I remember chiseling away at the—not the mortar, the, uh, putty, holding one of the window pieces, the whole back was covered with a small window pane—so I could remove the window and the fresh air . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** To get the fresh air in.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Not, the fresh air, that symbolized to me freedom. Every evening the fog would come rolling over the San Bruno hills in our direction and if the fog could be so pretty, so high, and that kind of thing, then I missed most, my freedom. Taking away my liberty.

**Mr. Metzler:** How long were you there?

**Mr. Uneishi:** That's a funny thing, most other people were there two or three months. I was there possibly less than a month, because the Department of Agriculture sent in a recruiting team, they were short of stoop labor, agricultural labor, in Idaho and Montana and so they were recruiting for work, people who would volunteer to go and

work there. We still remained—all this was done under the War Relocation Authority, that was headed by Milton Eisenhower, Ike Eisenhower's brother. They sent in recruiters and asked for volunteers. As I said, there were thirteen thousand in there, only thirteen of us volunteered to go, and they took us by train to Buhl, B-U-H-L, Idaho, and they put us in the former CCC camp there and they farmed us out to the various farms in the area that needed labor, agricultural labor to tend the sugar beets in the springtime.

When that work came to an end we were assigned to a cattle farm, they had irrigated alfalfa, and we had to put up this hay for the cattle. Out there they don't have barns to store it dry, so they simply build these enormous hay stacks. They're shaped like a loaf of bread except magnified a thousand times, about twenty feet wide, about thirty feet long, about fifteen feet high. There was a team of horses that you hitched up to cut the hay, and then after the hay, the alfalfa, dried for two or three days, you'd come around with a rake and rake the hay into windrows, then you'd counter to that over there, rake and make bundles, big bundles. And then you had a team of horses working with you and another team of horses had a slip, or a wooden slip, made of wood, about twenty feet wide by thirty feet long. You'd go around and hitch the bundles on to the slip, take them over to where they're building this haystack with a derrick, and unload it there, and repeat the performance. So I did that in the summer months.

**Mr. Metzler:** So how long were you doing that in Idaho?

**Mr. Uneishi:** I'd say July, July, August, early September. By that time the potatoes are ripe for picking, as were the sugar beets, and we, I think it was late September, so we went back to Buhl and did that work. And by the time the snows came the harvest was over. My parents had been, my family, had been moved to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center which is Cody, Wyoming, practically next door. We were still under WRA authority, so I joined my family there. I didn't stay very long, either. First three months, I remember working as a house—the American Friends Service committee had a program to relocate students and the government itself, the WRA, the War Relocation Authority, had this program of resettling college students.

As I think I may have said earlier, this was not a Nazi concentration camp, a death camp. This is a camp, literally it's a concentration camp, but I reserve that for the death camps. Anyway, they had the student relocation program and the American Friends Service Committee would contact colleges in the interior, asking if they would be interested, willing to accept a few students from the camps. There were ten such permanent camps located in Wyoming, and California itself in the interior of California, Arizona, Utah, and so forth. Even in Arkansas, two camps in Arkansas.

**Mr. Metzler:** Of all places.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes, of all places. So that students were able to get out if they had resources of some sort, or had made enough money in the sugar beet fields to be able to—I think I had about six hundred dollars in my pocket. And, since I had been nominally a Methodist at American Princeton University, which was founded as a Methodist institution, and I received a, I was accepted, and received a scholarship from the Methodist Church. I had to look for my room and board there, however.

The reason I was accepted, when the chancellor of the university, William P. Tolley, T-O-L-L-E-Y, he was the son of immigrants from England and he says, he writes in his memoirs, that when his father set foot on Ellis Island he proclaimed himself an American, and he lived by American values and standards, and he settled down in the East Side of New York City, which was a true melting pot representing all kinds of ethnic groups and languages. And he had, William Towley, was a conservative, but he had this strong conviction that the Constitution means what it says. He didn't believe that the evacuation of American citizens of Japanese origin without due process was constitutional. So when he was approached, he said, "I'll accept a hundred."

Some years ago, I'd been buying copies of the Alumni Directory, I went through the whole thing over the years 1942, '43, and '44, for people with Japanese names in it. I found only about fifteen, so I don't think he ever got his hundred, but he did open up the university to those of us who wanted that.

**Mr. Metzler:** So which university was this?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Syracuse University.

**Mr. Metzler:** Syracuse.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yeah, in Syracuse, New York, Upstate New York. You know, when I was evacuated, did I tell you that my best friend was Ted Smith, who I met in the Boy Scouts?

**Mr. Metzler:** You mentioned that in there, but tell us again.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, Troop Number One of Monrovia was held at the Presbyterian Church of Monrovia, and I joined that troop, I was the only Japanese American in that troop. I became friends with . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** And how old were you at the time?

**Mr. Uneishi:** And my best friend became Ted Smith, he had an older brother, Ian Smith, who was also a Scout. His father was a World War I veteran, a veterinarian, mules and horses and all that kind of thing. He was a large animal veterinarian, but when he moved to California after the war he became a small animal veterinarian, dogs, cats, and that

kind of thing. And his, Junior, was, that was Benjamin Smith, his son, Junior, was an immigrant from Scotland. And over a period of years I became, that became sort of my second family. I stayed overnight there all the time. And oh, yes, and Dr. Smith would accompany the troop, the Scout troop, to winter camp and so forth.

When I was evacuated, when the evacuation came about, Dr. Smith visited my father and offered to pay for my further college education. My father contacted me and I said no, I'll try to make it on my own. But you know, instances, or examples of this type, where you have Dr. Smith befriending, helping out, supported my belief that sooner or later this country would really live up to its basic fundamental values as a country, as a civilization, and as a political organization. And I never, never thought that my trust was based in the wrong place.

**Mr. Metzler:** So what happened at Syracuse University? So here you are, in Upstate New York now, and you, what were they, what kind of program were you in?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Still in Political Science. One thing I did not like was law. For some reason, I just could not get interested. Political Science just put me in an interest in the Constitution and the law. For some reason I just could not get interested in comparative politics, and that kind of stuff. I did take one course in law.

I was befriended there by a professor, Douglas Harrang, H-A-R-R-A-N-G. He was a, had been a missionary in Japan. As a matter of fact, in the northern Ryukrus, R-Y-U-K-R-U-S. Okinawa is an island in the Ryukyuan archipelago. He had been a South Sea anthropologist, he became, after serving out his missionary years, he became an anthropologist. He was teaching a course there. But he befriended me as did the Rev. Egbert Hayes, H-A-Y-E-S, was the university chaplain, he had been a missionary in China. So they looked after me.

I found lodging in the home of an Italian American widow who had a son. Her name was Anna Capasso, C-A-P-A-S-S-O, and all the students, we used to have bull sessions. When I was a student at UCLA and at UC Berkeley we used to get together and we'd have bull sessions on one thing or another, you know, and remarkably the same kinds of issues came up among my new Italian American friends, you know, dating, and discrimination because of our ethnic background, and jobs, and the same things that college kids worry about. Again, this is part of the vindication of my belief that my trust had not been misplaced.

Again, as I said earlier, I think that what happened in 1942, February, was that my older brother was drafted at that point. But shortly after that the draft was closed, but he remained. Some of them who had been drafted were summarily discharged. Some were kept on for reasons. Application was not consistent, dealing with hundreds of

different draft boards. They'd interpret the law in different ways. But most of the draft boards did not draft Nisei. did I explain what Nisei means, N-I-S-E-I?

**Mr. Metzler:** Would you explain it for us?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes. It means second generation. The first generation calculated, it was that they were the first generation of Japanese to be to let immigrate to this country, and the second generation was really the first generation born in this country, but it was, the first Japanese immigration occurred about twenty years, from 1886 when the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, about 1906 when Theodore Roosevelt and the Government of Japan began a series of gentlemen's talks to restrict immigration. The first group of immigrants formed a kind of a cohort age-wise, and their children also formed a kind of a cohort, age-wise. Most Nisei I would say are in the age group of say sixty to ninety, as a cohort. And our children also formed the third generation.

The first generation married other Japanese. The second generation, my generation, also for the most part married other Japanese Nisei. In California there were miscegenation lawa in effec so that you could not marry whites. That law was changed after World War II. As far as the Naturalization Act, passed in the 1790s, which made our naturalization open only to you if you're European or African descent. That law continued until after World War II. So that things changed over a period of time.

What were we talking about when we got off onto this track?

**Mr. Metzler:** You were talking about the second generation, and Syracuse, and then . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes, okay. And the draft was close to us. Most of, all of 1942, most of 1942. And then Elmer Davis, who was the Diretor of the Office of War Information, got the bright idea of using for propaganda purposes a unit to be organized to fight in the European Theater. You had to show that you weren't a racist, what we call racist now, anti-semitic, racist, racist, anti—But you can see this idea of forming or having the Army form a segregated unit of the Japanese Americans which would fight as a unit to show that Americans . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** To show they could do it.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Despite they were at war with Japan, they could form a regiment that's about, a regimental combat team, so that means it's about, a normal regiment is about 3500, this was closer to five thousand. And one of the battalions in the regiment of three battalions, the first was called the One Hundredth Infantry Battalion, because they were a group of people, a group of college students, who in Hawaii they were members of the National Guard. Initially put to work after Pearl Harbor, they worked for the military, but then they decided they didn't want the Japanese unit in Hawaii so they

sent this group to Wisconsin to receive—they were shipped out. And as they were shipped out they didn't know where they were going, where they were going, whether they were going to a detention center or an Army camp. They wound up in an Army camp and formed the Hundredth Infantry Battalion. And those were the guys who first fought as a battalion attached to another division, as part of another division, in Italy. They a real name for themselves and employed the impulse to create this regimental combat team. Which covered itself with glory in the European Theater.

Meanwhile, this program of Japanese language training that had started in September of 'forty-one was beginning to produce Japanese language linguists. And did I tell you about that?

**Mr. Metzler:** You may have mentioned it in the larger group, but you haven't mentioned here, so go ahead.

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**Mr. Uneishi:** Okay. Well, the War Department adopted a policy that was carried out by the G-2 at the Fourth Army headquartered at the Presidio of San Francisco. That was commanded by General John L. DeWitt. And he was also Commander of the Western Defense Command.

**Mr. Metzler:** You had mentioned DeWitt earlier.

**Mr. Uneishi:** And there's a history being written about the MIS thing, this author named Dr. James McNaughton, M-C-capital N-A-U-G-H-T-O-N, called *Nisei Linguists*. When the manuscript is finished it will be published probably next year, by The Center of Military History in Washington, D.C.

McNaughton tells the story about General DeWitt coming into this first class of sixty students, fifty-eight of them Nisei, and six Nisei instructors, and putting his arm around the chief instructor to support him, saying "You're doing a good job," reminded me of "You're doing a good job, Brownie." (Chuckles) "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." (Laughs) that reminds me of what General DeWitt said, because — Later, of course, he carried out the Executive Order 9066 and evacuated all of us.

**Mr. Metzler:** So this was before he did that, then.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes, of course, this must have been before Pearl Harbor. But you see, the Military recognized that war was coming, probably was coming. If it came then they would need linguists. The Navy recognized it also, so they set up their own Naval . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** So did you get involved in the linguist?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Navy began its program for officers in Berkeley and Harvard. I think I did mention

that. All of these programs, the two Navy programs got together in Berkeley. But all of these programs instructors were Japanese Americans, and they couldn't stay there in California any longer, so the Navy program was moved to Boulder, and the Army program was moved to Camp Savage, near Minneapolis.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now, last time I checked you were in Syracuse. So how did you hook up with this?

**Mr. Uneishi:** My older brother, Hughes, he had been drafted in February of 1942 and he wound up at the MISLS, Military Intelligence Service Language School, at Camp Savage. Later transferred to Fort Snelling, S-N-E-L-L-I-N-G. He was there when I was a student at Syracuse, and he wrote me and said, in early 1943, maybe February or March, saying that, in effect, that he was at Savage, it was a great program, the Army had opened up the service for draftees if they volunteered and sooner or later they would make this mandatory, they introduced the mandatory draft. If you get caught up in that, you'd probably wind up in the Infantry as cannon fodder (laughs) . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** In Italy.

**Mr. Uneishi:** In Italy. It'd be better for you to volunteer for the MIS, because you had some Japanese language capabilities. So that's what I did. My draft board sent me to Camp Upton in Long Island to be inducted. From there I went by train to Minneapolis, and then into—^ had my travel orders by then, of course—and then into Camp Savage. Arriving there in August of 1943 before my class graduated actually. I had asked for a deferral until I could finish my, complete my prelims for my BA, and the draft board permitted that. So I wound up there and, as I say, this had originally been planned in September of 1941 as a one year program. As the war went on, they needed interpreters and translation trainees almost immediately. The first I think occurred in the spring, late spring, of 1942, not the Naval but—

As I said, every battle in the Pacific and in the China-Burma-India Theater included Japanese-American interpreters and translators. Even those battles in Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Iwo Jima, which were essentially Marine operations. The Marine Corps did not have any Japanese-American interpreters.

**Mr. Metzler:** Did they have any interpreters at all?

**Mr. Uneishi:** They had, they were trained as part of their recon, officer cadets were trained as part of the Navy program so they had officers who, I mentioned today about the Marine Corps intelligence officer at the Battle of Okinawa.

**Mr. Metzler:** So they could speak Japanese?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Presumably. But (chuckles) six month training, that's pretty hard.

## END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE A

## BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE A

**Mr. Uneishi:** . . . the program, chiefly based on Japanese Americans, on the assumption that we knew Japanese. Well, it turns out that when we began to take tests for the language competence, not many of us had enough Japanese spoken or written. The percentage was remarkably low. I'll tell you why. Every immigrant group to this country tries to establish language schools, whether they're Portuguese or Polish or whatever. Korean or Japanese. I went to Japanese language school as a youngster on Mondays and Wednesdays after regular regular school, and all day Saturday. I was a very indifferent student. I was a straight A student in regular school, but in the Japanese language school I got Cs and Ds. Because I wasn't interested. I was interested in being American. Matter of fact, I didn't want to study there. I wanted to be patriotic and all this kind of stuff you know. The ironic thing is, I regretted that later when I was at camp . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Came back to haunt you.

**Mr. Uneishi:** It did! It bit me. If I had been more studious, I would have been a much more efficient student and in war time a much more effective intelligence person in the field. And more ironically than that, I end up being a professional Japanologist. After the war, I went to graduate school on the G.I. Bill, I ended up with a Ph.D. in Political Science. My dissertation was on constitutional and political changes in Japan under the Occupation. My job was as librarian of the Japanese collection and the \_\_\_\_\_ recruited me as head of a Far Eastern languages section—Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—and eventually I became chief of the Orient \_\_\_\_\_ Division because of my Japanese language competency (laughs).

**Mr. Metzler:** Back to World War II, when you—did you pass or did you not pass?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh no, I passed it. I had pretty good competency.

**Mr. Metzler:** You were good enough.

**Mr. Uneishi:** I was good enough, yes.

**Mr. Metzler:** So then what happened?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Those who were not good enough were sent were sent to the 442nd.

**Mr. Metzler:** To be cannon fodder.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes (both laugh). Then what happened? Well, after the six months of total immersion training in Japanese language, we were sent for two months of infantry basic training. I was talking to somebody about that here . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Where was your infantry basic training done?

**Mr. Uneishi:** At Camp Blanding in Florida. We were sent from Camp Savage in February, as I recall, of 1944, for two months of infantry basic training.

**Mr. Metzler:** And then what?

**Mr. Uneishi:** And then they shipped us back to Minneapolis. By then the school had been moved to Fort Snelling because they were training hundreds of Nisei, students, by that time. Eventually, as I said in my talk, I think, by the end of, toward the end of the war, they had trained and sent to the field I think the figure is twenty-seven hundred, somewhere in that neighborhood. Eventually before they moved that operation back to California after the war, they had trained about seven thousand Japanese language specialists. And they had added Chinese to their list of languages taught.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you were back in Camp Snelling now.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Fort Snelling.

**Mr. Metzler:** Fort Snelling, sorry.

**Mr. Uneishi:** This is in early spring of 'forty-four, and then we were formed into teams of ten Nisei, with an NCO in charge, tech sarg in charge of this. We were given leave to visit our families, and I went to, back to the Heart Mountain Relocation Center to visit my family, and the strangest feeling, walking into it, the barbed wire gates, in my U.S. Army uniform, and going through a check point where guys dressed the same way I was (chuckles), and the guard towers were manned by G.I.s.

**Mr. Metzler:** So there you are in your G.I. uniform, going back into the relocation camp.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yeah, yeah. You know, Franz Kafka.

**Mr. Metzler:** Yes.

**Mr. Uneishi:** It reminded me of one of his novels. A very peculiar, uneasy feeling. But again, you know, that's reality. You face it, and you don't cry about it, you just accept it. There isn't much you can do. You can't fight city hall, right?

**Mr. Metzler:** Not immediately, anyhow.

**Mr. Uneishi:** No. By that time, this is late spring 1944, my oldest sister, Florence, who had gotten a teacher's degree at UCLA, had been unable to get a job, because the profession essentially was not open to a Japanese American, but when she got up to camp, or, the relocation center, they gave her a job as a teacher. But then the Army was looking for Japanese language instructors at the University of Michigan and at the University of Minnesota where the officer candidate schools, for the white officer candidate schools, were located. And she was recruited to go teach at the University of Minnesota. My two younger brothers were—Noel, my younger brother, had already been transferred to the University of Wyoming, and my younger brother Paul was stayed in camp so that, or maybe he had gone off to work in the sugar beet field in the neighborhood.

In any case, the ones who were remaining when I visited camp were my father and mother, and younger sister Rose, and my younger brother James. There was another, youngest brother had died in infancy, as I said., I think I said that earlier. I had an older brother Arthur who was in Chicago. He was physically handicapped by a fungus infection and was unable to serve. But the four of us were healthy and and of age.

**Mr. Metzler:** But what happened to you? Take me to your next step here. So you went back to relocation camp to see family, and . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Family, and then after that I went back to Snelling. I was on leave from Snelling. And then, we had been formed into this team of ten, and they shipped us out to Fort Lewis in Washington, to Hawaii. We wound up at Schofield Barracks, S-C-H-O-F-I-E-L-D, Barracks.

**Mr. Metzler:** Well known.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yeah. In Wahiawa, W-A-H-I-W-A-W-A. Just outside of the airfield there. And then we got jungle training there in Hawaii. And by then, we spent a little bit of time, not too much time, working towards a JICPOA, Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area. That was headquartered at Pearl Harbor. But if you were a Japanese American, all Japanese were denied entrance to Pearl Harbor. So they put up an annex in the city of Honolulu, and that's where we did the work. Let's see, that will take us to July, July or August.

**Mr. Metzler:** Of 'forty-four.

**Mr. Uneishi:** "Forty-four. We were put aboard a troop ship and we were sent to cruise around the South Pacific. (Laughs) I think we as part of Twenty-fourth Corps, I think we were sent to become part of battles in the South Pacific under MacArthur. You know, MacArthur had command of the Southwest Pacific and Nimitz of the Central Pacific. Twenty-fourth Corps was sent to join other Army divisions for battles there, I think—I'm not sure. Marianas, maybe.

Now, my older brother Hughes, who was in Brisbane, Australia—what happened was that most of the graduates of the MISLS were sent to JICPOA Headquarters, which were down in Brisbane, Australia, as part of the Allied Translator and Interpreter's Section of GHQ.

**Mr. Metzler:** Is that where you went?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No. No. Because I was part of Nimitz's command, I think. You see, military bureaucracy. We were part of the Twenty-fourth Corps, which was under Nimitz's command.

As needed, these units from ATIS would be sent to the field. My brother went to, what's that island north of . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Australia. New Guinea.

**Mr. Uneishi:** New Guinea. And after that he was sent to, American Divisions, and then he was sent to the Philippines later. Most of the Nisei in ATIS were sent on as-need basis, teams of three, four, ten, as required, to the field. And they wound up in the Philippines. Twenty-fourth Corps was a little bit different, as I say, because it came under MacArthur's command but was still under Nimitz's organizational area. Authority.

So we went to the battle of Leyte. Leyte was declared secure by late December. We landed on October twenty, 1944. November, December, two and a half months, two months and ten weeks it was declared secure by the end of December.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you were there serving under Nimitz . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, no.

**Mr. Metzler:** . . . in the Twenty-fourth Corps.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Twenty-fourth Corps was going to MacArthur for the Leyte operation, that's my understanding. Leyte was declared secure by December. Then MacArthur's Headquarters got a hurry-up refuel \_\_\_\_\_ in Leyte as a—three little islands off of Leyte, the Camotes Islands, the Sweet Potato Islands, . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Which islands?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Camotes, C-A-M-O-T-E-S, called the Sweet Potato Islands, in English. They were a staging point for Japanese forces on Leyte, and a few, the call was that there were civilians that were being slaughtered, and for rescue to be sent, American forces to be sent to rescue them. Another guy named Lloyd Shinsato, S-H-I-N-S-A-T-O, and I,

volunteered for that mission. Did I say that we were in Twenty-fourth Headquarters, we were part of, we were members of the 306th Headquarters Intelligence Detachment. We were ten, with a qualified officer, eleven.

There were twenty of us at corps headquarters, so that when that appeal came to MacArthur's Headquarters he ordered the corps to take care of this and General Hodge, John Hodge, organized a, uh, issued the order to the Seventh Infantry Division fighting on Leyte to take care of this, and one of the regiments of the Seventh Division organized a reinforced batallion of about nine hundred men to liberate the Camotes Islands, and Lloyd Shinsato and I volunteered for that operation.

As soon as we landed, we were taken by ducks, you know, the amphibious . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Yeah, the ducks.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Of course, the battalion was . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Yeah, these islands had been liberated from Japan at that time?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No, no, no. They were occupied by Japan, Japan occupied all of the Philippines, you know. After . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** So this was what, a combat zone?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes indeed, yes indeed.

**Mr. Metzler:** So was there any resistance when you landed?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No, not when we landed, but as soon as we landed the forward elements picked up some documents and I remember translating them. And almost immediately we determined upon those documents what the order of battle was. It was essentially a group of units, miscellaneous units, the main force being what was called a shipping engineers organizational. I thought it was going to be a cakewalk. Shipping engineers are like Seabees, they're not really trained for combat. Well, then there were all kinds of other miscellaneous units making up a force there of about four hundred, and we were able to determine that from captured documents almost immediately.

We didn't know what the positions were, but a Japanese map was captured also. And the initial report was that they couldn't do anything about it because it was in Japanese, but Lloyd and I worked on it, translating, and converted it to American coordinates and there it showed very clearly what their strategy was, to put their defenses on top of \_\_\_\_\_ just like in Okinawa. And run tunnels through them, and all this kind of thing. And make the Americans fight them against stronger

fortified positions. And it turned out that these guys were not patsies either. Their infantry basic training must have been better than ours (laughs).

**Mr. Metzler:** So they were tough soldiers, huh.

**Mr. Uneishi:** They were, they were. We thought it might be over in just a few days. Actually it took a couple of weeks. And one of the things that Lloyd—I stayed at battalion headquarters, Lloyd was sent for advice in company \_\_\_\_\_, I think. What he reported to me later was that when he and his group went through town, their first village, they came across homes, houses, that had corpses, murdered corpses, stacked like cordwood, so much cordwood, in each house. And the regimental report of the battalion that I read just a couple years ago, in the National Archives, one G.I. swore the same way, he saw that, said “What are these bastards, we’ll kill ‘em all.” And as a matter of fact, no prisoners were taken.

But what turned the battle was that we translated the map showing these positions, and now the commander could determine how best we could attack. And they reduced their effectiveness. And they were all killed in a banzai attack that happened one evening. Well, you know, they were all killed, there must have been some who fought, escaped, and some who were wounded and who were killed by our Army.

War’s not a pretty thing.

**Mr. Metzler:** Not it’s not.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Those things happen in the heat of battle, and so forth.

Well, incidentally that was the only time I was ever under enemy fire, not from the troops, but from an attacking airplane. I was at battalion headquarters and our pup tent was on top of a hill, and I was standing by it and I looked up and here comes a plane firing tracers, and it was so pretty and I was watching it and I wasn’t thinking and the bullets started hitting around me. I dropped to the ground, and as the plane went by there was this meatball on the fuselage, and I thought, Jesus . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Big Japanese meatball.

**Mr. Uneishi:** (Laughs) Big. It was, I was too surprised to be scared. But when I hear these stories told by these infantry men who were at the front lines, I saw nothing like that. What they went through, true heroism, those guys. They had courage. I didn’t know how they went through it. And made it themselves. I guess they thought it was their duty, or whatever. I really salute those guys. I was under friendly fire in Leyte in the headquarters area of the Twenty-fourth Corps, because you know, one of the tactics there by the Japanese forces used was going on, they would tie themselves up on top of

the trees. Our headquarters was in a grove of coconut palms. They'd tie themselves up and hide in the leaves up there. Most of the leaves had been shot off in the pre-landing bombardment. But there were enough up there so that you could hide if you'd tied yourself up there. And somebody thought that he spotted a sniper, and started firing and pretty soon everybody was firing. At headquarters, you have a bunch of undisciplined guys, and you don't control their firing, somebody's gonna get hit. Fortunately, nobody was.

**Mr. Metzler:** But they were firing at you?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No, they were firing shots, trying to shoot anything they thought they saw in one of the trees, in the palm trees.

One of the team of ten that we had on Leyte was a guy named Itow, I-T-O-W. He was born in this country but was taken by his parents to Japan and brought up there. And he didn't realize, I know, until he reached the age of majority, twenty in Japan, that he had been born in the United States and was a U.S. citizen. And the very first thing he did was to hop on a boat and go to San Francisco, where he'd been born. Almost the first thing that happened to him after that was, he was drafted. This was pre-Pearl Harbor. He was drafted and he was working on KP duty in the Army. He was the only member of our team who was truly proficient in all phases of the Japanese language.

Their system of writing Japanese, which is known as grass writing, a cursive script, or Chinese characters. You know, Japanese is written with a combination of Chinese characters and letters of the Japanese syllabary. But this cursive script is an abstraction of Chinese characters and it takes years of study to learn how to write and read in that cursive style. But he was the only one who was really proficient in that, and that was because he had been educated in Japan through two years of college, I believe.

When we get to—later, when we get to Okinawa, let me tell you what happened there.

So then we were trained, we knew that our Twenty-fourth Corps would be involved in the invasion of Okinawa on April the first, we even knew the date.

**Mr. Metzler:** Let me come back to your first experience where you were translating the maps and were involved in that invasion. When you successfully translated those maps, and were able to contribute to the effort, that must have given you a good feeling.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh most certainly, absolutely.

**Mr. Metzler:** A feeling of accomplishment.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes. there's another document that we captured, that was captured by the troops, and that I spent all night translating. The Japanese had mounted an airborne raid on position on Leyte. Leyte was captured, and Leyte had been captured for the purpose of creating landing strips. You know, in the island hopping campaign. This raiding party's mission was to attack two landing strips that were under construction by the Seabees, and the mission of this invading, airborne, attack, was to destroy the facilities as much as possible and then to link up with the Japanese forces on Leyte.

Okay. All this was spelled out in orders given to this raiding party which contained only three Bettys, three bombers. Betty bombers. And one of them crashed right near the corps headquarters along the beach there, not too far from our landing beach. And so the G.I.s retrieved the documents from it, and one of them was this field logger.

**Mr. Metzler:** The whole thing.

**Mr. Uneishi:** The whole thing. Why they were carrying that with them I have no idea. I meant to ask General Miyamoto that. Why were the Japanese so careless about that? Because that happened throughout the Pacific. It wasn't just Okinawa, either. But, I remember trying to stay up all night translating that document. My CO was with me and Herb Nishihara, N-I-S-H-I-H-A-R-A, Herb was my buddy, he was a clerk typist, and he was the one who, as we translated the document, he would cut stencils for the mimeograph so that by next morning we had the whole story . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** In print.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yeah, and sent to G2. So that just a few hours after the landing corps headquarters knew what force they had, what equipment they carried, what their mission was, and all the rest. In effect, it was a futile effort on their part because they were cut off and when they attacked the airfields and so forth. I don't think any of them reached them, the Japanese forces were left in Leyte.

But, it's that kind of thing that we did that we think contributed in some measure to the success of that whole Leyte operation. Other things that we did was to gather, read diaries, or battle information, especially about oil. You know, we were trained to, in the Army, we were trained and told not to carry any personal diaries or journals or letters into the battlefield because the enemy could exploit them for intelligence. So I left my diary that I kept since my college days with my friend Herb Nishihara, so I don't know where they are now, they disappeared. But the Japanese had no such compunction about that. They carried these diaries and you could read the diary of the average Japanese, in Manchuria with the Kantung Army, and they transferred on such and such a date to this place, and they were sent there..

**Mr. Metzler:** All the information.

**Mr. Uneishi:** All that. No, that's historical information. But then they talk about the current situation, their latest notations, their current situation, where the officers were, and how many people they had left, and all kinds of ammunition supply, (laughs) I'm telling yu. That stuff is very—we worked right next door to the corps battle team, and we supplied them with this information. They compiled this and sent it to our headquarters. So identification of the enemy unit in front of you, what their force strength was, what their equipment was, how there were officers, all of this is of importance, tactical importance.

**Mr. Metzler:** It seems like it's extremely important. Do you feel like you and your group got recognition for your contributions at that time, or did that come later, or what?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, I tell you something about recognition. The Forty-second in Europe got all kinds of publicity, because that's the way the War Department wanted it. This is, intelligence is, by nature, a classified, secretive operation. And information leaked out. There was some notice, bits and pieces, news, about the MIS in the newspapers, but the whole story was never known until much later. The information was classified as confidential at least until . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** What about feedback from your immediate, you know, commanding officer or anything like that. I mean, were they . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh no.

**Mr. Metzler:** . . . giving you what we call attaboys, or?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes, I think we got that, many many times.

**Mr. Metzler:** They were happy.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes. I eventually was awarded a Bronze Star for Meritorious Service, that's a step above the Good Conduct medal, you know. One of the guys today said that he got a Bronze Star for Valor. A Bronze Star for Valor, a Bronze Star for Meritorious Service. They recognized the importance. These are professionals. They know what they're doing, and this is not unimportant information. And a few interrogation officers produced a lot of information.

**Mr. Metzler:** Were you involved in any of that?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, my MOS was head of translators, but once in awhile in the interrogation room our Japanese would be overbooked, so that I would have to take over . But you see, we'd been trained to do this, whether that was our MOS or not.

**Mr. Metzler:** You were trained to interrogate as well as interpret.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes, and that was part of our duties, but those who were completely bilingual both in Japanese and English were the interpreters. Then those who were good in Japanese were the interrogators, and those that were good in translating converted into English were the translators, but we all interacted and stepped in as needed.

What we were trained to do was not to use force. Our Geneva Conventions prohibited that to begin with. But to show kindness, and to show respect. The funny thing is, the Japanese soldiers were indoctrinated to believe that surrender was impossible, it was the utmost disgrace. It would disgrace yourself, your unit, and your family, and your country. And your Emperor. If you surrendered. That's why, it was the consequence of a lot of suicide.

But, as a consequence, they were not trained in what to do if captured.

**Mr. Metzler:** It wasn't supposed to happen.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Exactly the case. If you treated them kindly, with some kindness and some respect, and you asked them a question beyond name, rank, and serial number, that's all you were supposed to give under the Geneva Convention, if you asked them "Oh, what were you doing at this point?" or "Who were your officers and how many guys were left in your outfit?" they would respond without any compunction. Again, maybe they felt that they were dead, because that was part of their indoctrination, that you might as well consider yourself dead if you're captured. But for whatever reason, that's without any . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** They would actually open up then.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes, yes.

**Mr. Metzler:** How interesting.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, there weren't that many captured. There were prisoners, POWs, captured, but there weren't that many. Most of them, I would say, were captured because they were so gravely wounded. I remember, the very first one I interrogated, this was at corps headquarters on Leyte, and the G.I.s brought him into headquarters on a stretcher. You could see up in his face that he'd been hit, someplace in the right arm.

**Mr. Metzler:** Bad shape.

**Mr. Uneishi:** He was in very bad shape, and he was barely conscious, but showing very, very great pain. And I asked him, "Would you like a shot of morphine to kill the pain?" and he

nodded, and I had a medic come give him a shot. But the shot knocked him out so I wasn't able to interrogate him until later. And then he was able to provide what information, it's just small bits of information. But you get these small bits of information and tie them together to be something meaningful. But in that particular case I wasn't able to get that much information from him. In other cases, some of my colleagues were, interrogators.

**Mr. Metzler:** This experience you're speaking of, was this primarily in Okinawa?

**Mr. Uneishi:** This is Leyte.

**Mr. Metzler:** Oh, this is still Leyte.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes, this is still Leyte.

**Mr. Metzler:** So after Leyte, then, trace your steps to Okinawa for us, please.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well let me see now. Leyte is declared secure by the end of 1944. I'm involved in this Sweet Potato operations until February, through much of February.

**Mr. Metzler:** Of 'forty-five?

**Mr. Uneishi:** "Forty-five. And the landings are supposed to take place April, the first of April. We were undergoing training on Okinawan geography, topography, probable forces.

**Mr. Metzler:** And where were you when this was going on?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Still in Leyte.

**Mr. Metzler:** Still in Leyte.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes, yes, the planning and training of what to expect. Snakes were a problem there, poisonous snakes, and the nature of the population, who they were, and what probable forces—I think by that time, there were questions raised about the order of battle. How many troops the Japanese had there. By the time, before we got there, we knew, and I'm not sure where we got the information from, that there were approximately ninety thousand troops, Japanese troops, in Okinawa. They may have got this from radio intercepts.

**Mr. Metzler:** Breaking the code.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Breaking the code and, yeah. Now, the interesting thing about breaking the code and all that, is that we still were not trusted enough to be trained in cyrptology,

cryptoanalysis, and encryption. But once that, once the code breakers got translated, the coded message into Roman script, at least could be written in Roman script, then they turned that over to us for translation. So that I would assume, I don't know for certain, I would assume that, because there were Japanese troop movements going on almost to the very end, they sent one of their crack divisions, I think it was the Seventh Division, to Taiwan, or Formosa, because they thought that the attack would come there. And instead of sending the weakest division, they sent their best, because the weakest one had the artillery and the best did not have good artillery.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you were in training in Leyte, anticipating the Okinawa campaign.

**Mr. Uneishi:** And as I said, I think we knew just about what troops were on Okinawa. We didn't necessarily know their disposition, how they were sited, as divisions were sited and where their headquarters were and all that kind of thing, but we learned about all kinds of aspects of the countryside, the geography, the topography. And sometimes in the last two days these tombs had been mentioned. On a ridge, called Tomb Ridge, and formed one part of the first line of defense of the Japanese.

**Mr. Metzler:** Yeah, there were tombs all over the island.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Tombs all over. But they were in effect mausoleum. Mausoleum are hewn out of the native rock. It's a Chinese custom, southern Chinese custom. That's where it must have come from. For a family burial place, you create a crypt. It's a rounded dome carved out of the rock, about twenty-five feet, that's in diameter. Then, as the walls go down to the ground, extended from the, after this mound, dome, is created, in the very center at ground level you create a little entrance, where they put their bones in. Then, there's a courtyard, a masonry courtyard, extended on one side, and the symbolism to me is very obvious You come out of a womb at birth and you go into the womb at death.

But anyway, they made, carved out of stone, they made wonderful bomb shelters. All over the island. So that that's where I think a lot of the refugees, civilians trying to find refuge, would hide.

Are we in Okinawa now? I think we got a bit in advance there.

**Mr. Metzler:** Well, that's okay. but you were talking to me about the training and the preparation for Okinawa. You were finding out about all this.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes, all of this kind of stuff we were talking about.

**Mr. Metzler:** But I wanted to ask you a question. In some of the books that I've read, I understand that the Okinawa inhabitants were really different from the Japanese. They had more direct roots on to the mainland from China when they had originally gone there. The

language was somewhat different, wasn't identical to Japanese, and the Japanese looked down, if you will, on them as a sort of, kind of an inferior group. Tell me about that.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Okay. We learned about that aspect of it, also. The nature of the Okinawan culture and history and so forth. The Ryukun Archipelago came under both Japanese and. historically, has come under both Japanese and Chinese influence. I would say, in the Nineteenth Century, maybe late Eighteenth Century, the influence was predominately Japanese. By the Daimo of the prefecture, the southernmost prefecture in Kyushu Island, but there were Chinese influences going back, as I said, where the tombs come from, mausoleum come from. And there was a system of paying tribute to both China and Japan, historically. Well, that became just to Japan in the last hundred years or so.

As to the language, the culture, the clothing, is different, dances are different, the language is related to Japanese more than to Chinese, although there are Chinese words in the Okinawan language, but it's a different dialect. Unless you study it, it's very hard to understand and speak it.

There's substantial emmigration from Okinawa to Hawaii early on. One of the reasons is, in Japan there is a very strong rate of class consciousness. Way back into history, there were four classes in traditional Japanese history. There's the elite at the top, the samurai class, then the farmers, and then the artisans, and then the merchants, the merchants at the very bottom of the class system.

Now, the inhabitants of th main islands, Hokkaido, H-O-K-K-A-I-D-O, Honshu, it's a main island, those who considered themselves the real Japanese, the real Japanese, whatever. You know, Japanese society can be as racist as any society, and they looked down on the Okinawans. Probably to this very day. When they incorporated Korea into the Japanese Empire as a colony, they made them become Japanese citizens but (chuckles) . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Pretty much slaves.

**Mr. Uneishi:** But they were not slaves. But they were treated with disrespect. The Twenty-fourth Corps went into the occupation of Korea. Do you want me to get into that later?

**Mr. Metzler:** No. I'd like to get to Okinawa.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Okay. So, but anyway, Japan's divine mission was supposed to be to free the Asian people from white colonizers, Great Britain, France, and Holland. And Germany. And create a co-prosperity sphere. But when they were in a position of power, they became

the Imperialists themselves. What is resented to this very day, especially by China and Korea.

The younger generation spoke standard Japanese, so basically we had no real problem, although we had fifteen members attached to the Tenth Army Headquarters who spoke Okinawan. They got there a little late.

**Mr. Metzler:** So tell me about when you were landed on the island, and how that was, and when it was.

**Mr. Uneishi:** I remember it being L Day, April One. And I spoke to, I talked to Stanton Faulk, Dr. Stanton Faulk, who is co-editor of the book, cover title of American Patriot, he's a trained historian. He wrote the book on the history of the Leyte Campaign. We were on the beach there, he says "No way you guys call headquarters." Due to the fact that there was no physician, they had sixty thousand troops landed, American troops landed on the first day or something like that, and we had a hundred and eighty, two times that number. I'm quite sure that we were there on the very first day. As I came off the \_\_\_\_\_, further down the beach was the body of a dead woman. And I don't think if we came in on L plus Two or Three, she would still be there. Had been there. In any case, I remember that. I'm quite sure we got there on L Day.

We moved in then very quickly. As a number of speakers have said, and we didn't even understand this because, as I said, according to classic military doctrine, expect the Japanese military dropping your objective is to annihilate the enemy. There was simply none of that heavy opposition. Harrasing opposition, but no main force opposition.

**Mr. Metzler:** So how long were you there then before you started seeing opposition.

**Mr. Uneishi:** We moved very quickly. Corps headquarters was set up atop a hill on the ruins of a castle, Natagusuku, N-A-T-A-G-U-S-U-K-U, a central castle. There's a Shuri, S-H-U-R-I, castle, and that was the headquarters of General Ushigimi. But it was a tougher hilltop. We were there the first day and camped there. And the thing about that is that we assumed

#### END OF TAPE ONE

#### BEGINNING OF TAPE TWO

**Mr. Metzler:** Okay, Tape Two. Go ahead.

**Mr. Uneishi:** So the headquarters was placed on top of this hill, the ruins of the central castle. And every evening at about six p.m. the Japanese artillery started shelling us. But all their projectiles went wrong. I couldn't figure that out, because they must have had

the field coordinates there. Whatever. And then we set up operations to do our work, and almost immediately got these documents that we began translating classified documents, top secret only, operational order.

Did I tell you, I spoke about this at the, about the strategy for defense of the island? I know I spoke about that in the talk, but I didn't . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Tell us about that briefly.

**Mr. Uneishi:** The reason that there was no opposition on the beaches is that that was their strategy. The basic strategy according to these documents, top secret document, military top secretness, top top secret, was that it was captured, almost immediately after the landing. How a document of that type could fall so easily into our hands, I don't know. I didn't make sense to me.

**Mr. Metzler:** Almost like it was a decoy.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Except that was known before we invaded Okinawa, was a general outline of their strategy which was to fight at the water's edge to annihilate the enemy. But that was changed later to, to . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Fighting from fortified positions.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Heavily fortified positions. In the waist of the island, stretching about three miles across the waist of the island. Near the capital city of Ushaidi and the port city of Naha. No one thought that this was a false document, but we transmitted it and the idea was this: that there would be no opposition, no main force opposition as far as the landings were concerned. But maybe that's what they reported yesterday, he was a Marine, they came under apparently heavy firing. On the first two or three days.

But, the idea was this. That they would let the enemy land and unload all of their troops and all of their supplies, and just wait. Their strategy was, organize a defensive resistance to wear, a war of attrition, to wear down the enemy forces. And then, after all we were all on land and thinking ourselves safe and all that surprise there was, they would hit us with the kamikazis. And any other separate ships they could muster, and kill the Navy, the U.S. Navy. Sink our shipping, our transport shipping. Cut our line of supply. And then they could emerge from the heavily fortified position and wait for the attack to come, because their positions were very heavily fortified. And to at least prolong the war, the defense of the war, so that, for whatever reason.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now, tell us what those documents said.

**Mr. Uneishi:** The documents said that their strategy was to let us land and then the kamikazi would

hit and destroy us. I'm speculating as to why they adopted this. We knew exactly who the commanding officer was and we could supply the information about him, Ushijima Mitsuru, and his chief of staff, Isamu Cho, and we knew what the divisions were there, and in what force. We knew that they had recruited among their—this is in other documents that we translated and interrogations that were made of the civilian population—that they recruited heavily among the Okinawan population, male population, to create a kind of militia to bring their troop strength up to close to a hundred thousand. Something of that order.

All that information we did supply through the information connected to transmission of document and interrogation of prisoners and civilians.

**Mr. Metzler:** So was there interrogation of civilians as well?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Oh yes.

**Mr. Metzler:** Did you participate in any of that?

**Mr. Uneishi:** I did not participate in that, no. Here's one of the things that you may have heard about, cave flushing in Okinawa? Well, civilians would retreat into their mausoleum or to natural caves to escape the bombardment. There was a huge amount of bombardment of Naha and Shudi, twin cities, which I visited after the island was declared secured. Naha is at sea level, and Shudi is on the top of a hill. You can see across the plain there. It's completely flat, not a single building standing. Except for the skeleton of several concrete structures, several storied concrete structure. I don't know what it was used for, but that was the only building standing.

Now you can imagine, that was under Naval bombardment, battleships and cruisers and aerial bombardment. You could imagine not all the civilians escaped from those cities. These homes, you know, and there must have been—I just don't know—I imagine. I was fortunate that I didn't get on the front lines. I did not see all this killing, I didn't see all these dead bodies. The only dead body I saw was on that beach the first day, in the morning. I knew civilians were being killed, it's part of the Twentieth Century type of war.

Then the civilians naturally took refuge in these caves.

**Mr. Metzler:** You were talking about cave flushing.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Some of the guys were, some of our interpreters, who spoke excellent Japanese, were asked to go into these caves and convince them that no, we're not going to kill them, we're not going to rape the women, if you come out we'll feed you properly, provide food and this kind of thing. That takes an awful lot of guts. For one reason, one of the

documents that I translated myself was, I call it a Jack-in-the-Box position, field position. In Japanese it would be directly translated as surprise, “\_\_\_\_\_ ichi”—surprise box position. The instructions were to, for those who remained to harrass the enemy, or for any other reason, even at the front, was to hide, secrete themselves in some of these mausolea or caves until they let the enemy pass, and then spring out ehind them and shoot them down, “Surprise, surprise!” So I translated this Jack-in-the-Box position from . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Just spring up.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Just pops up, you know. To surprise the kids. Anyway, the one possible adverse effect of that, which I didn't really think about at the time, but when I learneed later about the enormous civilian casualties, and there was talk today about flame throwers and napalm and stuff like that, white phosporous shells, I knew those were being used. If I translated that document and it was circulated, and if the troops were warned to watch out for this kind of thing, every time they came across a tomb or cave they would treat it as a suspect position and go on . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** They would assume there were Japanese there.

**Mr. Uneishi:** . . . and go in there with flame throwers and mortar and kill them. And for the Nisei who were competent in Japanese to go, be asked to go in there, and try to coax the people out, they didn't know whether they were these Jack-in-the-Box position type soldiers or civilians. To do that takes a certain amooont of . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** That is a potential suicide.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Absolutely! What happened, when those guys went in, and I don't have any numbers as to the number of caves they entered and he number of civilians—most of them turned out to be civilians, almost all of them that they went into, maybe a couple of stray soldiers mixed in with the civilians—but they were reluctant to come out, because they had been indoctrinated. Part of the indoctrination the soldiers received, to be taken prisoner is the ultimate disgrace and that kind of nonsense. But I'm not sure that they already didn't even disown this, because there's at least one kamikazi that was involved in the interrogation with whom I was involved, who didn't want to die for the Emperor.

**Mr. Metzler:** Didn't die.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Did not want to. (Chuckles)

**Mr. Metzler:** He wasn't quite on board.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, what we're talking is this. I think that the Japanese were scraping the bottom of the barrel, they were taking mostly young guys, sixteen, certainly seventeen or eighteen. And given the short training courses, probably for the suicide plane, and they were taking anybody who could fly a plane. This one guy they got was a thirty-five year old civilian pilot, commercial pilot, and he had a wife and children. And what he did, he was supposed to crash his plane, bomb his plane, into any kind of a ship he could see in the bay there. What he did was pancake his ship along a convenient naval vessel and wait for help, for the Americans to fish him out of the water.

Under interrogation he said " I knew I was supposed to die for the Emperor, but I have a family, I have children and a wife, I didn't want to just kill myself." (Laughs) I suspect there were more than he who felt the same way.

**Mr. Metzler:** But that was the exception rather than the rule.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Probably, probably. But, as one of the people said this morning there were about, the Japanese had a garrison of about ninety thousand or a hundred thousand, and the ratio of prisoners to the existing pre-invading troop strength, there was the highest percentage, nine percent or something like, like nine thousand prisoners were taken, so I suspect they were not all on board.

And there were suicides, civilian suicides.

**Mr. Metzler:** So would you say your time on Okinawa, mostly you were translating documents and were you involved in any interrogation while you were there?

**Mr. Uneishi:** No, not really. Except for this one guy who was fished out of the water. there was a man named Donald Keene, K-E-E-N-E, he was the person, a genius among these linguistic geniuses, who was studying Persian at the Army University in New York. The Navy got ahold of him, turned him into a Japanese language specialist, and he was with Third Amphibious, but for some reason they sent him to Twenty-fourth Corps headquarters, and I worked with him, and interrogated this pilot we fished out of the water.

**Mr. Metzler:** This is the pilot you were speaking of being fished out?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Right. And he was also the one who thought of the idea, as propoganda, leaflets to drop on the troops. Oh no, we're no gonna murder you or rape your women, we'll treat you gently.

**Mr. Metzler:** We'll treat you well.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yeah. There was a Japanese lieutenant captured with his Okinawan nurse girlfriend. And I think that the reason he absconded was because he didn't want to, he wanted to stay with his girlfriend, he didn't want to die for the Emperor. So when Donald Keene had this idea, well, we can use this fellow for propaganda purposes. And he said yes, he expressed an interest in getting married. So why don't we hold a Shinto ritual ceremony, marriage ceremony, for this couple that photographed so good, print this on these propaganda leaflets and show them how we treated POWs, prisoners.

**Mr. Metzler:** Let 'em marry.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Let 'em marry. And I don't know how effective those propaganda leaflets worked, to tell you the truth. Even that one, that was dropped. But that's the kind of thing.

I remember another thing. I told you about this guy who spent his formative years in Japan, not knowing he was an American citizen? He could barely speak English when he came back to the United States, and when we boarded that troop ship out of Hawaii, I think in maybe July of 1944, and we eventually landed on Leyte in October, several months we aboard that ship. We were landed at Eniwetok where we had a beer party, and we landed in the \_\_\_\_\_ Islands someplace.

That guy, Hiroshi Ito, spent all of his time aboard ship, studying the Japanese-English Dictionary. So that he could be, at least, had some reading fluency in English documents. But he was our sole sharp cursive script specialist. He was the one that, if we captured a document that was hand written in cursive style would be very difficult and we'd spend hours translating, we'd turn those over to him and he'd provide the block print version, and we'd transmit it from that.

**Mr. Metzler:** What else happened in Okinawa that you'd like to tell us about?

**Mr. Uneishi:** I remember talking to Donald Keene about the nature of loyalty. One of the reasons we were evacuated again, Japanese-Americans were evacuated, was because we considered to be disloyal, possibly disloyal, potential spies and so forth. And I said, "Here's this guy, Hiroshi Ito. He's Japanese through-and-through. When he's drafted, he goes into the Army without objection. Right now he's helping us translate these documents that are gonna kill a lot and result in the defeat of Japanese troops and so forth, and he's doing this. How do you explain loyalty? How do you define loyalty when you come to an individual like that?"

These words that we use such as honor, duty, country, even country, people come upon and they say "What did you do in the war?"

"Oh, I was in the U.S. Army, I was a Japanese language specialist."

“Oh, where were you born?”

“In California.”

“Oh, well then, how do you feel about fighting your own people?” They had no, they had this stereotype of . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** That you’re still Japanese.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yeah, exactly the case. So, what was I saying, the point? What was I talking about? I was talking about Hiroshi Ito but something else came along. About stereotypes. And the stereotype of a Japanese is . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Once a Japanese, always a Japanese, kind of.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, in general, they’d put it more crudely, once a Jap always a Jap. In the Congressional hearing in 1943, on the hearing on the evacuation, he was asked by a congressman, “Well, why can’t you, why couldn’t you select, separate, the loyal from the disloyal?”

And that’s when General DeWitt said, “Once a Jap, always a Jap.”

Those were the words used by the McClatchy Press and the Sacramento Bee in Northern California, and by the Hearst Paper, the Los Angeles Examiner, the San Francisco Examiner, created these monsters, especially in the ‘thirties, stereotypes, buck toothed, wearing glasses, looking like apes. And they used the word “Jap” freely. We also had a stereotype going, notions about loyalty. How is that possible. Just because you’re born in the United States and you’re a loyal American Citizen? I think not. But how is it possible that this guy Hiroshi Ito is so loyal to his country of birth?

That kind of thing, I still don’t understand it. That other thing I don’t really understand, is why the Japanese were so careless with their custom, their permission. I think it may possibly be because a racial superiority idea seemed to be. Japanese is just such a complex language to understand and master, that there’s no way Americans can . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Figure it out.

**Mr. Uneishi:** . . . learn how to figure it out. They didn’t have to worry about it. If American officers were trained, that if your base is captured, what you do with these classified documents is to burn them or throw them in bags with stones and then chuck ‘em and all this kind of thing. But Japanese officers apparently were not trained to do that.

This is something that is very puzzling to me. Because they should have been aware, were aware, must have been aware that the importance of securing these documents, in some cases they apparently did, but throughout the war in the Pacific all these top secret documents keep popping up all over. And the information it gave, and the invoice, almost as important I think as the radio intercepts that were decoded and transmitted.

**Mr. Metzler:** Let me ask you a general question. You saw and heard of the “Japanese atrocities” . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Yes, of course, um-hum.

**Mr. Metzler:** . . . during World War II. Even though you were American your parents came from Japan.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Right.

**Mr. Metzler:** And you knew them and how they were. Were you, and do you think, they, were shocked to see what things the Japanese did, or . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, you see, it starts in the 1930s, the Japanese, this about the Japanese atrocities. Japan invaded North China . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Manchuria.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, Manchuria in 1931, but in 1937, North China. Then the invasion of Central China at Shanghai, and Rape of Nanking . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Right. Infamous.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Infamous Rape of Nanking. Now, I was, 1937, and I was still in high school. But I remember talking with my father about this. And he didn't accept it, didn't try to explain it or, or . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Condone it.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Condone it. But he had a different perspective. I was an incipient pacifist, I was reading Stern and Mohandas Gandhi. They both, Gandhi was heavily influenced by Stern, nonviolent resistance to evil. That's how he brought the British Empire down. And when I was in college I became more of a pacifist and one of the things I did not like was what the Japanese were doing in China and Korea, treating people as subhumans, essentially, in order to do that. Now, military discipline may break down in battle and you may get all kinds of atrocities, but you still don't . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** And that happened on both sides.

**Mr. Uneishi:** You still don't, yeah, you still don't condone it. And then, I'm not sure when I became aware, maybe it was after the war, about the biological experiments that the Japanese ran on Chinese in Manchuria. How they managed to get scientists to do that kind of thing, who knows. But we had a similar thing happening with white doctors in Mississippi infecting Negroes with syphilis.

**Mr. Metzler:** And they did in Germany as well.

**Mr. Uneishi:** So, if you look for a cause, you'll find it. But you don't have to look for a cause, it's so blatant as in the case of the Axis powers. Then your sensitivities, and your sensibilities, your ethical way of looking at life, becomes changed. The Twentieth Century, the last half of the Twentieth Century, is when total war begins. War used to be between military units, then you started bombing the civilians in Abyssinia in the 'thirties, mid-thirties, rape in Nanking, and then the mass bombing by the Germans of London, the retaliatory raids on Dresden—this is total war. You don't care about what happens to them. In essence. You don't care.

**Mr. Metzler:** The fire bombing in Tokyo.

**Mr. Uneishi:** And the atom bomb in Hiroshima. You don't care about that. Part of the mindset, now, is, it's, there's nothing in International Law, there's something maybe in your conscience that might prick your conscience, but there's nothing in International Law prohibiting this kind of behavior. It's total war.

So, I don't, still don't condone it, even if it's total war.

**Mr. Metzler:** But you said your father had a different perspective.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, especially later. He says to me, not in direct answer to my complaint about how the Japanese were acting in China, but "You look at the way you're being treated today. At least the Japanese are trying to correct that kind of blatant racial bias." I don't think that works quite that way. That's the basic difference.

**Mr. Metzler:** Interesting viewpoint, though. That was his viewpoint, was it?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, it was at that time, but, he was basically interrogated by an F.B.I. agent, he told me, when he was in camp, in relocation, we used to call 'em camps. Relocation center. And they had the loyalty oaths administered to all males, alien and citizen, regardless of age. There were two questions: Would you forgo allegiance to the Emperor of Japan? Yes or no. Would you be willing to fight in the Armed Forces of the United States? Yes or no. And my father was refused to respond positively to these two

questions, and he told me that the F.B.I. agent came after him, and my father said to him, "Well, you know, your laws make me ineligible for U.S. citizenship. If I lose my Japanese citizenship, then I become a stateless person, I have no protection from anybody." (Chuckles) The F.B.I. agent saw that it seemed a reasonable argument so he didn't question him further.

But my father was kind of, had contradictive feelings about this. Because one of the reasons he came to this country in the first place was because there was talk about American democracy, freedom and justice for all and this kind of thing. Then, after the war, the immigration was changed, the Constitution, the woman named—I say a woman—was a civil servant in the State of California. She had civil rights lawyers in San Francisco sought her out as a candidate to test the constitutionality—Nitsuye is her name, N-I-T-S-U-Y-E, from a family named Endo, E-N-D-O. Endo had read habeas corpus when she was interred at the Tanforan Racetrack, and that case went all the way to the Supreme Court, was finally decided in December of 1944. The Supreme Court found that she had been unconstitutionally detained, that the Army had acted wrongly, and that she should be immediately liberated, freed, and that was the day before the War Department had reached the same conclusion. They issued an announcement saying that the camps would be closed, and the evacuees would be free to return to their homes.

**Mr. Metzler:** And that was late 'forty-four.

**Mr. Uneishi:** It took a whole year for that to happen. But of course, by that time, the record established by the Forty-second in Europe and the War Department and the rest of the country was aware of the contributions we were making in the Pacific, and this contradictory, fundamentally contradictory policy of internment on the one hand, Japanese Americans, and exploiting them on the battlefield on the other, could no longer be sustained. Especially when the publicity arose about the exploits of the 442nd Unit. So the War Department backed down. It was determined by that time that no, there was no real threat as far as loyalty and potential spies and saboteurs from the people in the camps. And they decided that they would close the camps. As I say, it took them a whole year.

The next day the Supreme Court came down this decision in the Endo case. At the same time, it's very interesting, there was Fred Korematsu, K-O-R-E-M-A-T-S-U, every law student knows about the Korematsu case. Because it involved a very unconstitutional issue, can a citizen be deprived of his liberty without due process. Korematsu violated the Exclusion Zone act, proclamation. Because he wanted to stay behind to see his girlfriend, and he was arrested and tried and convicted of violating the proclamation. That case wound up to the, eventually wound up, that was in mid 1942. That case wound up tied to the Endo case ex parte, pretty much ex parte Endo. He was convicted. Why? Because under the doctrine of military necessity, the President can suspend the

Constitution. Abraham Lincoln did when he jailed a lot of legislators. Why? Because one of the slave states, if they voted to join the Confederacy, then there would be Washington, D.C. between (chuckles) . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** Be surrounded.

**Mr. Uneishi:** (Laughs) Between—and that would embarrass the security. So he had good reason. One of the legislators was caught trying, in a mob, trying to burn railroad bridges north of Baltimore, and that would cut the line of supply going into Washington from the north. He had them cast into prison in Baltimore.

**Mr. Metzler:** Okay. So. What else can we talk about today? We've heard your experiences in Leyte and Okinawa . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Let me say something about . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** What else would you like to say?

**Mr. Uneishi:** Let me say something about why I think my faith in my country was vindicated.

**Mr. Metzler:** Okay.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Because there were people in the camps my age who said "No" to those two questions on the questionnaire. They said "I would say 'yes, yes' to both questions of you restore my constitutional rights." And they were tried, convicted, sent to prison. They were later pardoned by President Truman. You know, when the 442nd, last elements of the 442nd, returned from Europe in 1946, they were royally treated in New York City and invited to the White House Rose Garden for a reception. And Harry Truman famously said, "You fought prejudice at home and abroad." And he was the one who desegregated the military in 1948, I believe it was. And then there was the Brown vs. Board of Education, which made separate but equal educational facilities unconstitutional. Then there's Martin Luther King who came along with this "I Have a Dream" speech, forcing the American people to realize that the dreams that he's talking about were the dreams of the founders of the Republic. Enormous change.

**Mr. Metzler:** That's what restored you . . .

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, I never lost my faith, but it simply reinforced that what I had believed in was right to begin with. When you're, we're not near perfect yet, we still have a way to go. But look what's happened to me in my own career. I got a government job that I could not have really aspired to, and I went up the ladder because of all that kind of stuff, you know. I wound up in a very important position at the Library of Congress in the senior executive service.

That could never have happened in pre-Pearl Harbor United States.

**Mr. Metzler:** So we've made a lot of progress.

**Mr. Uneishi:** We've made an enormous amount of progress, I'm proud of that, but we still have a way to go. And when I look at Asians as a group, Asian Americans as a group, have benefited from what happened, and I think in large measure because of the contributions of people like me who served in the Pacific and people who served in Europe.

The first published book that I know about was something called *Yankee Samurai* by Joseph D. Harrington, published in the 1960s, I believe. The best book on the subject was published in 1993, around that. I think it's still in print, or may be available to buy on e-Bay. It's by Lyn Crost, L-Y-N-C-R-O-S-T. And it's called *Honor by Fire*. And she covers, Lyn Crost, covers both the 442nd and the MIS. And as a chronological narration of World War II, there were alternating chapters covering the two battlefields. She lived in Washington, D.C. Graduate of Brown. And she came to see me when she started doing, conducting research on this book. When I was an officer at the Library of Congress. We became very good friends.

I once asked her, she's not dead, I once asked her how it was that she came to be such a champion of Japanese Americans. I knew that she had been a journalist, a foreign correspondent, for one of the papers. She said that it begins this way: She grew up in an Irish family, but her grandmother was a first immigrant, came separately, and she grew up mostly under her grandmother's influence. Her grandmother faced discrimination as an Irish person, as a person of Irish extraction, and she was very much for the downtrodden and the champion of the people who hadn't received a break in American society.

After she graduated from Brown she couldn't get a job, this is in 1937 or so. She went to Honolulu where she had an aunt and she got a job reporting as a society editor for one of the newspapers. And then when war came and the 442nd were just first in Hawaii, were sent to Europe, she got a job there to a company there, reporting to the, back to the newspaper. So she came to know these G.I.s, wanted to say something, write something about them. So she published this book. She wanted to include the MIS because there was very little published about the MIS. So that's why she came to write the book.

I find this interesting because my daughter married an Irish American, and my son married a polish Irish American, and my eldest son married a Taiwanese. Where our generation married only Japanese, now our sons are marrying . . .

Let me say this: Polish Americans, Irish Americans, were at one time considered minorities. "Poor Irish," "dumb Poles." And they weren't treated as equals. I think

that's part of the reason that people were treated that way, Jewish Americans also. Not as many marriages of Jewish Americans in this country. So that's, you know, it's—

But as far as I myself personally are concerned, I think that I would never have gotten the opportunity to get the kind of job if I had not had the education which I got through the G.I. Bill of Rights, and if I had not, if the barriers to opportunities in this country had not been removed through the Civil Rights Movement and so forth . . .

**Mr. Metzler:** The barriers had to be removed. But you also had to accomplish.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Exactly the point. Exactly the point. You had to have your credentials. If you had your credentials, then you could move up. And that's changed in this country. I'm glad I was there for them. I was not mistaken in saying that if people in my generation were in positions of political power, this evacuation never would have happened. (Laughs)

**Mr. Metzler:** Well, Warren, I want to thank you for taking the time today.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Not at all, I'm very happy to do this.

**Mr. Metzler:** It's been fascinating listening to your viewpoint and your experiences, and we don't have a lot of your kind of experiences in our archives.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, thank you.

**Mr. Metzler:** So I think it's really expanded the breath and the perspective of our collection. So thank you so much.

**Mr. Uneishi:** Well, thank you for letting me speak to you.

### **Finalized Copy**

**Transcribed by:** Betty Paieda  
Harbor City, California  
April 24, 2013