

2699 Deodar Circle,
Pasadena, CA 91107-2606
Sept. 12, 2014

Mrs. Claudia T. Frazer,
Digital Initiative Coordinator,
Drake University
2507 University Ave.,
Des Moines, IA 50311-4505

Dear Mrs. Frazer,


It has been my pleasure to participate in a biographical record of my life and times in Hawaii. Especially my personal experience and opinions of the WWII years in the Pacific. I hope you gained some insights of specific details of political intrigues, which transpired in the Executive Branch of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his Military Joint Chiefs of Staff before the disastrous attack of Pearl Harbor, Hickam Airfield, Schofield Barracks, and Kaneohe Naval Air Station on Dec. 7, 1941 by the Japanese Imperial Navy Air fighters and bombers.

The LIFE magazine's 50th Year commemorative of WWII and the photos will always be remembered by those who lived it and learn by those unborn during the period. Your visit to the WWII Japanese-American Veterans War Memorial to honor those who served with their lives for a country who displaced and discriminated their race indiscriminately without due process of law must have been inspiring. The 100th Btn. and the 442nd Rgt. who fought in Europe deservedly got all the public acclaim .. but the MIS was an unknown top secret for 45 years after the War! That is why my brother, Sam who was attached to Nav.Intell. was never allowed to be near or enter Pearl Harbor with other men in his group, and the war ended sooner.

The Japanese-American National Museum built after WWII in the 1960's was to preserve the racial identity and history of the "Isseis" (1st generation immigrants) and the "Niseis" (2nd generation U.S. birth) who labored and adapted to their new country. We, the Niseis were brought up to learn both Japanese and American language and culture, loyalty to the nation you live in, and to seek a higher education to be successful in life. As an example, my father was one of the few Isseis in Hawaii, who volunteered in the U.S. Army in WWI who was 29 years old and married.

Hawaii is proud to have its own "kamaaina" (native son), Senator Daniel K. Inouye who brought national and international fame in politics by his determination to lift the people of his race through his military actions in WWII and his political career as the first Japanese-American U.S. Congressman and later as the first U.S. Senator from the new State of Hawaii! He always remembered and was proud of his "roots" as a son of an immigrant, who was brought up in a district for immigrant families, called "Kakaako"! To be remembered by him before and after WWII and during his political career was indeed an honor .. that was the nature of the late Sen. Inouye for which he was well-known and loved by both Democrats and respected by Republicans!

Best regards,



Robert K. Isokane

P.S.

As a postscript, I would like to tell you why I accepted a commission in the U.S. Naval Reserve in Nov. 1959 as an Ensign. At that time, there were only a handful of Japanese-Americans who were commissioned in the Navy. Remember during WWII and several years later, the U.S. Navy did not accept Enlisted volunteers either from our race. At that time, my application form indicated my racial group as: Mongoloids (instead of Asian American today). Others were classified as either: Caucasoids or Negroids! How time and politics change! My purpose to volunteer in the Navy for 3 years was to prove to them what Loyalty means (which was never understood by all the military branches in Washington)!

My active duty at the Naval Hospital in San Diego (1960-63) as the first Japanese-American Staff Officer in the Medical Service Corps proved my point to the Navy that Loyalty and Devotion to duty is NOT based on facial features, color of skin, or blood .. it is of one's Heart! Even in the military, promotion comes with politics .. and being professionalism and too truthful in what you believe is right doesn't get you to be an Admiral! I had no pretention to ever rise to such rank in the Navy because of its discriminatory history, so I retired earlier as a Lieutenant after 5 years active-duty (2 Army+3 Navy) and 3 years in the Reserves.

But to my surprise, another J-A who was commissioned in June 1960 rose from an Ensign to Rear Admiral .. thereafter racial equality pressured the Navy to promote many J-A men and women to Captain (equivalent to Colonel). How time has changed, and I think Sen. Inouye, who was at one time Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and other influential committees in Washington had some influence in the changes.

*Special note: Early this morning, I woke up and my memory recall of the name Fred Asher came to my mind. I first met him at the Senior Center in Arcadia, when we became good friends and I listened to his remarkable and heroic experience aboard the Destroyer, USS Blue on Dec. 7, 1941 at the Pearl Harbor attack by the Japanese Navy aircrafts. He was a very modest man and a street in Pearl Harbor was named in his honor. He gave me an autographed copy of his testimony given at a hearing in Washington after the attack. Hollywood should have also added more of the U.S.N. defensive actions to the famous movies, "Tora, Tora, Tora"!

When I find my copy of his experience, I will send you Drake Library copy for posterity only to be used as a reference material and NOT to be copied for publication! It is one of a kind document of history from the words of an individual who was in direct action with the enemy! Enclosed obituary published in the L.A. Times on Aug. 11, 2005.

2699 Deodar Circle,
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Sept. 15, 2014

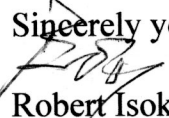
Mrs. Claudia Frazer,
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Dear Mrs. Frazer,

Going through my records to search for the late, Cdr. Fred Asher's Congressional Report of Dec. 7, 1941, I came across copies of pages 1 and 2 out of 3 of the full Munson Report submitted to the Executive and the National Security Branch investigating the loyalty and security of the all the citizen and alien residents in the west coast of the U.S. and Hawaii. As soon as I can search for its file and get the 3rd page, I will send you the full Report which was deliberately sealed by the White House to forcibly remove all of them from the west coast and selective part of the 40 percent population in Hawaii into "concentration camps" in February 1942 under wartime Martial Law Even the former FBI Director J.E. Hoover concurred with Munson's findings!

I am sending you this letter to request a favor to look into the file of my father, Matsujiro Isokane, who was naturalized a U.S. Citizen by the U.S. District Court for the Territory of Hawaii at Honolulu on January 27, 1919 circumventing Congressional statute preventing naturalization of Asian descent, even those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in WWI. He kept a meticulous personal record, and I remembered seeing an "onion-skin" carbon copy of this order .. but I misplaced it and may have discarded it. I am enclosing a copy of his Certificate of Citizenship, dated Apr. 27, 1939 issued with a notation of his initial naturalization.

When you find it, will you send me 2 copies .. and tell me how you came across the historical record in the computer .. like you are attempting to find my "Letters from the Reader" response to a defense worker's critical remark about us in the Star Bulletin in 1941 or 1942, while I was only 15 or 16! Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Isokane

The Munson Report

In October and November of 1941, Special Representative of the State Department Curtis B. Munson, under Roosevelt's orders, carried out an intelligence gathering investigation on the loyalty of Japanese Americans. What follows are excerpts from that report.

"1. The ISSEI -- First generation of Japanese. Entire cultural background Japanese. Probably loyal romantically to Japan. They must be considered, however, as other races. They have made this their home. They have brought up children here, their wealth accumulated by hard labor is here, and many would have become American citizens had they been allowed to do so. They are for the most part simple people. Their age group is largely 55 to 65, fairly old for a hard-working Japanese."

"The Issei, or first generation, is considerably weakened in their loyalty to Japan by the fact that they have chosen to make this their home and have brought up their children here. They expect to die here. They are quite fearful of being put in a concentration camp. Many would take out American citizenship if allowed to do so. The haste of this report does not allow us to go into this more fully. The Issei have to break with their religion, their god and Emperor, their family, their ancestors and their after-life in order to be loyal to the United States. They are also still legally Japanese. Yet they do break, and send their boys off to the Army with pride and tears. They are good neighbors. They are old men fifty-five to sixty-five, for the most part simple and dignified. Roughly they were Japanese lower middle class, about analogous to the pilgrim fathers."

"2. The NISEI -- Second generation who have received their whole education in the United States and usually, in spite of discrimination against them and a certain amount of insults accumulated through the years from irresponsible elements, show a pathetic eagerness to be Americans. They are in constant conflict with the orthodox, well disciplined family life of their elders. Age group -- 1 to 30 years."

"There are still Japanese in the United States who will tie dynamite around their waist and make a human bomb out of themselves. We grant this, but today they are few. Many things indicate that very many joints in the Japanese set-up show age, and many elements are not what they used to be. The weakest from a Japanese standpoint are the Nisei. They are universally estimated from 90 to 98 percent loyal to the United States if the Japanese-educated element of the Kibei is excluded. The Nisei are pathetically eager to show this loyalty. They are not Japanese in culture. They are foreigners to Japan. Though American citizens they are not accepted by Americans, largely because they look differently and can be easily recognized. The Japanese American Citizens League should be encouraged, the while an eye is kept open, to see that Tokio does not get its finger in this pie -- which it has in a few cases attempted to do. The loyal Nisei hardly knows where to turn. Some gesture of protection or wholehearted acceptance of this group would go a long way to swinging them away from any last romantic hankering after old Japan. They are not oriental or mysterious, they are very American and are of a proud, self-respecting race suffering from a little inferiority complex and a lack of contact with the white boys they went to school with. They are eager for this contact and to work alongside them."

"3. The KIBEI -- This is an important division of the NISEI. This is the term used by the Japanese to signify those American born Japanese who received part or all of their education in Japan. In any consideration of the KIBEI they should be again divided into two classes, i.e. those who received their education in Japan from childhood to about 17 years of age and those who received their early formative education in the United States and returned to Japan for four or five years Japanese education. The Kibei

are considered the most dangerous element and closer to the Issei with special reference to those who received their early education in Japan. It must be noted, however, that many of those who visited Japan subsequent to their early American education come back with added loyalty to the United States. In fact it is a saying that all a Nisei needs is a trip to Japan to make a loyal American out of him. The American educated Japanese is a boor in Japan and treated as a foreigner..."

"4. The SANSEI -- The Third generation of Japanese is a baby and may be disregarded for the purpose of our survey."

"...the Hawaiian Japanese does not suffer from the same inferiority complex or feel the same mistrust of the whites that he does on the mainland. While it is seldom on the mainland that you find even a college-educated Japanese-American citizen who talks to you wholly openly until you have gained his confidence, this is far from the case in Hawaii. Many young Japanese there are fully as open and frank and at ease with a white as white boys are. In a word, Hawaii is more of a melting pot because there are more brown skins to melt -- Japanese, Hawaiian, Chinese and Filipino. It is interesting to note that there has been absolutely no bad feeling between the Japanese and the Chinese in the islands due to the Japanese-Chinese war. Why should they be any worse toward us?"

"Due to the preponderance of Japanese in the population of the Islands, a much greater proportion of Japanese have been called to the draft than on the mainland. As on the mainland they are inclined to enlist before being drafted. The Army is extremely high in its praise of them as recruits... They are beginning to feel that they are going to get a square deal and some of them are really almost pathetically exuberant."

"The story was all the same. There is no Japanese 'problem' on the Coast. There will be no armed uprising of Japanese. There will undoubtedly be some sabotage financed by Japan and executed largely by imported agents... In each Naval District there are about 250 to 300 suspects under surveillance. It is easy to get on the suspect list, merely a speech in favor of Japan at some banquet being sufficient to land one there. The Intelligence Services are generous with the title of suspect and are taking no chances. Privately, they believe that only 50 or 60 in each district can be classed as really dangerous. The Japanese are hampered as saboteurs because of their easily recognized physical appearance. It will be hard for them to get near anything to blow up if it is guarded. There is far more danger from Communists and people of the Bridges type on the Coast than there is from Japanese. The Japanese here is almost exclusively a farmer, a fisherman or a small businessman. He has no entree to plants or intricate machinery."

"In case we have not made it apparent, the aim of this report is that all Japanese Nationals in the continental United States and property owned and operated by them within the country be immediately placed under absolute Federal control. The aim of this will be to squeeze control from the hands of the Japanese Nationals into the hands of the loyal Nisei who are American citizens... It is the aim that the Nisei should police themselves, and as a result police their parents."

Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy*, Morrow Quill Paperbacks, New York, ©1976, p. 33-53.



CJohnYu.96@alum.mit.edu [[email](#)/[finger](#)/[index](#)]

Hi Claudia,

Dave Finney of the Des Moines Register called me immediately after you gave him my phone number. He was very attentive to hear about the incidents on Dec. 7, 1941 as I experienced that day. If he should file an article on my interview in the Register on Sunday, Dec. 7th, I would like to have a copy of it and its related stories.

I could not give him many details, including the unpreparedness of command responsibilities by Admiral Kimmel at Pearl Harbor and Gen. Short at Ft. Shafter. Especially when the diplomatic negotiation heightened and stalled in Washington, D.C. between Cordell Hull, Secretary of State and Japan's Ambassador, Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura. President D. Roosevelt and the Joint Chief of Staff knowingly of the impending Pearl Harbor/Hickam Field attack by the Imperial Navy of Japan withheld the vital information from the Pacific Ocean Base Commanders, in order to declare war against Japan! Thus silencing Wendell Willkie's stance on the "Monroe's Doctrine"! Even several unarmed B-17 "Flying Fortress" on their delivery to Hickam Airfield were caught unaware of the attack in progress! The real victims of the attack were thousands of sailors and soldiers who died in sacrifice for political expediency! At what price Glory!

An interesting information I learned about the Niihau Island (privately-owned by the Robinson family by Royal Hawaiian Grant, before U.S. possession of the Islands) incident on Dec. 7, 1941. Where direct communication was non-existent, an enemy pilot crashed landed and the local inhabitants were unaware of the Pearl Harbor/Hickam Field attack that morning. After nursing the pilot the next day, an "Issei", a "nisei" and his wife were involved in protecting him from the native inhabitants. When the attack was found out the following day by a returning resident, altercations to imprison him pursued and the pilot, and "issei" were killed, the "nisei" committed suicide, and his wife was imprisoned and released after war's end in 1945. This story was never widely-known to most of the "kamaainas" (Hawaii born residents) nor publicized until after the WWII. Firstly, due to lack of direct communication between Niihau and Honolulu and secondly, to minimize the racial problem which may exacerbate at that time!

Perhaps you or Aaron might be interested in the foregoing information. Regards, Bob I.

Hello Claudia,

Thank you for your prompt replies to my inquiries. Aside from the error of my Drake graduation year, my Japan Occupation duties primarily involve military intelligence in the investigation and interrogation of communist infiltrators among Japanese military and civilian repatriates into Japan and to obtain Russian military information from them. As Japanese Linguists, we assisted in an earlier normalization with the people and to establish a democratic Constitutional Government and free election. Some of us were interpreters to assist in the post-war War Crimes Trials in Manila and Tokyo. So, we were not just support troop in the occupation of Japan.

For historical record, I would like to add comments about duty made by the former Emperor and a General of Japan after the War. When a "Nisei" personal interpreter of Gen. MacArthur was sent to Emperor Hirohito at the Imperial Palace to arrange a formal call at the GHQ, the Emperor said: "We are grateful to have your assistance to arrange for the meeting with Gen MacArthur to help Japan, and to be justly proud as a "Nisei" U.S. soldier". During the Manila War Crime Trials, Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita said to his "Nisei" U.S. interpreter on the Defense Attorney staff: "It is an obligation and rightful that you should be loyal and serve the country of your birth and protection".

The movies "Tora, Tora, Tora" starring the international-known, Toshiro Mifune was made in Hollywood. The Japanese film version followed, where a scene showed two young boys at the base of a mountain surprised by a squadron of enemy bombers flying low overhead at the private Oahu Golf and Country Club in the Alewa Hts. Valley over the Pali cliffs towards Kaneohe Naval Air Station. I suspect one of the surviving pilots must have seen us below, when interviewed by the Japanese filmmaker. I saw their film many years ago, but cannot remember the title or the name of its starring role replacing Toshiro Mifune .. but he was equally well-known. I'll go to the Pasadena Main Library to research the Japanese film version of "Pearl Harbor" and send you the additional information you seek. I'm also trying to find a DVD copies of both versions to purchase as historical memorabilia Regards, R. Isokane

Hello Claudia,

I'm glad you are enjoying your hot, Japanese green tea during the winter which is healthier than drinking coffee. Thank you for your continued support to inform the public of what really happened to the Japanese population in the west coast U.S. and Hawaii at the onset of WWII.

I wished I told Dan Finney about my predecessors of Japanese-Americans (Niseis), who volunteered in the U.S. Army's 100th Battalion (from Hawaii) and the "GFB" 442nd Infantry Regiment (from Hawaii and the U.S. Concentration Camps). They are the ones under unconstitutional laws and racial bias, who fought in WWII Europe against the Germans and Italians to prove their loyalty to the U.S. Racially segregated in the military, they performed actions befitting the "Congressional Medal of Honor", but denied until more than 50 years later! When the 100th Battalion was decimated by more than 75 percent wounded or killed-in-action, the remainders were transferred into the 442nd GFB Regiment, who were the highest decorated unit in history. After the war, President Truman personally decorated the Presidential Unit Citation and said: "You not only fought the War and won, but you also won against racial prejudice!".

This also happened in the Army's Military Intelligence units during WWII, when proficient "Nisei" Linguists were barred as commissioned officers, when inept Caucasian Linguists were commissioned and took the credits. At the Surrender Ceremony aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay, Gen. MacArthur's interpreter was a "Nisei" with only a Technical Sergeant rank, where the Japanese Foreign Minister was assisted by his proficient English Interpreter. But, when the Gen. sent a "Nisei" to carry a message to Emperor Hirohito, he had to promote him as a commissioned officer from a Sergeant rank befitting the assignment!

Yes, I'll be pleased to talk with Aaron Jacob to cover more information on the events which took place about the Japanese population before, during, and after WWII! I was surprised during my early college years that most midwestern population were unaware of what happened to them. If teaching of history and factual events which happened in WWII is lacking and undisclosed in Japan, it is also woefully lacking in the U.S. I hope I can relay those information, especially

how the independent nation of the Hawaiian Kingdom founded by Kamehameha I was overthrown from the last ruling monarch, Queen Liliuokalani by U.S. military force instigated by U.S. missionaries and merchants.