

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Jim Yoshio Tazoi

Interviewed by Claudia Ross July 25, 2003

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TRANSCRIPTION COVER SHEET

Interviewer and Recordist: Claudia Ross
Interviewee: Jim Yoshio Tazoi
Address: 13360 North 6000 West, Garland, Utah 84312
Place of Interview: Interviewee's home, 13360 N 6000 W, Garland,
Utah
Date of interview: 25 July 2003
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Brief Description of Contents:

Jim Tazoi's voluntary enlistment in Army Infantry prior to World War II, followed by combat activity in France and Italy in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a JapaneseAmerican group. His wounding and subsequent recovery. Awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Received special Italian award.

Other Materials: Photographs.

Reference:

JT=Jim Tazoi, Interviewee
CR=Claudia Ross, Interviewer

NOTE:

This is an edited transcript. Musings as interviewee was trying to recall incidences, most stray interjections such as "uh," "and," "so," "you know," "see," and irrelevant comments were omitted from transcript. Tense was occasionally altered to improve flow of reading. Although considerable editing was done, transcription has stayed true to interviewee's expressed thoughts.

Original cassette tape is archived at USU Libraries Special Collections and Archive.

Tape counter numbers which correspond to that tape are enclosed in ellipses.

CR: This is Claudia Ross. I'm in Garland, Utah, interviewing Mr. Tazoi about his military experience. Today is July 25, 2003 and I will be asking Mr. Tazoi to give information about his military service.

JT: My name is Jim Tazoi. Address is 13360 North 6000 West in Garland, Utah 84312. Telephone number is -----. My birth date is the 28th of August, 1919. I was in World War II in the Army Infantry. My rank was PFC. I volunteered to go into the service before the war started in 1941 and served in the United States. After the war began, I was in the service and served in Italy and France. Altogether I had about four years of service. I was out for a short period of time in between; but the total length of service covers about four years.

CR: What drew you into the military in the first place? Why did you join?

JT: I joined the military March 3, 1941. The United States was already preparing for a war. They told us at that time if we would spend one year in active service in the military, then we would be discharged; but before the one year was up, the war began. We declared war on December 7, 1941. The war began before the one year was up, so we had to stay in the service.

When I left here, in Garland, there were 104 of us who volunteered. The reason I went with them is because, (like I've mentioned before) if we'd spend one year in the service, we could get out; and I wanted to be with the local people. They were all local boys that volunteered. That's how I got started in the military.

CR: Where did you go for basic training?

JT: We went to Camp San Luis Obispo in California; and that's where I took field artillery basic in the 222nd Field Artillery.

CR: Where were you on December 7th?

JT: I was in Camp San Luis Obispo on the 7th of December. I remember distinctly. It was a Sunday, and we got news that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was! But I remember the date, the 7th of December.

CR: How did it affect all the people that you were with?

JT: Well, to be told we were in war! It was a novel experience for all of us; but like I say, I don't know how I felt.

CR: Where did you go after you were in San Luis Obispo?

JT: After the war had started, we had to move out; so we were about four or five days preparing to move out of San Luis Obispo. We went to Escondido, California down near San Diego. That's where we stayed for about three or four months. Then, after that... This is kind of a long story, Claudia, do you want me to tell it?

CR: Yes, I do, really.

JT: See, about in February, President Roosevelt signed an executive Order 9066. That is an Executive Order ordering all people of Japanese ancestry, citizens and aliens alike, everybody of Japanese ancestry, to be moved off the West Coast -- mostly in Washington, Oregon, and California because that's where most of those people of Japanese ancestry were living. Of course my home was in Utah, but we were stationed on the West Coast.

[Interviewer's note: Mr. Tazoi spent some time giving me some background, explaining that they evacuated those of Japanese ancestry at different times, as the internment camps were prepared. There were 120,000 evacuated Japanese, of which two-thirds were American citizens.]

JT: There was four of us of Japanese ancestry in our outfit that I left Garland with. (We were American citizens, but our folks were Japanese) When they started evacuating the people around the San Diego area to be moved into these internment camps, we were also told to get out, even though we were in the Army, and we were American citizens. I remember the morning that the four of us were told that we would have to move out. Of course we didn't know where we were going to go. They didn't tell us. Maybe our Company didn't know where we were going to go. I don't think they even knew. The "higher ups" knew. When we left Escondido, California, we stayed in a race track one night. It was a big race track, and we slept in those stalls. We stayed there one night, and then the next day they took us up to Los Angeles where we got on the train and we ended up in Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.

When we got there, there were quite a few people just like myself. We were in the service, but of Japanese ancestry. There were people, when we first got down there, who thought we were prisoners from Japan; but then that got straightened out in a hurry. I stayed there for maybe a month and a half or two months. I couldn't see where I was doing anything very important down there, so I kept going to headquarters and asking them if I could get discharged, because my family was farming here in Garland. Since I was the oldest boy (I had five sisters and one younger brother) and my folks were getting old, I asked them if I could come home to help on the farm. They finally told me, "Yes, you can go home." So I thought maybe I was discharged; but I wasn't.

I didn't know until later on when they formed the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which was made up of fellows like myself. Most of them were from Hawaii at that time. Then when they formed that 442nd, they said, "Well, you've got to go back in." I said, "I don't want to go back into the service." They said, "You never were discharged, you were just put into inactive reserve, so you've got to go back in." So that's how I ended up back in the service. After I'd been home maybe thirteen months or so, that's when they formed the 442nd.

Just about the time that I was home, they reclassified all of us fellows of Japanese ancestry "4C." Now that 4C is either "undesirable" or "enemy aliens." Now we can't be enemy aliens, we're citizens, so maybe in some people's opinions we were undesirables. But that's the classification

we had, so for about thirteen or fourteen months none of the Japanese fellows got drafted. Even though they were short of men and they were looking for soldiers, none of them got drafted.

There were quite a few people like myself who were in the service before the war. Hawaii had quite a few people that were in the service, and they didn't know exactly what to do with all of those fellows. Some people said, "Aw, let's just discharge them- kick them out of the Army." Some of the people said, "Oh, let's give them a chance, see what they *can* do." It was the 100th Battalion whose enlisted personnel were all Japanese fellows. Some of the officers were of Japanese ancestry, but most of them were Caucasians after the war started.

They finally decided, "Well, let's give these guys a chance. We'll send them from Hawaii over to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin." They started giving them infantry training. They got all kinds of training, and they said, "My gosh, these guys are going to be okay. They're going to be good soldiers." So when they got about half way through that training in Camp McCoy, they sent them on down to Camp Shelby, Mississippi to finish training.

About the time that they finished training, that's when they changed that classification from "4C" back to "1A;" but there were a lot of us who were already in the service. Even in San Antonio, Texas there must have been about 300 or 400 of us of Japanese ancestry down there. Then were a bunch of other guys in other camps. Camp Reilly in Kansas had a bunch of them, and I don't know exactly where else.

Before that, they sent us a questionnaire, and on that questionnaire, I remember two questions, #27 and #28. It made us sound like we had allegiance to Japan, which we didn't. I never did tell my folks that I got that questionnaire, but in the back of our property we had a tree, and I sat there for about two days wondering how to answer that question. If it were Antonio, Texas there must have been about 300 or 400 of us of Japanese ancestry down there. Then were a bunch of other guys in other camps. Camp Reilly in Kansas had a bunch of them, and I don't know exactly where else.

{171} Before that, they sent us a questionnaire, and on that questionnaire, I remember two questions, #27 and #28. It made us sound like we had allegiance to Japan, which we didn't. I never did tell my folks that I got that questionnaire, but in the back [of our property] we had a tree, and I sat there for about two days wondering how to answer that question. If it were today, it would be the simplest thing in the world to answer a question like that, but they made it sound like we held allegiance to Japan, which was completely false. I'm glad I wrote, [the right answer] on those two separate questions. I remember those two questions. If I had written [the wrong answer] I would have been sent to [Tule Lake, Oregon]. And, oh, I'm so happy today ... You see I was just a young kid then and I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to ask my folks, and they didn't ever know that I got that questionnaire.

So that's when they said, "Okay, you go back into the service in the 442nd." And that's when I said, "No, I didn't want to." But since I wrote, [the right answer] I got back into the service.

Ask me some questions, Claudia.

CR: When you were down there in Camp Shelby, those people had come from all different areas. Did they seem to get along as a normal group, or was there a lot of [dissension]?

{197}

JT: No, not at the beginning. See, the fellows from Hawaii, they were just like we were. Their folks came from Japan. My folks came from Japan. But they were brought up under a little bit different environment, and they all talked with this "Pidgin English." We had a hard time understanding [them]. They would talk to us, and we would say, "What? What? What? What did you say?" And that would kind of irritate them. So we, you know, didn't get along too well at the beginning. Finally it go so bad that they were even thinking about disbanding the whole thing, just on account that we couldn't get along.

So one day they had one of those internment camps in Rowher, Arkansas; and they decided to send a bunch of those Hawaiian boys up there to the internment camp. When they got up there, they said, "My gosh, here their kids are volunteering for the army, and they're put into these concentration camps." (We called them concentration camps, but they were called internment camps). After that, things completely changed. I don't know how many soldiers went up to the [internment] camp, [but] that completely changed their thinking. So after that, we got along real good.

JT: Most of them were Caucasian, because there were a very few that had taken OCS training. See that's officers' training. But some of those from Hawaii had been in service, and they were officers, but very few. Most of them in the beginning were Caucasian officers. But as the war progressed, as more of them got battle field commissions and those kinds of things, by the end of the war there were quite a few people of Japanese ancestry that had attained the rank of officers.

CR: When you were in that camp, I understand that the other camps were very impressed with the abilities of your group. There seemed to be a greater sense of discipline. Did you find that so?

JT: Well, I guess so. We didn't have any guys deserting or going AWOL or anything like that, but we were just young kids, like anybody else, and we maybe did a few things that were not exactly "according to Hoyle."

CR: What do you remember most about that period of time?

JT: When I was in Mississippi, just before we finished up our basic training there, we went on maneuvers. And, oh! You know, you think being in Mississippi, it is one of the Southern States, it would be warm there; but we went on maneuvers for about two or three weeks, and I am telling you, physically that was probably the hardest part of my military service. It was *so* cold. Every morning they would give us three little dry bread sandwiches that were supposed to last us all day long; but those three little sandwiches -- most of us would eat them up before the sun even came up in the morning because we were so hungry all the time. We lived through it all right, but physically that was so hard! At night we'd build little bonfires, and sleep right near the fire. I remember some of the guys, their clothes would catch on fire. Physically that maneuvers

was the hardest part. It was even harder than when we were overseas. Of course, mentally you know you are getting shot at overseas, so that changed our thinking there, too; but physically being in that maneuvers was probably the hardest part.

CR: When did you land in Europe?

JT: We left from Camp Shelby. We went to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. That's a P.O.E., Point of Embarkation. We left there the 1st day of May and we joined a great big convoy. I don't know how many hundreds of ships there were in that convoy. You know, when you're going as a convoy, you can only travel as fast as the slowest ship, because they all stayed together, so we were on the water just exactly one month from Camp Patrick Henry to Naples. Thirty days! In those days they didn't have a lot of transport planes flying like they have today. The biggest transport ship, I guess, was the Queen Mary. But the little boat that our company rode was just a little "Liberty ship." We had two companies on that ship which was comprised of about 400 men, but the Queen Mary, I think, had over 20,000 troops. They could, if they were alone, go a lot faster; but as I said, we had to go as one convoy, so you can only travel as fast as the slowest ship. We had to stay together for protection.

CR: What do you remember most about being on that little ship?

JT: I kind of enjoyed it. We got to go up on top. Of course at night we stayed down in the bottom. We had, I think, about six or seven layers of single canvas cots. The weather was real good, from what I remember, so everyday we'd go up on top. We'd either play cards or those kinds of things.

CR: Where did you actually land?

JT: We landed in Naples on the last day of May. We were on the water for 30 days. Thirty days!

CR: Where were you sent?

JT: We stayed in Naples for two or three days. You see part of our outfit, the 100th Battalion was already engaged over there. We went over in three battalions. (Three battalions form a regiment). The 100th Battalion that came over earlier and took training, they were already over there. So in other words, since they were already over there, they had established quite a good record. They let them keep their name as the 100th Battalion, and we went over with another battalion, which was the 2nd Battalion, and another battalion (the 3rd Battalion) and this formed the 442nd Regiment. I was in K Company. In this first battalion that they allowed to keep their 100th Battalion name since they were already over there, it had A, B, C and D rifle companies. The 2nd Battalion had E, F, G, H; and we had I, K, Land M. But we had other things attached to us. These were just the rifle companies I'm telling you about. That made the 442nd Regiment.

CR: We you all sent to the same battles?

JT: After we joined up. The fall of Rome was June 6, I remember. But we joined up with the 100th before that date Anyway, since they were already in action, we finally joined up with them. [Long skip in tape as Mr. Tazoi attempted to recall the dates and place.] I think I'm getting a little bit confused on dates. It's only been 60 years ago!

CR: Where did you first experience battle conditions?

JT: It was just a few days before the fall of Rome. We were stationed one night in Anzio. (Of course Anzio had already fallen, but it hadn't fallen too long before that.) I remember the "fireworks!" They used those "tracer" bullets. (You know, they shoot them at night. You can see where the bullets are going because it leaves a trail of light.) That night we were in Anzio, it was just like the Fourth of July fireworks! But, luckily, it was more precautionary because they were just shooting these tracer bullets. I don't think there were any enemy airplanes in the air at that time. We finally caught up with these 100th Battalion guys, and we joined them from there.

CR: So, what did you do once you got together. What was your assignment?

JT: Well, I guess when they were just the 100th, they were taking on smaller units, but after we joined together, what we did was take on a bigger assignment.

CR: So actually then, you were serving in Italy itself, not in France?

JT: That's right. We were in Italy. We fought quite a few battles. We went above Rome on the Arno River; and then I think in September they pulled us back and told us we were going somewhere else. A lot of the guys were speculating, "Oh, they're gonna send us to Japan."

We got on the ship (I think it was at Leghorn, Italy) and after a day or two we ended up in Marseilles, France. That had to be around the first part of September. The war had already gone quite a ways through France by that time, so when we caught up with the front line of the war, they were all up in Northern France. From Marseilles up to Northern France, we rode on those "40 and 8" railroad cars that haul horses and cattle. Forty men, or 8 horses. I guess that's how they named the 40 and 8. Anyway, we were lucky because it started raining. It was about a two or three day trip from Marseilles up into Northern France. A lot of the guys, most of the other two battalions, had to ride on the back of trucks. They were in open trucks, and it was raining all the time, but at least we had a little bit of roof over us. Even though it was for horses, gosh, that was a lot better than riding in the rain. So we finally got up into Northern France and we joined the 36th Division.

CR: Now the 36th Division, was that the "Texas division"?

JT: Yep, that's it.

CR: Were you in that group that liberated them?

JT: Well, there again, it is kind of a long story. Now after we got up there, we were attached to the 36th Division. They had one group called the "Lost Battalion," and they were part of the 36th. There were about 220 guys in that "Lost Battalion." The reason they got lost, the German soldiers let them come through, and then after they got through, they cut them off, and they couldn't get out. There were two or three other outfits that tried to get them out and couldn't. We happened to be in that area, so they sent us in there, after they'd been trapped for maybe two or three or four days. We finally got them out, but oh, at what a cost of lives! In fact, I think we had more dead in those two or three days that we fought to rescue them, than the number of guys that were rescued. I think we had over 200 fellows that got killed and I don't know how many wounded. Maybe 600 or 700 wounded.

That's why, according to historians, the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" was only about a two or three day battle, but it is one of the 10 most fiercely fought battles in American history. There were only two listed for World War II: the 442nd rescue of the "Lost Battalion" was one of them, and the other was in the South Pacific. I forgot which one it was, but some of those other eight (there were ten altogether listed in the archives) even go back as far as the Civil War. But anyway, the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" is one of the ten that's listed as the most fierce fight.

CR: And you were fighting against tanks part of the time?

JT: Yes, we were. Let me show you ... [We moved to another room, where he showed me a drawing of a group of infantry firing on a tank, which was situated above them. He told me about the battle, then we returned to the kitchen, and resumed our conversation.]

CR: Now, tell me about when you were fighting up towards that tank.

JT: We ran onto this tank. We didn't even know that tank was there, and I'm sure those tank guys didn't know we were coming up there. This was in broad daylight. We came right up to it, and we shot at it a few times, but we found out later that we didn't disable it or anything. Most of us just had these M1 s. You know they wouldn't even make a dent on a Tiger tank. We had bazookas, and they didn't do anything either. They hit the tank a few times. Then after the tank had been there for a little while .. I think the motor was running, but they turned it off. Then after while the Germans who were in the tank took off and ran into the forest. There must have been three or four of them. They took off, so we thought, "Well! That's all right. The tank is still there." But in the middle of the night (because we stayed there that night, right near the tank, and we were sleeping) they snuck back in the tank. They started the tank up and drove the tank off. Otherwise, we would have had a big prize there!

CR: But there were many wounded in that attack.

JT: Yes, I think most of the wounded came on the 29th of October. That was about the second day of the battle. I got wounded on the 29th. I got shot through the chest, and then a little while later I got wounded the second time. They threw a hand grenade, and one exploded just as it lit on me. When I got shot through the chest, it was with a rifle. It went in just above my heart, took

a kind of a downward course and exited in the back here. Like I say, I was the company radioman, and had a radio strapped to my back, so the bullet lodged in the radio.

I'm going to tell you how I felt when I got wounded. I knew something had happened to me, because I was just getting ready to crawl over a tree. Maybe an artillery shell hit the tree, a pine tree, and it knocked it down. I was just getting ready to crawl over that. I didn't make it. Of course I didn't know how far over I got, but I didn't make it. I thought, "Something happened to me! I don't feel just right." So after a little while I knew darn well I got hit somewhere. I guess I must have been lying down for a little while.

I'm sure it was a hand grenade they threw. I think it was what they call one of those German "potato mashers." Now a potato masher is mostly a concussion grenade. It had a metal covering on the outside. Inside of a room or something like that it would do a lot of damage. The least it would do, it would knock our eardrums out. But out in the open, since it was a concussion grenade, if it had been just a little ways away from me when it exploded, I don't think it would have done a thing. That's why I'm not exactly sure what it was, but I'm fairly certain it was one of those potato mashers. But it just so happened that it lit right on my groin as it exploded, and that really hurt, because it's a different kind of wound. Now I still have two pieces of shrapnel lodged against my big hip bone. One's about the size of a quarter. The other is about the size of a dime. But the reason they didn't take it out, the Doctor said, "Well, if it was just a straight shot into the bone, we could take it out, but we'd have to cut... We would probably do more damage by taking it out, so let's just leave it in there and see what happens. If it bothers you any time in the future, we can take it out." I still have it in me.

After I got shot I laid there for a while. 'Course time gets away from you. I don't know how long. Must have been, oh, half an hour or so anyway, and I was lapsing in and out of consciousness. The few times I was conscious, I kept telling myself, "Something happened to me," and "Try to stay conscious if you can. Don't pass out." Because, you know, I think I had presence of mind at that time to think that if I'd lose consciousness, I might die. So, "Try to stay conscious," I kept telling myself. But I couldn't do it.

I remember when the medic finally came up, I said, "Where did I get shot?" And I remember him telling me, "You got shot in the back." Well, evidently he cut the radio off my back, and he saw the blood on there, but he didn't know the bullet went in the front; and he didn't know I'd got wounded the second time. I remember I was conscious, (but I wasn't conscious very long), because after he left I got to thinking, "How could I get shot in the back anyway?" But, like I say, he didn't know the bullet went in the front.

After he left, I was unconscious for a while because I don't remember anybody taking me out. Two medics must have put me on a stretcher and taken me, but I don't remember that time. But I remember they took me back to a first aid station where there were a bunch of medics waiting, and I remember I was conscious again there. I have a picture of where that first aid station was, and I remember that. I know I was conscious then. I don't know how long I stayed there, then I lost consciousness again.

From that point on, they put me on a jeep and they took me to the "hospital." I regained consciousness again because I remember talking to the ward boys. (Now this was at night, so it would be five or six hours after I was wounded.) I said, "Hey, give me a drink of water. I'm so thirsty I can't even hardly talk."

"No, we can't give you any water."

I said, "Why not?" Then I guess I must have blasted off at the medics.

But they said, "Well, we're not supposed to give you any water."

"Awww, okay."

But then I passed out again and they took me into the "hospital" that night. It wasn't even a hospital. It was just a tent. Dirt floors. No windows or nothing. They took me in there and operated on me.

So I guess it was the next day I finally came to, and the doctor, Dr. Stimpson from Tucson, came in and said, "You're pretty lucky you're still alive."

I said, "Oh, I guess I am."

He said, "The bullet, went in just above your heart. The concussion of the bullet moved your heart!"

I said, "Oh, I guess I *am* lucky to be alive!"

Just before I got wounded that morning, we were so close to the enemy that neither side could use field artillery. You couldn't even use a mortar because we were so close that a ten yard difference... Maybe our troops would fire a mortar, and if it was ten yards too short, it would fall in on our own side. So we were just strictly rifle (you know, small arms). I came running up to one place where maybe the rain had washed a gully for years and years there in the mountains, and I got down on my knees because I didn't want to make a big target. I was kind of looking around. I just happened to look, and there was a German soldier right there! (I'm sure now that he didn't have a gun. I'm thinking all these things after it happened.) But at soon as I saw him, I raised up my gun, and he let out a squeal. I can still hear that squeal. I put about four or five rounds into him. I'm sure he was shooting at us maybe even ten seconds before, but he probably threw his rifle away. I didn't even look. But, you know, we couldn't afford to take a prisoner, because even one man short, if we take a prisoner ...

[Interviewer note: Tape ended. Mr. Tazoi continued on to say that in retrospect, he thinks the German was probably out of ammunition and was intending to just lie there until the Americans passed by.]

Tape 1, side B

JT: Yeah, I think that's what happened. Yeah, I'm *sure* that's what happened. Of course, I've had sixty years to think this thing over, but if he *had* had a gun, he could have got me before I got him.

And then right after that, about the time I got loaded, you see there was a big fallen pine tree. I think maybe an artillery shell had knocked it down, and I was behind it. I didn't know these soldiers were so close to that. 'Course I didn't know this either, but some of my friends were telling me later, "You were lucky that you wasn't any farther in advance." I remember climbing over that tree that was laying on the ground and that's when I got shot, I guess. The concussion knocked me back to our side of the tree. The enemy was on this side, and I was on this side [illustrating with his hands]. If I'd been a little bit farther, the concussion probably wouldn't have knocked me back over here.

My friends were telling me, "You know, just on the other side of this tree where you got shot there were two German foxholes and each of them had two German officers in them. We finally got them." 'Course I didn't know that, so I don't know whether they shot me, or whether some of these other guys shot me, but I was lucky that I wasn't a little bit farther, 'cause if I'd landed on that side of the tree, I wouldn't have lasted. They would have got me right then.

CR: Now you were carrying a field pack radio?

JT: Yeah.

CR: How heavy was it?

JT: Well, it's maybe about thirty or forty pounds.

CR: That must have been rather difficult to pack that, as well as keep in communication.

JT: Well, it was. It's about thirty or forty pounds extra weigh; but, you know most of the guys in our outfit (Japanese guys) are not very big. I'm one of the bigger ones. I'm only about 5'6" or 5'7" but I'm one of the bigger ones, so that's why I was carrying the radio.

CR: You were taken back to the hospital, and then where did you go?

JT: I stayed in that tent hospital maybe two or three days. Like I said, it was just a tent. Dirt floors. I remember after about two or three days it snowed, so this ward boy rolled the sides of the tent up. There were about twenty-five or thirty of us in that tent, wounded guys. The ward boys came in and said, "It snowed last night." So they rolled up the sides of the tent to show us the snow out there.

CR: Then you were taken where from there?

JT: Well, as you got a little bit better, they'd move you back to a different hospital. I guess I must have been in maybe three or four different hospitals getting moved back all the time. Then I

finally ended up in a hospital in Paris. I stayed there only one night. Then they sent me to a hospital in Chester, England. I stayed there maybe a month or so while I was recuperating. I got yellow jaundice. I said, "How do you know? How can you tell *I've* got yellow jaundice?"

CR: Did you stay there any longer, or did they send you back?

JT: I was in this hospital in England maybe a month or so, and then they said, "Okay, you're going to go home now." I still don't remember to this day whether they put me on a plane or whether they took me to the Channel and put me on a boat. I know it was in the daytime, but I just can't remember how we went there.

Then after I was in this hospital, we ended up in Virginia. This was only about a six-day trip this time going back from England to the same place that we left from, Camp Patrick Virginia. So after I got there, they said, "Okay, which hospital would you like to go to?" I said, "Well, they've got a hospital near my home called Bushnell and I'd like to go there."

They said, "No, you can't go there because that's mostly amputee cases (even though we had a lot of guys from our outfit already there in Bushnell). You can go either to FitzSimmons in Denver or to Percy Jones Hospital in Michigan.

I said, "Oh, if that's the case, I'll go to FitzSimmons in Denver because that's near my home (only the next state over, anyway)." So, they said okay, and in a couple of days they put me on a train and I ended up in Fitz Simmons.

But before I left Camp Patrick Henry to come to Fitz Simmons in Denver, I called my folks and my sister. My folks didn't know how to talk any English. They don't learn a whole lot sitting out in the beet fields, you know. I guess they didn't have enough money for the whole bunch to come, so my Dad and Mother decided to come to Denver to see me. My sister (she was a little bit younger than I am) wrote out a bunch of cards about the size of regular playing cards. The one side was written in Japanese, the other side would show you, "Where is your restroom?" or all kinds of situations that she could think of. You see in those days they didn't have commercial airplanes flying like they have today. Principal method of transportation was either they came by train or by bus. They thought, "Well, going on a train might be better because these buses probably stop at every little town." So that's how they came to Denver and back.

CR: So you did get to see them!

JT: Oh, yeah. We were trying in all ways to communicate with them. Like today, they've got this e-mail, and, gosh, you just punch a dial on the telephone and you can get overseas right now; but it wasn't that way during World War II.

CR: Did you send letters?

JT: Yeah, we sent letters, and they tried through the Red Cross and everything else; and even letters would sometimes get lost and be two or three weeks. Naturally a parent would wonder, "Oh, I wonder if he is still alive!" and those kinds of things. Yes, it was different than it is today.

[Interviewer note: Mr. Tazoi digressed to say that he had corresponded with the doctor who operated on him, a Dr. Stimpson from Tucson, but had never had the opportunity to visit with him in person. He lost contact with him, tried to locate him (even enlisting the aid of the police department), but has never re-established contact with him.]

CR: You went through a lot, both in the war and then recuperating from your injuries. What was the thing that helped you most to keep going and persevere?

JT: Well, I wanted to stay alive, and I didn't know I was that close to getting killed at that time. I'm not much of a religious person- but I want to back up again. After the medics came up, I was lapsing in and out of consciousness. One time when I was partway conscious I could hear the prettiest music I ever heard in my life, and that's when I told myself, "Hey, this is not a normal thing listening to music up here in the forest, so try to stay conscious," but I couldn't do it. I've never heard music like that before, or since. I think I was close to going to the other side, even at that time.

[Interviewer note: Mr. Tazoi digressed to tell about a man names Jensen, who lived in Brigham City, a city nearby Garland. Mr. Jensen told him that he was a member of the Lost Battalion, one of those rescued by Mr. Tazoi's group.]

CR: That was a wonderful thing that you people did. I don't know how you did it. Nobody else could get in there.

{ 165 }

JT: That's right. We got more medals for the length of time and the length of service than any other unit of our size. See, (this is a little bit braggy) next to the Distinguished Service Cross, the Congressional Medal is the next highest. We had *fifty-two* Distinguished Service Crosses service crosses issued to member of our regiment, and I'm one of them that had the DSC.

[Interviewer's note: Mr. Tazoi also received one of only four medals awarded to his regiment by the Italian government - the Military Valor Cross.]

{ 174 } The farther up the medal goes, the farther up the ladder it has to be approved. We could never figure out- some of us were recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor, but it would never go through. So finally just before the end of the war, we had a Senator in

CR: Did you ever go back overseas? Did you go back to France.

JT: Yes I did. I'm glad you asked that. I had three boys. One son was in the Air Force (not in the flying Air Force, in the ground troops). He got killed over in the country of Turkey. Two brothers on an interstate ran over him. I don't whether they were drunk. I didn't even want to find

out, but we finally got a letter from one of those guys who was driving. Anyway, my son got killed in Turkey, and then we got a letter from the Air Force saying there were going to dedicate a fitness center to our son in the place called Izmir, Turkey, where there is an Air Force squadron. They said they would "like to invite you and your wife to come over to our dedication" of that fitness center when they dedicated it to our son. I said, "We'd be happy to come over. We'd be honored to come over there."

They put us up in one of the big hotels there. This health center is on one of the floors in the Hilton Hotel. It has his name and everything on a placard. It is built there for civilians and Air Force. I hope someday somebody from Utah maybe goes to Izmir and sees that.

After we left Izmir, we went to France and went to this area of the Lost Battalion. Those people in France had put up a sign in that forest where we were involved in that Lost Battalion battle.

I've got to back up again. I had a friend that went to Germany about four or five years ago. He knew they had built some kind of monument to the 442nd in France. He came into France, took a kind of a back road, just kind of a logging road, just a dirt road. He came to a T in the road, a dead-end. He didn't know which way to turn, but saw a sign on a tree. So he went up there and looked, and he said,

"I'll be darned, there are three names on that sign, and your name is one of those!" I said, "Oh, I can't believe it." But he took a picture of it, so when we went back there two years ago into France, we stayed at a woman's bed and breakfast. He inquired about the sign. She said, "I've seen that sign many a time, but two years ago on Christmas day we had a windstorm come through here. It was the worst windstorm of the century, and it blew a lot of the trees down. The sign and the tree that had your name on it got blown down, but I know just exactly where that was because I live right there in the forest now." So we went over there, but we couldn't find the sign. I told the mayor of that town, "If you ever come across that sign, let me know, because I want to come back to France to see that."

[Mr. Tazoi, his wife, son, and two grandsons went to the area of the Lost Battalion battle.]

I was getting a little bit old and I didn't want to walk down in there. I probably wouldn't have recognized anything anyway down there; but my grandson went down there, and he came up with a bunch of shells - unused shells. I said, "Where did you find those dam things?"

"Down there. Just a little ways down there."

"My gosh, how did you find them."

"Well, the ground was kind of loose so I just kicked on it and found one or two shells."

He finally came up with about twenty shells. You know the Germans had a 31 mm gun and we had a 30 mm gun. Some of those shells were kind of caked together, so I know they had to be laying there for those sixty years. We brought them home; but before we brought them home we

emptied them of powder. My son said, "I'm going to empty all the powder out and just put the shells back in so in case we get stopped (which we probably will, with all that metal) the powder had all been taken out." We didn't have any problem at all. They didn't even stop us.

I don't think I have any of the shells here. I think they had to be German shells. They must have taken off and left them. As I said, theirs was a 31 mm-just one little bit bigger. Their shells will not fit into our gun, but our shell is a 30 mm and will fit into a German gun. I should find out for sure whether they were German shells or whether they were our shells. My son has them.

CR: How long after you got home was it before you were discharged?

JT: After I left Denver hospital, and they sent me to a hospital in Riverside, California. Camp Haun. From there I got discharged, and that's when I came home. But I was eight months recuperating in the hospitals.

CR: What did you go into after you came home? What type of work?

JT: Well, we were on the farm (the same farm that we're on today). So I stayed around here. Then I worked a little while in Hill Field. I was a payroll clerk there; but I wasn't exactly happy, so I quit that. I've been back on the farm.

CR: Did all three of your sons go into the military?

JT: Just one. Then I had a brother that went into the military. He went into the Korean War. He was a little younger.

[Interviewers note: Mr. Tazoi showed me a picture of him laying a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We then returned to the interview.]

CR: This was in Arlington?

JT: Yeah, this is in Arlington. This is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. That's me in the middle. It isn't everybody that gets that chance to lay a wreath on the tomb. That's why I'm so proud of this.

CR: How did that happen?

JT: You have to ask for permission and go through a lot of red tape to even get there.

CR: What was your friend's name?

JT: His name was Ken Kajiwara from Hawaii. I'm really proud of the fact that I was able to do that. In this county I don't think there are too many guys who have had the honor and privilege of doing that.

[Interviewer's note: Mr. Tazoi's experiences have been recorded in several published books. We looked through two together: *Missing Stories and Oral History of Ethnic and Minority Groups in Utah* by Leslie G. Kellen and Elaine Hallet Stone, and *The U.S. Samaritans in Breuysers* by Pierre Mouline. We chatted about the books, and then returned to the interview.]

CR: You mentioned that there was prejudice when you first went into the service, or when the war started. What about when you came home. Did you still run into prejudice?

JT: We sure did. I'll tell you one example. After you were discharged from the Army at that time we could wear the uniform for ninety days. We had what they called a "Ruptured Duck" insignia. We sewed that on our uniform. That tells you that we had been in and we were now out. Two of my friends and I, one time, were going up to Boise or Nampa to see some friends. We went to Twin Falls shortly after I came home. Naturally we were proud that we had been in the service and we were wearing our uniforms. We stopped at a place in Twin Falls, a little cafe, to get something to eat, and they said, "No, we don't feed you kind of guys. We don't feed you Japs." We said, "Ok, if that's the way you feel about it [shrugged shoulders]." We'd been in the service, had a uniform on, all three of us had Purple Hearts, and then to be told something like that!

CR: It must have been very hard.

JT: Oh, man, you just feel like picking up things and thrashing the place, but we thought, "Aw, what the heck. If he's that kind of a person, why [shrugged shoulders]."

You know people around here, they were all real good, nice, but it wasn't fashionable to say, "Hey, we think Japanese people are okay." They didn't say that, but they were all nice people. In fact, I'll tell you one instance.

Right after the war started (that's when I was in the service in California already), the Sheriff or someone came up and took my Dad to jail just because he was Japanese. He couldn't even hardly talk English or anything. When they took him to jail, my mother didn't know what to do. She was frantic about it. She sent one of my sisters over to a neighbor named Dean Capener. He was a real good friend of ours. He came over and asked what happened. She said, "They took my Dad to jail."

He said, "I'll go down and see what is wrong." So he went down there and he said, "If you need to keep Mr. Tazoi in jail, I'll sit in jail in his place. You let him go home!" So he came home.

CR: What a wonderful thing!

JT: Right! Absolutely.

CR: So your parents were able to stay here on the farm the whole time?

JT: Yeah. See, the people in Utah didn't get evacuated, but we were also under different restrictions. We had to be home between 9:00p.m. and 6:00 in the morning, and things like that.

We couldn't travel a radius of more than 50 miles, and couldn't have any weapons (contraband). We had these little box radios that probably wouldn't get reception here to Ogden. They took those away, and those kinds of things. It's war hysteria that causes that. That's what caused the evacuation. Poor political advice, for one thing. Racial prejudice. War hysteria. That's what causes all these things. See that was a big mistake, and the government finally admits it was, now. To evacuate 120,000 people, two-thirds of them American citizens! They never had been convicted of espionage, or anything. I don't think there's another nationality that would have accepted that kind of a thing. I've had people say, "Why didn't you guys fight it?"

We were just young kids. Most of our Dads and Mothers couldn't even talk English.

The government says, "Move out of here."

"Okay."

But today it would be different.

End of Interview