

THE DIRTY JOBS THAT OUR NISEI DO

"If the Jap, when cornered, would surrender he'd be immeasurably easier to fight. But he won't. Tactically you first lick him, then you have to spend hours, days, sometimes weeks and months rooting him out and killing him. I've seen half a dozen holed-up snipers fight to the death against a battalion."--
Maj. Gen. R. B. Woodruff, commander of the 24th corps infantrymen on Mindanao.

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Estimates of Japanese casualties run so many thousands killed, so many dozen captured, in campaign after campaign.

A little of this is due to bitterness and fear on our side, with our boys refusing quarter. But the bulk of it is due to suicidal stands by Japanese who fight on in numb terror when there's no sense to it.

The extra cost of this kind of fighting is so ghastly for our side, as well as theirs, that our authorities have been beating the bushes to find ways to get the Japanese to surrender more readily. Propaganda leaflets, surrender passes, and loud speakers have been pressed into service.

One of the most effective methods so far turns out to be one of which we deliberately deprived ourselves earlier in the war-- Japanese-Americans who can speak the language.

Soon after Pearl Harbor we stopped drafting Japanese-Americans and began sending those already in service out of the Pacific area. The Navy and Marine corps had no Japanese-Americans to begin with, and one of the motives for organization of the magnificent Seabees was to avoid the necessity of using Japanese-American construction workers in the Hawaiian islands, as the Army did.

It was a big mistake, though a natural one. The Japanese-Americans (with a few exceptions, who were soon spotted) proved one of the most loyal parts of the population. Their combat units on the European fronts made outstanding records for bravery and efficient fighting.

Soon volunteering, then the draft was re-opened to them. The few that had been allowed to remain in the Pacific theaters proved so useful that many requests for transfers from Europe were honored, and Japanese-speaking Nisei from the armies fighting Germany were "lend-leased" to Marines for the fight against Japan.

Now they sneak up toward Japanese pillboxes and caves, and call on the Japanese in their own language to surrender--with grenades handy if the Japanese aren't interested. Because of their

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looks, they risk death at the hands of their buddies as well as from the enemy--for uniforms quickly get dirty and ragged.

Joe Rosenthal, Associated Press photographer who made the famous flag-raising-on-Iwo picture, testifies:

"There are thousands of Japanese-Americans in United States Service in all theaters. All of those with whom I came in contact are anxious to prove their loyalty to this country. Often their anxiety is touching, for they volunteer for all sorts of dangerous missions.

"Many have paid with their lives, and many more have been wounded. They have done an outstanding job for the Allied cause, and their heroism should be recognized. It has been recognized by the Marine commanders where I saw them in action at Guam, Peleliu, and Iwo....And they get along fine with the Marines."

Recognition earlier would have saved even more American lives.