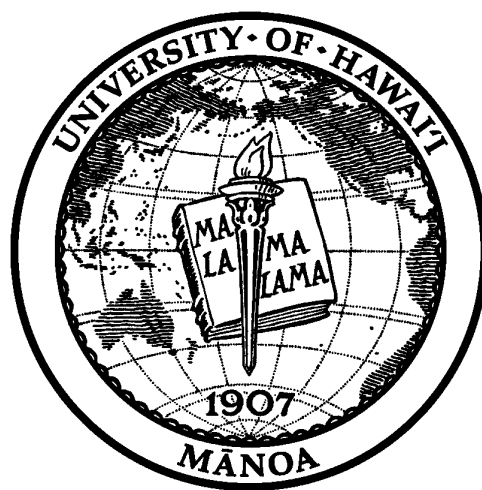


UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA

VVV Oral History Project Collection

Finding Aid



AJA 004

Archives & Manuscripts Department
University of Hawaii at Manoa Library

December 2005

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Introductory Information

Collection Name: VVV Oral History Project Collection

Collection Number: AJA 004

Inclusive / Bulk Dates: 1984-1992

Size of Collection: 2.5 linear feet

Creator of Papers (Individual): Dr. Franklin Odo

Abstract:

The Varsity Victory Volunteers (VVV) was a 169-member all-Japanese American volunteer labor unit assigned to the 34th Army Engineers at Schofield Barracks to assist in military construction projects from February 1942 through January 1943. A majority of the members were University of Hawaii ROTC students who were inducted into the Hawaii Territorial Guard (HTG) following the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. As a result of the general atmosphere of distrust following Pearl Harbor, all Japanese Americans were dismissed from the HTG in January 1942. The students then successfully petitioned the military governor to form the VVV in order to prove their loyalty.

The VVV Oral History Project Collection contains transcripts and oral history interviews of VVV members and others in the community who were involved with the VVV. Dr. Franklin Odo conducted the interviews between 1984 and 1992, and his interviews serve as the basis for the book *No Sword to Bury: Japanese Americans in Hawaii during World War II*. There are 26 typed transcripts arranged alphabetically by interviewee. There are also 15 oral history interviews available for listening on CD.

Administrative Information

- Repository Information:** Archives & Manuscripts Department
University of Hawaii at Manoa Library
2550 McCarthy Mall
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Phone: (808) 956-6047
Fax: (808) 956-5968
Email: archives@hawaii.edu
URL: <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/archives/>
- Processing Archivist:** Laura Capell, December 2005
- Restrictions:** None
- Provenance:** Donated by Franklin Odo of Washington, DC, in January 2005 (Accession 2005:001).
- Preferred Citation:** [Identification of item], VVV Oral History Project Collection, Archives & Manuscripts Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library.
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Historical Sketch

Members of the University of Hawaii ROTC were formed into the Hawaii Territorial Guard, following the attack in Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. After several weeks of service all Japanese American members of the Guard were dismissed on 19 January 1942, because of the general distrust of Japanese Americans prevalent after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. With the assistance of Hung Wai Ching and Shigeo Yoshida, these students petitioned the military governor, Lt. General Delos C. Emmons, to form the Varsity Victory Volunteers (VVV). Their petition was successful and the VVV was established on 23 February 1942.

The VVV, officially named the Corps of Engineers Auxiliary, was assigned to the 34th Army Engineers at Schofield Barracks to assist in military construction projects. The 169 volunteers were divided into twelve work gangs, including a quarry gang, carpentry gangs, mechanic gangs, laborer gangs, and the kitchen gang. Lt. Richard Lum served as the commanding officer, and Lt. Thomas Kaulukukui was the executive officer. Ralph Yempuku was the civilian supervisor, and he was assisted by Ted Tsukiyama. Some of the VVV's accomplishments include: constructing several buildings; stringing several miles of barbed wire; quarrying several tons of rocks; constructing numerous pieces of furniture; and participating in road construction projects.

On 31 January 1943, the VVV was inactivated so that its members could volunteer for the newly formed 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The former members of the VVV served with distinction in the 442nd RCT and the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) for the remainder of World War II.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Dr. Franklin Odo, Director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program, interviewed former members of the VVV, and his interviews are the basis of the book *No Sword to Bury: Japanese Americans in Hawaii during World War II*.

Sources:

Yutaka Nakahata and Ralph Toyota, "Varsity Victory Volunteers: A Social Movement," *Social Progress in Hawaii* 8 (November 1943), 29-35.

Franklin Odo, *No Sword to Bury: Japanese Americans in Hawaii During World War II*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

Scope & Content Note

The VVV Oral History Project Collection contains transcripts and oral history interviews of VVV members and community members who were involved with the VVV. The interviews were conducted by Dr. Franklin Odo between 1984 and 1992. There are 26 typed transcripts arranged alphabetically by interviewee. There are also 15 oral history interviews available for listening on CD.

The collection contains transcripts for audiotape interviews conducted by Odo with the assistance of Ted Tsukiyama, including Shiro Amioka, Hung Wai Ching, Masato Doi, Herbert Isonaga, Thomas Kaulukukui, Richard Lum, Yutaka Nakahata, Ryoji Namba, Yugo Okuba, Ted Tsukiyama, George Yamamoto, Ralph Yempuku, Shigeo Yoshida, John Young, and Richard Zukemura.

The collection also contains transcripts for videotape interviews conducted by Odo with the assistance of Chris Conybeare for KHET-TV. Interviewees include Hung Wai Ching, Yoshiaki Fujitani, Jackson Morisawa, Barney Ono, Akira Otani, and a group interview of Ralph Toyota, Ted Tsukiyama, and Ralph Yempuku.

There are also transcripts for talks at the Honolulu Buddhist Study Center hosted by Bishop Yoshiaki Fujitani, including Yoshimi Hayashi, Claude Takekawa, and Harry Tanaka. The collection also contains the transcript of an interview of Teruo Himoto conducted by Greg Beuthin. Please see the inventory for a complete list of transcripts and interviews.

The oral history interviews in this collection were received on audiocassette tapes, but have been reformatted onto CD for preservation and access.

For additional information on the Varsity Victory Volunteers, please see the Ted Tsukiyama Papers (AJA 002).