

Transcript: Don Miyada

Go For Broke Veteran Talk, April 30, 2021

1. ***When were you born and where are you from?*** I was born in Oceanside, California, May 21, 1925. I was raised in Corona Del Mar actually. It's between Newport Beach and Laguna Beach and we had a farm there for about 14 years until the evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry.
2. ***What was your school like back then?*** It was a so-called one-room school house. We had one teacher for all eight grades and the student body was primarily *Niseis*. We had two Spanish American students with us.
3. ***What did you enjoy doing as a student when you were in elementary and middle school?*** When I was a student, I don't remember very much enjoying studying or anything like that. The enjoyment I recall was primarily going out to the beach and go swimming and fooling around out there.
4. ***Why is it important to respect your parents and elders?*** I think parents are very important to us, especially the second generation, as we are called, *Niseis*, because the first generation sacrificed so much to, for our benefit so that we'd be able to get an education, and succeed in a society which was not that friendly to the *Isseis*. And, we learned the perseverance from them, their attitude towards us, and towards our, for our benefit. And they sacrificed a great deal in their life, and we are very thankful for that.
5. ***Did you feel betrayed by our leaders when they forced you into camps because of your heritage?*** Yes very much so. I felt, before we were ordered to go to camp, I felt that we were going to be staying on our farm for the rest of the conflict.
6. ***What did you have to leave behind when you were forced to leave your home?*** Yes we left our pets behind. And I remember I left my Schwinn bicycle, that's mine. But my parents lost everything. They lost the farm. They lost the store. They lost means of livelihood. They lost everything.
7. ***Was it important to the Nisei Soldiers to prove their loyalty?*** Yes I think it matters in proving your loyalty. Some of the veterans I know, especially the older ones, were very strong on that. In fact, they felt that they were helping the younger kids, and others who came back alive, to have a better life.

8. ***How did Nisei Soldiers like you make life better for us today?*** I think by serving in the Armed Forces — 100th Battalion, 442nd, MIS, WAC, and other units — they showed that they were willing to fight for their country. And the fact that they did it so well, speaks very highly of them. MIS did a sterling job in their translation work. 442nd/100th Battalion set an enviable record in Europe being the most decorated unit for time of service. And so I think if the general population saw those figures, they would like to welcome these people as fellow citizens.
9. ***Is the Go For Broke Soldiers Stamp important?*** Yes I think the stamp will be important. I think anything that brings out the fact that *Niseis*, despite discrimination and hardships imposed upon them by their government, were able to perform so notably in battle, I think ,is a real credit to the *Nisei* Soldiers.
10. ***Why is the “Go For Broke” persevering spirit important?*** Perseverance is opposite of giving up. And the fact that they didn’t give up and persevered in their patriotic duties, I think, was very important.
11. ***What did you answer for the American loyalty questions in camp?*** Yes my inclination was to put down “yes - no” but, or “no - yes,” one or the other, because one of the questions was, “Will you willingly serve in combat for the United States of America.” And the word ‘willingly’ really struck me as giving me my free will. If I had my free will, I would not have served in combat for the United States of America. So on that question there, I would probably have put down “no.” As for the allegiance to the emperor and stuff like that, of course, we had no relationship with the emperor, or Japan. So of course we had no affinity, you might say, for the country of Japan.

Note: This interview was conducted by the Stamp Our Story Coalition for educational purposes at Don Miyada’s home in Westminster, California. Go to www.StampOurStory.org for more information. Thank you.