

Honouliuli's POWs: Making Connections, Generating Changes

SUZANNE FALGOUT

ABSTRACT

Immediately adjacent to Honouliuli's internment camp was Hawai'i's largest prisoner of war camp. It housed as many as 4,000 or more Japanese, Okinawans, Koreans, and Filipinos sent from various locations in the Pacific Theater, plus Italians picked up from the Atlantic Theater. The Camp served as an important base camp and also as a main transit point for those sent to destinations on the US mainland.

Although framed within wider Geneva Convention and US military guidelines for the humane treatment of prisoners, conditions of imprisonment differed significantly from one group to another and also changed over time. Those differences were largely dependent on ethnic backgrounds, wartime political statuses, and the reputations of various POW groups. They were also significantly affected by connections made between POWs and the US military, some with internees of their own ethnic groups in the camp, and especially with members of the local community.

This paper examines those varying conditions of imprisonment. It also describes the significance of transnational, national, and local connections made by Honouliuli's POWs.

Suzanne Falgout, Professor of Anthropology, University of Hawai'i—West O'ahu; 91-1001 Farrington Highway; Kapolei, HI 96707. This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior. The author may be reached at falgout@hawaii.edu.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawai‘i—the surprise military strike by the Japanese Imperial Navy against this United States naval base on the morning of December 7, 1941—came as a profound shock to the American people and led directly to their entry into World War II in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters. The lack of any formal advance warning, furthermore, led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to proclaim December 7, 1941, as “a date which will live in infamy.” Over the years, this event has indeed been immortalized in a wide variety of representations, with the result that Pearl Harbor has become an important part of American history and has gained a very prominent place in global memories of World War II. For Americans, Pearl Harbor is where World War II began, and it is the major symbol of that war itself.

Pearl Harbor’s prominence, however, has long overshadowed other important wartime events and sites within Hawai‘i, which until recently have been given very little recognition. The internment of those classified as enemy aliens, or even suspected as sympathizers, residing in Hawai‘i had been planned for years and even decades earlier than the outbreak of World War II, and those plans began to be carried out later that same day on December 7. US wartime internment activities, then, actually began in Hawai‘i. That fact, and Hawai‘i’s different rationale for, and patterns of, internment, the locations and types of camps that were set up, the ethnic groups held, and the various impacts of internment, however, are only now coming to be fully known. And, only recently has the major internment site in Hawai‘i, Honouliuli Camp, been identified (see Kurahara, Niiya, and Young 2014; Burton et al. 2014) and been given state and national recognition.

The existence of prisoners of war in Hawai‘i and at Honouliuli has been almost entirely unrecognized until now. While the first-ever Japanese POW, Ensign Kazuo Sakamaki, captured on December 7 from a disabled Japanese midget submarine, is often given recognition (Office of the Chief of Military History [hereafter OCMH] 1955; Krammer 1983), little has been known of the large numbers of POWs shipped to Hawai‘i from both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters. In fact, Hawai‘i became an important outpost and transition point of national and transnational significance for POWs in World War II.

At the beginning of World War II, the United States had only very limited information about the geographic areas, peoples, and cultures they would encounter as enemies during the war. They also had little prior experience dealing with POWs, with only very limited numbers received in World

War I and with an original World War II plan to retain captives within actual war zones or to send them to other Allied nations. It was only in the middle of 1942, when mounting numbers of POWs began to exceed capacities and also the value of POWs as a crucially needed labor source was realized, that the War Department began to make its first plans to bring them to the United States. The earliest efforts involved the redesignation of six internment camps. However, it was quickly realized that hundreds of other POW camps in the United States would be needed, leading to the development of more than 500 main and branch camps. Whenever possible, they were located near existing military bases (Keefer 1992; Krammer 1983), spread throughout the nation, but with more than half located in the southern and southwestern regions (Keefer 1992). Eventually, the United States would hold some 425,000 POWs—mostly Germans, Italians, and some Japanese (Krammer 1983), but there were many others as well. Important US “overseas” POW camps were also established in Hawai‘i, the Marianas, and the Philippines.

The need for accurate information about our enemies was especially the case for the little-known Pacific Theater, and particularly for the various “Oriental” (Asian) peoples found throughout much of the region. The pressing need for this information produced a heyday for American anthropology (Kiste and Marshall 1999; Kiste and Falgout 1999), fostering new studies relying on a new research method and funded by the Office of Naval Research, called “culture at a distance” and spearheaded by prominent leaders in American anthropology (Mead and Metraux 1953). This method entailed interviews with expatriates and searches of often scant archival, library, and media sources to develop country profiles and “national characters” of places and people involved in the war. That information was also used by anthropologists who worked for the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in their training of US military officers expected to assume command of liberated areas (Kiste and Falgout 1999); anthropologists also acted as advisers to the military administration for several internment camps (Guerrier 2007; Starn 1986).

In this “total war,” Fujitani (2011) points out, both sides experienced an acute need not only to understand but also to mobilize every available human and material resource. She argues that these material demands produced adjustments in the ways both the United States and Japan managed their national minorities and/or colonial subjects—in order to gain their help to win the war, as well as their support for their possible postwar regional or global hegemony. In response, both sides disavowed racism, or at least made a

massive shift over the course of the war from vulgar exclusionary racism to a more polite inclusionary racism¹ (Fujitani 2011). This major change in policy, she reveals, unleashed changes in practice within both nations in egalitarian directions. In addition, this may have contributed to a more in-depth understanding and somewhat less restrictive treatment of some categories of POWs by the United States over time. This change of tactic was of value to US global propaganda efforts, as well.

This article aims to reveal other very important sources of information about our World War II enemies—those connections made “on the ground” that fostered important shifts in US policy and treatment of POWs. Over time, the US military’s ethnic group categorizations of POWs became differentiated, stereotypes became more nuanced, prejudices lessened, and treatments relaxed. One very important source of information came from the US military’s own direct interactions with POWs. We will see those connections were of great help to the US military in determining the political statuses and treatments of various ethnic groups; ongoing deliberations led to several significant changes over the course of the war. On the mainland United States, this was especially true for Italian POWs. The Territory of Hawai‘i and its POW camps were especially significant for Asians—Japanese, Okinawans, Koreans, and Filipinos, and a few others.

Hawai‘i’s century old practice of importing plantation laborers had produced a very multicultural society with a largely Asian local population. POWs brought to Hawai‘i during World War II from the Pacific Theater, then, often shared their ethnic backgrounds with local civilian residents. Interactions between POWs and locals in the Hawai‘i community were definitely limited and controlled by the US military; nevertheless, the direct and indirect connections made between them proved very important. They provided the POWs with a great deal of comfort and often incidental, but much appreciated, supplies. Not only did it help the US military better understand those ethnic groups, both in and out of the camps, but it also helped to normalize the military’s relationships with them. In the case of Koreans, that exposure led the US military’s re-evaluation of, and major changes in, the wartime political status of Koreans in the US military, with Korean citizens and resident aliens (hereafter residents), and also to a more favorable treatment of the Korean prisoner population.

The connections made by POWs with the US military in the camps and residents in the Hawai‘i community also provided, in varying ways, op-

portunities to experience a measure of democracy in action. Of course, those experiences of POWs were not ordinary ones—those experiences were within a wartime context in which they had been imprisoned as enemies. And, at Hawai'i's Honouliuli Camp, some POWs discovered that residents of their own ethnic group had been interned within the very same camp.

Hawai'i's POW Camps

The organization for handling POWs in Hawai'i varied somewhat over time, in order to meet the changing conditions (Hawai'i, Office of the Military Governor [hereafter OMG] n.d.). At first, the POWs were held at the Immigration Station and at Sand Island Detention Camp, until the Honouliuli Camp (also referred to by the military as the Alien Internment Camp) was opened in March 1943. The move was due to limitations of existing space and also the fear of a direct attack by an enemy landing (Hawai'i, OMG n.d.). Early

Table 1
POW Compounds in Hawai'i

| <i>Compound Number</i> | <i>Compound Name</i> | <i>Date Opened</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | East Range Schofield | July 1944 |
| 2 | Kalihi Valley | September 1944 |
| 3 | Sand Island | September 1944 |
| 4 | Kaneohe | July 1944 |
| 5 | Fort Hase | August 1944 |
| 6 | Honouliuli | March 1943 |
| 7 | Sand Island | March 1944 |
| 8 | Honouliuli | December 1944 |
| 9 | Honouliuli (same area as 6) | August 1945 |
| 10 | Hauula | August 1945 |
| 11 | Hilo | August 1944 |
| 12 | Kilauea Military Camp | August 1944 |
| 13 | Waikakaula | August 1945 |

Source: History of Hawaiian Department, USAFPCPA, USAFPOA, USAFMIDPAC, 1945a.

on, the POWs were administered under the Office of the Military Governor (MilGov), with custodial responsibility under the Provost Marshall. From 1944, Hawai'i's POW camps were under the control of the US Navy, and for most of that period under Commander H. K. Howell. Eventually, there were at least 13 POW compounds in Hawai'i, with three at Honouliuli (Table 1).²

There were many regularities in the daily life of POWs at camps located throughout the United States, and these were also followed in Hawai'i. Most camps were designed to hold an average of 2,500–3,000 prisoners and followed Geneva Convention rules for overall layout, food, sanitation, and health services, which were to be identical to those for the American armed forces (Krammer 1983). The camps were also run according to guidelines set by the Geneva Convention and with further directives from the US War Department. In Hawai'i, there were regular staff conferences that developed standard operating procedures for camp life (Headquarters Army Port and



Processing POWs at Honouliuli Camp. Photo 111-SC-237776. Here prisoners remove their clothing, which are fumigated and then used for other prisoners that are captured. Everything is taken from the prisoner, except his personal belongings. Signal Corps Photo #CPA-45-8832 (Ellner) (3116) restricted by BPR 4/16/1946, Lot 11886, esmed; National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD.

Service Command [hereafter HAPSC] 1944a, 1944b; Headquarters Prisoner of War Camp [hereafter HPWP] 1944a, 1944b, 1944c, 1944d, 1944e).

Accommodations for POWs were designed to meet only basic needs. In Hawai'i, most lived in small six- to eight-man pyramidal tents, used pit latrines, and took cold-water showers. However, the food and supplies given to them were, in fact, the same as for US soldiers and internees. They were also given standard clothing and other supplies (HAPSC 1944a, 1944b). As for Asian internees, it was determined that they required less food overall, but more rice, and the diet was adjusted accordingly (Hawai'i, OMG n.d.). Also, like the internees, POWs grew their own vegetable gardens to supplement camp rations with items they preferred. At regular intervals, the Swedish vice consulate provided inspections and sent reports to the Japanese Embassy. A Swiss delegation also made a report in late 1944–early 1945 (Cardinaux 1945). Facilities were kept clean. The POWs were disinfected upon their arrival, laundry was done three times per week, and bedsheets were changed every fifteen days (Hawai'i, OMG n.d.).



POWs working in the garden. Photo by R. H. Lodge. Courtesy of Hawai'i's Plantation Village and the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, Honolulu.

The main motive for bringing POWs to Hawai'i was the acute wartime labor shortage (Allen 1950; Lewis and Mewha 1955). The types and conditions of work appropriate for POWs in Hawai'i were also clearly specified with adherence to the Geneva Convention, and detailed records were kept (HAPSC 1944a). Prisoners should be properly clothed, and marked with PW badges. No POWs should be asked to do military-related work. Officers were exempt from mandatory work detail. Enlisted men were required to do some basic work within the camps, and they could volunteer for other work assignments. However, they were to work for only 8 hours a day, not including transportation. Outside of the compound, they could work 12 hours a day (HAPSC 1944a, 1944b).

Medical treatment was offered at the camps, with required immunizations and monthly inspections. Two hospitals were available—one in the North Sector General Hospital at Schofield Army Barracks and one at Tripler Army Hospital (HAPSC 1944a, 1944b).

Mail service was available, with free postage. POWs were limited to two letters and four postcards from family and friends per month. Packages of approved materials were limited to up to 11 pounds, needed customs declarations, and followed specified wrapping and addressing rules. Of course, the mail was censored (Postal Bulletin 1942; HAPSC 1944a, 1944b).

Recreation and athletics were encouraged (HAPSC 1944a, 1944b). Canteens were operated in each camp. Catholic and Protestant chaplain and church services were provided. Movies were shown once a week. Sports included the American game of baseball, the international sport of soccer, and other competitive sports (HAPSC 1944a, 1944b). And, there was some interaction between POWs of different ethnic backgrounds, and even from different camps. At Sand Island, Italian and Japanese POWs exchanged rice for wheat. Some Italian POWs at Sand Island belonged to the soccer squad; at one point, someone arranged an Olympic Games competition in which the Italians participated (Keefer 1992). Koreans were also known to enjoy the game of soccer, and the local newspaper, the *Honolulu Advertiser*, reported on their competition against the Italians in late November 1945 (Ch'oe 2009). English classes, mostly popular with Korean POWs, were also offered (*Honolulu Advertiser* [hereafter *HA*] 1945).

Reportedly, the Hawai'i camps maintained very good social control, with little discord, practically no homicides (OCMH 1955), and not one

suicide (Salzar 1942). There were reports of some POWs who passed notes at work, and of occasional underground campaigns and strikes. Official military reports state that no POWs were ever beaten; however, detention facilities were located at the Immigration Station and at Honouliuli. Commander Howell reported that when POWs occasionally became belligerent about their work, they were given the “cooking treatment”—they were confined and given no food for several days, and their hunger usually drove them back to work (*HA* 1945). Escapes were rare; there were only two or three instances involving Italians. Military Governor General Richardson said these were trivial ones, in which the escapees were quickly apprehended (OCMH 1955). There were very few recorded deaths of POWs at Honouliuli and elsewhere in Hawai‘i. Most POWs who were still at Honouliuli at the end of the war were repatriated in 1946—first the Italians and Koreans, then the Japanese (Allen 1950).

Honouliuli's POWs

It is difficult to obtain an accurate accounting of the POWs in Hawai‘i and at Honouliuli Camp. With prisoners coming and going, their numbers varied over time. This is further complicated by different methods of reporting, as well as by missing records. Furthermore, some ethnic groups were referred to by different labels during the wartime period (see discussion below). Table 2 shows the approximate numbers according to ethnic group membership.

Table 2
Approximate Numbers of POWs in Hawai‘i, by Ethnic Group⁴

| <i>Ethnic Group</i> | <i>Number of POWs</i> |
|---|-----------------------|
| Italian (nearly 1/3 of all prisoners) | 5,000 |
| Japanese | 4,766 |
| Okinawan | 3,723 |
| Korean | 2,692 |
| Others (Formosan, Southeast Asian, Chinese, Filipino, etc.) | 36 |
| Total Number of POWs Received | 16,217 |

Source: History of Hawaiian Department, USAF CPA, USAF POA, USAFMIDPAC (1945b).

The estimated total number of POWs received in Hawai'i over the course of the war was 16,217 (History of Hawaiian Department 1945b).

The Honouliuli Camp was somewhat unusual in that from the beginning it was specifically designed to hold both internees and POWs.³ The Camp was originally envisioned to house some 3,000 civilian internees and POWs, with the two main sections of the camp divided by the pre-existing Waiāhole Stream aqueduct. Upon entrance into the gulch, the first and smaller section of the camp housed the internees; the much larger section located at the back of the gulch was for the POWs. Each section of the POW camp was furthermore internally divided into barbed-wire enclosures for various types of occupants and their military status (officers, enlisted, noncombatants) (Hawai'i, OMG n.d.).

Although the ethnic composition of Italian, Japanese, and Okinawan POWs overlapped with internees held at Honouliuli, interaction between them was highly controlled, limited, and rare. However, the Swiss International Red Cross expressed their concern about the close proximity of the POWs at Honouliuli, saying it was detrimental to children in the internment portion of the camp (Cardinaux 1945). At Honouliuli, there are known instances of bilingual Japanese internees who provided needed translations for POWs. Hanako Hashimoto recalled her visits to her husband, Koji, who had worked at the Libby MacNeil Company Laboratory and also as a principal

Table 3
Numbers of POWs at Honouliuli,
Provided for Different Compounds and Dates

| <i>Compound Number</i> | <i>Number of POWs</i> | <i>Date Counted</i> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 6 | 1,500 500 | March 1, 1943 January 1, 1945 |
| 8 | 3,000 | January 1, 1945 and September 2, 1945 |
| 9 (same as 6) | 1,000 | September 2, 1945 |

Source: History of Hawaiian Department, USAF CPA, USAF POA, USAF MID PAC (1945a).

and teacher at a Japanese language school, and was interned at Honouliuli. While in the camp, Koji Hashimoto was first asked by some of the other internees to teach them English; later the American dentist there asked him to translate for the Japanese POWs. Through his work as a translator, he also received some information about conditions in the POW camp (Hashimoto 2010). The total numbers of POWs at Honouliuli varied over time, for reasons discussed below. Table 3 shows the number of POWs at different compounds in censuses from 1943–1945.

This table suggests that in January and September 1945, the number of actual prisoners held at Honouliuli may have exceeded planned capacity, reaching 4,000 or even more. This expansion over time may have led to some later-arriving POWs being housed near the entrance to the Honouliuli Camp.

Table 4 shows the population of different ethnic groups and in which compounds they were located at Honouliuli at different points in time when censuses were conducted.⁵

Table 4
Dates and Ethnic Compositions of POW Compounds at Honouliuli⁶

| <i>Compound Number</i> | <i>Date Counted</i> | <i>Number of POWs</i> | <i>Ethnic Group</i> |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 6 | 1943 | 250 | Italian |
| | | 200 | Korean |
| | 1945 | 87 | Italian |
| 8 | January 1945 | 320 | Japanese |
| | | 752 | Korean |
| | | 15 | Formosan |
| | September 1945 | 337 | Japanese |
| | | 2,426 | Okinawan |
| 15 | Formosan | | |
| 9 (same as 6) | September 1945 | 6 | Italian |
| | | 154 | Korean |
| | | 1,035 | Okinawan |

Source: History of Hawaiian Department, USAF CPA, USAF POA, USAF MID PAC (1945a).

Taking these numbers at face value, the largest group of POWs at the Honouliuli Camp over time was Okinawans; the Korean POWs were next in size. The number of Japanese who were held at the camp remains unclear, for reasons discussed below. Italians and especially Formosans (now called Taiwanese) held at Honouliuli were smaller groups.

The military statuses of POWs at Honouliuli were similar to the entire population of POWs held in Hawai‘i as a whole. Relatively few POWs at Honouliuli were officers (only a few Japanese and Italians, at less than 1 percent), and the camp also had slightly fewer enlisted men than at other camps in Hawai‘i (mostly Japanese and Italians, at about 7 percent). The overwhelming majority of POWs were noncombatants (all categories of POWs, especially the Okinawans and Koreans, at about 92 percent) (Statistical Data Report 1945).

Initially, administrative orders prohibited any visitors to POW camps, except on official business and even then only with official clearance from the director of intelligence, arrangements made with the commanding officer for each visit, and the completion of official forms (HAPSC 1944a). Irma Loo, then a young girl of Chinese ancestry who lived on a truck farm in the Honouliuli area, remembers a “concentration camp” located nearby, but recalls “it was so secure, you couldn’t even get into the road going into the place. It’s inside a sugarcane field. . . . [Y]ou couldn’t see it, because there was sugarcane all around it” (Loo, Irma 2010). This was likely the nearby Honouliuli Camp, although she and her older brother, Calvin Loo, knew it as Kunia Camp. Calvin Loo recalled occasionally seeing Military Police near the entrance to the road that led to the camp, but he never saw the camp itself. Calvin Loo did visit the Schofield POW Camp on one occasion, however. While working for the US Air Force at the age of 16, he accompanied a corporal who visited the Japanese POWs there. He recalls the area surrounded by a big fence that was further patrolled by guards; the POWs were located at the fence. The corporal had befriended one of the Japanese POWs, and he delivered cigarettes and other small items to him that day (Loo, Calvin 2010).

Unlike the internees at Honouliuli, non-Japanese POWs were allowed outside the camp, mainly for work on various projects (Lewis and Mewha 1955). Initially, the POW compounds were divided into two main categories—A (trustworthy) and B (untrustworthy)—and the number of guards stationed varied according to their perceived security risk (Lewis and Mewha 1955). However, security concerns over all enemy prisoners decreased over time.

Hawai'i's military governor, General Robert C. Richardson, stated that the ratio of guards to prisoners decreased over the course of the war—with POWs going from being closely guarded to more relaxed. At Schofield Barracks later in the war, prisoners were put on the honor system—still behind barbed wire, but without guards (OCMH 1955).

Also later in the war, POW fraternization with locals of the same ethnicity, especially for Okinawans and Koreans, increased dramatically. This became known as a “local fraternization problem,” and eventually led the military to set up a Visitors Bureau to help regulate visits to POWs in the camps (OCMH 1955) (see discussion below).

Despite these regularities found in Hawai'i's POW camps, conditions were varied according to prisoner ethnic differences and political statuses. We will now examine the types and degrees of connections these various groups of POWs made and how those impacted their treatment by the US military over the wartime period.

Making Connections: Transnational, National, and Local

The Atlantic Theater

The Italians (“The Fascists”)

The largest ethnic group of POWs to arrive in Hawai'i were from the Atlantic Theater—they were Italians, with the first 1,000 arriving in July 1944 (Hawai'i, OMG n.d.; Lewis and Mewha 1955), and eventually reaching approximately 5,000 (Table 2). However, as Table 4 reveals, their numbers were relatively small at the Honouliuli Camp.

The Italians had been picked up in the 1943 surrender with Rommel in various parts of North Africa (particularly Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia). Other Allied victories in Sicily and other parts of southern Italy had resulted in more than 500,000 Italian POWs (Keefer 1992; Calamandrei 2001). Shortages of space and supplies within the war zone and in British camps led to some 50,000 Italian POWs being eventually transported to the United States. Most arrived by ship, within a limited six-month period, usually two to three months after their capture in 1943, from the summer until the end of the year. With most captured before the overthrow of Mussolini, they were initially regarded as “fascists” and designated as “enemy aliens,” and they were carefully guarded and spread over 27 camps in 23 states in the United States (Keefer 1992).

Once in US mainland camps, some Italian POWs worked inside the camps on routine maintenance assignments, or later outside the camps in the private sector as farmers, cowboys, cooks, carpenters, and engineers (Keefer 1992). In March 1944, the US government established Italian Service Units (ISUs), and those that volunteered earned them the status of "collaborators" that granted them additional privileges outside the camps (Keefer 1992). Outside the camps, they found Italians to be the largest foreign born population in the United States, especially on the northeastern coast and in California (Keefer 1992). In connecting with Italians outside the camp, some of those Italian POWs would find a few sympathetic friends, and occasionally romantic partners or even wives in unauthorized marriages. Based on those wartime connections made, some of the POWs decided to return to the United States in the postwar period (Calamandrei 2001; Keefer 1992).

Of the large number of Italian POWs found on the US mainland, some 5,000 were later sent from various mainland camps to several ports on the West Coast and then on to Hawai'i beginning in the summer of 1944 (Allen 1950; Keefer 1992; OCMH 1955; Lewis and Mewha 1955). Some resented the move to Hawai'i, feeling it was a deportation because they had refused to cooperate with the US military. In fact, some of those sent to Hawai'i early on had indeed been labeled "non-collaborators," and most still pledged allegiance to the Italian Fascist Republic (Cardinaux 1945). Although most non-collaborative officers had been sent to the POW camp located at Hereford, Texas (Calamandrei 2001), a few officers were among those Italians sent to Hawai'i. Those officers, in particular, were said to have an intransigent attitude, to be unmovable, uncooperative, and very influential over the enlisted men (Cardinaux 1945). Some of the Italian POWs wrote booklets on the wonders of fascism; the guards waited until the booklets were finished so that they could tell which prisoners had been involved (*HA* 1945). In fact, compound commanders submitted lists of names of those believed to be fascists to the camp commanders. Howell indicated that the pro-Nazi Italian fascists were the most difficult to control, stating "Their fascism is almost an insanity" (*HA* 1945); despite punishment, they gave only the fascist salute. In addition, the earlier Italian non-collaboratives had to be separated from the later Italian Service Unit (ISU) collaboratives that followed (HPWC 1944c).

Although there were many incidents when Italian POWs in Hawai'i refused to work, engaged in work slowdowns, or committed minor acts of sabotage (Allen 1950) because they considered their assignments to be

connected to the war effort, a visiting Swiss delegation found most of their complaints to be unjustified (Cardinaux 1945). Eventually, most of the Italian enlisted men became willing workers in Hawai'i, especially on agricultural projects or on the maintenance of the post, and this helped to improve relations. One of the principal places where Italians worked was at 'Iolani Palace (Allen 1950), which during the war served as the temporary headquarters for MilGov Hawai'i. Other Italian POWs helped to replant 5,000 acres of burned or damaged forest land used as firing ranges or maneuver grounds; others removed bomb shelters (Allen 1950). In September 1945, Howell told *Honolulu Advertiser* reporters that the Italian POWs, along with the Koreans, were the most easily managed and cleanest of all. However, some of the Italian POWs were considered dangerous (Allen 1950), including one who claimed to have been one of Mussolini's guards (HA 1945).

The Italian camps in Hawai'i were reported to be excellent, with all the facilities available to POWs on the mainland, and in some ways the material conditions were actually better (Cardinaux 1945). The Italian POWs in Hawai'i, although recognized to present some difficulties for the US military, were also clearly admired by them. Commander Howell told the newspaper reporters, "[E]very meal the Italians prepare is a banquet." He regarded them as articulate and stated that they provided their own entertainment "on a high plane," citing their radio broadcasts and their enjoyment of classical phonographic records (provided by the International Red Cross) (HA 1945). Clearly, they were generally thought to be civilized, some were considered to be very well-educated, and a few were judged artistic. As on the US mainland, there were several Italian POWs who were noted artists in Hawai'i. Frequently mentioned is Alfredo Giusti, a former landscape architect from Buenos Aires, who had been told to return to Italy when the war began, and eventually became a POW at Sand Island. Giusti is noted for his sculptures "Bathing Beauty" and "Hula Maids" that bore the faces of his Italian and Hawaiian girlfriends, which he "dedicated to give hope to those without hope" (HA 1945). Another noted work is the Mother Cabrini Chapel at Wheeler Air Force Base, designed and built by Astori Rebate of Venice on his off-duty hours on Sundays during 1944 and 1945 (Keefer 1992; HA 1946.) After the end of the war, the chapel was occupied by Japanese POWs (HA 1946).

Despite the relatively favorable conditions for Italians in Hawai'i's POW camps, they were noted for their very low morale (Cardinaux 1945). The relationships between Italian POWs and the local Italian community did

not form as they had on the mainland. Indeed, most of the local Italians had been targeted for internment, with some housed at Honouliuli. Furthermore, some of the Italian POWs had been held as prisoners for nearly four years. Throughout their stay in the United States and then even farther away from home in Hawai‘i, they felt isolated and abandoned. They had been given very little information about the progress of the war or even news of their families. In addition, there was very little early repatriation of Italian POWs, even for those who were eligible. At the end of the war, some of the Italian POWs did express their appreciation for their good treatment while in Hawai‘i’s camps (Cardinaux 1945). However, there are no recorded instances of Italian POWs returning to live in Hawai‘i after the war, as was often the case on the US mainland.

The Pacific Theater

Most of the POWs sent to Hawai‘i were captured in the Pacific Theater—a combination of Japanese, Okinawans, Koreans, Filipinos, and a few others. Most were picked up after late 1943 from several locations in nearby Micronesia. With thousands of small islands in this crucial region, only a few, but very notable, land battles were fought on the edges of the region—in the Gilberts (now called Kiribati), especially in Tarawa and Makin; in some of the Japanese-held colonial possessions (Nany’ō) in atolls in the Marshall Islands on the eastern edge of the region; plus some on the larger continental areas to the western and northern areas close to Japan itself, notably in Saipan in the Marianas and in Palau (Morison 1968a, 1968b; Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2001; Falgout, Poyer, and Carucci 2009). It was from these land battles—especially ones in the Gilberts/Kiribati and in Saipan—that Japanese military and Korean and Okinawan noncombatant laborers and even some civilians were picked up and brought to Hawai‘i as POWs.

The Japanese (“The Enemy”)

Although all POWs held by the United States during World War II were technically considered to be enemies, the bombing of Pearl Harbor resulted in the ethnic Japanese being considered “the enemy” in the Pacific Theater, by both the US military and many members of the local population in Hawai‘i. Over the course of the war, approximately 1.5 million Japanese became POWs, housed in camps located in Russia, China, Britain, and the United States. Far fewer Japanese sailors and soldiers were held in the United States than other groups of POWs (Lewis and Mewha 1955)—only about 5,424 in total, due in

part to the Japanese preference for death to surrender and the deep shame felt by those captured in battle (Krammer 1983). Indeed, many Japanese prisoners refused to file their names with the International Red Cross Prisoner Information Bureau or to fill out the required postal card to let their families know of their safety; they preferred to let their families think them dead rather than dishonored by surrender. This was combined with some fear of treachery of Japanese troops by American soldiers, leading to their reluctance to take them as prisoners (Krammer 1983; Lewis and Mewha 1955). Early in the war, only dozens of Japanese were captured as compared to the thousands who were killed. The numbers of captured increased, however, after the campaign in the Philippines during October 1944, less than a year before the war's end (Krammer 1983; Lewis and Mewha 1955). In addition, the United States preferred to turn Japanese prisoners over to its Allies, particularly to Australia, promising to share costs and to assume the responsibility for their final disposal after the war. Those brought to the United States, then, were only those who were designated for special interrogation or whose capture was from a region closer to the United States than to Australia or New Zealand (Krammer 1983).

Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, California, is usually thought of as the main entry and temporary transit center for incoming Japanese captives (see Krammer 1983). From there, some were sent for further interrogation at a few other US mainland camps. Interrogation techniques were developed from observed patterns in interviews with Japanese prisoners, conducted by American intelligence officers, many of whom were Japanese American specialists from the army's Military Intelligence Service (MIS) Language School. Anthropological analyses of Japanese national character also drew upon and used that knowledge (Benedict 1946; Krammer 1983). Their small numbers were then spread across various mainland camps. The largest concentration, some 3,000, was at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin (Krammer 1983).

Largely unreported, however, were the more than 4,700 Japanese POWs who were first sent to Hawai'i (see Table 2) from the Pacific Theater, before being sent on to the mainland United States. After the capture of Sakamaki on December 7, 1941, the next Japanese captives to arrive in Hawai'i were 37 sailors from the carrier *A. Kaji*, picked up after the Battle of Midway in June 1942 (OCMH 1955). Most were sent from the battles of Tarawa and Makin in the Gilberts/Kiribati in 1944 (OCMH 1955); others were from Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Guam, and other Pacific Island battlefields (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin* [hereafter *HSB*] 1946). Over time, Japanese POWs would become the second

largest group sent to Hawai‘i (Table 2), although their numbers held at the Honouliuli Camp were relatively small (Table 4).

Like those sent to the mainland US camps, Japanese POWs in Hawai‘i reportedly felt disgraced (Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955). Strongly influenced by their own leaders, they were labeled as “untrustworthy” by the US military (Lewis and Mewha 1955). Among them, there was tension between those who had been in the army vs. the navy, and between those who had been wounded and others who had not. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported the wounded “wear their scars as badges of distinction—evidence that they did not give up without a fight” (1947). In Hawai‘i camps, the Japanese POW section was separated from the Italians and the Koreans; it was itself internally divided according to military rank—officers, enlisted, noncombatants. Most Japanese POWs sent to Hawai‘i were evacuated to the US mainland after their clearance. By the end of the war in September 1945, only 342 remained in Hawai‘i, with most housed at Honouliuli Camp (see Table 4).

As the war’s end neared, US Secretary of War Henry Stimson launched a six-month democracy indoctrination project for 205 potential Japanese POW converts at three “re-orientation centers” on the mainland. This was in violation of the Geneva Convention (Krammer 1983). This brush with democracy is not known to have occurred for Japanese POWs in Hawai‘i, however.

The Japanese POWs in Hawai‘i, as “untrustworthy” sorts, were not granted permission to work outside the camps; however, they had occasional visits in the camps from friends (see Loo, Calvin 2010), and they were sometimes transported to other camps for work details. Thomas Shiroma, of Okinawan descent and originally from the Big Island of Hawai‘i, enlisted in the US Army after the war ended, at the beginning of 1946. Based on his knowledge of Japanese language, the US military assigned him to supervise 16 of the Japanese POWs then housed at Sand Island to work at Ft. Shafter. Shiroma remembers:

So they [the Japanese POWs] approach me and say, “Eh, you Japanese?” I say, “Yeah.” “You know what, give us rice, we do whatever you want.” Okay, I do it. I knew the cooks. Get rice? [The Japanese POWs] tell me, “You know what, don’t worry.” I ask, “How many buckets, or how many cans, how many rice do you need every day?” And, then they [say], “Please two. Two buckets.” And, “No problem,” I tell them. All of them my friends anyway. So long you give them rice, they do whatever you want. (2011)

While working with the Japanese POWs, Shiroma said he reflected on what it must have been like to be in that position and he took care to not

abuse his wards (Shiroma 2011). The cordial relations he established with them apparently persisted after the war. Shiroma tells a story of a postwar trip to Okinawa, when a cancelled leg of his flight stranded him in Tokyo.

So, since it was cancelled, I might as well walk around. I might as well visit Tokyo, see what get. Then, one guy point at me, "Eh, you Shiroma?" "Yeah," I tell, "How I know you?" "I was one of your prisoners, in Honolulu." I tell him, "Really? Wow. Come, we go lunch, I take you lunch. Tell me the story." They had a misery was really hard, you know. No job, no money. They took a long time before the recovery of Japan, before people get job and money. But he told me the hardship they went through. Then later on, I feel kind of sorry for him, all what he went through. But, that's war. See? And you have a defeated country, and you meet a guy like that, what they went through? You know, you got a lot of pity. You know you were angry at one time, but when you hear that kind of story, you get a little compassion. (2011)

The Okinawans ("Enemy Japanese," or What?)

Possibly the third largest group of POWs in Hawai'i, and the largest group held at Honouliuli, was Okinawans. This is somewhat difficult to determine, however, due to the US military's confusion regarding their ethnicity as well as their political status.

Okinawan history is itself complex, and therefore surrounds the identity of its people with a measure of ambiguity. The ancient settlement and subsequent history and culture of the Ryūkyū Islands of Okinawa included ties to both China and Japan. However, Okinawa became an official prefecture of Japan in 1879.

Perhaps for this reason, then, Okinawan residents in Hawai'i were lumped by the US military into the category of "Japanese." However, as Gwenfread Allen (1950) points out, neither the local Japanese nor Okinawans in Hawai'i thought of them as Japanese. Those who had been picked up for questioning clearly identified themselves as "Okinawan." And, the Okinawans' objection to this misidentification as "Japanese" was a factor in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Honolulu's ability to recruit a large group of them during the war. Holding responsibility for analysis of the islands and its inhabitants to the west, one of this office's major wartime projects was a detailed study of Okinawa. Later, Okinawans in Hawai'i also provided significant support for American landing forces in the Battle of Okinawa (Allen 1950).

It is possible that some of the early Okinawan POWs sent to Hawai'i were also designated by the US military as "Japanese." As the end of the war

neared, however, POWs who were by then labeled as “Okinawan” came to Hawai‘i and to Honouliuli in large numbers. They first appeared in Hawai‘i under this designation in the September 1945 survey (see Tables 2 and 4). Many were sent to Hawai‘i following the Battle of Saipan that ended in the summer of 1944 after a period of incarceration in Saipan within slum-like barracks quickly hammered together from wartime debris by the US Navy, called Camp Susupe (Embree 1946). In fact, of the approximately 13,500 “Japanese” survivors of the Battle of Saipan, the majority were actually former civilian sugar plantation laborers of Okinawan ancestry; however, some may also have been young Okinawan boys who had been recruited or otherwise pressed into Japanese military service. Reportedly, almost half of the Japanese and Okinawans held at Camp Susupe were under the age of 16 (Meller 1999). Another camp, smaller and with somewhat better conditions, was later established on nearby Tinian, named Camp Churro (Embree 1946). In addition, other Okinawan POWs may have been sent directly to Hawai‘i from the Battle of Okinawa that ended in mid-June 1945 (US Army Forces 1944–1945 and 9/1946b). Military Governor Richardson commented particularly on the young Okinawan boys, ages 14 and 15 years old, housed in Hawai‘i’s POW camps, saying they were “pathetic in lack of comprehension of what they were supposed to do and why they were classed as POWs” (OCMH 1955).

Those labeled as Okinawan POWs in Hawai‘i were clearly not favored by the American military; in fact, there was a significant amount of prejudice against their traditional customs and behavior. Commander Howell described the Okinawan food as “miserable,” always containing lots of onions and garlic, and lamented that they were not as neat or as clean as the Japanese or Italian POWs. He also found them to be stubborn, and disloyal to each other; furthermore, he stated that most of them were illiterate in Japanese (*HA* 1945).

The Okinawan POWs had the greatest amount of contact with the local Hawai‘i population. Reportedly, nearly all of them had relatives in the islands. This was the source of the US military’s biggest “local fraternization problem.” In a *Honolulu Advertiser* article dated September 26, 1945, Commander Howell discussed his reluctance to discontinue this fraternization, so instead he halted the Okinawan POWs’ work on Thomas Square and at Punahou School. Howell reported, “Locals came in carloads, with kids, bearing cigarettes, candy, fruit, money, etc.” Howell said, “It’s just like Christmas.” Reviewing wartime records in her book *Hawaii’s War Years*, Gwenfread Allen wrote:

Many were seeking information concerning other relatives and friends in the Orient of whom they heard nothing since before the war. So disruptive to the work and so full of potentialities for escape and other difficulties were these contacts that the Okinawans were withdrawn from Thomas Square. Thereafter, most work outside of military reservations was entrusted to Italians, as they had few countrymen in Hawaii. (1950:221–222)

In an attempt to better handle the fraternization problem, the military's Visitors Bureau directed visits by locals within the POW camps. The local response was robust; the military received some 380 applications on the very first day. They thronged to the Immigration Station before daylight, and slept on the grass while waiting in line. It became necessary for the military to check licenses, so other visitors would have a chance. It also became necessary to place one guard for every ten men, and to limit visits to two per month (*HA* 1945). While these measures apparently helped the military to control the problem, there were also a number of infractions. Those Okinawan POWs who exceeded the limit on visitations via their aiding and abetting the visitors were penalized—the military took away two-thirds of their monthly allowance, confined them, and put them on a bread-and-water diet for two weeks. Even with these new measures in place, one Okinawan prisoner was recorded as having numerous offenses, and twenty-two others had five convictions each (*HA* 1945).

This connection to local Okinawans in Hawai'i proved very significant for the POWs. Although the US military did occasionally question their political status as "enemy aliens" but in the end did not modify it, still by the end of the war Commander Howell reported that most Okinawan POWs wanted to remain in Hawai'i. However, US immigration law forbade them to do so (*HA* 1945).

The Koreans ("Enemy Aliens," "Friendly Aliens," or What?)

Korea also had a complex history of relations with Japan, leading to some US military confusion about their identity and political status during World War II. Japan had declared the region as a protectorate in 1905, and the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty ceding all rights to the Emperor of Japan was signed in 1910.

As the largest Japanese colonial possession, Korea held great potential for civilian and military labor. Beginning in 1938, the Japanese Army allowed small numbers of carefully screened and trained Koreans to volunteer for duty.

Efforts were accelerated during the war, and in 1943 Korean men were subject to mass conscription. For that largely uneducated and unskilled population, they were assigned primarily as laborers in noncombatant units and some as soldiers. The estimated total of Koreans serving in the Japanese military was more than 214,000, which meant they played an extremely large role in the Japanese war effort (Fujitani 2011).

Summarizing results from other researchers as well as her own oral interviews with Korean veterans of the war, Fujitani (2011) writes:

Korean attitudes toward Japanese military service cannot be reduced to any simple categorization, such as the conventional nationalist one that seeks to place every individual into the neat rubrics of collaborator or resister, with all but a few Koreans emerging as essentially resistant to Japanese rule. (243)

While some Korean veterans spoke of tremendous pressure, others were more ambiguous and uncertain about their involvement in the Japanese military, and still others felt strong patriotism toward the Japanese. Nevertheless, in their official testimonies and informal conversations with the US military, most Korean POWs expressed their dislike of Japan, saying they were either coerced or enticed into their service (Fujitani 2011).

Many Koreans held as POWs in US mainland camps stated that they felt their allegiance was more to Korea than to Japan, and they continued to voice their strong desire for independence. This position was strongly reinforced by the Korean community in America, and especially by some Korean societies in Hawai‘i (US Army Forces 1944–1945 and 9/1946a) (see discussion below). The US military clearly understood this desire although they continued to struggle to define the political status of Koreans in the United States and its territories—as Korean members of the US military, as Korean resident aliens, and as Korean POWs.

From the very beginning of the war, the United States signaled a positive position regarding the Koreans in the military. Attorney General Francis Biddle and the Department of Justice made a distinction between the citizens vs. the subjects of the enemy nations of Germany, Italy, or Japan. In January 1942, Biddle declared those Austrians, Austro-Hungarians, and Koreans who had registered as native citizens under the Alien Registration Act of 1940 were exempt from restrictions, as long as they had not since that time voluntarily become a citizen or subject of the mother country’s colonizing state. This stopped short of granting them “friendly alien” status, however

(Kim 2007). Reports of continued harassment of Koreans in the US military also resulted in Secretary of War Stimson issuing further instructions to all field commanders in May 1942. Added to the earlier Department of Justice ruling, he instructed that soldiers of Korean parentage and Korean nationals enlisted or inducted into the US Army were to be treated in the same manner as soldiers whose parents were from nations friendly to the United States (War Department 1942).

Although the War Department's instructions had clarified the status of Koreans in the US military, it remained somewhat unclear for Korean residents on the US mainland and in Hawai'i. However, in Hawai'i, no Koreans had been interned. The practice of treating local Koreans as "friendly aliens," exempt from some minor restrictions (possession of cameras or shortwave radios, or from work on the waterfront), and on that basis considering individual cases on their own merits, was noted (Hawai'i, Office of Strategic Services [hereafter OSS] 1943; B. 1942). However, local Koreans remained as "enemy aliens" in some regards—they were subject to an early curfew law; they were restricted from the possession of explosives, arms, ammunition, radio transmitting; and they had to obtain a special permit to purchase liquor, drugs, and medical supplies. A pressing need for a more definite policy was recognized by both the US military and the local population.

For the most part, Korean residents in Hawai'i, as on the US mainland, were very careful to abide by those restrictions. However, Hawai'i provided two important court cases for local Koreans who violated the curfew law—cases that became prominent in continued local and national deliberations over Korean residents' wartime status. One case was eventually considered at the highest levels of government and aided in the wartime redesignation of resident Koreans.

The first case was heard in January 1943—that of Ko Duck Wha (nee Kang Won Do), a citizen of Korea who came to Hawai'i in 1904 when Korea was an independent country, on a Korean passport as a plantation laborer (Wha 1943). Although the case received relatively little local press coverage, it attracted considerable protest from the local Korean community in Hawai'i, and it was accompanied by appeals to Secretary of War Stimson for a clarification of Korean status (Kim 2007). Y. K. Kim of the United Korean Committee in America located in Honolulu and editor of the *National Herald Pacific Weekly* wrote to Roosevelt (Kim 1943), asking him to modify or amend the blackout law exempting Koreans living in Hawai'i from being charged as enemy aliens.

The second case in March 1943 was that of Syung Woon Sohn, who came to Hawai‘i in 1905 as a citizen of Korea, again some five to six years before Japan seized Korea, who was arrested on curfew violation (*HSB* 1943b). The military provost court ruled against Sohn, imposing and then suspending a \$10 payment. The judge argued that Attorney General Biddle’s ruling on Koreans in the United States was not applicable in Hawai‘i because the territory was under the War Department and martial law (Kim 1943). This ruling triggered a ripple of protests from both the local Koreans and the wider community in Hawai‘i and led to an appeal of the case (Hawai‘i, OSS 1943).

Honolulu newspapers, the *Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, began an urgent call for the reclassification of resident Koreans. The *Star-Bulletin* reported it was “time to correct an injustice” (1943a). The *Star-Bulletin* argued, “Here is a situation which Congress, if necessary, should move to change. Here is an injustice being visited on a people who, suffering for more than 30 years under the harsh Japanese yoke, have never given up faith and hope of eventual freedom” (1943a).

Nodi Sohn, the wife of Syung Woon Sohn, wired Syngman Rhee (Hawai‘i, OSS 1943), first president of the Korean Provisional Government (in exile) and chairman of the Korean Commission in Washington, DC, who used Hawai‘i as his home base during the war (Ch’oe 2007). Rhee, in turn, telegraphed his comments about the case to Hawai‘i’s governor, Ingram Stainback, and Honolulu’s tax collector, William Borthwick. Although the case had by then quieted down in Hawai‘i, this would be the beginning of repercussions being heard in Washington (Hawai‘i, OSS 1943). Hawai‘i’s Sohn case would be used as a “test case,” making resident Korean status a capital issue (Hawai‘i, OSS 1943; Richardson 1943).

Other influential people who were visiting in Washington, DC or permanently located on the US mainland helped to advance the cause. Hung Wai Ching, the head of the University YMCA and the head of the morale committee of the Office of the Military Governor of Hawai‘i, while on a trip to Washington, DC was received at the White House. It was believed by some that he may have influenced Mrs. Roosevelt “in stirring up the question of the ‘enemy alien’ status of the Koreans” (Hawai‘i, OSS 1943). Senator Guy Gillette also made an appeal to President Roosevelt “to correct a United States Provost Court ruling in Hawai‘i that Koreans are subject to consideration as enemy aliens” (Gillette 1943; *HSB* 1943b).

An article in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* called upon Franklin D. Roosevelt to correct the ruling on Koreans residing in the United States (1943b). Kilsoo Haan, representative of the Korean National Federation Front, Sino-Korean Peoples' League, wrote to Roosevelt as well, pointing out the contradiction with the earlier ruling by the Alien Registration Bureau that had changed resident Korean status to "friendly aliens" (Haan 1943). Both Rhee (1943) and Roosevelt (1943) next wrote to Secretary of War Stimson, asking that he give consideration to the matter.

The avalanche of appeals for a more positive reconsideration of the status of Korean residents in Hawai'i drew a strong reaction from MilGov in Hawai'i. As the end of May 1943 neared, the status of Koreans residing in Hawai'i was placed in Military Governor General Delos Emmons's hands (*HSB* 1943c), who ruled that Koreans in Hawai'i would remain as "enemy aliens" (*HSB* 1943d). General Robert Richardson, who replaced Emmons, sent a letter to Stimson providing a long list of justifications for Koreans to remain classified as such. Among the many reasons given in his letter was his concern that the Okinawans and Formosans (Taiwanese), who also had an unwilling association with Japan, might also petition to become friendly aliens if Koreans led the way (Richardson 1943).

All of these efforts, originating in Hawai'i and with the support of others on the US mainland, had the desired effect of reevaluating the status of resident Koreans in Hawai'i. By July 1943, Governor Ingram Stainback stated that the category "enemy alien" did not include any Koreans, and he lifted the restrictions on Koreans from purchasing drugs or photographic supplies (*HSB* 1943e). By December, the blackout and curfew restrictions as previously applied to local Koreans, which had come to symbolize Korean enemy-alien status itself, were lifted (General Orders No. 45) (Kim 2007). Six months later, on May 6, 1944, resident Koreans in Hawai'i were officially recognized as "friendly aliens" under General Orders No. 59 (Kim 2007).

The question of wartime political status still remained for Korean POWs, however. Those Koreans who were sent to Hawai'i as prisoners of war were primarily noncombatant laborers from various Pacific Islands—from the islands of Makin and Tarawa in the Gilberts/Kiribati beginning in late 1943, even more from Guam and Saipan in the Marianas in 1944, as well as from other islands in Micronesia (Ch'oe 2009). In Saipan, some 1,350 had been held at a small compound adjoining, but separated by barbed wire from, the Japanese/Okinawan one at Camp Susupe (Meller 1999; Russell 1983).

Korean POWs in Saipan were tended to by the Reverend Noah K. Cho, a minister of St. Luke’s Korean Mission in Honolulu. Reverend Cho, a native of Korea and son of a Korean Army sergeant and grandson of a colonel, having served for 14 years as church vicar in Honolulu, was one of three Koreans invited by Admiral Nimitz to accompany the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions. Cho was with the US Marines as they hit the beach in Saipan on June 15, 1944. At first, the Koreans feared the Americans, but Rev. Cho comforted those in the camp, telling them the Americans were their friends and wanted to make them free. At the camp, he became a “virtual mayor” of the native Korean community. He helped the hundreds of wounded, sick, and starving in prison compounds, most of whom had been workers for the Japanese Navy. He stayed with the Koreans in the camp in Saipan for 53 days (Lucas 1945); later, some of them were transferred to camps in Hawai‘i.

Also brought to Hawai‘i and held at Honouliuli were three Korean fishermen, picked up by a US submarine off of the southern coast of Korea in April 1945 and brought to Pearl Harbor for interrogation. Shortly after the end of the war, three Korean college draftees were also sent to Honouliuli; they had been conscripted into the Japanese Military Army while enrolled in colleges in Japan (Ch’oe 2009).

But what exactly was the wartime political status of Korean POWs? Throughout the wartime period, this topic received much discussion and debate among the US government and various military officials, both at the national and local Hawai‘i levels.

In many ways, the Korean POWs in Hawai‘i seemed to the US military to be decidedly different than other POWs. As was reported for Korean POWs in US mainland camps (Krammer 1983), many who arrived in Hawai‘i strongly objected when they were termed by the American military as “Japanese” and then had their names reported to Japan (Cardinaux 1945). Like many of their counterparts in the US military and in the civilian community, many Korean POWs in Hawai‘i professed strong anti-Japanese and strong pro-American sentiments. They clearly maintained that their country had been invaded by Japan. The Swiss International Red Cross’ 1943–1944 report for Korean POWs in Hawai‘i stated, “They show at all times great respect and devotion for the American officers with whom they come into contact, and the American Flag, as a sign of faith and friendship, flies in the camps” (Cardinaux 1945).

Those Korean POWs sent to the Honouliuli Camp were invited to a meeting with Colonel Howell, who expressed his sympathy with them (Ch'oe 2009). At Honouliuli, the Korean POWs were separated from the compounds of the Japanese and the Italians (who were sometimes referred to as the "whites") by a barbed-wire fence. Reportedly, the Korean compound was of a lower standard than for Italians; however, there were no complaints. Indeed, their morale was reported to be excellent, with their "willingness to cooperate apparent everywhere" (Cardinaux 1945). The exception was for the two camps located on the Big Island of Hawai'i that had proven too small for the numbers of POWs held there (Cardinaux 1945).

Korean POWs in the Hawai'i camps also engaged in a variety of political activities. They built a stage in the camp from scrap lumber, which they used in occasional plays and nationalistic political campaigns (HA 1945). They developed their own provincial and country associations based on clan lineages; although these displayed some factional strife, they also helped to forge a measure of unity among them. They also developed a political club, Han Chu Dang, one with reported democratic tendencies (Ch'oe 2009). Another organization, the Kanshu (Korean Eagle) Party, was formed to "repay at least in some slight measure the favors of our benefactors, the UNITED STATES... and, the formation... of a movement for the independence of our native land" (US Army Forces 1944–1945 and 9/1946b). Howell also encouraged the development of a program of "self-reliance and self-governance toward building a democratic country" (Ch'oe 2009). A handwritten and mimeographed Korean-language newsletter, *Chayu Han'in-bo* (Free Press for Liberated Korea) was also produced by the three former Korean agents in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS); in addition to providing world news translated from English into Korean, this newsletter also attempted to instill the ideas of independence and freedom. However, the newsletter was apparently little read (Ch'oe 2009).

Given their various nationalistic efforts, the United States had decided early in the war that the Korean POWs should be given the opportunity to do their part during the war for the liberation of their country. Korean POWs clearly expected to be given an opportunity to work to win the war against Japan.⁷ By early 1945, issues were being raised about the establishment of Korean Service Units (KSUs) and also the possible removal of the PW designation from their clothing (Taylor 1945). In fact, the visiting Swiss delegation had

recommended switching the Italian and Korean work assignments (Cardinaux 1945), and the Korean POWs even mounted a demonstration asking to be formed into KSUs. Their request was denied, however, due to the additional administrative overhead it would have required, as well as the military’s fear of adverse publicity for “pampering” prisoners of war (as it had for the creation of ISUs on the US mainland) (US Army Forces 1944–1945 and 9/1946a).

The Korean POWs in Hawai‘i also engaged in considerable fraternization with the locals who had friends and family back in Korea, although on a lesser scale than did the Okinawan POWs. They talked to resident Koreans when they were sent to work in public areas. The US military also approved of requests from Y. K. Kim for local Korean community members to send Christmas gifts (of approved types and after a thorough inspection) to the Korean POWs, in order to convey their “aloha” (Goldsmith 1943). In addition, the Korean POWs were often visited in the camps by various Christian church groups. As for the Okinawan POWs, those visits eventually came under the control of the Visitors Bureau.

Clearly, the very pro-American stance and generally cooperative attitude of Korean POWs in Hawai‘i resulted in them being favored by the American military. But, despite their favored status, the Korean POWs in Hawai‘i remained as “enemy aliens” and were held as POWs for the duration of the war. Indeed, they were so favored that most were retained in Hawai‘i for use as critically needed labor for the duration of the war, a situation the military deemed “highly desirable.” They were transferred to mainland POW camps only upon specific direction of headquarters in Hawai‘i (War Department 1942).

The Filipinos (“Allies”?)

The Philippines was an overseas territory of the United States at the outbreak of World War II, with control transferred from Spain at the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898. Civil government was instituted in 1901, commonwealth status had been granted in 1935, and complete independence from the United States was planned for 1946. This was interrupted by the Japanese occupation during World War II, however.

Although Philippine nationals were considered to be US allies, four were picked up in the islands during the war and brought to Hawai‘i, and were placed in the Honouliuli POW camp. For all of these rather unlikely POWs, the US military in Hawai‘i seemed rather unsure about how to either officially classify or handle them.



Korean POWs in Hawai'i commemorate the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Photo SC 207920. Korean national anthem is sung by the prisoners of war at the memorial service for the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Korean prisoner of war compound, Sand Island. Signal Corps Photo, O'ahu, TH, 15 April 1945; National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD.

Three of them had been fishermen who were picked up at sea near the Philippines in 1943. After a short stay at Honouliuli, they were paroled to work at the US Engineers, Mills Division, Construction Service; they were sponsored by and lived with one of their supervisors, who was required to make regular reports on their conduct. Over the war period, all changed jobs and/or residences; one married a local woman. One, in particular, frequently complained about his sponsor and his low wages; he was cited for frequent unauthorized work absences, a gambling offense, and was even once arrested. Although the authorities kept track of him, he remained outside the Honouliuli Camp for the duration of the war (Arcilla 1946; Gurrobat 1946; Tablate 1946).

The fourth man presented a very puzzling case for the military. At the outbreak of the war, he had volunteered in the 101st Infantry Regiment of the Philippines, and in the spring of 1942 he had asked for and received permission from his company commander to take leave to evacuate his wife from Mindanao to Leyte. While he was away, the American forces on Leyte had surrendered, so he remained at home. Then he joined guerilla forces there, which were well staffed by American officers, and continued to fight with them until February 1944, when he was picked up by an American submarine and brought to O‘ahu. While his story was checked and proven truthful, the US military in Hawai‘i felt there was no rush to provide an answer regarding his status; instead, he was given his freedom, worked on odd jobs, and made regular reports. He was judged to be very friendly. In July, the decision was made that he could not be considered either a POW or an internee, but instead a Filipino national, lawfully residing in the Territory of Hawai‘i (although under the circumstances, he did not enter Hawai‘i in accordance with immigration laws). Still, it was decided it was appropriate to continue to keep a regular account of him and his whereabouts. Finally, in March 1945, he was released and turned over for transportation to the Philippines (Cabugao 1946).

Hawai‘i’s POWs: Generating Changes

Of course, neither military forces nor their wars are organized according to democratic principles, nor are they particularly concerned with extending social justice to their captives. Nevertheless, the Geneva Convention does provide a baseline for prisoners’ humanitarian treatment. Furthermore, through their interactions with the US military within the camps and especially with locals of their own ethnic backgrounds out in the wider community, Hawai‘i’s prisoners of war did experience a measure of both.

At the beginning of the war, the US government and its military forces knew little about the global locations, peoples, and cultures they would fight during World War II. Along with the wartime research and advice of anthropologists and other social scientists, the US military's day-to-day administration of POWs in the camps provided them with a deeper, and more nuanced, understanding of them. In Hawai'i, this was especially the case for "Orientals" (Asians) from the Pacific Theater. Initially, most Asians captured from the Pacific region were labeled "Japanese." Over the course of the war, Hawai'i's military began to better understand the historical, political, and cultural differences between them, as well as the unique circumstances that had led them to participate in the war and to be captured.

Accommodations for POWs in Hawai'i and at Honouliuli Camp were limited; in addition, they were also carefully guarded, especially at the outset of the war, and particularly for "untrustworthy" ethnic Japanese POWs. However, the high demand for wartime labor in Hawai'i resulted in the non-Japanese POWs being allowed to work outside of their own camps, and even in the local community. This allowed them to make very important connections with people residing in the local Hawai'i community, and even some with members of their own ethnic groups, who later began to also visit them within the camps. In the case of Okinawans and Koreans, these visits were in very high frequency. POWs' interactions with members of their own ethnic groups in Hawai'i furthered the US military's understanding of them; it gave POWs important forms of support, helped to normalize them in the military's eyes, and contributed to the United States' continued deliberations about their political statuses over the wartime period.⁸

Military documents provide ample evidence of continued animosity, fear, and/or prejudice against POWs throughout the wartime period. But, it is also clear that over the course of the war, the POWs in Hawai'i and at Honouliuli went from being the unknown to the known, and that in the process their treatment was modified in significant, positive ways. Overall, their supervision went from very strict to somewhat more relaxed. For non-Japanese groups of POWs, it is also clear that the military developed a measure of appreciation of their cultural characteristics, hard work, and/or unique talents. In the case of the US military's interactions with Koreans, those connections led to continued re-evaluations of their wartime political status, with those in the military and residents eventually considered to be "friendly aliens." Still, by the end of the war, the official political status of all POWs initially considered

to be “enemy aliens” was not changed. In the case of the four Filipino allies brought as POWs to Honouliuli, they were allowed near-freedom of work, residence, and activities, and one was even returned home.

Regularities in the conditions of imprisonment for all POWs in Hawai‘i must surely have produced some similarities in their experiences—feelings of fear, confinement, discomfort, tedium, boredom, homesickness, loneliness, and loss. The war’s end must have brought another set of similar emotions—welcome release from the hardships of war and imprisonment and the anticipation of happy reunions at home, as well as anxieties about their return to their war-devastated homelands, communities, and/or families, and to uncertain futures. Given the differences in the POWs cultural backgrounds, political circumstances, interactions with the local community, and their treatment by the US military, however, one can also speculate in very general ways about the differences in their postwar experiences, as well. For many of those Italian and Japanese POWs who had been in the military, their primary motivation for participation in the war was patriotic; as a result, their capture and imprisonment must have been surrounded with feelings of anxiety and shame that would stigmatize them in the eyes of their countrymen, especially upon their return to their vanquished nations. For many of the noncombatant Okinawans and Koreans, their capture meant an end to their conscription and wartime hardships under the Japanese military. For young Okinawan boys, especially, their incarceration was also a time of confusion with much relief coming from their connections with those in the local Hawai‘i community; these sentiments were reflected in their postwar desires to remain in Hawai‘i, a familiar and safe place. For many Koreans, their imprisonment involved a quest for justice against the Japanese colonists; their work in the camps was regarded as a means to a new future; and the war’s end was a signal of that new beginning.

There is no evidence of any formal attempts at democracy training of POWs by the US military in Hawai‘i. Any such efforts initiated by the military themselves would have been in violation of the Geneva Convention; yet, those undertaken by some of the Korean POWs were definitely encouraged. Still, POWs’ interactions with the US military in the camps and with locals in the wider Hawai‘i community provided them with opportunities to experience the workings of democracy. Although those experiences differed from one group of POWs to another, all became exposed to ideas and possibilities that could provide models for what their countries could offer after the war ended.

In the case of POWs held at Honouliuli, however, that context also included exposure to the US government's unjust internment of citizens and resident aliens—and even of some who were members of their own ethnic groups. ❖

Notes

1. Fujitani (2011) describes vulgar racism as a particularistic, inhumane, naturalistic understanding of difference, antihistoricist in its denial of the possibility of assimilation, unconcerned about their health and well-being, collectivist in understanding groups of individuals in a racial group, etc. In contrast, polite racism is humane, relativist and more culturalist, historicist in its affirmation of possible assimilation, somewhat concerned about health and well-being, still collectivist in understanding groups of individuals within a cultural group, etc.
2. Gwenfread Allen (1950) lists the Army's first prison camp near Wahiawā. It had only 56 occupants in 1942 and 179 in 1943; these prisoners were only briefly held pending transfer to the mainland. Conversations with interviewees suggest that there may have been other locations early in the war where POWs were held for a limited time.
3. Sand Island continued to hold some internees and even POWs over time. During the war, these included those en route to camps on the US mainland; after the end of the war, it included some who would eventually be repatriated.
4. Gwenfread Allen (1950) lists the total of POWs in Hawai'i at the end of the war as 16,493 (Italians: 4,841, Japanese: 320, Formosan (Taiwanese): 230, Indochinese (Southeast Asian): 7, Chinese: 3). The Office of the Chief of Military History (1955) indicates a total of 17,124 internees and POWs in Hawai'i; the maximum number in Hawai'i at any one time was estimated to be 11,351.
5. Several questions remain, however. Are those POWs that were added to the Honouliuli Camp at later times "additional"? Or are some or all of them holdovers from an earlier time? How many were moved elsewhere (within Hawai'i or to the mainland) in the interim?
6. Dates for the arrival of the first Italian and Korean POWs vary in military documents and reports. Most indicate the first Italians began to arrive in the summer of 1944.
7. Some records indicate not all Korean POWs in Hawai'i willingly worked in support of the war effort. The US military maintained lists of those who were to be punished for wrongfully refusing to work. In addition, in March 1945 some Korean POWs from Compound 8 refused to work because their leader, Kim Chuyong, had been removed and punished. They stated they would not return to work unless ordered to do so by their POW leaders.
8. Much effort, in this issue and elsewhere, has been devoted to examining the wartime and lasting impacts of internment, especially of the Japanese, on resident popula-

tions. This is especially highlighted in the literature surrounding the famous World War II 442nd Infantry Regiment, comprised of Nisei from the US mainland and Hawai'i that very valiantly fought in Italy. What remains to be known, however, is how the interactions with POWs affected local residents, especially of the various Asian ethnic groups in Hawai'i.

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