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Japanese Internment Camps in World War 2

The internment of about 110,000 Japanese during World War 2 has been a blight on America's history since it became an issue after World War Two. America haters love to make America look bad so they exaggerate and leave out important information on this issue. Here is the WHOLE story on the internment of Japanese Americans during World War Two.

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan the following day. This prompted Germany and Italy to declare war on the United States on Dec. 11, 1941. The U.S. declared war on Germany and Italy later the same day.

In Europe, Nazi Germany defeated Denmark, Norway and destroyed the Armies of France, Belgium and The Netherlands in only 6 weeks. Only Britain was left. Germany seemed invincible.

In April, 1941, Japan signed a non aggression treaty with the Soviet Union which allowed Japan to concentrate most of it's military power against the U.S. The attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 killed over 2,400 men, wounded 1,300, sank 4 battleships and destroyed 188 aircraft. Japan had already conquered large parts of Asia and attacked the Philippines on Dec. 8, 1941, where 16,000 U.S. soldiers were cut off and doomed to die - or worse - be taken prisoner by the sadistic Japanese Army.(A) The Japanese military seemed invincible.

The attack on Pearl Harbor resulted in a bizarre incident on the Hawaiian Island of Niihau. A Japanese fighter plane, damaged in the attack on Pearl Harbor, crash landed on Niihau. There were only about 130 people on the island, 3 of Japanese descent. All three eventually sided with the Japanese fighter pilot and tried to take the islanders prisoner. During the confrontation, the Japanese pilot was killed and one of the ethnic Japanese committed suicide.(B)

After the ordeal, the Hawaiians were troubled by "the rapidity with which the three resident Japanese went over to the pilot's cause. The more pessimistic among them cited the Niihau incident as proof that no one could trust any Japanese, even if an American citizen, not to go over to Japan if it appeared expedient."(C)

In the official Navy report on the Niihau incident, dated January 26, 1942, its author, Navy Lieutenant C. B. Baldwin, wrote, "The fact that the two Niihau Japanese who had previously shown no anti-American tendencies went to the aid of the pilot when Japanese domination of the island seemed possible, indicate[s] [the] likelihood that Japanese residents previously believed loyal to the United States may aid Japan if further Japanese attacks appear successful."(D)

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt issued three presidential proclamations to remove non-citizens: #2525 (Japanese), #2526 (Germans), and #2527 (Italians).

The U.S. Government interned about 11,000 ethnic Germans - nearly all non-citizens. About 1,880 ethnic Italians were interned. On October 12, 1942, restrictions were lifted for all Italian non-citizens who were long-term residents of the U.S. After Italy surrendered to the Allies on September 8, 1943, most Italian nationals were released by the end of the year.

"Inevitably, war creates situations which Americans would not countenance in times of peace, such as the internment of men and women who were considered potentially dangerous to America's national security."
— INS, Department of Justice, 1946 Report (Q)



An article in the *Japan Advertiser* on the "Contest to kill 100 Chinese with Sword extended when both fighters exceed mark - Mukai (left) scores 106 and Noda 105." The headline reads, "Incredible Record."



Barracks at Manzanar camp in California, similar to U.S. Army troop barracks.

Thanks to American ingenuity, we broke the Japanese code in late 1940. Intercepts indicated the possible existence of a Japanese spy ring on the west coast of the U.S. (E)

The Niihau incident, combined with the intercepts (F) had a profound effect on FDR, who issued Executive Order 9066 in February 19, 1942. This Order allowed local military commanders to designate "military areas" as "exclusion zones", from which "any or all persons may be excluded."

Ironically, just four days later, at sunset on Feb 23, a Japanese sub shelled an oil refinery near Santa Barbara, California causing light damage. Some witnesses claimed seeing "signal lights" from the sub - apparently to spies on shore. (G) The only real accomplishment of this Japanese attack was to give further justification to FDR's relocation order.

After the sub attack, the Tokyo newspaper Kokumin said the attack showed that "occupation of the United States mainland no longer is in the realm of dreams."

Losing to either Japan or Germany was a real possibility. World War Two was a fight to the death. Had the Japanese won the battle of Midway, Hawaii would have been next and then the west coast of the U.S.

Removing the Japanese from the West Coast eliminated the possibility of local Japanese helping Japan in the event of an invasion, or more likely, Japanese subs landing sabotage teams along the West Coast. Nazi subs landed two sabotage teams along the east coast - in Florida and New York in June 1942. All 8 men were quickly captured with six being executed. (H)

This information is not intended to justify FDR's Relocation Order - rather give us greater understanding why the Order was issued. Many people blame racism for the internment and racism was a factor. **But there were legitimate reasons to be suspicious.** After the war, many felt the country had over reacted. But in 1942, the world was falling apart. The Allies were losing everywhere and people were in panic mode and not taking chances.

While the internment of the Japanese was somewhat controversial, it was mostly ignored as the country united for an all out effort to defeat Japan, Italy and Germany. **We can only speculate if FDR's Relocation Order would have been issued if the three islanders of Japanese descent on Niihau had fought the Japanese pilot instead of siding with him.**

Another incident that shook Americans occurred in the fall of 1943. Three American women of Japanese ancestry interned at Granada Camp in eastern Colorado, helped two German prisoners of war escape from their nearby POW camp. They gave the prisoners civilian clothing, some maps, and a nighttime lift south toward Mexico. (I)

Prior to Pearl Harbor, there was a Nazi spy ring in the eastern U.S. A naturalized American, William Sebold, was born in Germany and became of U.S. citizen in 1936. When he visited his ailing mother in Germany in February, 1939, he was recruited by the Nazis to spy on the U.S. But when he got back to the U.S. he informed the FBI of the scheme and became a double agent. The case became known as the Duquesne Spy Ring. (J)

On June 28, 1941, all 33 spies were arrested. On January 2, 1942, they were sentenced to serve a total of over 300 years in prison. The FBI informed President Roosevelt they were certain that there were no more German spy rings in the U.S.



School kids playing at Granada Camp in Colorado.



The Uyano family in their barracks room at the Granada Camp, Colorado. (R)



Typical interior scene.



A baseball game at Manzanar, 1943.

Despite the tribulations of Japanese Americans, about 10,000 Japanese volunteered for military duty in Europe. Known as the 442nd Infantry Regiment, the unit received over 4,000 Purple Hearts, seven Presidential Unit Citations and twenty-one men were awarded the Medal of Honor in under two years. They were the most decorated unit in World War Two.



German soldiers captured by the 442nd Infantry Regiment in Italy in 1944. (W)

The Japanese were only evacuated from the West Coast. There were about 15,000 Japanese living in other parts of the country who were not put into Internment camps. (K) Japanese Americans were given time to voluntarily move out of the exclusion zone and approximately 5,000 did so before the March 1942 deadline. About 110,000 people of Japanese descent were then interned in relocation camps in the interior of the US.

Over the next two years, nearly a quarter of the internees left the camps to live and work elsewhere in the United States, outside the exclusion zone. Eventually, some were authorized to return to their hometowns in the exclusion zone under supervision of a sponsoring American family or agency whose loyalty had been assured. Japanese of college age were permitted to leave the camps to attend nearby institutions willing to accept students of Japanese ancestry. By December 31, 1943, there were 2,263 students enrolled. (L)

Critics have attacked the housing accommodations of the internees. The fact is millions of American servicemen lived in the same type of wooden barracks - equipped with cots, blankets, a light bulb and had to share toilets, bathing and dining facilities. Although these accommodations were acceptable for young men in the military, in a family setting, this was pretty spartan. But the Japanese made the best of it.

An Issei doctor was appointed to manage each facility. The goal was one physician for every 1,000 inmates and one nurse to 200 inmates but this goal was never met. At Manzanar, hospital staff performed over 40,000 immunizations against typhoid and smallpox. Most internees worked at the camp. They planted crops and raised chickens, hogs and cattle and made clothes and furniture for themselves. Professionals were paid \$19 per month, skilled workers received \$16 and nonskilled workers got \$12. (M) These camps were guarded by border patrol agents.

On Dec. 17, 1944, with Japan's defeat in sight, U.S. General Henry Pratt issued Public Proclamation No. 21, declaring that Japanese American "evacuees" from the West Coast could return to their homes, effective January 2, 1945. (N) The problem was that some had no home to go back to.

Some historians have compared the internment of Japanese Americans to the persecutions of other ethnic minorities in the World War II era but this is a fraudulent comparison. An estimated 500,000 Volga Germans were rounded up and deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan by Stalin with many of them dying en route. (O) In 1944, the Red Army rounded up about 500,000 Chechens and Ingushes for relocation. A third of this population perished in the first year from starvation, cold, and disease. (P)

A big controversy has been what to call these camps - Internment/Relocation camps or Concentration camps. Concentration camps were places of torture, barbarous medical experiments and extermination centers. The camps for the Japanese did none of this. The Japanese were in Internment/Relocation camps.

Below are three pictures from Nazi Concentration Camps.



Children prisoners in the Auschwitz Concentration camp in Poland were often experimented upon by the infamous Josef Mengele.



A mass grave at the Mauthausen Concentration camp in Austria, May, 1945.



Dachau Concentration camp in Nazi Germany.

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Below are three pictures from Japanese Concentration Camps.



Rescued from a Japanese Concentration Camp in the Phillipines.(S)



A rescued British POW.(T)



An Australian POW moments before being beheaded. The Japanese Officer ordered a private to take a picture of the beheading for a souvenir.(U)

Of the 27,000 Americans taken prisoner by the Japanese, a shocking 40 percent died in captivity, according to the U.S. Congressional Research Service. That compares with just one percent of American prisoners who died in German POW camps. (V)

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