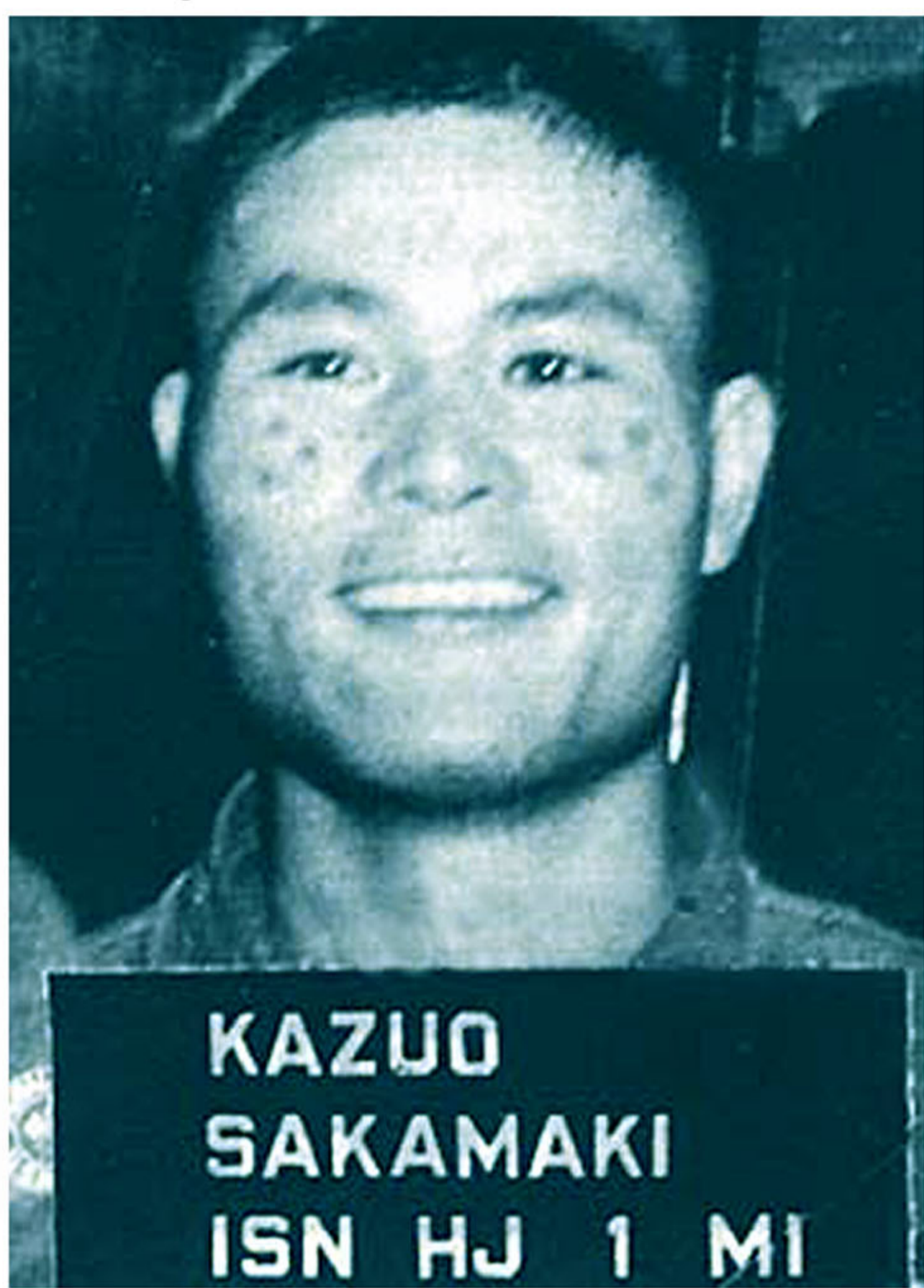


"Pampered" War Prisoners by Robert Devore



America's First Japanese P.o.W

A midget Jap submarine went aground on the morning of December 8, 1941, off the island of Oahu in Hawaii, and a lieutenant, undersized even for a Japanese and just one year out of the Imperial Naval Academy, walked ashore and became our first and for many weeks our only World War II prisoner. He eventually wound up at Camp McCoy, where 568 other dead men are living.

Yes, they're all dead, officially. The code of the Japanese warrior demands that he return home victorious or return not at all. No allowances are made for men unconscious from battle wounds or in malarial coma. The captured warrior is a dead warrior—officially. In Japan, funerals for McCoy's living dead already have been held. Parents are in disgrace. Wives have remarried. Their children bear new names.

Some of the Jap prisoners were too gravely wounded to avoid capture, but many simply chose life. A naval commander, captured when our Navy sank his carrier, was a man of high station in Japan, born to the Japanese officer caste. He has persistently attempted to rationalize his failure to kill himself, by feigning sickness and insanity. American medical officers repeatedly have found him physically and mentally well.

None of the Japs has made a serious attempt at self-destruction while in custody at McCoy. Fully 99 per cent of them have signed written declarations asserting that they do not desire to have either their government or their families notified of their capture. To fulfill its obligations under the Geneva convention, our government has to notify Spanish authorities who, in turn, notify the Japs whenever we take a Japanese prisoner. The Imperial Government has yet to acknowledge a single such notification. However, let one Jap complain to a Spanish representative about treatment, and our government soon hears that retaliation has been taken against American prisoners in Japan.

War Prisoners

The Depiction of Hatred

There are other facets of the Japanese character that are hard for us to understand:

"We don't know hate," said Lieutenant Colonel Horace Rogers, the camp commander. "We don't know anything about hate until we have seen it in the faces of these men, particularly the Japanese."

Japanese and German compounds adjoin at McCoy. So do their playing fields. They share the same canteen. In the evening, after dinner, they pack it to gulp their daily ration of two bottles of 3.2 beer and soft drinks. For each race, the other is nonexistent. They never look at each other, even in furtive curiosity. They hate each other.

In the Germans' compound, grass grew long and flower beds were untended. Knowing that it was soon to be turned over to the Japanese, they asked the Americans, "Why beautify this place for the damned Japanese?"

At nothing have the Japanese worked harder than at erecting new wire stockades they knew would soon imprison Germans.

Piles of carefully selected stones were found near Japanese working parties, and it is likely that they were intended to provide ammunition for attacks upon U.S. troops training on the McCoy reservation. The Japs hate Americans more than Germans.

You don't see hate in the Japanese faces, at first. You expect to, and don't, but possibly that's because you never really have looked upon hate before and don't recognize it. The Japanese officers make a ceremony of insult. American officers and I found them sitting cross-legged on their beds, heads averted at an angle that made it nearly impossible for them to see books they made a pretense of reading. They ignored American officers, although the convention requires captive officers to salute Americans of equal or superior rank.



U. S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

U.S. soldiers give full military honor at the funeral of a Nazi prisoner. Several captives have died, some killed themselves, a few were "purged" by Nazis



INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

War prisoners, in accordance with the Geneva convention, helped get out needed pulpwood last winter and are currently doing land reclamation and conservation jobs for which other labor is not now available