

I'm an American

Narrator: George Takei

Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, young Japanese American men and women, like all young Americans, rushed to their recruitment office to volunteer to serve. They were answered with a slap in the face. They were denied service and labeled Non-Aliens. Even the word, "citizen," was taken away from them.

A year into internment, the government discovered that there was a war time manpower shortage and they looked to the young men and women as potential sources. But they had accused them as being disloyal and potential traitors or saboteurs. How to determine their loyalty? The government, a year into internment, came down with the infamous loyalty questionnaire which turned all ten camps into turmoil. Despite some of the outrageous and offensive questions that were asked in the loyalty questionnaire, many young men still volunteered to serve. Shortly thereafter, the draft began and thousands of young Japanese American men and women served in the U.S. military. They were all put into a segregated all Japanese American unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which was sent to Europe to fight on the bloody battlefields of Italy, France, and, ultimately, Germany. They served with incredible courage and they returned to the United States as the most decorated unit of the entire Second World War. They were greeted back to America on the White House lawn by President Harry Truman who said to them, "You fought not only the enemy, but prejudice, and you won."

Revision #2

Created 2026-05-15 15:57:34 UTC by Michael Guthrey

Updated 2026-05-15 16:05:47 UTC by Michael Guthrey