

Pass It On®...

Give Peace a Chance.

How a Mexican-American Marine negotiated peace speaking Japanese during WWII.

We don't always realize it, but our upbringing can be our biggest advantage later on in life. What we learn from parents, friends and the community we grow up in can teach us things that make a difference at the right time.

Guy Gabaldon was born in 1926 in Los Angeles. He started shining shoes to help his family when he was 10 years old but quickly joined a gang. At age 12, he was fostered by the Nakano family. He attended language school with their children, where he learned Japanese, along with their culture of respect and ancestral traditions.

But at the outset of WWII, the Nakano family was sent to an internment camp. Guy moved to Alaska at 16 years old to work in a cannery until he was old enough to join the military.

A year after his training, the U.S. was fighting from one Pacific island to the next until they reached Saipan, an island in the Northern Mariana Islands. Guy arrived as U.S. forces were being reinforced and Japanese commanders were shouting orders to fight to the last man.

Civilians were caught in the chaos, and many Japanese troops were holed up in caves. It would be a bloody ending for all Japanese on the island.

Remembering his adopted family, the Nakanos, Guy left his post one night and shouted to the Japanese soldiers, guaranteeing their peace. He brought two prisoners back that first night and was sorely reprimanded by his commander. The next night, he went back out — against orders — and negotiated with a Japanese officer. Over 800 Japanese soldiers and civilians surrendered.

The U.S. commander then gave Guy permission to act as a "lone wolf," convincing civilians and soldiers to give up the fight. This unabashed and cocksure 18-year-old kid is credited with the surrender of over 1,300 Japanese soldiers and civilians and was later awarded the Navy Cross.

War is a messy business. It hardens men and women and calls on them to make choices most of the rest of us will never have to make. Yet, in the fog of uncertainty, we can still follow our moral compass, respect human life and honor our heritage and those who raised us. We don't have to be perfect in our efforts, but we can stand up for what's right in any situation.

Peace...PassItOn.com

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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