

Q & A WITH LT. JANELLE KURODA **PAGE 6**

NOV. 5-18, 2010



PACIFIC CITIZEN

The national newspaper of the JACL



SPECIAL
VETERANS ISSUE



GOLD MEDAL HEROES

Heroism, sacrifice and the
Congressional Gold Medal for
Nisei World War II veterans.

PAGE 3



HONORING NISEI VETERANS

The word “heroism” is used to describe everyday events and achievements, but make no mistake about it – Nisei World War II veterans are the definition of heroism.

They faced enemies on the battlefields and racism at home. They fought for the love of their country and the hope of a brighter future. Because of their sacrifice, the community and country owes them a huge debt of gratitude.

Because of their heroism, we dedicated this issue to our Nisei veterans, our newly minted Congressional Gold Medal winners. It’s our way of saying thank you.

— Pacific Citizen Staff



COVER PHOTOS

1. (Front, l-r) Frank Fujikawa, Don Seki, Jim Murata, Ken Miya, Toke Yoshihashi, Duke Ogawa; (back, l-r) Mas Takahashi, George Fujimori, Ken Akune, Sam Fujikawa, Bob Ichikawa and James Ogawa.

2. Norman Ikari, of the 442nd RCT, in 1944 at Camp Shelby. Prior to this photo being snapped, Ikari had just come in from a hike.

3. Sus Ito ‘somewhere in the Vosges Mountains shortly after the rescue of the Lost Battalion.’



We are proud of our veteran

IN MEMORY OF

BEN CHIMATO

OSHITA

442ND MIS

Love,
The Family of
Ben Oshita

GO FOR BROKE

AN AMERICAN STORY

RISE TO THE DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY. OF THE THOUSANDS THEY CAME, THESE YOUNG JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS FROM HAWAII, THE STATES, AMERICA'S CONCENTRATION CAMPS, TO FIGHT IN EUROPE AND THE PACIFIC DURING WORLD WAR II. LOOKED UPON WITH SUSPICION, SET APART AND DEPRIVED OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, THEY YET REMAINED STEADFAST AND SERVED WITH INCORRUPABLE SPIRIT AND UNCOMMON VALOR FOR THEIR WAS A FIGHT TO PROVE LOYALTY. THIS LEGACY WILL SERVE AS A SOBERING REMINDER THAT NEVER AGAIN SHALL ANY GROUP BE DENIED LIBERTY AND THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP.

THE 442ND CENTRAL Postal Directory

THE 442ND CENTRAL Postal Directory

NEW YORK JACL

salutes and honors
all Nikkei veterans.

Gambare!

Japanese American Citizens League
New York

National Japanese American Memorial Foundation

salutes all veterans and
congratulates the 100th/442nd
Regimental Combat Team and
Military Intelligence Service
for receiving the
Congressional Gold Medal.

Thank you,
Veterans

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Sus,

You make us
so proud.

Love,
Your Family

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The *Pacific Citizen* newspaper (ISSN: 0030-8579) is published semi-monthly (except once in December and January) by the Japanese American Citizens League, *Pacific Citizen*, 250 E. 1st Street, Suite 301, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Periodical postage paid at L.A., CA
POSTMASTER: send address changes to National JACL, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115

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Periodicals paid at Los Angeles, Calif and mailing office.

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Thirteen WWII JA veterans shared their reactions to the Congressional Gold Medal honor Oct. 25 at the Go For Broke Center.

Nisei Veterans Discuss Honor, Sacrifice and Service

Incarcerated in barbed wire camps during World War II, these veterans are among the thousands to receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

By Nalea J. Ko
Reporter

TORRANCE, Calif.—They fought discrimination on the home front after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and despotism overseas while serving during World War II. For their heroics and sacrifices they received an arsenal of medals and honors.

Now veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Infantry Battalion, and Military Intelligence Service can add another award to their collection: the Congressional Gold Medal.

Their sacrifices were recognized Oct. 5 when President Barack Obama signed the Congressional Gold Medal bill, awarding the veterans Congress’ highest civilian honor.

Despite being labeled an “enemy alien” following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans served by the thousands in the 442nd RCT, 100th Battalion, and MIS.

Known as the most highly decorated unit in United States history, the 100th and 442nd RCT received 4,000 Purple

Hearts, seven Presidential Unit Citations, 560 Silver Stars, 21 Medals of Honor, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 28 Oak Leaf Clusters and 15 Soldier’s Medals, among other distinctions.

Thirteen JA veterans shared with the *Pacific Citizen* their reaction to the Congressional Gold Medal bill during a roundtable discussion at the Go For Broke National Education Center in Torrance, Calif. This is their story.

***Pacific Citizen:* What does it mean to you to receive the Congressional Gold Medal?**

Ken Akune, Military Intelligence Service: We weren’t trying to be heroic or anything. We

just wanted to do our job as American citizens.

You can talk about loyalty and everything else. But words are cheap. The only way you can really prove your true allegiance to the country is to give your life. That’s what the 442nd guys did.

When we went in we knew there was a chance that we might not make it back. But we thought that if we didn’t do something at that time we would be forever second-class citizens. And the only way to prove it was for us to go out and do something about it. Because action means more than words.

Jim Murata, MIS: I think the ones who really deserve it are not here with us anymore.

P.C.: The bill was amended to add the heroics of the Military Intelligence Service. Why was it important to include the MIS in the bill?

Akune: So many guys have already passed on. We’re being honored with this Gold Medal, but the only regret I have is it’s happening now when those guys really worked their butts off and gave their lives are not here to join us. I know in our case of MIS, especially in our group, we were doing a lot of propaganda. The only thing I can say about our group and most of the MIS is that



442nd veteran Robert Ichikawa (foreground) and George Fujimori, MIS veteran, laugh at a joke.

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS



Ken Akune
MIS



Sam
Fujikawa
100th
Battalion



George
Fujimori
MIS



Frank
Fukuzawa
442nd RCT



Robert
Ichikawa
442nd RCT



Ken Miya
100th
Battalion



Ocean
Miyake
442nd RCT,
F Co.



Jim Murata
MIS



Duke Ogawa
Honorary
442nd RCT



James
Ogawa
442nd RCT,
C Co.



Don Seki
442nd RCT




Mas
Takahashi
100th
Battalion

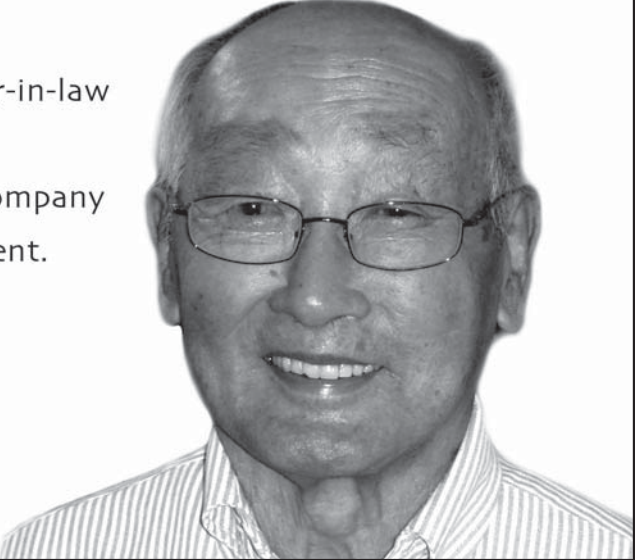


Toke
Yoshihashi
100th
Battalion

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Steve and Roy Doi
would like to honor their brother-in-law
Frank Kageta
who was a Staff Sergeant in F Company
of the 442nd Combat Regiment.





In honor of
Salem Yagawa (MIS)
and to fellow recipients
of the collective Gold Medal
award. You are remembered
and we thank you for your
courage and service.

Elaine Yagawa, Scott and Jaclyn
Sakamoto (Yagawa) and their
children Blair Aihara, Garrett Aihara
and Rachel Sakamoto; Dawn Yagawa
and her children Heather Chandler
and Jason Chandler.



ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION



‘Hey Don, how come you Hawaiians call it Katonk?’ asks 442nd RCT veteran Ocean Miyake (*in hat*) while Toke Yoshihashi (*left*), Sam Fujikawa and Bob Ichikawa look on.

CONTINUED
NISEI VETERANS

we were there basically to get intelligence about the enemy. And knowing what the enemy was planning to do you get a chance of saving your own people.

I wish there was a way that they were here and they could enjoy this thing. It might be a happy occasion but I don’t feel real elated or shall we say ‘Oh, we did a great thing or anything like that.’ All I can say is we did what we had to do as a good American.

P.C.: Why did you decide to serve your country even though your family was interned?

George Fujimori, MIS: When we all had to go to camp I went to Manzanar. But my wife was pregnant. So the colonel

came to recruit the MIS, so I went. He says, ‘OK you can go.’ But I had to wait until my son was born, which was about five and half months later. As soon as he was born I volunteered.

Akune, MIS: I was in Amache, Colorado. I think the fellows won’t talk about it, but I think for us guys in the age group of 18 or older. For us to be incarcerated and to say on top of that that you can’t serve your country when they really needed you was really devastating for us.

Robert Ichikawa, 442nd RCT: I was in Amache. The same place that he was. I volunteered when I was 17. On my eighteenth birthday I was inducted in Denver, Colo. After we were inducted we were put on trains.

As the train went down South Colorado it went by Amache, Colo. the camp. I really thought I would like to say good-bye to my

mother and dad. But the train didn’t stop it kept going. ... A friend of mine who was on the train with me he said, ‘I thought you were going to cry.’

Anyhow that’s my short story.

Don Seki, 442nd RCT: I graduated high school June of 1941. Then October in 1941 my parents decided to go to Japan for good ... I said I will not go with you I will stay right here. They said, ‘We’re leaving.’ I said, ‘Good-bye.’

All of a sudden they said, ‘Hey Pearl Harbor has been attacked. ... They said ‘Hey, we are now enemy aliens.’

I got really peeved. Boy, that disgusted me, you know.

Then from 1943 they say, ‘Hey now you’re American.’ But I’ve been American my whole life.

the sacrifices you made during WWII. How do you feel when people call you a hero?

Sam Fujikawa, 100th Infantry Battalion: We were ostracized from the Caucasian society. But we fought as a unit. Whether you were a Katonk or Kanaka boy makes no difference we fought as a unit.

When I came home I came with a unit and I paraded in Washington. At least our unit paraded for the president to get our Presidential Unit Citation. That was an honor right then and there.

Ocean Miyake, 442nd RCT: Hey Don, how come you Hawaiians call it Katonk?

Seki: Once this Katonk guy, he fell. His head went down and went katonk. [Everyone laughs]

Seki: We have a strong tie among our

P.C.: You are regarded as heroes for

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

In Loving Memory of

2nd Lt. David M. Tsuruda

442nd Regimental Combat Team, Co. E

From

Kay Tsuruda, daughter Nancy Santo, grandsons David and Tim, and Family.

The Pacific Citizen

congratulates

the WWII

veterans.

Congratulations

to New England's Gold Medal honorees

James Inashima, MIS

Susumu Ito, 442nd

Tetsuo Takayanagi, MIS

and to all the Gold Medal recipients

with grateful thanks for all they did for us.

New England Chapter JACL



Cortez JACL

12714 Cortez Ave.
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Cortez JACL proudly honors our Nisei Veterans.


Hiroshi Asai	Masmoru Uyekubo
Fred Kajioka	Saburo Okamura
Kaoru Masuda	Howard Taniguchi
Kenso Miyamoto	Kiyoshi Yamamoto
William Taniguchi	Kenji Yotsuya
Keiji Yotsuya	Asaji Yotsuya

Our Hero

SHIZ KONDO

We love you, Grandpa!

Justine, Lilia and Christy Kondo





WARTIME MEMORIES: (Top, left) Mas Takahashi and Ken Akune swap stories about cooking on the battlefield.

HONOR: (Left) Sam Fujikawa holds up a printout of a news article about President Barack Obama’s signing of the Congressional Gold Medal bill. Fujikawa attended the Oct. 5 ceremony at the White House.

CONTINUED
NISEI VETERANS

people because we were segregated. Our parents taught us you fight for your country and also you do not offend your family. That’s the main thing.

P.C.: With the signing of the Congressional Gold Medal the story of the 442nd RCT, 100th and MIS will gain more recognition. How do you feel to know awareness will be raised about your wartime efforts?

Akune: It was a time that people today don’t understand.

When you think about it, even though we did a lot I think the Issei deserve a lot of credit. Because they were calm enough. They were the one that gaman. They said, ‘Hey better days will come around.’

When you think about this Gold Medal, really when you think about that I think the Issei deserve a lot. What they had instilled in us and taught us ... I think that helped us a lot along the way. I think they really deserve a share of this.

Fujikawa: We were a bunch of Depression kids. In other words, if you had a nickel in your hand you were rich.

We’ve been through a lot. It’s the parents that kept us in line. They are the ones that really deserve the credit.

Frank Fukuzawa, 442nd RCT: I think my kids and my grandkids they’ll be the ones that will be proud. Inside of me I know how much I contributed.

I was in camp. I was drafted. My father was taken right away because he was an ‘enemy alien.’

But there were a lot of things I learned about my father. Instead of being bitter I was proud of him. He volunteered for the Army.

But he never bragged. He never said anything. But the guy was that kind of a man. That showed me a lot of respect. I always thought of my pop as a good man. He was twice the American I was.

Ken Miya, 100th: As far as I’m concerned it’s those people that died for us ... They’re the ones that really deserve it.

I feel very humble. I just hope that in the next life I will be able to tell them the story that their government has done to us in awarding us the Congressional Gold Medal. ■

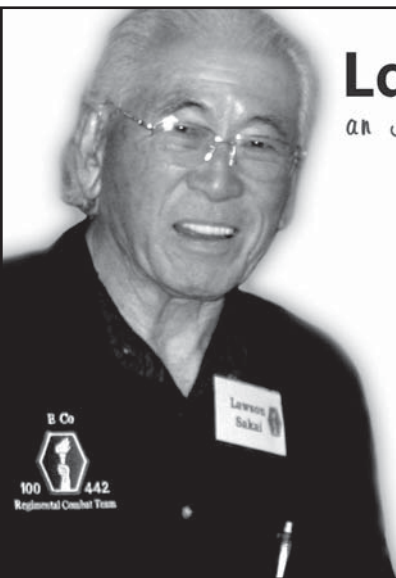
Gold Medal Ceremony



The Congressional Gold Medal ceremony will be held in the summer or fall of 2011.

Veterans, or their relatives, who are interested in attending the awards ceremony and festivities in Washington, D.C. should complete a registration form at:

www.nationalveteransnetwork.com or call Terry Shima at 301/987-6746. Please be advised that the registry is simply designed to gage the level of interest in the event.



Lawson Sakai,
an American hero from Gilroy.

Gilroy JACL would like to thank you and all the veterans of our Military for their commitment and sacrifice.

WWW.PACIFICCITIZEN.ORG


Congratulations veterans for being honored with the Congressional Gold Medal.


Houston JACL

K. Tom Kawaguchi

"To each his own and my own is you"


Lovingly,
Sudi



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Navy Lt. Janelle Kuroda Reflects on Military Service This Vets Day

APA and JACL youth pose questions to the 30-year old member of the Navy JAG Corps.

By *Pacific Citizen* Staff

Question 1: Please provide biographical information, including what generation Japanese American you are, and in general, what does Veterans Day mean to you, both as a JAG and a descendant of a Nisei veteran?

I am a 30-year-old Yonsei. My family immigrated to Hawaii from Japan in the late 19th century to work as laborers on the sugar plantations in the town of Ola'a (now Keaau), on the Big Island of Hawaii. I attended the same school that my grandfather and father attended in Kea'au. In high school, I was active in student government and participated in the U.S. Senate Youth Program. I attended the University of Hawaii at Hilo, where I was the vice president of the student body and was the head delegate of the Model United Nations team. I also interned at the Hawaii State Legislature, the Circuit Court and the County Council. Upon graduation, I attended



Boston College Law School, where I was the president of the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association and was commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy JAG Corps on board the USS Constitution in Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Veterans Day is a time to honor the men and women who have served before us in the Armed Services. This day is very special to me because my family has served in every

American war since World War II. As all Americans pause to remember the heroes of the past, I feel honored myself, and equally humbled, to come from such a long, proud line of my own personal heroes.

Question 2: Did you always know you wanted to become a JAG, and if so, what steps did you take to ensure you would reach that objective? – Sonya Kuki

I had never really thought about joining the JAG Corps until my first year of law school. I attended a lunch one day and met a Navy JAG Reservist. He told me about all the good that I could do for sailors and the Navy as a judge advocate. This made me start thinking about the possibility of military service.

About a month later, I flew home to Hawai'i to accept a scholarship from the Hawai'i Veterans' Memorial fund, and had a chance to meet several veterans from different services. When I told them that I was considering joining the military as a judge advocate, they were curious as to which service I might want to join. As they spoke of why their own particular service was clearly superior to the others, I saw an intense, joyful spark in their eyes. They spoke so passionately about the advantages of the Army, or the Navy, and I could tell that their jokes about the other services were only half-jokes. They loved what they did, and I wanted to know more about a community that can inspire such passion.

As far as preparations, I met with several judge advocates and I asked many questions to determine which service would be the right fit for me. I chose the Navy over other services for several reasons. I love being stationed near the ocean, and I find the types of law that Navy judge advocates practice fascinating. I also felt the most comfortable with the people I met in the Navy JAG Corps. However, the Navy JAG Corps' prestige and excellent reputation was what really put it over the top.

Question 3: Have you ever had to give legal advice that went against your personal

convictions? If yes, what was the issue? – Paul Fisk

I have never given legal advice that went against my personal convictions. I believe in the rule of law, and as a judge advocate, I am not only upholding, but also defending those laws. As an attorney, I uphold the laws by representing my client or advising my commander to the best of my ability. As a naval officer, I am sworn to protect and defend the Constitution.

Question 4: What does it feel like to be a minority woman in a field that is primarily characterized as masculine? Would you encourage other women to enter the armed services? If so, why? – Mackenzie Walker

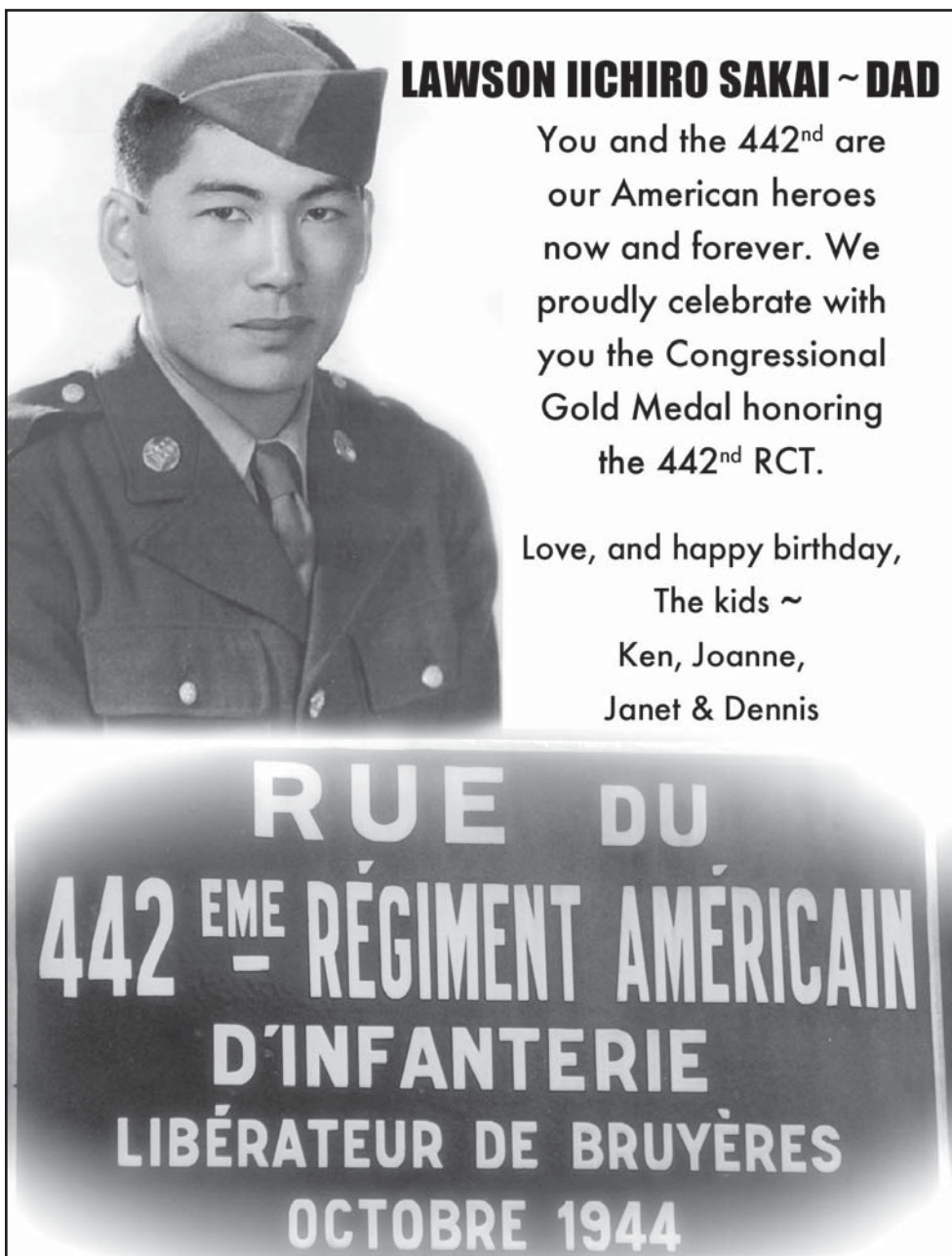
I do not feel that I am treated differently or that I am out-of place in the military because I'm an Asian American or a woman. The military focuses on mission accomplishment. Most do not care where you come from or what you look like; the quality of your work is what matters. On the other hand, the military does value diversity of thought and experience, because the leadership recognizes that different people can have different ways of attacking a problem and coming up with innovative solutions.

I have personally witnessed several occasions where one person's culture and background have been a tangible asset to mission accomplishment. Prior to a meeting with representatives of some Japanese ships, I helped my commander with various cultural norms and expectations. Another time, our ship encountered an Arabic fishing vessel, but we had no trained Arabic linguist on board. However, we happened to have an Arab American petty officer, who was brought up to the bridge to serve as a translator. In each of these cases, diversity brought strength.

Question 5: Why did you decide to join the military? Was the main reason you wanted to follow in your ancestors' footsteps or is there another reason? – Jack Tobe

I've always admired my family's military service. Their sacrifice inspired my sense of service to my community. When I was younger, this service was in the form of student government and volunteering. The military offered me another opportunity to serve my national community, while at the same time providing me with a challenging adventure. Where else but the military does one's job and location change every two years? In just over five short years, I have argued at courts-martial in Virginia, reviewed detainee cases in Iraq, provided Seelegal assistance to sailors in Italy and Bahrain, and advised an admiral on the rules of engagement regarding pirates at sea off

See KURODA/Page 11




LAWSON IICHIRO SAKAI ~ DAD

You and the 442nd are
our American heroes
now and forever. We
proudly celebrate with
you the Congressional
Gold Medal honoring
the 442nd RCT.

Love, and happy birthday,
The kids ~
Ken, Joanne,
Janet & Dennis

**RUE DU
442^{EME} - RÉGIMENT AMÉRICAIN
D'INFANTERIE
LIBÉRATEUR DE BRUYÈRES
OCTOBRE 1944**



Congratulations

**Congressional
Gold Medal
Honorees**


From

**Tokuji
YOSHIHASHI**
and family

HELEN KAWAGOE

**Salutes the
Nisei Veterans
of World War II.**

*Congratulations on receiving the
Congressional Gold Medal.*



We proudly support the

hard work,


& courage,

& sacrifices

of the

men & women

of our armed forces.



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Alaska

Japanese American Citizens League

The Alaska Chapter JACL would like to honor these World War II veterans who were awarded the Gold Medal posthumously. We honor and thank them for what they did for Our Country and for each and every American.

There is a connection with them and our chapter.

Hisao “Koby” Kobayashi SGT MIS
Fred Rock Matsuno PFC HQ Co 442nd
Morinaka Takaki SGT MIS
Henry Yukio Goto Unknown
Tad Fujioka Unknown
Patrick Hagiwara Unknown
William N. Tatsuda Unknown
Peter Heyano SSGT 442nd

The Japanese American Veteran ‘Playboy’

Nisei George Fujimori was a ‘one-man crew’ during World War II and while working at ‘Playboy’ as a carpenter after the war.

By Nalea J. Ko
Reporter

There are numerous military medallions pinned on veteran George Fujimori’s baseball cap. A gold and blue pin marked “always out front” honors Fujimori’s service in the Military Intelligence Service, MIS, during World War II.

Another circular pin with the “Go For Broke” logo pays homage to his membership in the veterans’ nonprofit organization.

At the top of his hat, above all the military emblems and medallions, is a pin that makes Fujimori blush when he is asked about it.

“I used to work there,” the 90-year-old said, smiling and pointing to the Playboy bunny pin on his baseball cap.

After returning from the war to Chicago, Ill. Fujimori ran Playboy Designs, Hugh Hefner’s carpentry and furniture design shop, for about 16 years.

His carpentry work included furniture for the Playboy penthouse in New York, the Chicago mansion, the Beverly Hills home and the Chicago club. But the most well known of his creations was where Hefner laid his head at night: the Playboy rotating bed.

“We had it made so it vibrates,” Fujimori said about the iconic bed that he saw stored at the Playboy mansion last year. “So Hefner gets up in the morning, he puts it on for about five minutes and he’s raring to go. It circulates everything in your body.”

Photos, magazine clippings and letters from Playboy’s

editor-in-chief compiled in albums by his late wife, Esther, document Fujimori’s career working for Hefner. A black and white photo shows Fujimori creating the walnut bed. Fujimori laughs knowing that he laid on the bed before Hefner.

“Hefner got it secondhand,” said Ken Akune, a fellow MIS veteran, who volunteers with Fujimori at the Go For Broke monument in Los Angeles, Calif. twice a week.

“I had to test it out,” Fujimori said with a chuckle. “I got on it first.”

At Playboy, Fujimori says he was a “one-man crew.” During WWII he was also a one-man crew in the MIS, although also armed with two bodyguards.

Using his Japanese language skills, Fujimori was tasked with finding “the enemy” and convincing them to surrender.

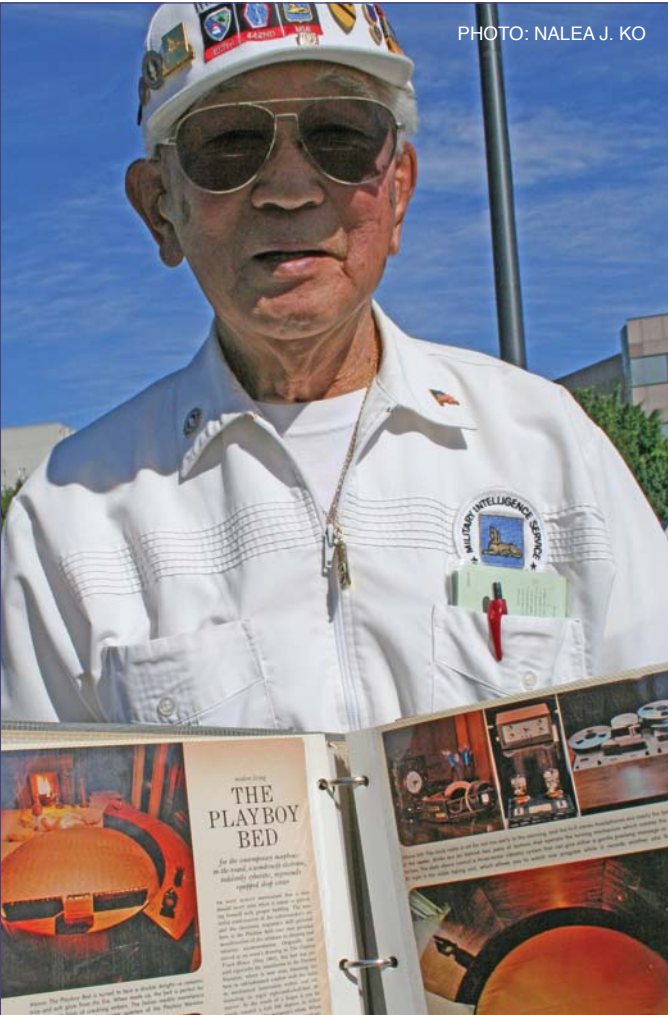
Born in Fresno, Calif., Fujimori was interned in Manzanar with his wife when Japanese Americans were classified as “enemy aliens.”

While in camp in his early 20s Fujimori volunteered for the military, but he had to wait for the birth of his son, Glenn, before serving. The decision to join the military was simple, Fujimori says.

“I thought it was the right thing. I thought things would be better after the war if they [Japanese American soldiers] get killed you know,” Fujimori explained flipping through black and white photos of him in military garb. “And sure enough it did happen that way.”

In battle the attempt to get Japanese soldiers to surrender began with a peace offerings: a cigarette. Then Fujimori would begin his plea.

“I did talk to them real good. I told them they were kind of stupid to be killing themselves for one guy, you know the emperor.” Fujimori continued, “I said, ‘Now go back to Japan. We’re going to send you back to Japan and you guys




MISer George Fujimori shows a newspaper clipping of his famous Playboy rotating bed.

IN LOVING MEMORY

BROTHERS, UNCLE AND FATHER

CALVIN OBA • RICHARD OBA • SIDNEY OBA



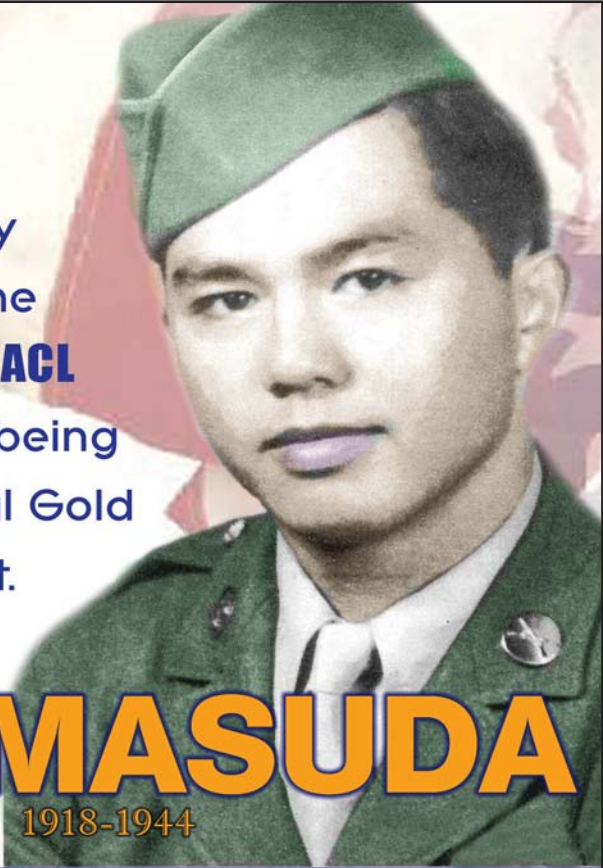
LT. COL. JUNEUS TETSU OBA

442nd E Company
June 2, 1924-
December 29, 1968
Korea, Vietnam
Legion of Merit
Bronze Star
Purple Heart with Cluster

PVT. STANLEY T. OBA

442nd G Company
June 28 1923-
April 19, 1945
Killed in Action
Purple Heart







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1918-1944



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his memory.



The Kazuo Masuda Middle School
(pictured) is located in Fountain
Valley, CA. The Kazuo Masuda
Memorial Post 3670 is located in
Garden Grove, CA.

help build the country up.”

When his appeal worked he would take the men prisoner. When Fujimori could not convince the enemy to surrender it would sometimes result in their death.

Experiences in the war haunted Fujimori in his nightmares.

“My wife said, ‘Separate beds,’ I hit her a couple of times,” Fujimori explained of waking up and thinking he was in combat. “That’s why we had separate beds [laughs]. I don’t blame her.”

Once in awhile, the 90-year-old says, he still has nightmares of the war.

All of Fujimori’s wartime stories could only play out in his dreams for years because of its highly classified nature. The 6,000 JAs who served in the MIS were barred from speaking of their wartime efforts until 1974 when the Freedom of Information Act was passed.

The MIS veteran never shared his wartime stories with his Playboy employer because of his vow to secrecy. Fujimori is just as secretive about the behind-the-scenes events at Playboy parties.

“I figure that’s private,” Akune said when asked if Fujimori has shared classified Playboy information with him. “If he told us we’d be all jealous.”

Working at the Playboy mansion for over a decade, Fujimori had a key to the Chicago Playboy club. There he said they spent the nights mostly drinking although the main attraction was the Playboy bunnies. Fujimori described holiday parties at the Chicago Playboy mansion that soon halted after guests began using the Christmas tree as a toilet.

Being around scantily clad Playboy bunnies did result in a domestic tiff once, Fujimori explained.

“Oh, she got mad once because somebody told her that I was kissing the girls,” Fujimori said about his wife. “She wasn’t a Playboy girl. She was at the bottom of the stairway and she kissed everybody. You know a merry Christmas



George Fujimori, pictured here with his daughter and son-in-law, recently visited with Hugh Hefner at the Playboy mansion.

[kiss].”

“Somebody snitched. I don’t know who it was but somebody snitched. I got hell for it,” he added smiling widely.

While working at Playboy, Fujimori often ate with celebrities and bunnies. The girls would eat breakfast dressed in their nightgowns. He described Hefner as a “genius” who wore his famous burgundy bathrobe often.

“It never bothered me,” Fujimori said of Hefner’s bathrobe. “What the heck! He wants to wear a bathrobe, let him wear a bathrobe. What am I to say? [Laughs].”

His carpentry work at Playboy also included making a model of the company’s airplane. For the project Fujimori borrowed Barbie dolls from his daughters, Wendy and Laurie, to sit in the mini airplane.

“They were the right size,” Fujimori explained adding that he put a pipe in the doll that looked like Hefner. “And my daughters kept asking me, ‘When are you going to bring the

Barbies?’ He’s still got the model.”

After about 16 years, Fujimori says the stockholders closed Playboy Designs in the 1970s or 1980s because he was not making money.

Fujimori then returned to his old job at Greyhound Exhibits, where he worked before Playboy, creating display booths and more.

He still keeps in contact with Hefner, Fujimori says. His WWII veteran pals make use of his connections at Playboy while volunteering at the Go For Broke monument.

“When we want to get attention right away we bring it up. And boy, everybody’s ears perk up,” Akune says about telling visitors of Fujimori’s Playboy job. “Forget about everything else they want to hear George talk about Hugh Hefner.”

These days Fujimori spends most of his days at the Go For Broke monument and the Torrance, Calif.-based headquarters. The 90-year-old says he’s quit making furniture now.

He is planning a trip to D.C. next year to participate in the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony. Veterans of the 442nd Regiment, MIS and 100th Battalion were recognized on Oct. 5 when President Barack Obama signed the Gold Medal Bill. It is Congress’ highest civilian honor.

The Congressional Gold Medal will be on display at the Smithsonian museum. Veterans can later purchase replicas.

The Playboy circular bed will also go to the Smithsonian, Fujimori says.

“I don’t know if he’s going to put my name on it or not,” Fujimori explained about whether Hefner will credit him for the bed. “If he puts it on it, fine.”

Just like some of his war stories, Fujimori mostly keeps mum about the wilder Playboy party stories. He smiles only sharing tidbits of what life was like on the Playboy payroll.

“There were all these women. I was just an innocent boy [laughs],” Fujimori said closing the photo album and tucking it into a brown paper bag. ■



Photo Courtesy of Rich Iwasaki Photography ©2010

Portland JACL and the 2010 recipients of the Veterans of Oregon Honorable Service Medal congratulate the soldiers of the 100th Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service for their bravery and honorable service on the occasion of their selection to receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

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100th, 442nd and MIS
on being awarded the
Congressional Gold Medal!



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COMMENTARY
Working the Hill for WWII Nisei Vets



Phillip Ozaki (right) worked the Hill with JAVA’s Terry Shima to pass the Congressional Gold Medal bill.

As a former JACL Mineta Fellow, helping to push through the Gold Medal Bill is a story of personal growth.
By Phillip Ozaki

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award in the United States. This means that the 442nd, 100th, and MIS have to be recognized by the House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and the president. When I started working on this legislation, the House had already passed their version of the bill. Thus, the task at hand was to get 67 senators (or a two-thirds majority) to co-sponsor the bill, ensuring passage. There were already 36 senators on board and we needed 31 more.

One of the first things I learned in D.C. was that getting a Senate visit is tricky. They get tens of thousands of requests a day and are usually focused on the constituents who live in their state. Our team consisted of Jean Shiraki, Shirley Tang and me. We were JACL fellows looking for this kind of exciting D.C. experience. We made meeting requests to the entire Banking Committee where the bill was placed and only heard back from a few of them. This was the start of our adventure.

My first visit was to Sen. Mike Crapo’s office. I tried my best to brush off the nervousness and used what I thought was the best tactic to score a co-sponsor. I told her the story of my grandpa, Sam Ozaki.

When my grandpa was 18 years old, he and his family were forced from their home in Southern California and thrown into the Santa Anita Racetracks where they were temporarily held. As grandpa always expresses, “they treated the horses better than they treated us.” His family was then shipped to swampy and muggy Jerome, Arkansas.

Grandpa decided to fight in the war to prove his loyalty and the loyalty of his family and other Japanese Americans to the United States. For the

442nd Regimental Combat Team, it was a war waged on two fronts. They fought the enemy abroad and discrimination at home. Grandpa returned home with a Purple Heart, but had nowhere to settle. Our family ended up in Chicago because that’s where his sister lived.

Nowadays, my grandpa, 85, lives on Chicago’s Northside. An educator and an activist, he goes around to classrooms and community events to talk about his experience. He is dedicated to inspiring young people to fight for civil liberties and freedom. He is my hero and I am honored to have the opportunity to talk to Senators about my grandpa’s story, and ask them to award these Japanese American World War II heroes with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Of these November visits, I had one instant success. A few days after visiting the office of Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado, I got word that he became a co-sponsor. With one more down, we had 30 more to go.

JACL Twin City’s Matt Farrells, who is the new JACL youth chair, also took action. He got a hold of his Senators and was an important individual in getting them to co-sponsor. I asked him to speak at the JACL Midwest Chapters meetings. Matt made a great presentation and soon enough, we got a bunch more co-sponsors from the Midwest.

Then, one rainy day in May, WWII veteran Grant Ichikawa, 91, and I walked up Capitol Hill to make some visits. Grant, who had never made a legislative visit in his life, carried a very effective tool for moving politicians: he is an amazing storyteller with amazing stories to tell.

In Sen. Kit Bond’s office, I talked about the bill and Grant reeled in the attention of the staff person with his natural storytelling.

Usually you have 10 to 15 minutes to sell your legislation to the politician. We were there for 45

SEE OZAKI
page 12

HONOR ROLL OF WORLD WAR II VETERANS (BUTTE, COLUSA, SUTTER AND YUBA COUNTIES)		
George Abe	Robert Kodama	William Nishikawa
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Ben Kitani	Frank Nakatani	Akiji Yoshimura
Henry Kodama	Yutaka Nakatani	Toshiro Yoshimura

KURODA

(Continued from page 6)

the Horn of Africa.

As a judge advocate, I have a sense of purpose in life. I understand the role I play in the larger mission of my command, of the Navy, within the Department of Defense. Being a judge advocate is to be part of an exciting, dynamic organization. Each day brings a new opportunity to innovate, and I'm honored to put on the uniform and to carry on the tradition of those who have served before me.

Question 6: How has your background as an Asian American shaped your perspective on our recent/ongoing wars in the Middle East? — Christopher Lapinig

My experiences living in Southwest Asia have shaped my perspective on our current conflicts more directly than my AA heritage. While living in Bahrain for two years, I learned that the Eastern core values of honor, humility, and sacrifice extended throughout all of Asia, including the Middle East. These Eastern values include an emphasis on building lasting, interpersonal relationships. I believe that our understanding of these values has developed over



the course of these wars. We now understand that winning the hearts and minds of the local people is a long, complicated process. We know that we must work to gain and build trust, and that any newly formed government must do the same.

Question 7: How is JAG different from the general practice of law? — Emily Iwasaki

To me, being a Navy judge advocate is being part of something bigger than myself. I am not just an attorney, but I am also a naval officer: a leader and mentor. I am responsible for the sailors that work for me, and I know how important it is to do everything I can to not only set a good example, but to inspire them. Additionally, a Navy judge advocate immediately

gets the chance to begin litigating cases and counseling clients. They can practice while on board a ship or overseas. The old Navy slogan, "It's not a job, it's an adventure," captures the essence of what it means to be a Navy judge advocate.

Question 9: What kind of legal issues does the commander of the Navy Region Southwest Asia come by? Which were the biggest, and how did you handle it? — Lindsay Oda

The commander of Navy Region Southwest Asia was responsible for Naval Support Activity, Bahrain. His job was to make sure that the operational naval forces in the area received the best support at all times. As the base is within a foreign country, he, and his sailors, had many interactions with the local population. My role as the deputy staff judge advocate was to advise the commander on all legal matters, including international and Bahraini law. This included analysis of how these laws affected the base and the sailors. I played a major role during military exercises and criminal investigations ensuring we coordinated with local officials and all laws, including the Uniform Code of Military Justice, were followed. ■

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442nd Company L

Love,
The Family of
Misao Doi




Phillip Ozaki is inspired by his grandparents Sam and Harue Ozaki.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

with story after story. Grant told one about the 442nd RCT when they were asked to climb a cliff to penetrate the German army.

Imagine these 442 guys. These were not big American guys, they were kind of smaller JA men with hundreds of pounds of equipment about to climb a mighty cliff. Their orders were to NOT scream if they lost their grip and fell off the cliff. This would give away the position of the entire unit and the mission would be a failure. Some soldiers fell, silently as ordered, but those who made it broke the German lines in 30 minutes, where they had waited months.

A few weeks later, Sen. Bond signed on. On our next couple of visits, I always reminded Grant to tell the "cliff story".

By June, we had about 57 co-sponsors and were counting down to 67. Time was running out as the bill would expire soon and my fellowship would end at the end of summer.

I made a plan for the JACL fellows and Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA) veterans to do what I called a "bull rush", walk into 25 Senate offices, ask to speak to the proper staff person, and politely demand them to co-sponsor our bill.

On June 15, a muggy and humid day in D.C., we executed the bull rush. Jean, 24, and JAVA President Terry Shima, 86, visited half of these offices, and Grant and I visited the other half.

Four hours later, we were finished with the bull rush. My legs were aching from all the standing and waiting, my throat was dry and tired from talking, and my body was covered in sweat from the heat, or perhaps from the nervousness of demanding instant meetings. We walked to the train station and I thought about my grandpa. I was sure that Grant and Terry

were thinking of the many veterans they knew, living and already gone, and the legacy that they wanted to pass down to grandsons like me.

One by one, the bull rush efforts seemed to have paid off. First it was Nebraska, then Kansas, and even one Senator from Vermont.

On July 4 we reached our goal: we had 67 Senate co-sponsors. By September, both houses of Congress passed the bill and on Oct. 5, President Obama signed the bill into law. I called my grandpa and I posted the news on my Facebook. I was more proud than ever to be my grandpa's grandson.

Looking back, this was a powerful learning experience about policy advocacy and leadership. I left D.C. having been a significant agent in pushing the bill through. At times, it was frustrating how slow it is to move legislation, no matter how important and timely. At other times, I felt like I could really make a difference in the world, one co-sponsor at a time.

Now that the bill has passed, we await a memorial service and awards celebration in D.C. and other localities where we want all WWII veterans, their families, and supporters to come. Even for my grandpa, it's hard for him to travel in his old age, but I'm trying to convince him and my family, especially my younger siblings, that the trip is worth it. And it will be. ■

For updates on the Congressional Gold Medal awards celebration:
www.nationalveteransnetwork.com

Phillip Ozaki was the 2009-10 Norman Mineta Fellow in the JACL Washington, D.C. office and is currently the JACL membership coordinator. He can be contacted at pozaki@jacl.org.



The Pacific Northwest District Council sends its heartfelt congratulations to the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service, the most decorated units in World War II, for their selection to receive the Congressional Gold Medal!

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The story...

On the eve of war with Japan in November 1941, the US Army recruited 58 Japanese American (Nisei) and 2 Caucasian soldiers for the coming war. Trained in the utmost secrecy as military linguists, these enlisted men comprised of the first class at Building 640 at Crissy Field in the Presidio of San Francisco. From its humble beginnings, the MIS grew to over 6,000 graduates, and evolved into the renowned Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center at the Presidio of Monterey.

Serving in every major battle and campaign in the Pacific Theatre of War, while their families languished behind barbed wire in America's concentration camps, the Nisei MIS were credited for shortening the war by two years. During the Occupation of Japan, the MIS worked to establish a lasting peace. For their role, the MIS have been honored with a Presidential Unit Citation and most recently with a Congressional Gold Medal along with veterans of the 100th Battalion / 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

The place...

Set in the breathtaking Presidio of San Francisco, (a designated National Historic Landmark District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service), Building 640 still stands as a place of historic significance. Spearheaded by the National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc. (NJAHS) together

with the National Park Service and the Presidio Trust, and bolstered by grass roots support from the JACL and veterans groups, this effort is underway to save the building and develop it as an adaptive reuse project—an interactive MIS Historic Learning Center devoted to the MIS Legacy of peace and reconciliation. To date, it has already received nearly \$4.6 million in federal support. **Today, NJAHS seeks matching private dollars to ensure its long-term viability.**

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President Obama signs Congressional Gold Medal into law, Oct. 8, 2010.



Military Intelligence Service Historic Learning Center at Building 640 in the Presidio of San Francisco, opening Fall 2011



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“Rescue of The Lost Battalion”

This larger than life size bronze monument will complete the memorial in Roseville, California, dedicated in December 2009 to Americans of Japanese ancestry who served in WW II.

The monument commemorates the “Rescue of the Lost Battalion” depicting a soldier of the 442nd helping rescue a wounded soldier of the 36th Texas Division from a long, brutal battle against the German Army. The 442nd was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the history of the U.S. Military.

This permanent memorial will ensure that future generations remember the significance of this period in our history, when many Americans of Japanese descent were interned while their brothers fought bravely – and many died – in testimony to their loyalty to our country. Our goal is also to develop educational materials for students to learn the significance of this era in our history.



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Arizona Chapter thanks all of our Veterans!



**A big thank you to the many courageous Nisei
who valiantly served our country while their
families remained incarcerated at Gila and Poston.**

TRIBUTE


Masako Mary Yamada
Birthday - April 17, 2010



Masako Mary Yamada passed away in New York City on April 17, 2010, at the age of 97. Born in Los Angeles in the Boyle Heights area where her parents ran a little grocery store, she attended Roosevelt High School and then USC, later transferring to Columbia University's Teachers College in New York City where she received her bachelor's degree and later two master's degrees. Mary was inducted into the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in early 1945 with a commission of Second Lieutenant, taking her basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, then assigned to Bellevue Hospital in New York City where she held teaching and supervisory positions. In 1946 she was promoted to First Lieutenant and made an instructor in the medical technical training school and the Assistant Director of the U.S. Senior Cadet Nurse School at Fort Dix. After returning to civilian life, she served as a guidance counselor for the New York City Board of Education until her retirement. A picture of Mary in her Army Nurse Corps uniform appears on the cover of the paperback issue of "Serving Our Country — Japanese American Women in the Military during World War II" by Brenda L. Moore, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology, State University of New York at Buffalo (Rutgers University Press).

TRIBUTE

Tadashi Kono
April 25, 1921 - October 12, 2010



Kono Tadashi, 89, Sacramento, CA, passed away October 12, 2010. Preceded in death by wife Lynne Kono, brothers Shigeo and Takeo Nakano, sisters Margaret Mitani, Kimie Yabumoto, and Chiyeko Matsumoto. Survived by daughter Cheryl Kono, brothers Yoshio and Kenso Kono, and many nieces and nephews.

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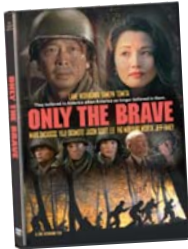
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