The morning after the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the Houston Astros and forced a deciding Game 7 of the 2017 World Series, JACL National President Gary Mayeda joined a coalition of community groups that expressed dismay in Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred’s decision to delay the punishment of Astros’ player Yuli Gurriel following his racist mockery of Dodgers pitcher Yu Darvish.

On Oct. 27, Manfred announced that Gurriel would have to undergo sensitivity training and be suspended without pay for five games beginning in the 2018 season, allowing the Cuban-born player to continue to play in the series. During the Oct. 27 game, which the Dodgers ultimately lost, Gurriel hit a homerun off Darvish and upon returning to the dugout was seen on national TV making a mocking “slant eye” gesture in reference to Darvish and saying “chinito,” Spanish for “little Chinese boy.” Darvish is a Japanese national of Iranian and Japanese ancestry.

The incident caused a social media uproar among Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and fans, as well as amongst baseball supporters in general. Gurriel later issued an apology to Darvish for his actions.

At the Nov. 1 news conference, which was held at the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, Mayeda compared Manfred’s punishment to a parent disciplining a child months after misbehavior.

“Baseball is a test of skills, but more importantly, it is a test of character and respect,” Mayeda said. “Commissioner Manfred, you fell short of that test and should have suspended Yuli Gurriel immediately.”

Mayeda, asked by the Pacific Citizen whether he had watched the live broadcast of Friday night’s game and Gurriel’s gesture, said he had not.

“I found out about it over social media, the Internet and just seeing all the images come out, and I was just shocked and appalled,” he said. “I thought it was an older picture. I really couldn’t believe it was a current image from the game that was on the night before.”

Mayeda said he also received supportive comments from different individuals and community organizations following the incident.

“It was a shock,” he said. “I really couldn’t believe this would happen today. It was a lesson for our community to figure out how to react to it.”

Also at the news conference, Rev. Tim Yee of the Union Church of Los Angeles cited church member Hagi Kusunoki and her late husband, George, a member of the 442nd Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team.

In WWII, the segregated U.S. Army unit, comprised mostly of Americans of Japanese descent, famously rescued 211 members of the so-called “Lost Battalion,” the 1st Battalion of 141st Texas Regiment that had been trapped behind enemy lines for several days. The 442nd suffered more than 800 casualties in the rescue and its members were famously honored as “heroic Texans.” George Kusunoki was awarded the Bronze Star in that battle.

“Hagi and George made incredible sacrifices for their country so that we would always remember the pain and injustice that racism can lead to,” Yee said as he held up a photo of Hagi Kusunoki. “So, when 40,000 fans gave a standing ovation to Yuli after being cleared to continue playing in the World Series, I think that Hagi’s story has been forgotten.”

The Media Action Network for Asian Americans called on Manfred to not only have Gurriel undergo sensitivity training but also make such training a requirement for all Major League baseball players.

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NIKKEI VOICE

A Salute to Our JA Veterans

By Gil Asakawa

When the word “veterans” comes up in conversations within the Japanese American community, I suspect most of the time the image the word conjures is a picture of Nisei soldiers of the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team fighting during World War II. More and more people might think of the Military Intelligence Service, the lesser-known group of Nisei who served bravely during WWII in the Pacific, island hopping with Gen. Douglas MacArthur and then helping as interpreters in the U.S. Occupation of Japan. So many of the MIS kept mum about their experiences because the government demanded secrecy about their service. Today, they deserve the spotlight of history to shine brightly on their accomplishments.

These men are the JAs’ “Greatest Generation,” the generation that came of age before the baby boomers and fought for the rights that so many of us enjoy without worry today. Their invocation is appropriate.

It’s even more important to remember them and celebrate their accomplishments today, as so many are passing from our families and communities.

I salute the Japanese American WWII veterans, always have.

And I also salute all the thousands of other JAs who’ve served in America’s military, both men and women, in both wartime and peace.

My father was in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict. His journey there makes for an interesting story (and a future book-in-waiting). He was born and raised in Honolulu, but my grandfather took the entire family, including my then-8-year-old dad, to Japan in 1940. Bad timing, obviously. He and his siblings attended Japanese schools and were teased as American spies. They spoke only Japanese outside the home and sang Glenn Miller songs inside at night.

After WWII when my dad was 13 years old, he went to work for the U.S. Occupation Forces as a howdy boy. When he was old enough, he joined the Army, worked for the CIA, the Counter Intelligence Corps, mainly interrogating returning Japanese prisoners from Siberia and identifying potential Communist sympathizers and spies.

When the fighting broke out in Korea, my father was sent there. Back in Japan, he was stationed in Nemuro, Hokkaido — my mom’s hometown. They met, they married, and my two brothers and I were all born in Japan.

My dad was a handsome, dashing figure in his uniform, with dimples punctuating his impish grin. We grew up around U.S. military bases in Tokyo and later, in Iwakuni, south of Hiroshima, but we always lived off-base. That’s because after I was born, my father was told my grandfather was dying, and he came to live with us. Because my grandfather was a Japanese national, we couldn’t live on-base. My brother and I took the bus to base schools for elementary school in English and then played with our Japanese neighborhood pals in the afternoons.

My dad kept working for the Army as a civilian — he took a transfer to a Corps of Engineers job in northern Virginia in the 1960s, and we moved stateside. He remained in the U.S. military through the Army Reserve, and he would fly often to Japan to Camp Zama, or to San Diego every year, for Reserve duty. Only upon his death in 1992 did I find out that he had been instrumental in U.S.-Japan negotiations with Russia over the disputed islands, and he received a commendation from the Japanese government and a U.S. government peaceetime medal at his funeral.

He never talked about his military life, even though we grew up around bases and PXes for shopping, and were very familiar with the “look” of military bases everywhere, with their wide-open roads decorated with statues and military equipment like tanks and jets, tidy rows of low buildings (that all were painted institutional green inside) and barracks and schools. He never acted particularly “military” at home, except when we all made our beds like they were Army cots, and we always had dinner at 5:30 on the minute.

He never talked about the Army. He’d get nostalgic when he hung out with his military pals and they drank beers — lots of beers. But he never told us about his childhood experience in Japan until he was diagnosed with cancer, and I asked him what it was like to be at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. “I don’t know,” he said. “I wasn’t there.” That’s when he explained how his family had gone back to Japan the previous year.

**See VETERANS on page 9**

PHOTO COURTESY OF GIL ASAKAWA

Gil Asakawa's father, George, served in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict. Following the war, he continued to work for the Army as a civilian.

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Speech and Social Change

By Kenji Kuramitsu

JACL NY/SIC Representative

I recently returned from the JACL’s fall National Board meeting, held in our San Francisco office on Oct. 21. Some highlights from our time together were working through our strategic plan with Deb Ikeda and Bob Buscher, spending quality time with other young community leaders and meeting our organization’s new Masaoka and Inouye fellows.

One comment that P.C. Editorial Board Chair Gil Asakawa shared stuck with me: the *Pacific Citizen* is in many ways this organization’s organ. That is this forum is a living member of the wider JACL body, forming public connective tissue that helps us to actively structure our community discourse and values.

As Maya Angelou observed, the written and spoken word clings to us: “Words are things . . . they get on the walls. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, in your upholstery and your clothes — and finally into you.”

Words carry immense power to order and define reality. Through the enchantments of speech, we enact the powers of life and death upon one another, summoning either hope or great destruction. The battle for words and their meanings is why we write and speak with such fervor. It’s why the JACL produced a handbook called “Power of Words,” decrying “intemperate” terminology and other phrasing as “euphemistic and misleading vocabulary.” In addition to “enemy nonalien” and “relocation camp,” there may be other rhetoric we should bury.

For instance, we can challenge the idea that we are an “immigrant nation.” As many indigenous and black voices have pointed out, this is the “nastiest intergenerational squabble I’ve dealt with in the JACL. I have come from our lack of a shared vocabulary for social justice. One of the ways that we can bridge this experiential gap and enrich age-diverse conversation and shared youth/elder activism is through introducing and standardizing consistent language that other activist movements have long employed.

Language allows us to properly diagnose oppression or to mask it so that euphemism and gloss are used to diagnose oppression or to mask it so that euphemism and gloss are used to diagnose oppression or to mask it. Our language shapes our cultural narratives, and our public witness. One of the lessons I’ve learned during my tenure as National Youth Representative is that some of the nastiest intergenerational squabbles I’ve dealt with in the JACL have come from our lack of a shared vocabulary for social justice. One of the ways that we can bridge this experiential gap and enrich age-diverse conversation and shared youth/elder activism is through introducing and standardizing consistent language that other activist movements have long employed.

For instance, empty vernacular such as “racial tension” may be more effectively remedied by terms such as “white supremacy,” a more accurate descriptor of the central organizing principle in American public life.

When we get too far ahead of our own people, it can be easy to mistake one another for the enemy. We cannot afford to leave one another behind. Participating in an intensive antiracism or social justice competency training with your local chapter board, district council or other body may be one key way of narrowing this yawning gap. Do any groups offer trainings like this in your area? Are there better ways you can think of to further decolonization and critical consciousness in your JACL community?

Your conscious speech can be a tool to address the ongoing currents of violence and exclusion that pervade our society. You can start at your next chapter meeting, on social media or even by writing an article here in the *P.C.* Let’s use our voices and our actions in whatever spheres of influence we have access to in order to daily denounce the smokes of colonialism and capitalism.

Kenji Kuramitsu is the NY/SIC Youth Representative of the JACL.
JACL Identifies Strategic Plan as Means to Secure Organization’s Longevity

The National Board convenes in San Francisco to re-energize its efforts to show people why they should be a JACL member.

By P.C. Staff

A ction. It’s a term that the JACL has long been familiar with since its inception in 1929. Through the years, that terminology has been used to see the fruits of great moments in the organization’s history, from civil rights advocacy to re-energizing support for landmark court cases.

It’s a term that JACL still recognizes and fights for, clearly more than ever, as the organization was all about “action” at its latest National Board meeting, convened at its San Francisco headquarters from Oct. 21-22.

JACL convened to outline a “strategic plan” that opened up a broad discussion about the organization’s mission statement, its vision for the future and how to best ensure its sustainability in an ever-evolving world.

Chief among topics discussed were financial fundraising initiatives, membership goals and ways for all JACL chapters to work together along with the National Board to remain relevant.

“We have a lot of work to do with this organization to re-energize our grassroots network,” said Executive Director David Inoue. “One of my goals is that JACL is known for its political clout and its strength in that area. We are the only Asian American group that has chapter membership across the country. That’s something I really want to work on to get our chapters and members engaged in this process.”

And it is paying off. Inoue noted that JACL chapters have been working closely together on many important social issues, including grassroots advocacy on the DACA/Dream Act, the Tule Lake Fence Proposal and writing letters to support Fred T. Korematsu in New York City in 2018.

Inoue, who officially joined the organization in July, has been working to ensure that all of the organization’s moving parts are in concert with each other.

“We’re all in this for the same reason,” he said. “We love this organization and want it to move forward. We just need to figure out the best way on how to do that.”

As part of the organization’s strategic plan, JACL is working on a fundraising campaign to raise $1 million, as National Secretary-Treasurer Alan Nishi outlined during his report that although the organization’s YTD revenue (as of July 31) exceeds the budget by $217,000, fundraising revenue is still $49,000 below the forecasted amount, the P.C. is $44,000 less than budgeted, grants are $30,000 below budget and membership revenue was $11,000 less than budgeted.

Nishi noted that a general donation of $100,000 and a quest of $50,000, as well as high-performing investment income due to strong market conditions largely accounted for this surge.

“My target is to build at least 20 percent of the budget so that we can stash it away into our reserve funds,” he said. “It’s set up right now for any surplus to go into the reserve.”

Looking ahead, VP of General Operations Michelle Amano announced that next year’s National Convention will be held in Philadelphia from July 18-22.

“A big idea within this convention is to make sure that it shows that JACL is relevant, exists and you should be a part of it,” she said. Philadelphia Board Member Rob Boscher added that this convention, “through this event, we’re hoping to have larger connections with the AAP community. From a national perspective, we’re hoping to highlight our past and our future.”

Former Congressman Mike Honda Feted at San Jose

JACL Dinner

A capacity audience was on hand to help the San Jose JACL honor the life-long accomplishments of former U.S. Congressman Mike Honda at the chapter’s annual dinner at the Holiday Inn in San Jose, Calif., on Oct. 21.

In keeping with the evening’s informal atmosphere, guests were greeted with a life-size photo of Honda in his fishing gear, with directions for them to take “selfies” with the honoree.

Serving as the evening’s master of ceremonies was Mike Inouye, traffic anchor at NBC Bay Area, who also moderated a “Fireside Chat” as a vehicle for recounting Congressman Honda’s distinguished history and service to his community. In addition, a video created by student interns Jason and Josh Fujinaga highlighted comments from local citizens who voiced their appreciation to Honda. A commendation was also presented to Honda by Dave Cortese, president of the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors, followed by a joint toast by the Honorary Committee and special guests, including JACL Executive Director David Inoue, Union Bank’s Nancy Okubo, Yosh Uchida, Dr. Jerrold Hiura and Robert Honda, host of NBC Bay Area’s “Asian Pacific America,” who was also Honda’s former student.

Acknowledging Honda’s enjoyment of karaoke, the evening concluded with a musical performance by an ensemble of local musicians. Serving as the event’s co-chairs were Tom Oshidari and Sharon Uyeda; committee members included Reiko Iwamasa, Joyce Iwasaki, Leon Kimura, Iris Lou, Joyce Oyama and Steve Yamaguna. Sponsors included Hiura, Union Bank and California Retired Teachers Assn. — Mid-Peninsula Division 54.

Manzanar Set to Host Special Veterans Day Program

In 1943, 22-year-old Marine Pfc. Robert E. Borchers returned from fighting in the Pacific to learn that the U.S. had incarcerated 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. In October, he wrote a fiery letter in defense of Japanese Americans, saying, “We are fighting for freedom for all Americans regardless of their ancestry. Yes, we believe in those things for which we fight, and we believe in fighting until we get those inalienable rights, liberty and justice for all, no matter how long it takes to secure them.” His letter was published in Time magazine, angering some but lifting the spirits of many others — including Japanese Americans who read his words from behind barred wire.

Robert Borchers Jr. will share his late father’s incredible story in the West Theater at the Manzanar National Historic Site in Independence, Calif., on Nov. 11 at 2 p.m.

Also in attendance will be Ross Stone of the Big Pine Paiute Tribe, who will speak about local Native American veterans, and Manzanar Latino Heritage Intern Rochi Gomez, who will highlight Ralph Lazo, a Mexican Irish American who joined his Japanese American friends at Manzanar. Lazo lived in the camp until 1944, when he volunteered for the U.S. military.

“As we honor the many contributions by these special military veterans, I am reminded that veterans throughout our nation’s history have been protecting our freedoms and our constitution. I invite all veterans to join us and share your own, or a loved one’s story.” — Manzanar Superintendent Bernadette Johnson. “You are welcome to bring photos or other memorabilia to show.”

The program, which is free and open to the public, is co-sponsored by Manzanar’s nonprofit partner, the Manzanar History Assn., which is supporting Borchers’ travel from Wisconsin. MHA will also provide light refreshments following the program.

Marine Pfc. Robert Borchers during World War II

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT BORCHERS
HONORING AND PRESERVING THE MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN HEROES

Youth take part in the biannual ‘Spit & Polish’ event at the Japanese American Veteran’s monument in Little Tokyo.

Every spring and fall, a group of young people gathers together at the biannual ‘Spit & Polish’ event in Little Tokyo at the Japanese American Veteran’s Monument, located just outside of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center.

Hosted by the Japanese American Living Legacy, participants help clean up and maintain Memorial Court. The most recent cleanup occurred on Oct. 28.

Following is a reflective essay written by Kiley Murakami, who participated along with fellow youth from the Yonsei Basketball Assn. in the spring event on May 13, as well as the Oct. 28 cleanup.

Last spring, my friends and I had an opportunity to represent the Yonsei Basketball Association at the annual 2017 Spring ‘Spit & Polish’ event in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo.

At first, I just thought that we would be helping to clean an important Japanese American Veteran’s Monument outside of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. What transpired that day, however, would change the way we look at our lives.

Yonsei volunteers comprising of Kyle Eng, Kylee Ishibashi, Ty Nishikawa, Emily Sarashina, Katie Ikemoto, Micah Misumi, Brendan Ikeda, Alyssa Miyamoto, Nolan Tanaka, Tyler Minami, Hannah Tanita, Tyson Murata and I arrived at the Japanese American National War Memorial Court located next to the JACCC.

There, we met Ron Yamada, who helped to coordinate this event for us, and he introduced us to Ken Hayashi, a Vietnam War veteran, as well as other Japanese American veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Iraq War.

As we assembled in the memorial court, Hayashi handed each of us a picture and short biography of a Japanese American veteran whose name was on one of the granite walls. What was striking to us was how young all of the soldiers looked. All the soldiers were only a few years older then we were.

We found the names of the soldiers on the wall, and we stared at them. Some of us touched the names with our hands. It was a solemn moment — we realized that all of the names had faces and stories behind them. Now, cleaning the Memorial Court took on a deeper meaning.

We followed the direction of Javier from the JACCC, and we power-washed the walls and concrete floors. Then, we hand dried and polished the black-granite monument until it was shiny.

As I passed my cloth over the engraved names, I silently told the fallen veterans, “Everything is all clean now. Thank you for all that you have done, so that I can have the life that I have today.”

I am sure that my Yonsei friends and I were furiously polishing the black granite were having the same silent conversations with their parts of the memorial, too.

Next, we gathered at the JACCC for lunch and visitation with some very special Japanese American war veterans.

Jim Yamashita was the first to speak to us. He was a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in World War II. He spoke about some of the names on the Memorial Court wall, and one of the first casualties that he would remember forever. A young Japanese American soldier was hit by enemy fire and called out, “Okaasan, Okaasan,” as he lay wounded.

Mii Tanai, a Korean War veteran, spoke of fighting for a country that took his father away from the family for more than three years during WWII. He was also imprisoned along with his family in a concentration camp.

Don Suehiro, a Vietnam War veteran, told us that he understood that we were too young to fully know or understand about the Japanese American involvement in the wars or the camps, but we should. Yes, I thought. We definitely should.

As the meeting wrapped up, I noticed a sense of quiet appreciation on the faces of all the Yonsei players and our parents. It was an emotional and educational afternoon for all of us.

We were there to provide community service to the JACCC by cleaning the Memorial Court, but the special veterans that met with us that day gave us an invaluable lesson on a greater type of community service.

Jim Yamashita and the panel of veterans never complained about their hardships and the prejudice that they and their families had to endure. They never spoke about their personal accomplishments, but instead chose to tell us about the brave soldiers that they fought alongside with and those that lost their lives too early.

The veterans wanted to convey that they fought hard for their families and fought hard for their country, so that no one could ever say anything bad about the Japanese Americans. The Japanese American veterans left us a wonderful legacy, and all of us Yonsei players appreciate their humbleness, honor, courage, love for family and the United States of America.

Memorial Day has passed and now Veterans Day is coming up soon. I hope all of us will reflect on the way that the Japanese American veterans have touched our lives and have made it possible for us to have the lives that we have today.

Arigato, Arigato!

Kiley Murakami resides with her parents in La Palma, Calif. She is currently a freshman at Oxford Academy in Cypress, Calif. Along with balancing schoolwork with on-campus activities such as student government, clubs and choir, Murakami also is a Girl Scout and plays basketball. This past summer, she traveled to Shimane, Japan, as a member of the Yonsei Basketball Assn., an experience of a lifetime.
More than four decades have passed since the Fall of Saigon ended the United States’ military exploits in Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia. The Vietnam War was the first war America lost. That war, plus the present Cold War, continue to influence and shape the world’s political landscape. It is a reminder of our country’s values and ideals, and it is a testament to the sacrifices made by those who served.

Gravity does not exist here. You remain on the ground only because this whole country sucks. Even the birds here fly upside down because there’s nothing worth sitting on in the whole country.”

— Excerpted from “Wolfhound Samurai,” written by Vincent H. Okamoto

When the 10-part, 18-hour long “The Vietnam War” premiered in September, the first installment of the Ken Burns-Lynn Novik-directed epic documentary garnered the season’s highest Nielsen ratings for public broadcaster PBS.

Among the dozens of soldiers and civilians interviewed for the documentary was Vincent H. Okamoto, a former Army Ranger who served in the infantry as a second lieutenant in Vietnam circa 1968. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and would eventually be inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame.

A Los Angeles County Superior Court judge since 2002, Okamoto also authored “Wolfhound Samurai,” a novel inspired by the experiences of his men and his encounters while fighting in the jungles, swamps, tunnels and rice paddies of Vietnam.

While Okamoto’s profile was raised thanks to “The Vietnam War” documentary, there were other Japanese-Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during that war.

On a recent evening in Long Beach, Calif., the Pacific Citizen hosted an informal dinner at Number Nine — not ironically, a Vietnamese restaurant owned by Hideki “Dickie” Okahashi — to discuss with three Japanese American Vietnam War-era vets their experiences from decades ago, compare notes and talk story about their not-so-disparate experiences.

At 73, Art Ishii is the eldest amongst the trio of vets and the lone member of the Air Force, the military branch in which he served during the 1960s for five years — two years stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas, which he hated, and then three years stationed at Tachikawa Air Base in Japan, which he loved.

“I was so happy to get the orders to go to Tachikawa. Frankly, for the most part, the three years when I was over there were some of the best years of my life,” said Ishii.

But before that assignment, Ishii says he recalls two huge events that happened in his first year of active duty.

“I got out of boot camp and immediately there was the prospect of going to Vietnam because the Cuban Missile Crisis,” he said. “We’re on alert for like, 60, 90 days, because we were a Strategic Air Command base. Within a year, (President John F.) Kennedy gets assassinated. Boom. We go on red alert again, and it’s guard duty, B-52.

At the time for Ishii, Vietnam was the furthest thing from his mind. Although never stationed in Vietnam, he did visit while on TDY (temporary duty) during his stint at Tachikawa, which he saw go from a small, sleepy American military outpost to a buzzing pit stop for the thousands and thousands of U.S. troops on their way to Southeast Asia as America’s involvement in the war escalated.

... 2.7 million Americans would be sent to fight in Vietnam. More than 58,000 would be killed. Nearly 300,000 would be wounded. Over 2 million Vietnamese would die...

— Wolfhound Samurai

“Start hearing little ripples about places you’ve never heard of before — French Indochina, then you start hearing about Vietnam. By the time they joined, Vietnam was obvious,” Ishii said.

The “they” to whom Ishii was referring are David Miyoshi and Mike Nakayama, both 68, who each served in Vietnam as Marines, officer and enlisted, respectively — and both had experiences while in training of being singled out as Americans of Asian ancestry, including being called racial slurs that are no longer tolerated in today’s military.

While Nakayama recalls being “so traumatized” by the entire boot camp experience that when it happened, “it was just another incident” — but the time when a drill instructor called him up before at least 100 other recruits during a lecture calling an unsettling memory.

“Drill instructor looks at me and goes, ‘ Pvt. Nakayama, stand up.’ I was like, ‘Oh no, what did I do now?’

“I stood up, and he goes, ‘Turn around so everybody can see you.’ Nakayama continued. ‘So, I did a 360, and he goes, ‘All right everybody, this is what a gook looks like.

You remember this because this is the person that you need to kill when you get over there. You can sit down.

Nakayama remembers being worried, thinking, ‘Is this not cool because everyone’s going to have loaded weapons and if I look like the enemy, what’s going to keep them from doing something to me?’ Fortunately, Nakayama said that when he got to Vietnam, he was “singled out as an enemy by my fellow Marines.”

For Miyoshi, when he was in the 13-weeklong Officers Candidate School, an older, wizened NCO who had fought the Japanese at the Battle of Guadalcanal during WWII seemed to zero in on him.

“Sgt. Keyes was always just staring at me,” Miyoshi said.

Noting that there was a 30 percent failure rate for OCS, the challenges were not just physical — which Miyoshi says were quite severe — but also mental, emotional and psychological.

“They’re constantly messing with your head,” Miyoshi said. “That racial element — not only for Asians, but also for blacks and Latinos — this is the weakest point, they believe, for a human being, that sense of who you are and if they can attack that part and they can get this guy off balance, they can see what you’re made of.”

Miyoshi remembers, ironically enough, that on Dec. 7, 1966 — two weeks away from learning if he would graduate or not — Sgt. Keyes yelled, “Sgt. Miyoshi, get your...
When he was stationed in Vietnam, Miyoshi was part of a combined action platoon—and his first day, while amusing in retrospect, was not so funny at the time, as it underscored the potential hazards of being an American with an Asian face.

As it began to get dark, Miyoshi decided to use the officer’s shower. After removing his uniform and while showering, a loud siren went off.

“I was thinking, ‘This probably isn’t good,’” he said. He was so surprised because he was getting hit with a rocket attack. “All of a sudden, boom, boom, boom!”

Just then, a Marine sergeant was walking by. “He says, ‘Hey man, you forget about me?’” Miyoshi recalled. “I was just lying there. I said, ‘Are you going to do something for me?’”

“Hey Art, I want to talk to you. I just thought of something that I had.” Less amusing was what happened to Nakayama when he and his men were hit by a rocket.

“I was medevac’d to Da Nang,” he said. Nakayama had shrapnel in his head and face, blown-out eardrums were hit by a rocket attack.

Nakayama was retreated into the firefight. “I knew these guys and they were telling me, ‘Don’t go. Don’t do this,’” Nakayama continued. “And that just made me want to do it more. It was like challenging me. It was a mistake. It’s not easy for me to rationally explain. It was just that things were so bad in my day-to-day life with my friends. We were just in this downward spiral of fighting and taking drugs.”

It got to the point where Nakayama was walking by the streets and the gunshots were getting so close, he was going to either die on the streets or get out of there and change his life. Volunteering for Vietnam, however, turned out to be a leap out of the frying pan and into the firelight.

Ishii, who said he also joined the service to escape an environment that had him on a path toward a life of crime and violence, was one of those older guys who advised younger guys about what was going on in Vietnam.

“I was home on leave, maybe ’65 or ’67, and one guy, maybe a year, year and a half younger than me, came running up to me. He said, ‘Hey Art, I want to talk to you. I just got drafted.’”

“I remember telling him, ‘Have you considered going to Canada or joining the Coast Guard or the Reserves or something like that?’” he continued. “If you go in, you’re going to boot camp and you’re going ‘in country.’ That’s all there is to it. We talked for a while about what his options were, and I just remember we went on to other things.”

“I got back overseas and just a few months later, I got a letter that he had gone to Vietnam and within three weeks, he was killed. I always wondered, ‘Did I impress upon him deeply enough?’ His name’s right there on the [Memorial Court] wall. I go visit him every time I go into Little Tokyo,” Ishii concluded.
SHUTTERBUG SATO CAPTURES VETS’ ‘GO FOR BROKE SPIRIT’ IN NEW BOOK

‘Portraits of Courage’ was nearly 20 years in the making.

By George Yoshiro Johnston, Senior Editor, Digital & Social Media

I n 1999, Shane Sato began what seemed to be a pretty straightforward assignment: shoot portraits of as many still-living Japanese American World War II veterans as possible.

According to the preface of the photographer’s newly published coffee-table book “The Go for Broke Spirit,” it began when Christine Sato-Yamazaki and Diane Tanaka of the then-nascent Go For Broke National Education Center saw some of Sato’s work — portraits of ladies in a retirement home — and asked if he would take portraits of some veterans, which would be used to publicize the Go For Broke Foundation, back in the pre-Little Tokyo days when the GFBNEC had its offices in Torrance, Calif.

Over time, the initial concept — black-and-white photos of veterans of the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service wearing their iconic white Go For Broke/MIS short-sleeved shirts and garrison caps — evolved. In part, it was due to technological advances as photographic film gave way to digital and a decision to also shoot in color.

But Sato also realized he could have a more expansive, inclusive photographic vision that included Army uniforms, weapons and other props (like a camera for the late Susumu Ito, who famously brought an illicit 35mm Agfa with him as part of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion) — and with other veterans who also embodied the “Go for Broke” spirit.

As the years rolled by, Sato continued to accompany veterans on photo shoots overseas, meeting with them in Los Angeles, Hawaii and Seattle. “I was looking at the pages, and I didn’t know if I had the capability, time and funds to do that,” he said.

He had about 80 portrait portraits — but he needed some help.

Estate Robert Horsting. Sato had known him for many years, thanks to Horsting’s involvement with the GFBNEC’s Hanashi Oral History Program, which sought to record oral histories of Japanese American veterans of their experiences before they passed away.

Sato continued to work on the project, accompanying veterans on photo shoots. Horsting picked up much of the cost of the project, as well as the salary of a full-time staff member who accompanied the veterans. He also faced many challenges, including getting the project off the ground.

“‘We were lucky,’” Horsting said, “that these relationships, particularly the Hanashi Program, being in contact with the 100th Club in Hawaii, the 442nd Club in Hawaii, the Nisei Veterans Committee in Seattle — these different organizations and friends and family of Nisei veterans; these were all resources that we were able to contact and help us collect candid photos or even help us identify the guys.”

“Some veterans were comfortable with being photographed, there were some of them who were not, and it took Sato’s accumulated years of experience and powers of persuasion to get some veterans to let their guards down and be photographed. “A lot of these men were very hesitant to get their photos taken. They didn’t want to do it. So, sometimes I would go, and there would be a group of men but only a couple of volunteers,” said Sato. “It was very interesting and trying.”

If there was one vet Sato regrets not being able to photograph, it was Daniel K. Inouye. Despite repeated efforts, the star’s jostle never aligned due to the busy schedule of the late senator and Medal of Honor winner from Hawaii.

“The Go for Broke Spirit” should have been completed in June, but when Sato went to China to conduct a press check at the Shanghai-based printer, he found many challenges.

“When they looked at the pages, I don’t think they really cared necessarily about what I was looking at. They were just trying to get it done as fast as they could,” Sato said. “So, if there were some mistakes or something going on wrong, we definitely had to point it out and approve it. Let’s just say they were not happy that I was there.”

Fortunately, Sato was able to get the project back on track, with the initial shipment of books arriving in early October — just in time for all-important holiday sales — and the end result is a moving, beautiful and delightful 184-page hardcover collection of 98 portraits that is a testament to Sato’s skill and expertise at bringing out a moving, truly human side to each vet.

Sato said there are about 40 unpublished portraits and some veterans who are still alive who he would like to photograph for a second volume. It is, however, a race against the clock, with any still-living vets now in their 90s.

To accomplish this goal, Sato and his team have set up a Kickstarter program to raise necessary funds to cover the costs of, for example, a trip to the East Coast. (The Kickstarter URL is tinyurl.com/5g9r99.)

Sato and Horsting noted that all the vets who appear in the book — or their families, if they’ve passed away — are getting a gratis copy of “The Go for Broke Spirit.” For everyone else, however, the cover price is $45. The book can be purchased online (TheGoForBrokeSpirit.com), with tax, postage and handling boosting the price to $60.

Sato says he will also be in person to sell books Dec. 3 at the St. Francis Xavier Church Japanese Catholic Center’s (aka Maryknoll) Festival. Interested parties can also learn more at Facebook.com/goforbrokスピリット.

So, nearly 20 years after he began photographing his heroes, Sato is at the beginning stages of a new project: getting the book that collects those photos out to the public.

“I want people to remember what they did when they had everything against them,” Sato said.

“Hopefully, the next generation will be able to look at what these men did and talk about that.”

George Morihira

Don Seki

Barney Hajiro

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MLB >> continued from page 2

Asked if an “official letter” had been sent to Major League Baseball regarding the concerns of the organizations represented at the news conference, JANM COO Rick Nagoshi said letters would be sent to both the League and Gur­ied.

To read JACL National President Gary Mayeda’s full statement, visit www.jacl.org.

VETERANS >> continued from page 3

I’ve met other Japanese American veterans over the years, including many who, like my father-in-law, were stationed in Okinawa in the years before we got tangled in Vietnam. Or my wife’s uncle, who served during Viet­nam while protests raged at home. I was glad to see the “The Vietnam War” documentary series. It was great to see the episodes of Ken Burns’ landmark American history. The wisdom Ishii says he got out of his military service — having shrapnel in his body, missing limbs and with holes in their bodies big enough to see through. And maybe the next day you meet and greet some young kid on his way to Vietnam, and he can’t wait to kill a gook for God and Country,” Ishii said.

Nakayama recalls how he and his men were Japanese, about the same age, with half their faces blown off, missing limbs and with holes in their bodies big enough to see through.

“I felt like I had just come back from Mars,” he said, laughing at it now. “When I came back, I didn’t want to ride in a car. I felt so fucking vulnerable. I had to sit in the back, and I was like, Slow down, goddamn it! I’m going to fucking die here after surviving the fucking war!” In addition to PTSD, all three vets said they still feel residual anger.

“This is anger. There is anger of our country, because of politics, put young men through all of this,” Miyoshi said.

The wisdom Ishii says he got out of his military service in the 1960s during the time of the Vietnam War is more general.

“We have to just remain vigilant. We, as people of color and as Asian Americans, need to look out for ourselves. How do you do that? You have to be proactive, you have to be vigilant and know our history,” he said.

“I don’t have any kind of link or tie to China or North Korea. But to the general population of, say, whites, we’re one and the same. That’s why we were gooks. It didn’t matter that we were Japanese. Like Mike says, we need to stay out of other people’s business unless they really come knocking on our door and bombing our shores.”

As for Miyoshi, serving in the military and being stationed in Vietnam gave him a new­found gratefulness for being an American in America. “I really got to appreciate America for what it had when I came back,” he said. “I gained an appreciation for what we have here, albeit we have some pretty messed up politicians and things like that here. That is one of the sole benefits of going through Vietnam — appreciating America.”
help celebrate Nihonmachi Little Friends’ 42nd anniversary with this Sushi Social evening event that will feature a sushi tasting and meeting with local winemaker Jason Mikami of Mikami Vineyards. Guests will also be treated to a musical performance by the trio of Dr. Anthony Brown, Mark Izou and Masaru Koga, as well as a performance by NLF’s Little Friends. Sushi will be prepared by chefs from We Be Sushi. All proceeds from the evening will benefit NLF programs and its Building Fund.

Info: To make reservations, contact NLF at (415) 922-8898 or nlfchildcare@gmail.com.

**Hold These Truths** Reading
San Francisco, CA
Nov. 18; 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Cowell Theater
Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture
2 Marina Blvd.
Price: Matinee $25/$20 Seniors; Evening $30 General/35 VIP/$40 Before Nov. 1/$45 JACL Members
The San Francisco chapter of the JACL presents Jeannie Sakata’s “Hold These Truths” featuring Greg Watanabe, which brings to life the courageous actions of Gordon Hirabayashi, who challenged the government’s orders to forcibly remove and mass incarcerate hundreds of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast during WWII. Following the evening performance and a panel discussion moderated by SFJACL’s John Hayashi featuring Robert Borchers Jr. will share the story of his father, Marine Pfc. Robert B. Borchers, who in 1943 wrote a letter that was published in Time magazine in defense of Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. Ross Miyake of the Big Pinel Plateau Tribe will also speak about local Native American veterans, and Manzanar Latino Heritage Intern Rocio Gomez will highlight Ralph Lazo, a Mexican Irish American who joined his Japanese American friends in Manzanar. Call: (760) 878-2194, ext. 3310 or visit www.nps.gov/manz.

**PNW**
Youth Leadership Seminar Series
“A Primer on s10(G)’s for Young Professionals”
Seattle, WA
Nov. 18; 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Keiro Rehab Center
Garden and Kinschi Rooms
1601 E. Yesler Way
Price: Free but registration required
In this second JACL Youth Leadership seminar presented by the Seattle JACL, it will look at the basics of a 501(c)3 organization and the do’s and don’ts of political advocacy. Wayfind, an organization of volunteer lawyers, will give an overview of topics essential for anyone aspiring to lead an NPO. Funding provided by the Robert B. Borchers Trust and the Joyce Foundation.

**MDC**
Kodome Matsunaga
42nd Birthday Bash
Seattle, WA
Nov. 11; 4-6 p.m.
Japanese American Service Committee
1431 Clark St.
Price: Free
Join JASC at its annual Holiday Dedication and Kodome Matsunaga’s 42nd Birthday Bash. This event features photographs taken by Ansel Adams at Manzanar and a selection of photos from the WU George and Frank C. Hirahara photo collection of Heart Mountain. Info: Visit https://fdlibRARY.org/ or exhibitions or call (800) FDR.-VISIT.
MEMORIAM

Asato, Anne, 89, Torrance, CA, Oct. 9; she was predeceased by her husband, Noboru Asato; she is survived by her daughter, Linda Asato; she is also survived by her sisters-in-law, a brother-in-law, nieces and a nephew: gc: 2.

Eguchi, Michiko, 93, Gardena, CA, Oct. 6; she is survived by her children, Sheila (Ronald) Yamaguchi, Byron (Christine), Wayne (Karen), Dean (Margaret) and Gregory (Ann Marie) Eguchi; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives: gc: 8; ggc: 7.

Hashizume, Tom Yoshio, 87, Portland, OR, June 26; during WWI, his family were incarcerated at the Minidoka WRA Center in ID; he was predeceased by his brother, George, and sister, Arlene; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Ichikawa, Dana Kimi, 56, Tustin, CA, Oct. 14; she was predeceased by her husband, Russell Ichikawa, and her father, Tom Tomita; she is survived by her son, Ethan; mother, Tomoko Tomita; broth­er, David (Sharon) Tomita; 2 neph­ews; and other relatives and friends.

Fukui, Charles Masao, 99, Norwalk, CA, Oct. 14; during WWII, he served in the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team; he is survived by his children, Charlotte (Donald) Beier, Ronald (Barbara) and Raymond (Evelyn) Fukui; gc: 8.

Kaji, Teruo Bruce, 91, Torrance, CA, Oct. 28; during WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at the Manzanar WRA Center in CA and he later served in the Army’s MIS; he was also a principal in the founding of the Japanese American National Museum; he was predeceased by his wife, Frances; he is survived by their children, Jonathan (Lisa), Mike Hamil (Brad) and Trey (Marguerita); gc: 8.

Ishima, Amy Masako, 92, Sacramento, CA, Oct. 11; WWII, she and her family were incarcerated at the Tule Lake WRA Center in CA; she is survived by her children, Ellen (Duane) Plankett and Raymond; gc: 3.

Kuwata, Lillian, 100, Glendora, CA, Oct. 1; she is survived by her children, Carolee and Kent (Janet); siblings, Kawaye, Sadako and Ray; gc: 3.

Kawamoto, Takeshi, 84, Loomis, CA, Oct. 17; he is survived by his wife, June; children, Carolee and Kent (Janet); siblings, Kawaye, Sadako and Ray; gc: 3.

Kuwata, Lillian, 100, Glendora, CA, Oct. 1; she is survived by her children, Carolee and Kent (Janet); siblings, Kawaye, Sadako and Ray; gc: 3.

Maeshiro, Kenyu, 97, Los Angeles, CA, Oct. 7; he was predeceased by his wife, Mae Maeshiro, and son, Jack Maeshiro; he is survived by his children, Sandy (Ken) Jung and Jamie Maeshiro; sister, Florence Yoneko Carr; daughter-in-law, Susan Fujimoto; gc: 4.

Masayasu Bill Taura diee peacefully on Oct. 1 at age 91. Proceeded in death by his parents, Kiku and Masajiro Taura, and brothers, Masayuki and Joe, Devoted husband of Martha Masako Taura (Sugimoto), beloved father of Jill Kiku Taura (Takamasa Onose), Richard Bill Taura and Constance Mie Tsuchiya (Todd Touchiya), Doting grandfaather to Joseph, Jacob and Ian Taura and Kyle Touchiya. Visitaton was held on Oct. 26 and memorial service will be held at Midwest Buddhist Temple, 435 W. Menomonee, Chicago IL 60614.
Recognizing Veterans’ Entrepreneurial Spirit

By Ron Mori

November is always a month that reminds me of all the things that I need to be thankful for in my life. I’m especially thankful on Veterans Day, when so many men and women have served our country and so many have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. Of course, the Japanese American community has its rich history of Nisei veterans who fought in World War II, and we will always honor their service.

On Oct. 25, I attended the Filipino and Filipino American Congressional Gold Medal presentation ceremony in Washington, D.C., which was attended by more than 380 family members of veterans who fought in WWII. It was a moving and inspiring ceremony to see 21 living Filip-Am veterans finally receive the highest civilian honor for their service to our country.

I know so many heartfelt stories from family members that came to honor current and fallen heroes from WWII. A common American story was how an uncle or father came back from service overseas and started a business or worked for a couple years and then decided to start a business. “It was a different time in America,” said one Filipino American Vet, who is 94 years old.

One thing these veterans had in common with others who would open small businesses was their tenacious never-give-up spirit that helped them survive the ups and downs in starting a new business. While November is widely known as a time our country honors and recognizes the contributions veterans have made to our country, it’s also a moment we acknowledge the impact entrepreneurs have made to our economy.

In addition to Veterans Day, November is National Entrepreneur Month (as well as National Family Caregiver Month). It’s a time we can also acknowledge our veterans who took the leap of faith to open small businesses across the country.

While becoming an entrepreneur is challenging and rewarding all at the same time, tenacity and a leap of faith are sometimes required. As noted, today is a different time than 75 years or even just 10 years ago in America.

Perhaps, now is the time. If you’re a veteran, or anyone who’s interested in getting your business started but don’t know where or how to get started, here are a few things to consider: Make a plan, and attend workshops or webinars.

To get started, register now (www.aarp.org/startabusiness) for the free AARP From Passion to Profit, Part 2: Veteran Entrepreneurship Webinar on Nov. 9 at 3 p.m. EST. If you miss it, you can view the Webinar in our archives along with other entrepreneurship tools (www.aarp.org/50plusentrepreneurship). Or, attend an event during SBA Veterans Small Business Week to learn more about becoming an entrepreneur.

Then, talk to an expert. I’m sure you know someone who has experienced the highs and lows of being a business owner. Reach out and request time to chat. Here you can ask about his or her experiences and how he or she got started, particularly if he or she is in your desired industry. Ask the expert about the challenges and successes of being a business owner and being one’s own boss. From there, you can determine if starting a business is right for you.

Get a mentor. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has great resource partners such as SCORE, a group of retired business executives, who offer mentors in business or interested in starting a business one-on-one assistance to help you get and stay on track. SCORE mentors are located in most cities throughout the U.S. and have a proven track record helping entrepreneurs be successful.

Get funded, and don’t feel like you’re alone. Funding is one of the most common roadblocks to getting your business off the ground. There are a number of nontraditional ways to get funded through entities such as Kiva, Funda and Community Development Funding (CDF) looking to help your business build and grow. Consider seeking an angel investor(s) and/or fundraising through GoFundMe or other online “crowd-funding” sites to get on people interested in supporting your business. Don’t let failure stop you. Studies show that many businesses fail in the first five years. This may not apply to you, so don’t let that discourage you.

Launching a small business takes risk and fortitude to see your dream become a reality. Be committed to moving from idea to “open for business.” Seek out others’ small businesses. The challenges and rewards of self-employment are partly due to the support of fellow business owners. Take a moment on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 25, to support small businesses. Remember, their survival depends on you!

Ron Mori is the co-president of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community states and national affairs—multicultural leadership for AARP.

In honor of their military service during World War II, 21 living Fil-Am veterans received the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation’s highest civilian honor, on Oct. 25.

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