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CELEBRATING 97 Years



Brothers Albert "Oscar" Tsukayama *(left)* and Conrad "Joe" Tsukayama from Kailua, Hawaii, served in the 442nd RCT and 100th Battalion, respectively. Both experienced combat during World War II.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE TSUKAYAMA FAMILY

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Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Visitor Center Dedication Honors a 25-Year-Plus Vision.

By Sheldon Arakaki, JACL National President

On a crisp fall Oct. 11 morning in Washington on Bainbridge Island, 12 survivors of America's concentration camps cut the ribbon to the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Visitor Center exactly one year after construction commenced on the $6.5-million, 1,545-square-foot space.

The grand opening event welcomed more than 200 attendees, including U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, Bainbridge Island Mayor Clarence Moriwaki, 23rd Legislative District Rep. Greg Nance and Bainbridge Island Memorial Executive Director Ellen Sato Faust, to the new building, which completes the final phase of the memorial project and stands as a permanent space for education and reflection to remember the 227 Japanese Americans who were, on March 30, 1942, the first in the nation to be forcibly removed from their homes on the West Coast following the issuance of Executive Order 9066.

The Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Assn., the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community, the Bainbridge Island History Museum, the Bainbridge Island School District and the National Park Service all contributed to the interpretive work for this permanent indoor space. The visitor center with its paved plaza and amphitheater will hold film screenings, educational activities, seminars, interpretative exhibits and historic artifacts to further the memorial's purpose to share the story of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American community.

"It's an honor to join you in commemorating the opening of the new Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Visitor Center, a new addition to our National Historic Sites, which is part of our National Park Service, to tell a story Americans should never forget," said Cantwell at the dedication ceremony. "We're here today to acknowledge the significance of the very ground that we stand on and the role it plays in American history. A difficult and shameful chapter, but that is exactly why this site is so important. It serves to acknowledge and memorialize the wrongs committed here in the name of national security and to help educate future generations. . . . It will stand as an enduring symbol of what should never happen again."

Today, the visitor center's exhibit floor space tells the story of Dr. Frank Kitamoto, the visionary; Fumiko Hayashida, the iconic image of the 120,000 Japanese Americans incarcerated; and Walt and Milly Woodard, the voices of resistance and the *Bainbridge Review* newspaper publishers who editorialized against the mass incarceration. The Woodards were also the Edison Uno Civil Rights Award recipients at the 1986 JACL National Convention held in Chicago.



BIJAEMA signage



The visitor center exhibit depicts the life story of Fumiko Hayashida, who along with her husband, Saburo, and their two children were forcibly removed from Bainbridge Island in 1942 following the issuance of Executive Order 9066.

PHOTOS: LIZ DUNBAR/PUYALLUP VALLEY JACL

In the post-redress 1990s, Kitamoto told the story of Japanese American incarceration at schools, churches and conferences with a focus on the Bainbridge Islanders. His educational outreach eventually led to an interfaith group suggesting a memorial to tell the story with its important messages of strength, healing and forgiveness.

What started as an EPA Superfund Site then became a proposed public park with a parallel BIJAC and the North Kitsap/Bainbridge Interfaith Council memorial site plan for the western edge of the park in 2001.

Several months later on March 30, 2002, a plaque commemorating the 60th anniversary of the forced removal was placed near the departure site. A total of $8 million was then raised to acquire land for the memorial. And every year as more funds were raised, elements of the vision were turned into reality — a pavilion, a memorial wall, the rebuilt departure ferry dock and more up to the visitor center's October dedication.

One important milestone in the history of the memorial site was the testimony of then-95-year-old Hayashida before the U.S. Congress in 2006 supporting a bill that would eventually lead to the inclusion of the memorial as part of the Minidoka National Historic Site in 2008. BIJAEMA was also formed that year to better solicit funds for the project.

BIJAEMA's Faust stated that this memorial project was a result of imagination, cooperation and good luck. She also cited the outcome as an example of true partnerships between institutions and the community. BIJAEMA worked with all levels of government, from the federal government to the state legislature to the city council to the school district and the parks department.

Faust also cited the support received from other nonprofits such as the Bainbridge Community Foundation and museums. The $6.5 million was raised from government grants, foundations and private donors with the Legacy Families creating a matching fund to secure the final financing of the visitor center.

She also thanked longtime project champion U.S. Sen. Cantwell, who secured $767,000 in federal funds and personally took the meetings in her D.C. office.

The memorial is located by the Eagledale Ferry Dock, where the 227 members of the Japanese American community began their forcible removal starting with what is now a 35-minute ferry ride to downtown Seattle and then a five-day train ride to Manzanar in California. About a year later, most were transferred to Minidoka in Idaho. Those who were away at school or work were not allowed to return after Executive Order 9066 and are part of the total 276 forcibly removed Bainbridge Island individuals. ■



Twelve survivors of America's concentration camps during World War II and their descendants cut the official ribbon signaling the grand opening of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Visitor Center on Oct. 11.

PHOTO: NANCY TREDER/BIJAEMA

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New Documentary on How Nisei Soldiers Planted *'Seeds of Aloha'*

Test screenings will be held throughout California in November for this new film on the 100th Infantry Battalion.

By Gwen Muranaka, P.C. Contributor

With live music and a lot of Aloha spirit, the team behind a new documentary on the 100th Infantry Battalion will be showing a rough cut of the film at locations in Japanese American communities throughout California in November, starting at the San Jose Buddhist Church on Nov. 8 and concluding at the Venice Japanese Community Center on Nov. 29.

"The 100th: Seeds of Aloha" follows the journey of the men of the famed "One Puka Puka" from Hawaii to the battlefields of Italy and France and explores the ways their heroism and sacrifice continues to resonate today. The film also highlights the formation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion. The film's production team interviewed more than 40 individuals and also utilize archival interviews, photos and letters from the soldiers.

"My goal was to make the soldiers real, so that you know them not as statistics," explained director Steve Sue.

The result thus far is a comprehensive look at the battalion, which descendants of the 100th say has often been overlooked in the retelling of the wartime experience. Sue's documentary strives to capture the Japanese American soldiers' stories in new ways for new audiences.

"Everybody's been pleasantly surprised that the story is deeper than anybody could have ever imagined," said Sue. "We brought to light many things that I think all of the units are extremely proud of, and most importantly, you know, every single one of those units were really the epitome of sacrifice, honor and valor."

Sue is hoping as many people as possible view the film before a final cut is completed early next year. He notes that many of the veterans and their descendants reside in California, particularly those of the 442nd RCT. Sue founded the nonprofit ID8 Studios in 2012, and "Seeds of Aloha" is the third documentary in a series exploring the meaning of Aloha. His earlier films highlighted the foods of Hawaii in "Ono, Foods of Aloha" and the shaka hand sign in "Shaka, A Story of Aloha."

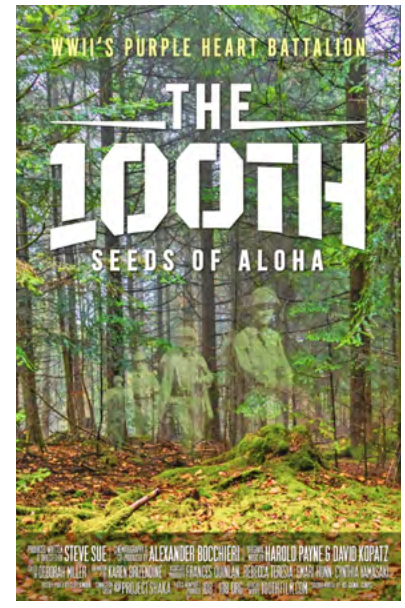
"I thought there was a really strong thread of how the 100th/442nd used the concept of Aloha throughout the theaters of battle. And so, you know, the question is can Aloha survive a World War," Sue said.



Nora De Bievre is interviewed by Steve Sue in Salerno, Italy.



Steve Sue is filmed by Kristle Backe and Patrick Quinlan at Mantignano, Italy. PHOTOS: CLIFF KIMURA



Promotional poster for "The 100th: Seeds of Aloha"

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ID8



One of the countless European monuments dedicated to the 100th/442nd RCT units of World War II



Dignitaries with Steve Sue *(center)* at the dedication of Daniel Inouye Piazza, San Terenzo Monte, Italy

PHOTOS: CLIFF KIMURA

Last June, in a hangar at the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum in Honolulu, the film crew unveiled a massive 6,000-square-foot map and filmed as descendants placed round medallions with the names of their loved ones on sites where they fought and, in some cases, perished.

The map, three months in the making, provides the framing device for the story, following the men on a 2,000-mile journey through the early days of the war and the battles of Monte Cassino in Italy, where they earned the nickname the "Purple Heart Battalion." "Seeds of Aloha" also explores how the Nisei returned home and became leaders in Hawaiian society.

Kathi Hayashi, president of the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans (Club 100), placed a medallion near the city of Rome with the name of her late father, Tokuichi "Toku" Hayashi. He served as a cook in Able Company in the 100th and was among the first to enter Rome after the Germans fled in June 1944. After the war, Toku Hayashi returned to Aiea, where he served as a trustee for the Aiea United Methodist and participated in the Kuakini Hospital Hawaii Heart program, a decades-long program that has led to medical breakthroughs in good and bad cholesterol and Alzheimer's disease.

Hayashi said her father is an example of the ways the Nisei led lives of purpose after the war. A retired senior vp from Verizon, she sees the film as a case study on how the Nisei embodied leadership by overcoming tremendous obstacles. The 100 Club provided initial seed money for the film, and she said she hopes to use it to educate the public.

Under Kathi Hayashi's leadership, Club 100 launched Legacy2Action in 2022, which challenges students at local high schools to identify problems facing Hawaii and create a service project utilizing Japanese values such as *gaman* and *gambare*.

"I told Steve that to me, this is more like a Harvard Business Review study about leadership, about overcoming obstacles, about end result thinking and setting affirmations," she said. "This Nisei story is something that we need to share with our keiki, with our children, not just in Hawaii, but for the world, about believing in yourself.

"I truly believe it's something that can help everybody, whether you're a student or you're in a company," Kathi Hayashi continued. "Having to work through conflict, and they worked as a team. They would succeed even though you have a temporary setback. They're going to figure out and get it done, no matter what. And unfortunately, they lost a lot of lives to make that happen."

Filmmakers of "Seeds of Aloha" spent three weeks in France and Italy last year, following in the footsteps of the 100th/442nd. Led by the tour group Nisei Legacy Tours (*nisei-legacy-tours.com*) *(see related article in this issue),* the filmmakers climbed steep terrain where the Nisei soldiers fought and made connections in the small villages where they are still celebrated as heroes. They were there for the dedication of the Daniel Inouye Piazza in the town of San Terenzo Monte in Italy and later participated in a celebration at neighboring Tendola.

"There's just a lot of fondness for what these guys did. We kind of felt like rock stars going to all these towns, and you know the mayors would come out, and the whole towns would come out and party with us. They'd sing to us, and we'd sing back to them," Sue said.

Musicians Harold Payne and Dave Kopatz traveled with the film crew to Europe and performed and were often composing music for the score as they went along. They will be playing songs from the soundtrack during the California screenings. Brian Yamamoto, who provides vocals for two tracks, will also be joining at select locations.

Payne grew up in Gardena, Calif., alongside members of the 442nd, who never discussed what they did during WWII. Sue contacted Payne after seeing a video for his song "Quiet Heroes," a tribute to the 100th/442nd.

In instances, the songwriters would compose on the spot to specific emotional beats. Payne said "Eyes of a Friend" was written to convey the disbelief of the liberated townspeople that their rescuers were Japanese.

"One of the things that was so touching was the reverence that the local people in these towns held for the Japanese American soldiers because these guys came in and saved them," he said.

For Payne, the Nisei story has been with him for most of his life. He recalled going to neighbor Harry Komatsu's Texaco gas station when he was 18 or 19 and saying he hadn't seen Komatsu in a long time. In fact,

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Kimmy Tanaka gives a tour of Fort Snelling's MISLS while holding a photo album featuring soldiers who trained there during WWII.

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA



The Post Headquarters Building at historic Fort Snelling.

SECRETS IN THE SNOW

Throughout World War II, soldiers at the MIS Language School at Fort Snelling helped to turn their heritage into a tool for democracy while helping to forge Nisei history.



Building 57 at historic Fort Snelling, which was used by the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service Language School during WWII to train thousands of U.S. Army personnel, many of them Japanese Americans, in Japanese language skills for military intelligence work in the Pacific Theater.

By Gil Asakawa, P.C. Contributor

When people think of Japanese Americans fighting during World War II, the "Go For Broke" Nisei of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, comprised of the 100th Battalion from Hawaii and bolstered by recruits from the mainland concentration camps, come to mind. They fought in Europe and remain today the most-heralded combat group in U.S. military history for its size and length of service. But there's another group of Nisei who served during WWII but didn't get the recognition and medals (or Hollywood movies) of the 442nd: the soldiers of the Military Intelligence Service, who served across the globe in the Pacific and across Asia and in Japan.

If you wander around the old stone barracks of Fort Snelling in Minneapolis, across the highway from the city's airport, it's hard to picture it as the birthplace of America's Cold War and Pacific Theater intelligence operations. But back during WWII, this sprawling Minnesota outpost became an unlikely hub for a band of young Japanese Americans whose language skills — and absolute grit — helped shorten the war in the Pacific and change the course of history.

"Military Intelligence Service Language School. It's a mouthful," explained Kimmy Tanaka, senior director of Inclusion, Outreach and Community Engagement for the Minnesota Historical Society. Earlier this summer during an Asian American Journalists Assn. conference in Minneapolis, she led a walking tour of conventiongoers at Fort Snelling.

"It was started in California, in San Francisco at the Presidio, about a month before Pearl Harbor, with like 50 or 60 students in a class. It started because there was an Army officer, Kai Rasmussen, who had spent some time in Japan and knew that Japanese was somewhat of a complicated language. He knew also that potentially the war with Japan would be imminent, and that we would need people who could speak the language to translate documents, be interpreters and [help] the war effort."

Rasmussen's goal was to recruit and train soldiers, including Nisei, for the program. But then Pearl Harbor was attacked, followed by the issuance of Executive Order 9066, which resulted in more than 125,000 people of Japanese ancestry being forcibly removed from the West Coast and placed into concentration camps. A large amount of the soldiers, about a third of them, were recruited from the incarceration centers while their family members were imprisoned behind barbed-wire fences.

"So, after Pearl Harbor, the commandant of the school started looking for a new location," Tanaka explained, "but at the time, a lot of the different areas that he met with did not want Japanese people, Japanese American people, in their state. So, he came to the Midwest, met Gov. Harold Stassen, the governor of Minnesota at the time, who was like, 'You're welcome here.'"

The MISLS was first placed at Camp Savage about 20 miles west of Minneapolis, but because it was attracting so many recruits, it was moved to Fort Snelling, a military base closer to the city that had been originally built decades before the Civil War.

Even as the federal government was herding more than 125,000 people of Japanese descent behind the barbed wire of American concentration camps, the War Department was quietly recruiting those exact same citizens to master Japanese military terminology, translate captured documents and interrogate prisoners of war. Another program at the University of Colorado in Boulder trained mostly Caucasian Naval recruits in Japanese.

For the Nisei soldiers at Fort Snelling, it's a story defined by incredible contradictions, deep patriotism under fire and a quiet cultural revolution that played out in classrooms heated by sputtering coal stoves in the dead of a Minnesota winter.

From Crissy Field to the Frozen Plains of Minnesota

The roots of the school date back to November 1941, just weeks before Pearl Harbor, when the U.S. military brass realized they knew next to nothing about the Japanese Imperial Army. Tucked away in an airplane hangar at Crissy Field in San Francisco, the Fourth Army Intelligence School opened its doors to a tiny pilot class of 60 students — mostly Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans), alongside a handful of Caucasians; after the start of the war, the school was re-established at Camp Savage.

By August 1944, the operation had moved to Fort Snelling, taking over a massive footprint that could accommodate thousands of eager, sleep-deprived soldiers.

Life at Fort Snelling was no walk in the park. The students faced an academic and physical military boot camp designed to compress years of complex language study into an agonizingly tight six-month window. They tackled thousands of kanji characters, military field manuals, interrogation techniques and specialized jargon. They pulled all-nighters under flickering incandescent bulbs while sub-zero blizzards howled outside the old brick barracks.

Yet, beneath the grueling pace ran a fierce, shared sense of purpose. Many of these young men had families locked up behind barbed wire. Day after day, like the soldiers fighting in Europe with the 500th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Nisei at the MISLS chose to serve the country that had imprisoned their loved ones.

The Unsung Heroes of the Pacific War

Once they graduated, MIS graduates were thrust straight into the brutal island-hopping campaigns of the Pacific Theater: Burma, Guadalcanal, Okinawa, the Philippines, Saipan and eventually occupied Japan. Attached to Marine, Army and Australian units, these Nisei intelligence soldiers operated in small, high-risk teams.

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A view of Montecassino Abbey and Castle Hill, which the 100th Battalion fought to secure. PHOTO: DEAN TSUKAYAMA



A stained-glass window commissioned by Nisei soldiers in Montecassino Abbey, featuring the 100th Infantry Battalion insignia
PHOTO: HAYLEY TSUKAYAMA

NEVER A *'FORGOTTEN CAMPAIGN'*

In Italy, the history of the heroic WWII actions of the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team still lives on.

By Hayley Tsukayama

(Editor's Note: Following is author Hayley Tsukayama's account of her Sept. 2-10 participation in the Nisei Legacy Tour, which focused on the historical exploits of the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team's combat experiences in Italy during World War II. Tsukayama's grandfather and great-uncle were members, respectively, of the 442nd and 100th Battalion.)



Pax Corner at Montecassino Abbey is the only part of the structure that survived a bombing attack in the Battle of Monte Cassino. PHOTO: HAYLEY TSUKAYAMA



The Nisei Legacy tour group celebrates together at a local winery. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NORA DE BIEVRE



Members of the Nisei Legacy Tour place a wreath to commemorate the first-ever "National World War II Italian Campaign Remembrance Day" on Sept. 9, 2026.

The first solemn notes of "Taps" fill the air. It's Sept. 9 in Anzio, Italy, and we're at the Sicily-Rome cemetery of the American Battlefield Memorial Commission. We're ending a weeklong tour tracing the steps of the 100th Battalion in this solemn place, where Italian umbrella pines shade the paths between rows of stark-white marble headstones.

We're told as we arrive that our timing is perfect. Today is the first-ever "National World War II Italian Campaign Remembrance Day." Could we participate in a small ceremony?

The weather has been sweltering for days. Even the next three notes of the trumpet seem to hang in the languid heat. But as two members of our group lay a wreath in the central courtyard, I get goosebumps.

The 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team did some of their fiercest, most-decorated fighting in Italy. When they landed there in 1943, the roughly 1,300 men of the 100th Battalion joined the massive Fifth Army that swept up the peninsula toward Rome. The cemetery we visited honors nearly 11,000 American soldiers who died or went missing during the World War II battles between Sicily and Rome. Yet, the remembrance day we celebrated in Anzio was only officially designated by Congress last year, 80 years after the war ended.

These men liberated Rome, the first Axis capital freed from Nazi occupation, on June 4, 1944. They were then quickly overshadowed by the D-Day landings two days later. Because of this, the fighting in Italy is sometimes called the "Forgotten Campaign" or the "Forgotten Theater."

That's one reason we came on this Italian tour run by Nora De Bievre of Nisei Legacy Tours: to learn about an overlooked piece of our own histories. An atypical Italian vacation for tourists, we walked with our family ghosts from Salerno to Cassino to Anzio toward Rome. Along the way, we met the Italians keeping their stories alive.

Especially in its early days, the 100th Battalion — formed first and with some experienced troops — was thought of as a "big brother" battalion to the 442nd RCT. Our family reflects this relationship. My grandfather, Albert "Oscar" Tsukayama, was a 442nd RCT medic. His oldest brother, my great-uncle Conrad "Joe" Tsukayama, was already in the Army when America entered the war and served in the 100th Battalion. Both spent part of the war in Italy.

I had already researched where my grandfather had fought in Italy with the 442nd RCT. For Conrad, though, I relied mostly on family lore. I knew he had fought in the fierce Battle of Monte Cassino, a fact I could not reconcile with the loving man I remembered. I also knew he was the first one in the 100th to be injured and the first to go "reverse AWOL," or discharging himself from the hospital to go back to the battlefield. That was easier to picture from what I knew of him, but I had never looked into the story.

On Day Four, we drove through the mountain town of Montemarano. We came from Paestum, near where the 100th Battalion landed on the beaches. The troops then marched and drove about 60 miles to this mountain town, climbing in rain and mud to nearly 2,700 feet above sea level. They pursued Germans who were methodically retreating toward their own defense lines. It wasn't a particularly easy drive for us on paved roads with an experienced driver in 2026. To walk it during the war, carrying packs and constantly looking for German traps, must have been terrifying.

It was somewhere along that road, Nora told us, that a mine explosion caught my Great-Uncle Conrad and injured his face.

I looked around the small mountain town that, even now, seemed a bit isolated. I thought about Uncle Conrad and the man he was. Suddenly, I could see him deciding that taking mine shrapnel to the face was less important than bunking in the mud with the men he'd trained with. They were not in Kailua, Hawaii, anymore; they had to stick together. Even in idyllic sunshine rather than muddy terror, being where he'd been made the family stories real in a new way.

That happened countless times during the tour. Most people on the tour had some connection to the 100th. Their fathers, grandfathers and uncles had, in many cases, shared similarly vague outlines of stories but rarely in depth.

In some ways, one does have to see it to understand. The stories take on new depth when one understands the force of the rivers and the harshness of the terrain. At the engrossing Venafro Winterline Museum, run by two friends born after the war but raised in its aftermath, we saw the gear that soldiers carried and drove the ridges and passes they walked. We looked up to where German guns once perched on mountaintops and imagined being told to take those positions as death rained from the sky.

Later in the tour, we went to the spot where Lt. Young Oak Kim and PFC Irving Akahoshi, whose daughter was on the tour, both crawled 250 yards across an open field to take a German machine-gun nest. Let me tell you: Thinking about crawling that far is very different than seeing how far it really is.

Apparently the Germans, Winterline Museum curator Luciano told us, were surprised about the men who looked like their allies, but were not fighting for the Allies. They were even more surprised that the Japanese Americans particularly didn't seem to duck or stop when they were shot at. They kept moving.

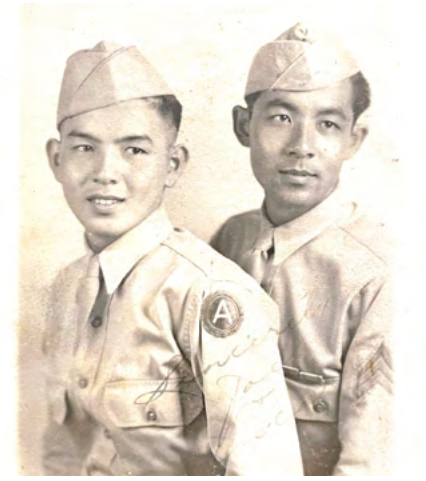
The Italians, however, did not focus on the Japanese faces under the helmets but rather their American uniforms. To the locals, they were just Americans.

This was one thing I found refreshing about the history of the war as told by Italians. While they celebrated the Nisei soldiers and graciously sought to share those stories with us, they also put these men in a broader context.

At Montecassino Abbey, we learned about not only the Nisei and other Americans, but also the British, French and Canadian troops who fought there. We learned about Polish soldiers who fought for a country many never returned to, due to the post-war rise of Communism.

At the chapel there, the Nisei soldiers commissioned one of many stained-glass windows from different units. In Cassino itself, our hotel owner and local historian Pino Valente created a walking tour of the areas that includes a stop on Nisei soldiers.

That felt fitting. My grandfather did not like being called a hero, a common theme in veteran interviews. He and many other Nisei veterans wanted to celebrate their own history, of course, but also focus on their part in the broader war. Out of the American frame, I could see the whole picture more clearly.



Brothers Albert "Oscar" Tsukayama *(left)* and Conrad "Joe" Tsukayama from Kailua, Hawaii, served in the 442nd RCT and 100th Battalion, respectively. Both experienced combat during World War II.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE TSUKAYAMA FAMILY

Many Italians see the Japanese Americans as they, and even sometimes we today, were not seen at home — as just Americans. Early in the tour, as we listened to Nora talk about where the 100th Battalion landed on the beaches, an elderly woman approached us.

"Americani?" she asked. Yes, we said. A torrent of rapid Neapolitan Italian later, she told us how American soldiers saved her when she was 6 years old. Now in her 80s, Maria still feels deep gratitude for all Americans and had a hug for every member of the group who wanted one.

It was the first of many times I found myself in awe of the relationship the Italians we met hold with the history of their country. From the Winterline Museum curators Renato Dolcigno and Luciano Bucci, to Pino in Cassino, to cemetery staff in Anzio, people who were born long after the war are engaged deeply with their history. They have not forgotten and are determined none of us will either.

In contrast, a common theme among tour participants was the older generation's reluctance to talk about the war at all. That is understandable, given that it is often painful. Still, the silence takes the reality of it away from future generations. It was notable to me that I was the only Yonsei on the tour, accompanying my parents.

In Italy, the history lives. It comes alive for us when we see it together, and we can say to each other what we can no longer say to those who are gone.

As we left the Anzio ceremony to place flags on the graves of 100th Battalion officers, I felt gratitude, grief and regret. We lost Grandpa in 2013; Conrad passed when I was in high school. While they were alive, I didn't understand. Now, I can no longer ask.

I wished I could talk to them. In some ways, though, I felt like I just had. ■

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2026 TOUR SCHEDULE.

CHRISTMAS MARKET CANADA HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Dec 1-7
Vancouver City Tour, Grouse Mountain Skyride, Shipyards Christmas Market,
Ferry to Victoria Island, Butchart Gardens, High Tea at Fairmont Empress Hotel,
Victoria Christmas Market & Fair, Van Dusen Festival of Lights.

2027 TOUR SCHEDULE (Preview)

FANTASTIC FLORIDA & KEYS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Mar 11-18
Miami, Ft Lauderdale, Everglades National Park, Homestead,
Key West, Marathon Key, Hemingway Home.
JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Apr 4-15
Tokyo, Niigata, Sado Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Kyoto.
JAPAN HOLIDAY CRUISE . . . . **Rescheduled to 2028** . . . . . Apr 8–25
Tokyo, Yokohama, Amaezaki, Osaka, Kochi, Fukuoka, Sokcho(S.Korea),
Kanazawa, Sakata, Aomori, Otaru, Hakodate, Yokohama. Holland America Cruise.
NATIONAL PARKS & CANYONS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Apr 25-30
Las Vegas, Hoover Dam, Mob Museum, Grand Canyon West & Skywalk,
Mesquite, Bryce Canyon, St. George, Zion National Park.
TULIP FESTIVAL & GREAT LAKES HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . May 6-14
Chicago, Grand Rapids, Holland Tulip Festival, Mackinac Island, Green Bay, Milwaukee.
KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . May 11-24
Seoul, Bullet Train to Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Nami Island, DMZ, few K-Drama sites.
GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . .Jun 20-30
Tokyo, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experience.
HOKKAIDO SUMMER HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . July 11-23
Furano Asahikawa, Wakkanai, Rishiri Island, Sapporo, Noboribetsu,
Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
DANUBE RIVER CRUISE (Carol Hida). . . . . Aug 22-Sep 4
Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Weissenkirchen, Linz, Passau,
Vilshofen, Prague. AmaWaterways Cruise Line.
JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE TOUR TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 14-27
Kyushu, Shikoku.
OKINAWA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Nov 12-22
Okinawa, Ishigaki Island, Iriomote Island, Taketomi Island.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

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Ernest or Carol Hida

GO FOR BROKE HOLDS 25TH EVENING OF ALOHA

The annual gala also marks the 37th year since its founding as a new complex progresses.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

After 37 years of existence as an organization, the Go for Broke National Education Center used its 25th Evening of Aloha gala to not just raise funds but also reflect on its raison d'etre, as well as its past, present and future during its annual gala on Oct. 3 at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites in downtown Los Angeles.

The past was represented 81 years, one month and 19 days after V-J Day (Aug. 15, 1945) by the in-person presence of three centenarians who represented the "Go for Broke" spirit with their service to the nation during World War II: Tokuji "Toke" Yoshihashi, 103, who served in the Army's 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team; Mary Tamura, 102, who served in the U.S. Armed Forces Cadet Nurses Corps program; and Ed Nakamura, 101, who served in the Army's Military Intelligence Service and the 11th Airborne Division, 188th Parachute Division. The trio were introduced by GFBNEC board member Nikki Kodama.

Host Sierra Katow introduced three individuals who represented GFBNEC's past and whose stories were included in one of the evening's many videos: Chip Mamiya, who had served as a GFBNEC board member for many decades; and two former GFBNEC executive directors, Christine Sato-Yamazaki (1997-2010) and Don Nose (2010-2016), both of whom were absent. Of his father, Chip Mamiya told the audience that his father, Yoshio "Buddy" Mamiya, and Young Oak Kim were among GFBNEC's original founders. "They were best friends, so I've been involved with Go for Broke since inception," he said.

"Over the years, I've met so many wonderful people through Go for Broke, and I've had the privilege of hearing stories of courage, sacrifice, loyalty and perseverance. Those stories are really the heart of our organization. … I know I'm standing on the shoulders of many people who gave their time, their energy, their money and their hearts to this organization."

George Tanaka, chairman of the GFBNEC board of directors, reported on the present by introducing the board's members: Denise Kennedy, Kodama, Mylissa Magallanes, Jeff Maloney, Kendra Motayasu, Dan Nishkawa, David Ono, Marshall Ozawa, Rick Shinto, Kimberly Tachiki and the evening's chef, Roy Yamaguchi.

Tanaka also recognized the special guests in the audience, including El Camino Community College District Board of Trustees VP Tricia Murakawa; Los Angeles Community College District Trustee Kelsey Iino; city of Alhambra councilmember Maloney; and Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles Kosei Murota.

Tanaka then introduced Kanani Kalama Hula Studio's Cayleen Nakamura, who performed to "Aloha Aku, Aloha Mai." Her performance preceded an in-memoriam video tribute.

Among those representing GFBNEC's future were Go for Broke Torchbearer Kiyomi Takemoto, who, before introducing another video and pausing for dinner, noted how she was "incredibly impressed by the wide array of programming that we conduct all across our nation."

Following dinner, a team effort by Yamaguchi, Westin Bonaventure Chef Andreas Nieto and King's Hawaiian Bakery and Restaurant pastry chef Heather Campbell, board member and former national chair of the Torchbearers Magallanes introduced the Living Nisei veteran photo tribute, a tradition that began six years ago and featured 22 veterans from nine states, ranging in age from 98 to 106.

Next onstage was Melanie Ramirez, the Los Angeles Regional Torchbearer representative for GFBNEC's local torchbearer program, who introduced board member and KABC-7 news anchor Ono, who in years past served as the host for Evening of Aloha but this night was on hand to reintroduce vocalist Lauren Hanako Kinkade, who earlier in the program sang the "Star Spangled Banner," had helped Ono with his original production of "Defining Courage" and was present to sing "When I'm Gone."

"I want you to listen to the lyrics," Ono told the audience, who noted that Kinkade had sang it in "Defining Courage" because he thought it was "the perfect song to remember the Nisei soldier."

Next onstage, representing GFBNEC's future, specifically its Go for Broke Plaza, aka First Street North (*see Oct. 31, 2025, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/7susk2*), were GFBNEC board members Motoyasu and Maloney to introduce a video on the $170 million project and its 248 affordable housing units, storefronts and businesses.

Motoyasu said, "After two and a half years of construction, Go for Broke National Education Center will have a forever home. Ladies and gentlemen, check out what we're about to move into."

After the video, Maloney said, "We're about to have a permanent home, a home right next to the monument. It's really what our veterans dreamed of, and I want to take this moment to thank our friends and partners at the Little Tokyo Service Center for helping this dream come true." He then introduced GFBNEC President and CEO Mitch Maki.

"Wow! What an evening we have covered so many things," said Maki. "Creating an organization like Go for Broke National Education Center is not easy. Building a monument, a dramatic monument, bringing our organization to downtown Los Angeles, to the Little Tokyo District, having national programming that goes across the nation, telling our story to Americans across the country and, of course, now a new building, a new home.

"I hope that you all are as excited as we are about our future. I hope that you see all of the opportunities that now lie before us," concluded Maki.

Also participating in the 25th Evening of Aloha were Koshin Taiko; Kanani Kalama Hula Studio; and the Redondo Beach High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC Honor Guard, which performed the posting and retiring of the flags.

(The 25th Evening of Aloha can be viewed on YouTube at tinyurl.com/5n965n6x. A list of the event's sponsors can be viewed at tinyurl.com/bdfjndjx.)

The Redondo Beach High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC Honor Guard and Lauren Kinkade





Recognized for their WWII military service were *(from left)* Tokuji Yoshihashi, Mary Tamura and Ed Nakamura.



Pictured *(clockwise from top left)* are Kiyomi Takemoto, Chip Mamiya, George Tanaka, Cayleen Nakamura, Mitch Maki and David Ono.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

WILLIAM S. CHEN'S SKY-HIGH ARMY CAREER

Retired major general served from the Cuban Missile Crisis to the first Gulf War.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

Missiles and rockets.

It would not be inaccurate to say those two words bookended the 32-yearlong Army career of William S. Chen, who retired in 1993 as a major general, making him one of the highest-ranking Chinese Americans to have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Very early after receiving his commission, he served at a North American Air Defense Command center, the Washington-Baltimore Army Air Defense Command Post, at the time of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, one of the tensest periods of the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

That was preceded, famously, by the U.S.S.R.'s launch of Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite to orbit Earth, launched into space by rocket, which coincided with when Chen was an ROTC cadet.

"Today, you would Google missiles, rockets, etc. I went to the library. I wanted to learn as much as I could about Army missiles and rockets, and that's how I learned," said Chen. "And I said to myself, 'When I go on active duty, I want to be in Army missiles and rockets.'" Decades later, by the end of his career, missiles were again part of his active-duty status quo.

"As a major general, I commanded the U.S. Army Missile Command, 1989-92, and that was during the first Persian Gulf War," the third-generation Chinese American told those gathered to hear him speak on Sept. 13 as part of the Asian Pacific American Military Oral History Series, organized by military historian Montgomery Hom and held at the Museum of the Republic of Vietnam in Garden Grove, Calif.

That Chen's appearance took place at the museum, which is largely dedicated to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, was fitting since he served two tours in the country. It was during his second assignment, which he volunteered for, when his career took off, thanks to an accelerated promotion he received after working with Hmong military leader Maj. Gen. Vang Pao. "During the bulk of the Vietnam War, he and the Hmong soldiers conducted the majority of operations against the Viet Minh and the North Vietnamese," Chen said.

"I was in the part that dealt with military assistance and advising the Royal Lao Army," Chen said of his second tour of duty. "We had a special project at that time, at a location called Long Tieng." Located in Northern Laos, Long Tieng has been described as a secret military base for the Hmong army, operated by the CIA.

"It was largely a construction project," Chen said, "and everything had to go up by air because the roads were insecure. So, we used Air America C-130s to actually bring up the construction equipment, the ground crews, and then once they completed their construction project, then bring up all the ammunition."

The foundation for Chen's trajectory into the upper reaches of the U.S. military is all the more remarkable because of the societal obstacles and institutional racism faced — and overcome — by his forebears. His China-born grandfather immigrated here in 1878 and worked on the second transcontinental railroad.

"Afterwards, all the workers were released. He migrated to Georgia, North Carolina, then settled in Ohio, and so Ohio was where my father was born," he said. Unfortunately, Chen's father became an orphan at 15.

Chen noted that his father had to work his way through high school and college, graduating in 1932 with an aeronautical engineering degree. "That was the middle of the Depression, and he couldn't find a job working for an aircraft company for two reasons. One is the Depression, and second, at that time, unfortunately, aircraft companies were not hiring Chinese Americans, even those that were American-born."

Using his passion for aviation as fuel, he saved up enough money to take flying lessons. "In New York at Roosevelt Field, Long Island, that's where he got his pilot's license, and then in 1936, where he got his commercial pilot's license. Then, he went to China in 1936 and began a career as a commercial airline pilot," Chen said of his father. Three years later, he was born in Shanghai.

As someone interested in rockets and missiles would surely know, what goes up must come down. Chen would learn that firsthand during his first tour in Vietnam, from 1966-67, when a helicopter he was in crashed. "I was assigned to the Military Assistance Command, and I was an adviser to a Vietnamese infantry division, the Fifth Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam, and this was located at Phu Loi, part of Binh Duong Province."

The crash happened when he was assigned to help set up a communications radio relay at the top of a mountain. "We went up by U.S. helicopter, and that crashed. There were a number killed," he said, noting that afterward he was covered in blood — but it was not his. Although he survived, it took until the next day for the effect of what happened to sink in. He was in another helicopter, just sitting on the ground, when the sound of the rotors and the smell of the helicopter literally left him shaking.

In addition to missiles and rockets, another keen interest of Chen's is leadership. "I can tell you that I was not born a natural-born leader," he said, describing himself as reserved and reticent when he was growing up. "I had a tendency not to speak up, and so I recognized that I needed change, and so that was part of my leadership journey."

It was this self-recognition that would eventually lead him to achieving the rank of major general. "We can get educated on how to be a leader, but it takes hard work," he said. "It takes dedication, practice, simulation, and so it's something that you can develop, but you have to consciously self-assess." Chen has written a book on leadership: "Blend In, Stand Out," which is scheduled to be published next July.

Sometimes that recognition can come from interesting places. "After I retired, I was in the Twin Cities in Minnesota, where there's also a large Hmong population, and we had an event there. It was to honor Hmong Americans who were in the U.S. Armed Forces." Not only was Chen a speaker, so, too, was Maj. Gen. Vang. "People treated him like a king," Chen noted, adding that it was the first time he had seen him since he was in Laos.

"I was a major in Laos at that time," Chen recalled, "and he was glad to hear that I got promoted to major general." ■



Retired Maj. Gen. Bill Chen *(left)* answers a question posed by Montgomery Hom during the Asian Pacific American Military Oral History Series event held on Sept. 13 in Garden Grove, Calif.



Onlookers view a display at the Museum of the Republic of Vietnam.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



ALOHA » continued from page 4



Pictured *(from left)* are Steve Sue, Sen. Glenn Wakai, Dr. Taka Manago and Kathi Hayashi as they kick off "The 100th: Seeds of Aloha" production at the Hawaii State Capitol.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ID8

Komatsu was in France for a celebration for the 442nd. Payne asked why the French were honoring his neighbor.

"He goes, 'Well, we chased the Nazis, we liberated their town from the Nazis,'" Payne said, recalling his conversation. "I went, 'What?' I didn't even know that Japanese American soldiers had been there, and I didn't know about the camps. It turned out that I had three of these guys on my block. They were already kind of role models to me as human beings."

"Seeds of Aloha" also interviewed military leaders, who provide insight into what made the 100th such a special battalion. Among those include Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hara, Maj. Gen. Suzanne Vares-Lum, Lt. Col. Don Seta, Col. Walter Ozawa, Terry Shima of the 442nd and Takashi Manago, who served as a staff sergeant with the 100th.

The film was made in conjunction with the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. While "Seeds of Aloha" avoids the politics of this current moment in American history, it's an important, necessary story to tell of soldiers that did not fit the stereotype of what a soldier is supposed to look like and yet became the most-decorated unit in military history.

"What I want to underscore and have people come away with is good values. You know, kind of the 'Greatest Generation's' set of values, which weren't about greed. They weren't about getting ahead. They certainly wanted to get ahead and provide for their families, but I don't think they were ever greedy in that sense, and they would always be looking out for others," said Sue.

"I never knew what the term 'Greatest Generation' really meant until I made this picture."

Upcoming screenings will feature live music and a Q & A with Producer/Director Steve Sue. Visit 100thfilm.org for event details and registration.

FREE TEST SCREENINGS FOR *'THE 100TH: SEEDS OF ALOHA'* IN CALIFORNIA

Reservations are required for the following dates and locations.

Nov. 8: San Jose Buddhist Church, 5-8 p.m.
Nov. 10: San Francisco Public Library (Main Branch), 1-4 p.m.
Nov. 12: San Francisco Public Library (Western Addition, Japantown), Noon-2 p.m.
Nov. 13: San Francisco Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Nor Cal, 6-9 p.m.
Nov. 14: Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 1-5 p.m.
Nov 15: J-SEI in Emeryville, 1-4 p.m.
Nov 21: Faith Methodist Church in Torrance, 1-4 p.m.
Nov 29: Venice Japanese Community Center, 1-5 p.m.

SECRETS » continued from page 5

"Altogether, there were 6,000 Nisei Japanese Americans who graduated from the school, and then they were deployed overseas to the Pacific Theater and Japan during the occupation. There was also a class of women, and there was a class of Chinese Americans," Tanaka added.

The Chinese were recruited in part because the Army brass couldn't tell the difference between Japanese and Chinese and even then, thought if someone could speak Chinese, it must be similar to Japanese. That was wrong, but some of the Chinese soldiers were sent to the China-Burma India Theater (think the 1957 movie "The Bridge on the River Kwai").

In the end, the Niseis' contributions can't be overstated. They translated enemy battle plans, diaries and maps plucked from dead soldiers, giving Allied commanders unprecedented foresight into Japanese troop movements and ambush sites. During interrogations, their cultural fluency and empathetic approach coaxed valuable intelligence out of terrified prisoners of war who expected to be executed.

Because of their faces and heritage, they carried a heavy psychological burden: They were hunted not just by the enemy but also occasionally faced accidental friendly fire from American troops who failed to recognize their uniform in the heat of battle.

Beyond military intelligence, the soldiers of the MIS played a critical humanitarian role by broadcasting surrender appeals that saved the lives of countless civilians trapped in crossfires (especially in Okinawa, the last battle bastion of the war), and later, also helped draft the blueprint for post-war democratic reforms during the Allied occupation of Japan.

When the guns finally fell silent in August 1945, the MIS mission didn't end. It merely shifted geography. Hundreds of language school alumni were rushed to Tokyo and across the shattered Japanese archipelago to serve as the critical cultural and linguistic bridge for the Allied occupation under Gen. Douglas MacArthur. The Nisei officers alongside civilian linguists helped interrogate suspected war criminals, repatriate millions of displaced military personnel and civilians and scour seized Imperial archives.

Perhaps most remarkably, they found themselves on the front lines of rebuilding a nation. MIS veterans assisted in drafting the post-war Japanese constitution, translating democratic legal frameworks, observing early democratic elections and managing food and medical relief distribution. For many of these young American soldiers, walking the streets of Tokyo or ancestral family prefectures offered a bittersweet homecoming, a chance to reconnect with extended relatives and witness firsthand the rebirth of a democratic Japan from the ashes of total war.

MacArthur's intelligence chief, Gen. Charles Willoughby, famously estimated that the work of the MIS shortened the war in the Pacific by as much as two years and saved hundreds of thousands of American and Japanese lives. Yet, because much of their work was classified as top secret for decades, these soldiers returned home to a country that largely forgot their sacrifices. Their stories were buried under layers of wartime secrecy and the collective amnesia surrounding the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans.

A Legacy Carved in Stone and Memory

When the war wound down in 1946, the language school at Fort Snelling wiped its chalkboards one final time and headed west to the Presidio of Monterey, eventually evolving into the Defense Language Institute. But its spiritual home remains rooted in the Minnesota soil where thousands of Nisei soldiers learned to turn their heritage into a tool for democracy. ■



An exhibit inside Fort Snelling of Toshio Abe, an MIS soldier who "gathered vital information behind enemy lines in India and Burma" while his mother and brother were incarcerated in an American concentration camp in Arizona in 1942. PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

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News Briefs

CAPAC Survey: Most Japanese Americans View President 'Unfavorably'
In an Oct. 27 statement, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus said 69 percent of surveyed Japanese American voters viewed President Donald Trump unfavorably, adding that "Japanese Americans are still waiting for him to deliver on his promises of lower costs and greater economic opportunities." The results were from a recent poll conducted of likely Asian American Pacific Islander voters in advance of the Nov. 3 elections. According to CAPAC, the top five most important issues for Japanese Americans were the economy (89 percent), the cost of living (82 percent), health care (68 percent), foreign policy (58 percent) and election fairness (57 percent). CAPAC also found "66 percent of Japanese Americans are not confident that the federal government will act in the best interest of the public's health, and 72 percent of Japanese Americans think the government is spending too little on health care." CAPAC also criticized the president with regard to Executive Order 14253, aka "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," noting the "administration posted signs at the Manzanar and Minidoka National Historic Sites where Japanese Americans were unjustly incarcerated during World War II, encouraging guests to report any information considered critical of American history."

Duly Noted: Sean Metzger Is New UCLA Asian American Studies Dept. Chair
The 2026 Guggenheim Fellow, 2026 Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard fellowship recipient and since 2012, professor at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, received the new title in late September. ¶ The government of Japan on Oct. 23 presented its Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays, to Dr. Takashi Hoshizaki.

— P.C. Staff

O.C. Black Chamber Recognizes Ken Inouye

Former JACL national president awarded for distinguished service.

Longtime civil rights advocate Kenneth K. Inouye was honored with the Black Chamber of Commerce of Orange County's 2026 Distinguished Service Award at its 42nd Annual Awards Banquet. The sold-out event took place Oct. 1 at the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa.

Inouye, who served as the Japanese American Citizens League national president from 2004-06, was recognized for his decades of public service, advocacy and efforts to strengthen relationships among Orange County's diverse communities. The award was presented by Alison Edwards, CEO of Groundswell, formerly OC Human Relations.

A prominent leader in the Japanese American community, Inouye co-founded the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) in 1997. He also served for 23 years on the Orange County Human Relations Commission, including as chair, advocating for civil rights, social justice and greater understanding among communities.

The Black Chamber praised Inouye's longstanding partnership with the organization and his contributions to African American, minority business and veterans communities.

The recognition adds to Inouye's distinguished record of service, including his 2019 Nisei Week Pioneer Spirit Award, and highlights his enduring commitment to building bridges across racial and cultural lines throughout Southern California.

— SELANOCO Orange County JACL



Alison Edwards, CEO of Groundswell, presents Kenneth Inouye with the Black Chamber of Commerce of Orange County's 2026 Distinguished Service Award.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SELANOCO ORANGE COUNTY JACL/ERIC KAWAGUCHI

Portland Community Celebrates Its Nikkei Elders



Pictured *(front row, from left)* are Frank Nakata, Richard Noburo Endow, Tom Fujii, Shu Konno, Seichi Konno, Aya Fujii, Taka Mizote and Alice Watanabe and *(back row, from left)* Terry and Linda Nishikawa, Lynn Fuchigami Parks, Tiffany Koyama Lane, Rev. Vonn and Karen Magnin.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PNW JACL

The Greater Portland Japanese American Community celebrated its elders at the DoubleTree Hotel near the Lloyd Center in Portland on Oct. 10.

Sponsored annually by the Gresham-Troutdale JACL, the Japanese Ancestral Society, Portland JACL, the Japanese American Museum of Oregon and the Veleda Club, the luncheon highlighted the lives of the elders who have reached their 95th birthday.

For 2026, there were 30 honorees, with eight attending in person.

Honorees able to attend in person were Richard Noburo Endow (95), Aya Fujii (99), Tom Fujii (99), Seichi Konno (101), Shu Konno (99), Taka Mizote (102), Frank Nakata (100) and Alice Watanabe (101).

The program included words before and after the meal, a congratulatory message from Portland City Councilor Tiffany Koyama Lane and was highlighted by a presentation that honored each of the 30 elders with a capsule of their life and contributions to the Greater Portland Community.

The names of the elders honored who were unable to attend in person were Linnea Foss (104), Amy Furumasu (98), Jim Hasegawa (95) Kimi Iwamoto (104) Fude Kagawa (98) Misako Kodama (99) Jean Kozawa (97) Mishie Matsumoto (96), Tsuyako Monas (98) Ella Morisato (98), George Morishige (104), Setsuko Morishige (97), Janet Nagata (97), Sam Naito (104), Harry Nakamura (96), Etsuko Osaki (95), Bertha Saiget (101), Sachiko Kawara Simmons (95), Kazue Sumoge (100), Satoru Terada (99), Chiyoko Watanabe (99) and Vivian Wong (99).

A special acknowledgment was delivered for those elders who had passed since last year's event.

This included Bessie Asai, Paul Ase, Dan Hinatsu, Michiko Kiyokawa, Afton Nozaki, Hideo Ouchida, Robert Ouchida, Henry "Shig" Sakamoto, Dorothy Sato and Jeanne Shioshi.

The tentative date for next year's luncheon has been set for Oct. 23.

— PNW JACL

In Memoriam

(Note: Boldfaced names in the PDF version of this are active hyperlinks.)

Arakaki, Jordan, 40, Honolulu, HI, June 1.

Bauza, Eric, 46, Los Angeles, CA, Oct. 25.

Hayata, Tomoaki 'Tomo,' 96, Huntington Beach, CA, Sept. 6.



Imai, Dorothy, 97, Seattle, WA, Sept. 15.

Jaberg, Elaine Noriko, 81, Whittier, CA, Oct. 12.

Katayama, Kenneth Kenji, 72, Monterey Park, CA, July 31.

Kawahara, Larry Hiroshi, 79, Gardena, CA, Oct. 10.



Miya, Kerry Alan, 76, Layton, UT, Aug 25.

Nakazono, Sayoko, 80, Monrovia, CA, Sept. 9.

Takehara, Yohko, 80, Los Angeles, CA, Aug. 14.

Yoshitani, Dean Masaaki, 57, Alhambra, CA, Sept. 30. ■

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'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. **Tributes** honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of $25/column inch.

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GLA JACL Represent at Torrance No Kings Day

Richard Kato and Mitchell Matsumura participate at the Oct. 17 No Kings rally at Torrance City Hall in California.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MITCHELL MATSUMURA

Book Review: *'Proven in Blood'*

The World War II fiction novel remembers the Nisei segregated Army unit the 442nd RCT.

By Skylar Paxton

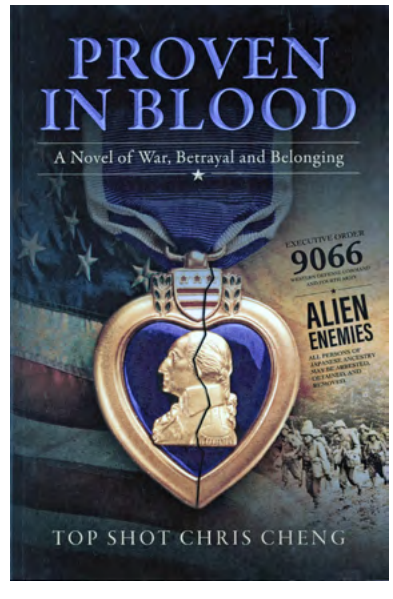
When Chris Cheng heard the news that 84-year-old Thai man Vicha Ratanapakdee was fatally assaulted just 10 minutes away from his San Francisco home in 2021, he kept asking himself two questions: "What is my place in all of this, and what can I do to make my community, my family and other Asian Americans safer?"

Cheng's response was writing and publishing his historical World War II fiction novel "Proven in Blood: A Novel of War, Betrayal and Belonging." The story follows Nisei Daniel Tanaka, who goes from being a UC Berkeley baseball student to volunteering for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated Japanese American Army unit, while his family is forcibly incarcerated during WWII.

The combat unit, which was combined with the 100th Infantry Battalion (nicknamed the "Purple Heart Battalion" and comprised mostly of Nisei from Hawaii), is renowned as the most-decorated unit in U.S. military history for its size and length of service. Cheng writes about the complex dynamics the soldiers experience through the eyes of Tanaka and how he navigates his changing world with courage, patriotism and strength.

"I wrote 'Proven in Blood' as a response to the anti-Asian hate that our country saw at the beginning of the (Covid) pandemic," Cheng said in an interview with the *Pacific Citizen*. "It is my hope that 'Proven in Blood' will be a positive force for the Asian American community in helping us be strong and feel powerful."

Following the death of Ratanapakdee, Cheng went on to showcase his marksmanship skills on the TBS talent show "Go-Big Show." While mostly known for being a champion on History Channel's "Top Shot" and as a weapons expert, Cheng wanted to incorporate his Asian American identity on TBS and researched possible connections to the weapons he wanted to use. That's when he did a deep dive into the history of the 100th/442nd that would then lead to six years of research and writing "Proven in Blood."



'Proven in Blood' follows the fictional character Daniel Tanaka as he enlists in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during WWII.

"My proudest Asian American moment was learning about the men of the 100th and the 442," Cheng said. "And learning about them inspired and galvanized me in a way that I've not experienced ever in my life."

Alongside oral interviews and historical documents, research for "Proven in Blood" included two trips to Italy and France, where Cheng toured the battlefields that served as the fighting grounds between the 100th/442nd soldiers and enemy forces. Both trips coincided with the 80th and 81st anniversaries of the liberations of 1944 and included descendants of the Nisei soldiers and local residents commemorating the famed battalion.

He also met Leslie Sakato, daughter of soldier and Medal of Honor recipient George Sakato, who served in the 442nd. Cheng said he was moved by her father's story and her decision to come to Europe to see where her father fought. George Sakato, who had risked his life by making a one-man rush and advancing his platoon across enemy lines on hill 617 in France, became someone Cheng constantly thought about while writing about his protagonist.

"Many of [the Nisei soldiers] also lost their lives fighting for our country," Cheng said. "That was very moving for me to be witness to her experience."

While Cheng is a professional marksman and is familiar with military concepts, writing about the battle scenes authentically was a challenge.

"I'm a native Californian, and I only learned about the 100th and 442 six years ago, and I was just shocked, right?" Cheng said. "I'm half-Japanese and half-Chinese, grew up in California where a lot of the 442 came from, yet I had never even heard of a segregated Nisei unit."

It's why Cheng finds this history to be so important to tell, especially as an Asian American. Despite not having ever written a fiction novel before, with his first book "Shoot to Win" being a nonfiction shooting guidebook, Cheng said he wanted to write about the history through a vehicle that would help "every American know who these men are."

Cheng also said he hopes the story can become adapted into a movie or TV series where he can help platform Japanese American actors and make the "Purple Heart Battalion" history more known to the general public.

"Asian Americans have always been a part of the American story," Cheng said. "'Proven in Blood' is one of these key examples of how we rose above the racism and the bigotry when our country distrusted us, and the Nisei soldiers were the best of what America had to offer."

"Proven in Blood: A Novel of War, Betrayal and Belonging" is available to purchase on Amazon at https://tinyurl.com/4bz82mfu.



