



Mission

The mission of the Nisei Veterans Legacy is to preserve and perpetuate the legacy of Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) who served in the U.S. armed forces in World War II: the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion. Through education and outreach, the NVL is committed to ensuring that future generations learn Hawaii's story of the Nisei soldier legacy. These stories include the incredible sacrifices made by the AJA during the course of World War II as well as their significant contributions to Hawaii's post war society. It is hoped that a greater sense of civic responsibility will transpire by promoting community awareness of the values of good citizenship, such as loyalty, gratitude and humility, exemplified by the Nisei veterans.

Leadership

Directors:

Wesley Deguchi
Lawrence Enomoto
Carole Hayashino
Lynn Heirakuji
Phyllis Hironaka
Lloyd Kitaoka
Janice Trubitt
Warren Yamamoto

Advisors:

Warren Haruki
Irene Hirano
Dr. Fujio Matsuda
Gary Okuda
Barbara Tanabe
Ted Tsukiyama
Barbara Watanabe



2018 Joint Memorial Service

The 13th annual Joint Memorial Service sponsored by the Nisei Veterans Legacy (NVL) was held on Sunday, September 30, 2018 at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. Attendees at this event included veterans from the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Military Intelligence Service, Gov. David Ige, ADM Philip Davidson (Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command), Lt. Gov. Doug Chin, Mayor Kirk Caldwell and Japanese Consul General Koichi Ito.

The theme of this year's event, "Remember Their Sacrifice by Challenging Ourselves," resonated in the words of our keynote speaker Tom Coffman, author of books about Hawaii's social and political development. Coffman reflected on the history and contributions of the Nisei soldiers in helping to advance a modern, integrated society.

This multigenerational ceremony involved participation by JROTC cadets from Punahou, Roosevelt and Kapolei and UH Air Force ROTC cadets along

with Boy Scouts in the presentation of wreaths by various organizations and in assisting with other parts of the program.

The Joint Memorial Service is held annually to honor the Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJAs) who served in World War II. The Nisei Veterans Legacy sponsors the annual event on the last Sunday of September. The end of September was chosen because that was when the first AJA soldier died in battle.

After Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, AJAs were mistrusted and declared "enemy aliens." On the West Coast, 120,000 people of Japanese descent — most of them Americans by birth — were forced from their homes and sent to internment camps in the country's interior.

Despite the suspicion and the bigotry, more than 20,000 AJAs from Hawaii and the Mainland volunteered and served honorably and heroically in the racially segregated U.S. Army units.

In Hawaii, when the war began, residents of Japanese descent made up 37 percent of Hawaii's population. By comparison, AJAs who fought in the war constituted 63 percent of the territory's military war dead.

After the war, President Harry Truman told the 442nd Regimental Combat Team on the White House lawn, "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice, and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win — to make this great Republic stand for just what the Constitution says it stands for: the welfare of all the people all the time." Two years later, Truman ordered an end to racial segregation in the military.

For Hawaii, the AJA soldiers served and sacrificed much to win equal treatment for all people in the islands and helped Hawaii become the 50th state in 1959.

NVL Holds its Annual General Meeting at the 100th Infantry Battalion Clubhouse

As required by the NVL Bylaws, the Annual General Meeting was held on October 21, 2018. Each officer and committee chair gave a brief report to the membership. Those present also voted to approve three new NVL Board Directors, Carole Hayashino, Lloyd Kitaoka, and Larry Enomoto. In addition, the membership voted to adopt recommended changes to the NVL Bylaws that will allow greater administrative flexibility — importantly, the membership is now able to consider and vote on Bylaws amendments via email/US Mail rather than only at the Annual General Meeting. The new Bylaws were issued in October 2018.



PHOTOS BY PO2 JESSICA BLACKWELL, DVIDS

Message from the Vice President

Greetings Friends,

2018 was a year of unprecedented sharing and connecting for the NVL. We took the Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit (HNLE), which chronicles the history of the Japanese immigration to Hawaii, to Japan and then to Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii Island. As the HNLE and other NVL traveling exhibits journeyed from place to place, we heard heartwarming and “chicken skin” stories from visitors who felt a renewed passion for reconnecting with their ancestry. What’s more, we heard many express awe and appreciation for the spirit of the original Japanese immigrants. Surely, this spirit was passed on to their children—some of who went on to become the Nisei Soldiers of WWII. We estimate that through our traveling exhibits alone we’ve shared the Nisei Soldier story with over 50,000 visitors. This sharing of the HNLE was only possible because of the support we received from so many. The Consulate General of Japan, Hawaii Tourism Japan, Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, Japan America Society of Hawaii, and the Hawaii Senior Life Enrichment Association, to name a few, have been key organizational partners. We look forward to continuing these relationships.

The NVL is nestled within the larger Oahu community of Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) Veteran organizations. These organizations have been meeting to discuss how to unify efforts to better preserve and share the legacy of the Nisei Soldiers. The NVL is pleased to be a part of this effort and remains committed to moving this forward.

We are planning for a robust 2019. We have filled our Education, Membership, Website, and Publicity Committee Chair positions. Our emerging leadership team has identified several action items for 2019 including revitalizing existing exhibits, adding membership options which reflect our community, providing translation capacity on our website, and establishing social media accounts.

As your new Vice President, I will do my best to help us strengthen our internal operations and bring the Nisei Soldier story to new audiences in new ways. The good news is that this can be done. The challenge is that we need your help. When author Tom Coffman addressed the 2018 Joint Memorial Service audience, he talked about the legacy of the Nisei Soldiers. He thanked the Nisei Soldiers and those who worked across ethnic lines who made our present day possible. He closed by saying that, “nothing just happens. . . [and] that the future is ours to create.” Tom’s words resonate with me, and I invite you to join us at the NVL to make things happen in 2019. Note: To read Tom Coffman’s entire Joint Memorial Service speech, go to nvlchawaii.org.

Mahalo
Lynn Heirakuji
Vice President, NVL

Japan-US Joint Memorial Ceremony Honors the Fallen of WWII

On December 6, 2018, the Japan Consulate and the US Navy hosted a small invitation-only ceremony at Ford Island to honor the WWII fallen of Pearl Harbor from both sides.

Speakers included Governor David Ige, Japan Consul General Koichi Ito, Rear Admiral Brian Fort, and Superintendent Jacqueline Ashwell of the National Park Service.

Superintendent Ashwell spoke poignantly about the power of reconciliation — she recalled the words of President George W. Bush — who himself was shot down by Japanese forces in the Pacific — when he spoke at Pearl

Harbor in 1996 and said that he held no rancor in his heart toward Germany or Japan. These healing words helped to open the door for reconciliation between the US and Japan. According to Superintendent Ashwell, the 2016 Joint Statement Ceremony held on the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor conducted by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe further galvanized the move toward friendship between the two countries.

Lynn Heirakuji represented the NVL at the ceremony.

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HISLEA hosts Charity Golf Tournament Generously Benefitting the NVL

On December 26, 2018, the Hawaii Senior Life Enrichment Association (HISLEA) hosted its annual charity golf tournament at the Pearl Country Club. This year, the NVL was chosen as one of the lucky beneficiaries of the tourney. Thirteen four-person teams played in the Tournament under a beautiful blue sky. Many organizations including Sun Noodle, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Central Pacific Bank, and Kuakini Medical Center, participated in the tournament.

After the tournament, HISLEA provided a buffet dinner to participants and conducted



a short program. HISLEA Chair, Ryoza Sakai, presented the NVL with a generous \$1,000 check. HISLEA has been exceptionally supportive of the NVL and our relationship continues to grow. HISLEA, as it did last year, will provide space for several NVL exhibits at the upcoming Honolulu Festival in March 2019.



FAR LEFT: Miss Allison Arakawa performing "Hole Hole Bushi" at the opening ceremony on Kauai

LEFT: Artifacts presented by the Kauai Japanese Cultural Society greatly enhanced the exhibit display at the Kukui Grove Center in Lihue

Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit Tour Continues in Hawaii and Japan

With support from the County of Kauai, Kauai Japanese Cultural Society and the Consulate General of Japan in Honolulu, the Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit was displayed at the Kukui Grove Center in Lihue, Kauai from September 7–23, 2018. This showing was part of the Gannenmono anniversary celebration throughout Hawaii, commemorating 150 years since the initial Japanese immigration to Hawaii and coincided with the Matsuri Kauai Festival. A highlight of the opening ceremony featured Ms. Allison Arakawa, dressed in traditional plantation working garb, performing "Hole Hole Bushi," a song commonly sung by plantation workers in the field.

The exhibit then traveled to Hawaii Island, appearing in Kona at the Hawaii Community Federal Credit Union from November 1–28, and in Hilo at the Hawaii Japanese Center from December 1–21. Mayor Kim attended the opening ceremony in Kona and reminisced about his days of growing up on a plantation. The exhibit was manned by members of the Kona Japanese Civic Association and local Kenjin Kai members, making the showing a real community building event.

The Okinawa Times and Hawaii Tourism Japan sponsored the exhibit showing in Naha, Okinawa Prefecture Japan from October 4–14. Although a typhoon forced cancellation of the opening ceremony, once the weather cleared, large crowds visited the exhibit reflecting the high interest amongst Okinawans in Hawaii's Nikkei community.

The exhibit completed its 2018 tour of Japan at the Contemporary Art Museum Kumamoto from October 20 – November 25. Ms. Joy Sakurai, originally from Wahiawa and currently serving as the Principal Officer of the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka gave a presentation on the U.S.-Japan relations and the important role of the Nikkei (overseas Japanese) in this relationship. This kind of special event, along with the exhibition showings, helps to improve the understanding between the Japanese people and the Hawaii Nikkei.

Most recently, from January 14–18, 2019, Punahou School hosted the exhibit at its Cooke Learning Commons as part of the Gannenmono celebration, paired with a display of student projects on their ancestral roots. Dr. Dennis Ogawa made a special presentation in conjunction with a video on the Gannenmono Symposium held in June 2018.

Visitors at the Okinawa Times Building, Naha, Japan



NVL Presentation to Civic Groups

Byrnes Yamashita made a presentation on the Nisei Soldiers to the Rouren Group from Japan at Natsunoya Teahouse on December 18, 2018. The Rouren Group are NHK staff members who are studying World War II. They also visited the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii and the 100th Infantry Battalion clubhouse.

Other recent presentations include the Downtown Honolulu Rotary Club and a class at the Hawaii Tokai International College in November.

The National Museum of the US Army (NMUSA) Makes Progress Toward Its 2020 Grand Opening

All of the Nisei Soldier exhibits will be finalized in 2019 in time for the grand opening of the NMUSA in early 2020.

Currently, work is proceeding on developing interactive maps that will trace the journey of the 100th and 442nd in Europe, and of the Military Intelligence Service in the Pacific. The maps will highlight 8 campaigns in Italy and France, and 8 campaigns in the Pacific Theater using photos and videos.

In November 2018, the Medal of Honor Wall, which will include the engraved names of the 21 Japanese American WWII Soldier recipients of this award, was installed on museum grounds.

For more information on NMUSA, contact Lynn Heirakuji at LHeirakuji@gmail.com.

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) Interviews Nine Nisei Veterans in Honolulu

The GFBNEC conducted nine Nisei Veteran interviews in Honolulu from January 2 – 5, 2019 as part of its Hanashi Oral History Program. The oral histories chronicle the experiences of Japanese American Veterans who served in segregated units during WWII, many of whom had families imprisoned in US incarceration camps.

The GFBNEC wants to ensure that the stories of Hawaii's Nisei Veterans are well represented in its oral history collection. The Hanashi collection has the largest compilation of Nisei Veteran interviews and includes stories from those who served in combat and intelligence units in the European and Pacific Theaters. Hundreds of oral histories are in the Hanashi collection. Online access is at <http://www.goforbroke.org/learn/archives/hanashi_program.php>.

The team interviewed Shinye Gima (MIS), Thomas Nakano (MIS), Ben Kaito (MIS), Roy Fujiwara (442nd), Minoru Tamashiro (442nd), Tokuo Murai (442nd), George Oide (422nd), Mitsuo Adachi (MIS), and Tatsuo Omiya (442nd).

Consul General of Japan Commendation Award

The Consul General of Japan in Honolulu presented its 2018 Commendation Awards at a reception at the Japan Consulate on November 28, 2018, to celebrate the Emperor's Birthday. The Nisei Veterans Legacy received an award along with numerous other Japanese American organizations that contributed significantly to Japan-America relationships. Other honorees included the members of the Kizuna committee which scheduled several events throughout the year as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of initial Japanese immigration to Hawaii, Ms. Barbara Kawakami, Mr. Kenny Endo, Mr. Grant Murata, and the Moiliili Japanese Cemetery Beautification Project. The NVL partnered with the Japan Consulate in sponsoring several showings of the Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit throughout the State of Hawaii as part of the celebration.



Awardees of the Consul General of Japan in Honolulu Commendation Award included NVL President Wes Deguchi and NVL Education Committee Chair Byrnes Yamashita (second row, 1st and 2nd from left)

State to Hold Its First Veterans Summit in June 2019

The State of Hawaii is planning its first State-wide Veterans Summit tentatively scheduled for June 2019 at a location to be determined. The State Office of Veterans' Services under the leadership of Ron Han (retired, USAF) is coordinating the event, which seeks to unite the more than 60 Veterans organizations in Hawaii at a single event. The purpose of the Summit is to update Veterans on available support services. Many government (Federal, State and local) and non-governmental organizations participated actively in the first planning meeting, which was held on December 19, 2018 in The Adjutant General's conference space. While the NVL is not a service provider, it is supportive of this event and plans to stay involved as a possible educational participant.

NVL news is published by the Nisei Veterans Legacy, P.O. Box 2476, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804, 808-971-1060, inquire@NVLChawaii.org.

Honoring the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion.



Left to right: LTC Bob Takao (Ret USA), MG Suzy Vares-Lum, Lynn Heirakuji, 2LT Christopher Arakawa

Maunalani Nursing & Rehabilitation Center Honors Veterans at its 2019 Veterans Day Celebration

Maunalani Nursing & Rehabilitation Center located in Kaimuki honored its 25 resident Veterans including seven Nisei WWII Veterans on November 9, 2018.

The annual program was emceed by Lynn Heirakuji and featured MG Suzanne Vares-Lum as the keynote speaker. MG Vares-Lum who serves as the Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command, gave a rousing and inspirational talk about the honor of serving in the military.

The Punahou School Army JROTC under the leadership of LTC Bob Takao (retired, US Army), the 100th Battalion/442nd Infantry, and Ann Kabasawa and Clyde Sugimoto (photographers) provided exceptional support for the event.

The NVL's new 6-panel exhibit was displayed for two weeks at the facility and received many positive comments.

Announcements

■ **The NVL has plans for a new home at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii (JCCH)** We plan to rent office space at the JCCH building located at 2454 S. Beretania Street starting in March of this year. Details are being worked out. Stay tuned — more to come on this.

■ **New NVL Board Directors and Committee Chairs**

- Carole Hayashino, Board Director and Publicity Committee Chair
- Lloyd Kitaoka, Board Director
- Larry Enomoto, Board Director and Membership Committee Chair
- Bill Wright, Website Committee Chair

We are still seeking Chairs for our NVL Fundraising and Finance Committees, as well as, a Chair for the upcoming Annual Joint Memorial Service to be held at Punchbowl Cemetery in September 2019. The Committee Chairs are also eager to recruit new members to help with the many projects that we plan to undertake this year.

■ **NVL Seeks Part-Time Administrative Assistant** We are seeking a person to work about 10 hours/week to help with a range of administrative tasks including maintaining digital and hard copy files, handling correspondence and messaging, and setting up a calendar of events. Worksite will be at the new NVL office space at the JCCH building on S. Beretania Street in Honolulu. For more information contact Lynn Heirakuji at LHeirakuji@gmail.com.

■ **Jeff Morita** (retired, US Army active duty and civil service — 40 years) continues to do a great job helping eligible World War II Nisei Veterans and families prepare and submit nominations for the Legion of Honor (Chevalier), France's highest decoration. Nominees must be living and able to document a direct contribution to the liberation of France during WWII. To date, Jeff has submitted 37 Legion of Honor nominations, with 26 pending approval, and 11 approved Chevaliers. Jeff also assists all Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA) Veterans with submitting requests for a one-time, free replacement of their eligible military awards and decorations. Jeff is passionate about supporting our Veterans and offers his help as a public service. For more information contact Jeff at jeff_kine_57@icloud.com.