16th Annual Nisei Soldiers Memorial Service

The Nisei Veterans Legacy is honoring all Nisei Soldiers in the 16th Annual Nisei Soldiers Memorial Service with a video tribute since the ongoing pandemic prohibited in-person gatherings at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. The 30-minute program is available for viewing on the NVL website.

The theme of this year’s memorial service is “Continuing to Strive for Liberty and Justice for All,” which reflects the ongoing reminder to advocate for equity for all who call America home. The WWII Nisei Soldiers, who bravely fought abroad for liberty and continued the quest when they returned home to Hawai‘i, serve as inspiring examples for us to emulate.

The video includes messages from Lynn Heirakuji, President of the Nisei Veterans Legacy; retired Army General David Bramlett; retired Pastor Calvin Takara of Kaimuki Christian Church; and Bishop Eric Matsumoto of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

These messages are mixed with a ukulele performance by local entertainer Jake Shimabukuro, the Presentation, Posting and Retiring of the Colors by the Roosevelt High School JROTC; and a personal message from Caitlin Shishido, granddaughter of a Nisei Soldier.
Many mahalos to NVL committee members Byrnes Yamashita, the video lead; Jeanne Omaye; and Lynn Heirakuji; and also Mae Isonaga of the Sons & Daughters of the 442nd RCT, for working tirelessly to produce this tribute. Kyle Hayama was the videographer and funding was provided by the Central Pacific Bank Foundation.

To watch this video, visit the NVL website

Hidden Heroes: The Nisei Soldiers of WWII

The HISTORY Channel will broadcast a 1-hour documentary entitled, “Hidden Heroes: The Nisei Soldiers of WWII” on Veterans Day, November 11, 2021, at 6 p.m. Hawaii time. Confirm your TV listings for this and any future showings. The show tells the inspiring story of the Nisei Soldiers who served in the 100th/442nd RCT and the Military Intelligence Service during WWII.

View more information here

New Youth Journalism Program Perpetuates the Nisei Soldier Legacy

NVL is partnering with the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and Report for America to provide a free three-month pilot program for high school students interested in learning about journalism basics and the stories of Hawai‘i’s Nisei Soldiers of WWII.

“The NVL is always seeking to forge new partnerships with youth to promote our organization’s mission of perpetuating the legacy of Hawai‘i’s Nisei Soldiers,” said Lynn Heirakuji, NVL President. “This new program creates win-win opportunities for so many in our community.”

Jayna Omaye, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser’s ethnic and cultural affairs reporter will be the leader and teacher for this program, which begins in early December.

Read about this fantastic new program and learn how to complete an application. Applications are due by November 15, 2021 and the program is limited to only six students to maximize personalized attention.
Read the Veterans Day article in The Hawaii Herald’s November 5, 2021 edition written by Lynn Heirakuji on the impact her father’s 442nd soldier experience had on her life.

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A Lasting Connection with the 442nd RCT

Carmine Iosue, adult son of World War II veteran Nicholas Iosue, has touching memories of his dad who formed a strong bond of friendship with some members in the 442nd Regimental
Combat Team. While in a truck that was struck by an artillery shell on the battlefield in Italy, the senior Iosue was severely wounded.

A medic who looked at his dog tag mistakenly assumed his Italian last name was Japanese, and Iosue was placed in a 442nd RCT field hospital with Japanese Americans. Given the option to be placed in a Caucasian field hospital, he chose to stay with his Japanese American comrades and formed lasting relationships with them.

After the war, Nicholas visited Hawai‘i to attend an American Legion convention. While on Oahu, he reconnected with his Japanese American friends, who treated him like a hero, even though he felt they were the heroes.

Carmine and his wife Tina recently visited Hawai‘i and met with NVL President Lynn Heirakuji and NVL Vice President and Education Committee Chair Byrnes Yamashita along with Ann Kabasawa, President of the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans, and Shinye Gima, President of the MIS Education Society of Hawaii.

Carmine said his father, as with many other World War II Veterans, rarely spoke about his war experiences, and those wounded in battle never complained. He said most were just grateful to be with their families. Watch a video of Carmine’s visit to Hawai‘i, his recollections of his dad, and the lasting bond the senior Iosue developed with the 442nd veterans.