

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 Hawai'i'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 Hawai'i's postwar 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

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Lynn Heirakuji

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Larry Enomoto

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Irene Hirano

Gary Okuda

Barbara Tanabe



2019 Joint Memorial Service Held at Punchbowl

The 14th Annual Joint Memorial Service (JMS) was held on Sunday morning, September 29th, 2019, at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. The Nisei Veterans Legacy (NVL) sponsors the event which honors the war and postwar legacy of the Nisei Soldiers of World War II. The theme of this year's ceremony was "A Legacy for Generations."

Brendan Burns, grandson of Governor John A. Burns, the second governor of Hawaii, was the emcee and shared his poignant memories of his late grandfather. Major General Suzanne Vares-Lum, Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, was the keynote speaker. Her local roots and impressive military accomplishments made her remarks deeply resonant with the Nisei Soldier Story.

The event was honored by the presence of fifteen Nisei WWII Veterans. Gov. David Ige, former Gov. George Ariyoshi, Mayor Kirk Caldwell, Japanese Consul General Koichi Ito, Senator Brian Schatz, and representatives from veteran, government and military organizations also attended.

The next generation of leaders — JROTC cadets representing Farrington, Kapolei, McKinley, Punahou and Roosevelt high schools, Boys Scout Troup 100 and Cub Scout Pack 442 — supported the event in full force. The 100th BN, 442D Infantry Regiment provided the rifle salute and presentation/retiring of colors.

The success of the JMS depends heavily on the support of the NVL's many dedicated volunteers. Each year the NVL seeks to grow interest in the event particularly among visitors and the younger generations. Planning for the September 2020 JMS will be in full-swing soon and we welcome any and all support.

Top to bottom, left to right: Masaharu Saito, 100th INF BN Veteran pays his respects. Consul General Ito of Japan presents a wreath. Major General Vares-Lum, Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command gives the keynote speech. JMS attendees pose for a commemorative photograph. Members of the 100th BN, 442D Infantry Regiment serve as color guards. All photographs by iHi Photography.



Nisei Soldiers paying their respects to a fallen comrade. Epinal Cemetery, France (1945).

Nisei Veteran Organization Representatives Meet with Congressman Ed Case

Grace Fujii, Juanita Allen, Gayle Kawahakui, Larry Enomoto, and Lynn Heirakuji (collectively representing the Sons & Daughters of the 442nd RCT, Military Intelligence Service Veterans Education Society of Hawaii, and the NVL), met with Hawaii Congressional Representative Ed Case, at his Honolulu office, on September 6, 2019. The purpose of the meeting, which was requested by Rep. Case, was to tell him about our respective organizations and discuss ways in which his office could support our efforts to promote the legacy of the Nisei Soldiers of WWII. In addition, the representatives shared

information about the current status of the Americans of Japanese Ancestry Veterans Association of Hawaii (AVAHA). Rep. Case sits on the MILCON/VA Subcommittee (of the Appropriations Committee) which includes oversight of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). The ABMC administers American military cemeteries which are located in foreign countries. We discussed the idea of developing and making available searchable on-line bios of Nisei Soldiers who are buried at overseas cemeteries such as Epinal Cemetery in France. Rep. Case expressed a strong interest in this idea and promptly followed up with the ABMC, which responded by providing the names of thirty-five 442nd RCT and 100th Infantry Battalion Soldiers either buried in an overseas cemetery or honored in its tablets of the missing. Late last month, staffers from Rep. Case's office indicated that they would contact the ABMC and U.S. Army to see what kind of biographical information might be available on these Soldiers.

It is important to note that this project for the Nisei Soldiers of WWII would be a pilot, providing a path forward for other veteran organizations to do the same thing for all of the fallen of WWII who never made it home.

HALE Association Makes Donation to NVL

The Hawaii Aloha Life Enrichment (HALE, formerly HISLEA) Association held its annual charity golf tournament at the Pearl Country Club on December 12, 2019. As in 2018, the HALE Association made a generous generation

to the NVL. The HALE Association is headquartered in Hawaii with over 1,000 members living in Hawaii and Japan.

HALE has graciously sponsored NVL educational exhibits at the annual Honolulu Festival for the past four years. They are one of several organizations with whom the NVL partners to spread the story of the Nisei Soldiers of WWII. NVL representatives have made several presentations to the Rainbow Kids from Tohoku, Japan, whose trips to Hawaii are sponsored by HALE. The Rainbow Kids are children who lost parents in the 2011 tsunami disaster.

Left: NVL President Lynn Heirakuji receiving donation check from HALE Association President Mr. Ryoza Sakai. Below: HALE Association Charity Golf Tournament participants.



President's Message

Dear Friends,

A common theme emerges when I speak with my fellow descendants — our Nisei Soldier fathers did not talk much about their war experience — well, at least not with us. But we know that they certainly “talked story” among themselves about the war and clearly forged an everlasting bond with each other. I suppose that happens when you fight side-by-side in two wars — one, on the battlefield and the other, back home to change the status quo.

Perhaps, their reluctance to talk about what they did in the war is a reflection of their humility. Or maybe, it's simply because it's too hard to talk about the scars of war. Whatever the reason, we, the descendants, understand that out of an abundance of gratitude, we should do our best to tell their story on their behalf. We don't do it for ourselves, but for our Nisei parents and for the generations that follow us.

Interest in the Nisei Soldier Story has come from unexpected places. For example, we found that the people in Japan have a thirst for learning about the Hawaii Nikkei — especially from among those who come from one of the seven prefectures which sent most of the original immigrants. We estimate that over 50,000 Japanese visited our Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit when it toured Japan in 2017 and 2018. Also, we were pleased to learn that the National Museum of the U.S. Army which will open in June 2020 at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, plans to have exhibits featuring the Nisei Soldier Story.

What this tells me is that the Nisei Soldier Story has a relevance that transcends boundaries. And finding common ground and working together is the best way to preserve and share it.

World War II officially ended with Japan's September 2, 1945, surrender on the USS *Missouri*. This year, 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of that day. Hawaii will commemorate that day with the theme, “Salute their service, honor their hope”. This theme captures perfectly the spirit of the mission of the NVL, which is to preserve and perpetuate the legacy of the Americans of Japanese Ancestry who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in WWII.

I invite you to join us at the NVL in saluting and honoring our Nisei Soldiers and Veterans, and all Veterans.

Mahalo,
Lynn Heirakuji
President, NVL



MIS Veterans Education Society of Hawaii Holds its Annual Shinnenkai

The Military Intelligence Service (MIS) Veterans Education Society of Hawaii held its annual 2020 Shinnenkai at the Natsunoya Teahouse on January 26, 2020. Incoming MIS President, Dr. Shinye Gima, MIS Veteran, invited Lynn Heirakuji, incoming President of the NVL, to speak about her career in Washington, DC. Dr. Gima presented outgoing MIS President Larry Enomoto with an appreciation plaque for his many years of dedicated support. The event which was attended by seven MIS Veterans and many descendants also included the administering of the oath of office to the club's new officers. The energetic event ended with a rousing rendition of the singing of "God Bless America".



Top: multi-generational MIS Shinnenkai attendees. Above: Lynn administered the oath to the 2020 slate of MIS officers. Right: MIS President Dr. Shinye Gima, right, presenting outgoing President Larry Enomoto with an appreciation plaque..



ALL PHOTOS BY CLYDE SUGIMOTO

Update from the NVL Website Committee Chair Bill Wright

The NVL's comprehensive website at nvlchawaii.org is being continually upgraded as content is prepared. Among the recent developments are the following projects.

Americans of Japanese Ancestry (AJA)

Historical Timeline — This contains 148 significant historical events in AJA Hawaiian history. Each event will contain an extended article that provides context, detail, and reference sources.

Nisei Stories — This provides 29 multimedia stories that combine the related events from the AJA Historical Timeline, with photos and videos. Together with the AJA Historical Timeline, these portions of the website provide an informational resource for teachers, parents and children.

Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit — This replication of the NVL's 26-panel traveling exhibit describes how the Nikkei (overseas Japanese) immigrated to Hawaii and have maintained their cultural values while adapting to the blend of cultures in Hawaii. At the core of the exhibit is

the story of the Nisei who served in the U.S. Army in WWII. The exhibit also depicts the postwar accomplishments of the Nisei in Hawaii. Japanese translation of the Exhibit's text is underway.

The 522 Story — Work on a video project entitled, "The 522 Story", has begun. This animated video, targeted at middle school children, tells the story of the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd RCT. When completed, the video will be 40 minutes in length and available on the NVL website.

Translation — Efforts continue to provide more Japanese language translated webpages with a focus on historical information. Providing more of the NVL webpages in Japanese will continue to promote goodwill and cross-cultural values between Japan and Hawaii.

NVL Instagram Update

The NVL Instagram continues to gain followers. A year ago we had no NVL Instagram account and therefore zero followers. We are now up to 122 followers. Check out the posts by downloading the Instagram app to your smart phone or if you already have the app, go to "nvlchawaii". Keep checking the NVL Instagram account for both current and historical events.



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NVL Supports Japanese Researchers

The NVL has been involved for several years assisting Japanese researchers learn about Hawaii Nikkei history and the Nisei Soldiers of WWII. Since the December 2016 Joint Statement Ceremony at Pearl Harbor attended by President Obama and Prime Minister Abe, there has been an increase in interest among the Japanese about what happened in Hawaii during the war.

On December 8, 2019, the NVL hosted a visit by Ms. Nao Fukuoka from Hiroshima. Ms. Fukuoka's family are survivors of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima during the war and she is interested in learning what happened here in Hawaii so she can write balanced accounts for young Japanese about both sides of the war.

Byrnes Yamashita, Chair, NVL Education Committee, arranged Ms. Fukuoka's visit with Mr. Ray Sekiya who was a seven-year old at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack and still has vivid recollections of that day and the experience of growing up as a Japanese American during the war. Dr. Shinye Gima, MIS Veteran, who was a high school student at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, also attended the meeting. Initially turned down for military service due to his poor eyesight, Dr. Gima was later allowed to enlist for the MIS and served during the Battle of Okinawa as part of a special unit comprised of ten men who could speak the Okinawan dialect. Their mission was to help the U.S. military both control and support the civilian Okinawan population in the aftermath of the battle.

Ms. Fukuoka was very grateful to hear the personal accounts of Mr. Sekiya and Dr. Gima. Ms. Fukuoka was also introduced to Mrs. Hiromi Peterson and Mr. Stephen Miwa, local residents who are both involved in fostering friendly relations between Hawaii and Japan.

Then on December 27, 2019, Byrnes met with Dr. Wakako Murakami, Chuo University Professor from Tokyo. Dr. Murakami is conducting research on Hawaii Nikkei to study the evolution of their immigration story. She has interviewed other Hawaii Nikkei and written about their immigrant stories. Byrnes explained the background of the Hawaii Nikkei experience and how it differed from that of the Mainland Nikkei during the war and how those differences impacted current outlooks. Byrnes also described the role the Nisei Soldiers played in shaping modern Hawaii society when they returned from the war.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wesley Deguchi stepped down from the NVL Presidency effective November 30, 2019, and the NVL board voted to have Vice President, **Lynn Heirakuji**, step into that role, effective December 1, 2019. Wes will continue to serve the NVL as a board director. **Larry Enomoto**, board director, was approved by the NVL board and appointed by Lynn to serve as the NVL Treasurer effective December 14, 2019.

NVL held its 2019 **Annual General Meeting** at the Tendai Mission on January 19, 2020. Each officer and committee representative gave a brief report to the membership. The membership voted to re-elect three current board directors (Wes Deguchi, Phyllis Hironaka, and Warren Yamamoto), and to continue as a member organization rather than changing to a non-member organization.

The December 2019 edition of the **Honolulu Magazine** ran an article, entitled, "Soldiering On", featuring 17 Hawaii Nisei Soldiers. The stories of these men focus on their Families and postwar lives. Jayna Omaye, the writer of the article, had a grandfather who was a Nisei Soldier.

In the introduction to the article, she writes, "The world knows these nisei veterans as heroes. But to many of us ... they are our grandpas, dads, husbands, uncles and friends." The article can be accessed online at <bit.ly/hn-nisei>.

Lynn Heirakuji gave a presentation on the Nisei Soldier Story to residents of the **Kahala Nui retirement community on Veterans Day**, November 11, 2019. She was asked to return to deliver the same presentation at Kahala Nui's 2020 Veterans Day Program.

She also gave the keynote address at the **Maunalani Nursing and Rehabilitation Center's 2019 Veteran's Day celebration** on November 8, 2019. LTC Bob Takao (retired, US Army) was the emcee for the annual Veteran's Day event. The Punahou School Army JROTC and the 100th BN, 442D Infantry Regiment provided protocol and musical support for the ceremony. Six WWII Nisei Veterans reside at Maunalani.



The NVL's 26-panel traveling **Hawaii Nikkei Legacy Exhibit** enjoyed a run at the Kaimuki Public Library during the month of October 2019. Byrnes Yamashita is exploring other public

library venues for 2020.

Jeff Morita (retired, US Army active duty and civil service) continues to help eligible WWII Nisei Veterans and Families submit nominations for the Legion of Honor, France's highest decoration. The last combined French Legion of Honor conferment ceremony honoring six Nisei Veterans as chevaliers was held on June 1, 2019, at the Hawaii Convention Center. To date, Jeff has successfully helped 30 Veterans receive the French Legion of Honor and assisted 109 Veterans/Families in obtaining military personnel files and no-cost replacement of military awards and decorations.



The National Museum of the US Army (NMUSA) located in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, which is about 30 minutes south of Washington, DC, has announced its June 4, 2020, grand opening. Ticket reservations are not yet open. The NMUSA is approximately 185,000 square feet in size and is located on 84 acres of land. The museum celebrates the service and sacrifices of over 30 million men and women who have served in the US Army since 1775. Several exhibits will feature the Nisei Soldier Story.

Save the Date: The legacy continues unbroken this year to celebrate the 77th anniversary of the creation of the 442nd RCT. The Sons & Daughters of the 442nd RCT will sponsor a buffet luncheon on Saturday, May 2, 2020, at the Hale Ikena at Ft Shafter. Visit <<https://442sd.org/news-events/>> for more information.

NVL news is published by the Nisei Veterans Legacy, 2454 S Beretania St., Ste 302, Honolulu, HI 96826 • 808-942-0881 • inquire@NVLchawaii.org.

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

