

MISSION

Preserve, perpetuate and share the legacy of the Nisei Soldiers to promote good citizenship.

VISION

A community in which we live by the universal values of honor, gratitude and patriotism upheld by America's Nisei Soldiers.

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Nisei Veterans Memorial Service Video to Air in September 2020

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the annual Joint Memorial Service traditionally held at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl was re-invented as a 30-minute video program. The NVL produced the video in partnership with videographer Stuart Yamane and 'Ölelo. Stuart is the son of a 442nd RCT Veteran and the producer of the touching 2001 film, "Journey of Honor".

Renamed this year as the Nisei Veterans Memorial Service, the video program will be aired on 'Ölelo Channel 53 at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 27, 2020 at the same time that the live event would have been held at the Punchbowl Cemetery.



Additional 'Ölelo airing times are:

- » Monday, September 29 at 10:00 p.m. (Channel 53)
- » Tuesday, September 29 at 10:00 p.m. (Channel 53)
- » Wednesday, September 30 at 12:30 p.m. (Channel 53)

It will also be aired on the 'Ölelo YouTube channel and Facebook Live so it will be available to a world-wide audience and viewable at later times.

The memorial service is normally held on the last Sunday of September to commemorate Sergeant



Shigeo "Joe" Takata who was the first Nisei Soldier killed in combat in Italy on September 29, 1943. Originally intended to honor the lives of the over 700 Nisei Soldiers who died during World War II, the service has evolved to honor all the Nisei Soldiers and Veterans.

Instead of a single keynote speaker, Governor George Ariyoshi (MIS Veteran), Major General Suzanne P. Vares-Lum (NVL Advisor) and Mr. Jon Teraizumi (Vice President at Central Pacific Bank and grandson of MIS Veteran Makota Kunimune) provided brief remarks on the need to remember the Nisei Soldier legacy and how their individual lives were affected by the events of WWII. Sandy Tsukiyama and Alan Miyamura rendered musical performances. Pastor Cal Takara and Reverend Masanari Yamagishi provided the invocation and prayer of remembrance, respectively. The 100TH BN 442D IN REGT provided Honor Guard support.

ABOVE: The Brothers in Valor Monument at Ft. DeRussy provided the perfect alternative to Punchbowl Cemetery due to its history and meaning. It was dedicated in 1998 and created by Nisei Veterans. It honors the four major WWII Nisei Army units: the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and 1399 Engineer Construction Battalion.
LEFT: Portions of the service being filmed.



Hawaii Trail and Mountain Corporation

Presentations

On February 22, 2020, NVL President, Lynn Heirakuji gave a presentation to hikers with the Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Corporation at its historic clubhouse in Waimanalo. It was a great opportunity to share the Nisei Soldier Story with a different audience. Over 30 people attended the event which ended with a lively and engaging discussion about the Nisei response to the war.

In conjunction with the NVL and Ms. Jayna Omaye, former Honolulu Magazine staff writer, Kaiser High School students held a special history program on March 3, 2020, to learn about and honor Hawai'i's Nisei Veterans. The event was coordinated by teacher Ms. Lory Dillon and conducted entirely by students with support from Air Force JROTC cadets. Lynn Heirakuji opened the event by providing an overview of the U.S. Army units in which the Nisei Soldiers served during WWII. Nisei Veterans Dr. Shinye Gima and Mr. Kenji Ego also spoke.

Dr. Gima explained to the students how he

was selected to go to Okinawa during the war as part of a ten-man group who could speak Hogen, the Okinawan dialect. He served as a translator and interpreter, and after the war distinguished himself by earning a doctorate degree in educational psychology. Mr. Ego described how he volunteered to serve in the 442nd RCT and fought in major battles in Italy and France, including the "Rescue of the Lost Battalion". After Mr. Ego returned to Hawai'i, he earned a degree in biology and worked as a biologist for the Federal and State governments.

The 200 students who attended the event clearly were enthusiastic about meeting these two special Nisei Veterans. The Nisei Veteran Post War Contributions traveling exhibit was displayed at both events.

For organizations desiring NVL presentations or exhibits please contact Lynn Heirakuji at <lheirakuji@gmail.com> or Byrnes Yamashita at <bkyamas@gmail.com>.

Left to right: Dr. Gima, Ms. Dillon, Mr. Ego, Ms. Heirakuji



President's Message

What were you doing six months ago? Normal things, like going to work at the office, dining in a restaurant, getting your hair cut. Maybe shopping at the many stores at the mall. But COVID-19 with its devastating health and global financial impact has come upon us and our world and day-to-day lives have become



virtually unrecognizable. In addition, our country is in the midst of deep civil and political unrest. For many of us, uncertainty, distress and a sense of vulnerability have become our constant companions.

I wonder if this is how those who experienced the outbreak of World War II – especially the Japanese living in Hawai'i – felt? I recall my mother telling me that her Japanese parents gathered all things Japanese in their home and destroyed them because they feared what would happen to them since we were now at war with Japan. Well, her family's alarm was not misplaced.

The Japanese attack on Oahu released all restraints on anti-Japanese sentiment that had been brewing in this country for years. Over one hundred thousand people of Japanese ancestry most of whom were U.S. citizens and including some from Hawai'i, were relocated to incarceration camps here and on the mainland.

Yet it was in this atmosphere of suspicion and discrimination that thousands of young Japanese American men volunteered to fight for their country. My father was one of them. When asked by a reporter many years later why he had volunteered to serve in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, he said simply, "To prove that we were loyal Americans."

The over 20,000 Japanese Americans who served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd RCT, Military Intelligence Service, and 1399 Engineer Construction Battalion compiled an extraordinary record of bravery, sacrifice, and honor. They would go on to change how the country viewed them and when they returned home from the war, helped Hawai'i to become a more equitable society for everybody.

I believe cultural values had a lot to do with what the Nisei Soldiers did both on and off the battlefield – values like sacrifice, ganbari (perseverance), and yamato damashii (warrior spirit). Lessons are imbedded in their stories. And their legacy is bound by values that are as relevant now as they were powerful then.

Take care everybody,
Lynn Heirakuji
President, NVL

Committee Reports

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

On July 28, 2020, NVL members unanimously adopted by email ballots the proposed amendment involving changes to several membership-related provisions in the bylaws and standing rules. These included: shifting the current membership year to the calendar year, adding two new membership classes – Veteran and Life, clarifying payment and renewal procedures for membership dues, updating the fee schedule for all membership classes, and correcting some administrative items. PDF copies of the updated Bylaws & Standing Rules can be obtained upon request to the Bylaws Committee (BC) Chair Larry Enomoto by email: <treasurer@nvlchawaii.org> or phone: (808) 255-8971.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Due to the financial impact of COVID-19, the Hawai'i State Legislature announced that there would be no funding for 2020 grants-in-aid (GIA) requests. The NVL is monitoring the status of State GIA funding options for 2021. In an effort to secure operating funds and to diversify its funding base, the NVL successfully applied for donation support from the Bank of Hawaii Foundation and the ABC Stores (Kosasa Foundation). The NVL will participate in the Foodland Give Aloha Program in September for the first time. Watch for more information on how to donate through this popular program.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Committee revised the membership application process via the website and reminded members of dues payments via email.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE

The Committee completed several enhancements to the website, increased historical information content and continued Japanese translations. Work continues on an animated video on the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Since all exhibitions and presentations have been suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions, the committee is working on a video focusing on the post-war contributions of the Nisei Veterans. The video will feature current and historic interviews that describe how the Nisei Veterans helped to transform Hawai'i after the war and is scheduled for completion in February 2021. Noted author Tom Coffman is participating in this effort.



Dr. Shinye Gima, right, and his brother Noboru Gima

Byrnes Yamashita wrote an article for the June 19, 2020 edition of the Hawai'i Herald that featured the story of Dr. Shinye Gima and his younger brother Noboru and their experiences of being on different sides of the war during the Battle of Okinawa. Dr. Gima served in the Military Intelligence Service and worked with the Okinawan

civilian community. Noboru served in the student corps that provided support to the Japanese Army. They were reunited after the war and enjoyed sharing times together but Noboru eventually returned to Okinawa and lived out his remaining years there. We hope to develop similar articles for the Hawai'i Herald in the future.



Here's a handy way to support the NVL – buy & use our new NVL tote!

The NVL has new tote bags for sale at \$15 apiece. They measure approximately 18" by 19" with a zippered top and a side pocket. Material is a light-weight canvas. Please contact the NVL by email <Inquire@nvlchawaii.org> if you are interested in purchasing a bag.

Communications Plan and Strategic Plan Update

The NVL has obtained the services of Strategic Communications Solutions (SCS) to develop a communications plan to guide us in more effectively sharing the Nisei Soldier Story with an emphasis on reaching the younger generations. This effort was in part initiated in response to a recommendation from the NVL Advisors to improve our outreach efforts. The plan's recommendations will hopefully help our entire community of Nisei Veteran organizations here in Hawai'i in sharing the Nisei Soldier Story.

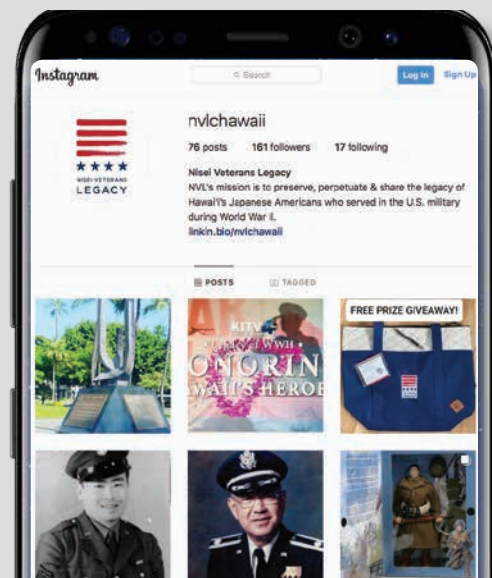
Mr. Nathan Hokama of SCS conducted interviews with many individuals to collect information on their perceptions on how the Nisei Soldier Story can best be told and preserved.

The NVL leadership will present study findings and recommendations to the NVL Board and Advisors this Fall. Key elements of the plan will be incorporated in the NVL Strategic Plan for execution and shared with the Nisei Veteran community.



Follow us on Instagram:

If using the Instagram mobile app, go to @nvlchawaii or visit <<https://www.instagram.com/nvlchawaii/>>



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MG Suzanne Vares-Lum being congratulated by an audience member at the 2019 Joint Memorial Service where she was the keynote speaker. Ms. Jennifer Okubo Polido, granddaughter of a Nisei veteran. Mr. Jacce Mikulanec, former President and Executive Director of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii.

Advisors Briefing Held in May

The NVL Officers and Board of Directors conducted their second annual briefing to the NVL Advisors on Sunday, May 31, 2020 via a Zoom meeting due to the COVID-19 situation. The briefing updated the Advisors on the NVL accomplishments and ongoing efforts and solicited their insights and guidance on the direction of the organization. Nathan Hokama, Strategic Communications Solutions, is working on the NVL Communications Plan and also attended.

Three new Advisors were added to the slate this year: MG Suzanne Vares-Lum (U.S. Army), Ms. Jennifer Okubo Polido, and Mr. Jacce Mikulanec. They joined the roster of current Advisors—BG (U.S. Army Retired) James Hirai, Mr. Gary Okuda, Ms. Barbara Tanabe, and Mr. Warren Haruki.

After observing a moment of silence to remember the Nisei Soldiers and Veterans and Mrs. Irene Hirano Inouye, a longtime NVL Advisor, who have passed away, NVL Officers Lynn Heirakuji (President), Byrnes Yamashita (Vice President), Larry Enomoto (Treasurer), Phyllis Hironaka (Secretary), and Bill Wright (Website Chair) made presentations.

Advisors later commented on the high quality of the presentations. They provided helpful comments and suggestions on the need to adjust and re-invent NVL programs under the COVID-19 situation, the importance of appealing to younger audiences, and supported the NVL's redirection of funding strategy.

Advisor Jennifer Okubo Polido sent a note later, saying "The presentation was great and I'm happy to see the progress the NVL has made!"

The NVL Board of Directors took immediate action to incorporate the Advisors' suggestions and plans to schedule another meeting later this year to update them on the NVL Strategic Plan and Communications Plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COVID-19 has impacted many activities and events that are normally held each year.

- The NVL Annual General Membership meeting will be held on Sunday, October 25, 2020 using a Zoom platform.
- The Joint Memorial Service traditionally held each year at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl was re-invented as a 30-minute video production which will be aired on 'Ōlelo on September 27, 2020. See article on page 1. Look for publicity on this event which has been renamed the Nisei Veterans Memorial Service.
- The MIS Veterans Education Society of Hawaii, 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans Club, and the Sons & Daughters of the 442nd RCT are reviewing their event plans for the remainder of this year. The 442nd RCT banquet is tentatively rescheduled for March 27, 2021 at Hale Ikena, Ft. Shafter.

■ As a follow up to the Congressman Ed Case article in the February 2020 NVL News newsletter, the Congressman's office was able to obtain a list of known Nisei Soldiers buried at overseas European cemeteries. However, rather than creating bios for these Soldiers and making them available on-line at the Cemeteries, the Sons & Daughters of the 442nd RCT will launch a limited alternate pilot project. It will involve Sons & Daughters members developing formatted bios for their 442nd RCT Nisei Soldier ancestors



Epinal Cemetery in France (U.S. Army photo)

which would be made available on the Sons & Daughters website. Next steps may include working with the MIS and 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans' clubs to include bios on those Nisei Soldiers.

■ The National Museum of the U.S. Army (NMUSA) located at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, was not able to open on June 4, 2020 as planned due to the pandemic. Nisei Soldier stories will be featured in four of the NMUSA galleries. A 2021 grand opening date is yet to be determined.



Go to <<https://armyhistory.org/about-the-museum/>> to see a video on the new NMUSA.

■ Director Lloyd Kitaoka has stepped down from his NVL Board Director position. We thank Lloyd for his service and support over the years. We also welcome new Board Directors, Bill Wright and Byrnes Yamashita.

■ As part of the many events commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, KITV ran a special program on August 25 and 29,

2020 featuring several stories about the war and its impacts on Hawaii. President Lynn Heirakuji spoke about all four of the WWII Nisei Army units and her father's experience during and after the war. MG (U.S. Army Retired) Bob Lee also discussed the Congressional Gold Medal for Chinese Americans.

If you missed the program, you can watch these segments at:

- Congressional Gold Medal: <<https://www.kitv.com/clip/15126393/honoring-hawaiis-heroes-chinese-congressional-gold-medal>>
- 442nd Regimental Combat Team: <<https://www.kitv.com/clip/15126298/442nd-regimental-combat-team>>

■ Jeff Morita shared that the Consulate General of France in San Francisco recently announced that the following additional 442nd RCT Veterans were approved for the French Legion of Honor. They are:

- Kankichi Albert Nakama; L.Co; Kailua
- Harold Seisuke Nakasone; Cannon.Co; Mililani
- Hideo Nakayama; L.Co; Kailua

Due to COVID-19, their medals were delivered to their families in lieu of a formal presentation.

■ The February 2020 NVL News newsletter announced the publishing of the "Soldiering On" article written by 442nd RCT Veteran descendant Jayna Omaye in the December 2019 issue of Honolulu Magazine. We recently learned that the article won the National City and Regional Magazine Association's Award for Multiplatform Storytelling. According to Jayna, "The article was such a passion project for me and the Honolulu Magazine team. We're so happy that those seven months of hard work paid off in so many ways. This recognition also reaffirms how touching and inspiring the Nisei veterans' stories are and will continue to be. If anything, this win goes to them." Congratulations to Jayna and her team.

NVL news is published by the Nisei Veterans Legacy, 2454 S Beretania St., Ste 302, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826 • 808-942-0881
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Honoring the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion.

