

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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Refocusing Our Message

In past issues, we have told you about the development of our NVL Communications Plan by Nathan Hokama of Strategic Communications Solutions. After reviewing our various forms of communication platforms and interviewing over 50 stakeholders and friends, he developed several observations and recommendations for our review.

The primary gist of the recommendations was for the NVL to transition from a historic preservation focus to become more of a thought leader and agent for change. We believe that this will serve to make the Nisei Soldier story more relevant to the issues of today and appeal to the younger generations. This does not mean that we will abandon our historical focus because an understanding of the unique story of the Nisei Soldiers and Veterans is critical; rather, we will expand our perspective to include larger current day events.

The NVL Board of Directors approved the Plan's findings and recommendations in October 2020 and presented them to the NVL Advisors in December. The Advisors responded enthusiastically and offered their encouragement and support for this new direction.

YOUR THOUGHTS? We hope that all NVL members and recipients of this newsletter will take time to ponder these message themes and provide us with your feedback. Your thoughts and voices are important to us.

We have shared these themes with several different people and have received very positive responses. Here are some samples.



Nisei Veteran U.S. Senator Spark Matsunaga helped create the U.S. Institute of Peace.



Nisei Soldiers feeding Japanese Orphans, Christmas Day 1945.

THEMES The message themes developed to support the new focus will form the foundation for the NVL's educational content in the future. They are:

- Values such as loyalty, honor, and patriotism influenced young Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) to serve in the military during World War II despite overt prejudice and discrimination against them.
 - After the war, having proven their loyalty beyond all doubt, Nisei Veterans worked with Hawai'i's unique multi-ethnic coalitions to break down the institutional barriers of the "plantation society" and create a more equitable society.
 - Understanding and perpetuating the Nisei Soldier legacy can inspire current and future generations to continue fighting for racial and social equality, and justice for all.
- The next themes are aimed at reaching the Japanese audience here in Hawai'i and in Japan:
- Cultural values of the Hawai'i Nikkei helped Nisei Soldiers overcome hardships and achieve major victories on and off the battlefield.
 - Nisei Veterans played a key role in healing the wounds of war between the U.S. and Japan, as well as, in rebuilding and solidifying the cultural and economic relationship between Hawai'i and Japan.

Fumiko Sato Chun is a Japanese media coordinator here in Honolulu and is very familiar with the Hawai'i Nisei Soldier story. She commented, "I strongly believe these messages will resonate strongly with Japanese media especially the ones passionate about perpetuating the Nisei veterans' legacy."

Kristen Nemoto Jay is a local writer and the granddaughter of a Nisei Veteran of the 442nd RCT. She commented, "Now, more than ever, the dialogue of social justice and acts for change are needed within every community. The Nisei Veterans Legacy's revised themes will be a great resource for future generations and inspire them to continue to fight for racial and social equity."

NVL Advisor **Major General Suzanne Vares-Lum** said, "This is a very timely and relevant set of themes. USINDOPACOM is very focused on the value of diversity in our armed forces."

Presentations

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII' JAPANESE CULTURAL STUDIES

President Heirakuji gave a presentation on the Nisei Soldier story via Zoom to a University of Hawai'i Japanese Cultural Studies class on September 18, 2020. Dr. Elizabeth Keith invited Lynn to speak to her class of 20 students.

Several students reached out to Lynn after the presentation to state how moved they were to learn how cultural values motivated the Nisei to achieve so much both on and off the battlefield.

Here is what one student, Ms. Kaylin Kukino whose grandfather was a member of the 442nd RCT had to say after Lynn's presentation:

"Every time I hear mention of World War II, my heart can't help but swell with pride and awe as I think of my grandfather and how hard he worked to protect this country as a member of the 442nd RCT and 522nd Field Artillery Battalion. For years, whenever we've covered that part of history in my classes, I've tried to fight the urge to raise my hand and obnoxiously monologue about my grandfather and all his accomplishments. However, during Lynn's presentation, aside from sharing her own inspiring stories about her father and spreading the Nisei legacy, Lynn made sure to open a window for me to share my voice with my peers and honor my grandfather.

"Trying to grow out of a childhood habit of taking things for granted, it has become so important for me to give my gratitude and recognition to him while he is still living and thriving at the ripe age of 99. His service, dedication and hard work, and compassion have hugely shaped me into the person I am today. Though I may not be able to do something as awe-inspiring as joining the military, I commit myself to doing what I can to stand up for others, uphold positive values, and fight injustice in this country and the world on a daily basis because working to perpetuate the same morals as my grandfather helps me to preserve and spread his legacy."

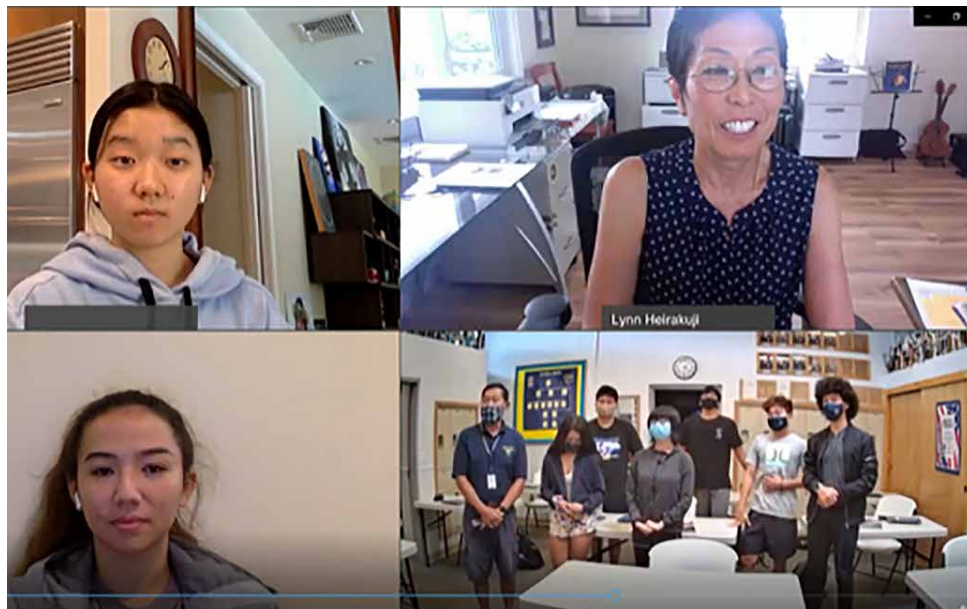
PUNAHOU SCHOOL JROTC

LTC USA (Ret.) Bob Takao, Punahou Senior Army Instructor, also invited Lynn to be a guest speaker at his JROTC cadet class via Zoom on November 20, 2020, to discuss her leadership career in the Federal Government in Washington, DC. The students, our future leaders, were engaged and impressed.

Organizations with an interest in hosting an NVL Nisei Soldier presentation and/or exhibit may contact Lynn Heirakuji at lheirakuji@gmail.com or Byrnes Yamashita at bkyamas@gmail.com for more information.



NVL shared the Nisei Soldier story via Zoom with a Japanese Cultural Studies class at the University of Hawai'i, left, and with a JROTC cadet class at Punahou School, below.



President's Message

I had the honor of working for the Federal Government in Washington, D.C. for 30 years. After witnessing the shocking events of 9-11 which included a deadly attack on the Pentagon where I would later serve, I couldn't imagine that the National Capitol Region (NCR) would experience yet another trauma.



But it did. On January 6, 2021, a group of several hundred individuals committed a violent act of insurrection by breaching the U.S. Capitol, hoping to thwart Congress' Constitutional obligation to certify electoral college votes for the presidential election. Four people including a U.S. Capitol Police officer died as a result. And in an unprecedented government action, 25,000 National Guard troops were positioned in the NCR in an effort to ensure a peaceful presidential inauguration.

I've heard it said that democracy is not something we have but something we do. I think what that means is that we must each do our part as citizens to make sure that our democratic and Constitutional rules and principles stay healthy. Without fidelity to them, they become meaningless.

The Nisei Veterans returned to Hawai'i after the war and worked alongside many other groups to bring greater democracy and equity to the Islands. They helped to transform our society into one that provided greater social, economic and political opportunities for all. George Ariyoshi (Military Intelligence Service Veteran), Hawai'i's third Governor and the first Asian American Governor in the Nation, played a key role in this transformation.

On a national level, Senators Spark Matsunaga (100th Infantry Battalion Veteran) and Dan Inouye (442nd Regimental Combat Team Veteran) lobbied the U.S. Senate to pass House Resolution 442 which provided redress for the thousands of Japanese Americans who had been wrongfully incarcerated during WWII. Clearly, the Nisei Veterans having just performed magnificently on the battlefields decided that their work was not done – as American citizens, they continued to do their part to revitalize democratic principles in Hawai'i and we are the beneficiaries of their actions.

In these challenging times of division and unrest, let us not forget what these Nisei Soldiers sacrificed and fought for to help make for a more perfect union. A lesson more relevant today than ever.

Stay healthy,
Lynn Heirakuji
President, NVL

Committee Reports

BYLAWS COMMITTEE **(CHAIR LARRY ENOMOTO)**

On October 1, 2020, NVL members unanimously approved a proposed amendment to change several provisions in the bylaws by email ballot. These changes enabled virtual meetings and virtual voting.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE **(ACTING CHAIR LYNN HEIRAKUJI)**

As expected, the Hawai'i State Legislature will not be accepting applications for 2021 GIA funding. Good planning positioned the NVL to secure first-time funding in 2020 from Bank of Hawai'i, ABC Stores, and through Foodland's Give Aloha Program. The Atherton Family Foundation also awarded funds to the NVL in late December to create a new video.

Treasurer Larry Enomoto volunteered to chair the Fundraising Committee in 2021. He offered to lead efforts to raise funds in five areas identified by President Heirakuji: corporate donations, foundations/grants, virtual fundraising, legacy (planned) giving and general donations (including membership dues).

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE **(ACTING CHAIR LYNN HEIRAKUJI)**

A major milestone was achieved through the completion of and unanimous adoption by the NVL Board of Directors, of the Communications Plan developed for the NVL by Nathan Hokama, Strategic Communication Solutions. NVL leadership briefed the NVL Advisors on the Plan and its execution strategy and received their enthusiastic endorsement — see lead article.

The Nisei Soldier legacy received significant media coverage in

2020 — our Nisei Veterans Memorial Service (formerly the Joint Memorial Service) video was aired on 'Ōlelo and KIKU TV; President Heirakuji was interviewed for a KITV special, "Legacy of WWII — Honoring Hawai'i's Heroes"; and Hawai'i News Now produced a poignant Veterans Day news segment on 100th Infantry Battalion Veteran, the late "Sus" Nakagawa which included an interview of his two sons and President Heirakuji — see "Announcements" elsewhere in this newsletter. In addition, the *Hawai'i Herald* published numerous articles on the Nisei Soldier story during the year.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE **(CHAIR BILL WRIGHT)**

The Committee completed the enhancements to the unit history section of the website, to include a review of the 232nd Combat Engineer Company and Japanese language translations of the 100th Bn, 442nd RCT, MIS, and 1399th Engineer Construction Bn. The sixth and final chapter of the 522nd Field Artillery Bn animated video was completed. The video is in final editing and will be uploaded on the NVL website in the 1st quarter of 2021. A project was initiated to enhance the website technical infrastructure to support the growing library of digital videos.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE **(CHAIR BYRNES YAMASHITA)**

Work continues on a video focusing on the post-war contributions of the Nisei Veterans. Noted author Tom Coffman is participating in this effort. We will be continuing to submit articles on the Nisei Soldiers for the *Hawai'i Herald* to reach the Japanese American community. A team is being assembled to begin work on a new video featuring O'ahu sites associated with the Nisei Soldiers. The target audiences will be students and tourists, including Japanese visitors.

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We Need Your Support! Please Consider Giving via a NVL Legacy Gift Option

Among your 2021 resolutions, did you include one for making a charitable legacy gift this year? You as a donor have a range of options to make a legacy (planned or deferred) gift to NVL. These include both simple outright gifts, bequests, gifts of stock, life insurance, etc., and more complex gifts that require an advisor, such as remainder unitrust, annuity trust or lead trust.

Due to the COVID-19 economic impacts NVL was unable to obtain grant-in-aid funding from the State of Hawai'i in 2020 and 2021.

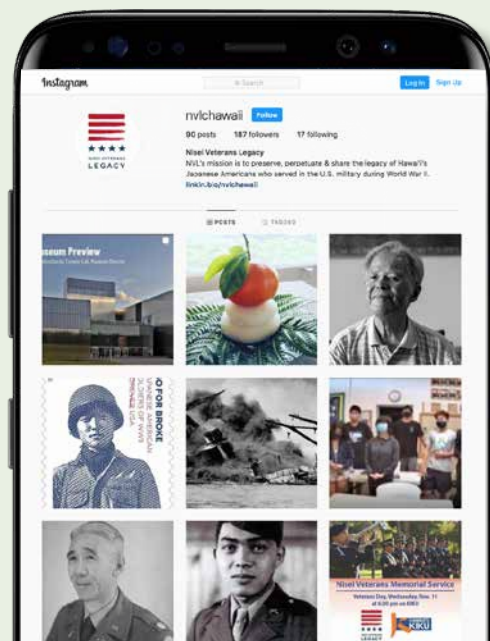
Your legacy gift will help us to share more of the wartime and post-war legacies of Japanese American soldiers who fought during World War II in both European and Asia-Pacific areas.

NVL offers a free worksheet which can help you prepare a new legacy gift. For a free copy of the worksheet or to learn how to establish a charitable legacy gift, please contact Jennifer Okubo Polido, NVL's Legacy Gift Advisor, at 808-226-8277 or JROP@JenniferEPLaw.com.



Follow us on Instagram:

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ The NVL Annual General Membership meeting was held virtually via Zoom on Sunday, October 25, 2020. Members re-elected President Lynn Heirakuji to a second term as director and Bill Wright and Byrnes Yamashita to initial terms as directors.

■ Sections devoted to telling the Nisei Soldier stories at the National Museum of the U.S. Army (NMUSA) in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, opened Veterans Day, November 11, 2020. Nisei Soldier stories are featured in four of the NMUSA galleries. Go to <<https://armyhistory.org/about-the-museum/>> to see a video on the new NMUSA.

■ The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) announced that a new commemorative stamp will be issued in 2021; the "Go for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers of WWII" stamp. The USPS announcement states: "'Go for Broke' was the motto of the all-Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team and came to represent all Japanese American units formed during World War II." What is not mentioned in the announcement is that the soldier depicted is Hawai'i Nisei Soldier Shiroku "Whitey" Yamamoto, a former member of the 100th IB/442nd RCT who recently passed away. Whitey paraglided into southern France as part of Operation Dragoon. He took many photos during the war and several of them are in the National Archives.

■ Hawai'i News Now (HNN) featured a story on Susumu (known as "Sus") Nakagawa, 100th Infantry Battalion Veteran on Veterans Day, November 11, 2020. Sus was the owner of the iconic Seaside Restaurant and Aqua Farm in Hilo, now run by his son, Colin. He passed at the age of 98 after contracting COVID while a resident of the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home. Sus earned a degree in Entomology from the University of Hawai'i and worked at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He always credited his 442nd RCT buddies with helping him build the Seaside Restaurant. HNN interviewed his sons, Colin and Kris, and NVL President Heirakuji for the heartwarming story.

■ The NVL's traveling Hawai'i Nikkei Legacy Exhibit was displayed again at the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum in Yokohama, Japan from December 1, 2020, to January 6, 2021. The exhibit had been previously displayed from June to September 2017. The exhibit explains the history of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i and the role of the Nisei Soldiers in shaping Hawai'i's history.

■ Raking in the Awards! In December 2020, Jayna Omaye's *Honolulu Magazine* article, "Soldiering On" won first place for multimedia excellence for Asian American and Pacific Islander issues from the Asian American Journalists Association. This was a national award and yet another very high honor for her work. Congratulations again, Jayna!

■ The NVL is planning to hold a virtual fundraiser in May 2021. Stay tuned for details.

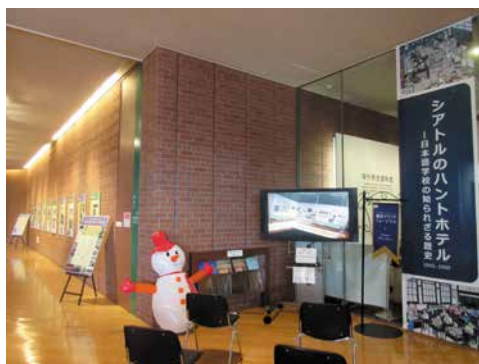
■ Jeff Morita shared that the Republic of France inducted five 442nd RCT Veterans into the prestigious Chevalier dans L'Order National de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight in the National Order of the French Legion of Honor). The French Chevalier is the highest French order bestowed for military and civilian merit and was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte. All five 442nd RCT Veterans were instrumental in the liberation of France in World War II from years of occupation and oppression. Due to COVID-19, their medals were delivered to their families in lieu of a formal presentation. The five are:

- Hajime Miyamoto
- Charles Masuo Murakami
- Seichi Jonathan Oshiro
- Takashi Shirakata
- Minoru Tamashiro

RIGHT: The new "Go for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers of WWII" U.S. Postal Service stamp features 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team Nisei Soldier Shiroku "Whitey" Yamamoto of Hawai'i.



LEFT: "Sus" Nakagawa surrounded by his children in a recent photo.



MIDDLE & DIRECTLY ABOVE: The NVL's traveling Hawai'i Nikkei Legacy Exhibit was displayed again at the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum in Yokohama, Japan.

NVL news is published by the Nisei Veterans Legacy, 2454 S Beretania St., Ste 302, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826 808-942-0881 inquire@nvlchawaii.org <https://www.nvlchawaii.org>

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

