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# INTRODUCTION

In its fundraising letters the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) describes The Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II as “a cause behind which we can all unite.” In response, a considerable number of individuals from the Japanese American community contributed more than \$13,000,000 for the memorial that now stands in our nation’s capital. It will be dedicated on November 9, 2000, after more than a decade of effort.

At the heart of the Memorial is the wartime exclusion and detention of the entire Japanese-American population of men, women, and children, including the elderly, the infirm, and newly born, from their homes and communities in the western United States. Their only crime: their Japanese ancestry. Forty-six years later, through the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the Congress apologized on behalf of the nation to Japanese America and authorized individual compensation to the surviving victims. And accompanying each check was a letter of apology from the President.

This extraordinary act of national contrition provided the impetus for a memorial to recognize the discrimination and injustice suffered by American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry and to honor the patriotism of all Japanese Americans during World War II.

Unfortunately, instead of a symbol of unity and honor, the Memorial became a monument to disunity. Ignoring a swelling tide of dissatisfaction from concerned citizens, veterans, historians and other scholars, the NJAMF Board and two federal agencies, the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Park Service, have displayed indifference to matters of historical accuracy and insensitivity to deep divisions in Japanese America that go back to the war itself.

## **The Authors: Our Purpose**

We, the authors of this document, are members of the Board of Directors of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation. We were among the minority on the Board that struggled unsuccessfully to maintain fairness and balance in the deliberations of the Board. It was our goal to ensure the Memorial would be aesthetically pleasing, historically sound, and free of parochial interests, so that it would be a source of authentic inspiration for the Japanese American community and for the nation as a whole. That was a trust and duty placed on us.

As directors, we are entrusted with the responsibility of establishing one or more depositories for materials to educate the public on the history of the Japanese in America. This pamphlet is our contribution to the historical record of how the Japanese American Memorial was established, joined by a critical analysis of its inscriptions, and an account of the protest these inscriptions engendered. It is in response to National Park Service Director Robert Stanton’s suggestion “that pamphlets should be produced which will give more information to the visitor.”

Following this introduction, we provide four sections. First, an account of how the Memorial came into being. Second, a discussion of two issues: historical accuracy and the inclusion of the name and words of Mike Masaoka. Third, a description of the protest that arose over the Memorial. And fourth, an addenda of related topics: Conflicts of Interest, Peak Populations, Origins of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and “The Lim Report.”

# AN ACCOUNT OF KEY EVENTS

## Origins of the Monument

One of the events that spurred the idea of a Japanese American Memorial was the opening in October 1987, of an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History called, "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the United States Constitution." Through photographs, artifacts and narratives, the exhibit portrays the history of the first immigrants

from Japan, the establishment of Japanese communities in America, the prejudice and discrimination they endured, the anti-Japanese agitation of the war years and the mass incarceration. Near the end of the exhibit, there is displayed the extraordinary war record compiled by Japanese Americans serving in the Army during World War II.

## Go For Broke National Veterans Association

Shortly thereafter, a group of Japanese American veterans established the Go For Broke National Veterans Association (GFBNVA), an organization whose purpose was the establishment of a memorial to honor Japanese Americans who died in military service. Mike Masaoka was one of the founding members, if not the leading proponent, of the organization, but he resigned shortly after its formation when it became clear that the memorial would require the broad support of the entire Japanese American community. The minutes of the GFBNVA indicate that Mr. Masaoka recognized that he remained a controversial figure within the Japanese American community and that his continued involvement could jeopardize the memorial. Ironically, Mr. Masaoka, who died in 1991, appeared to have a better understanding of the Japanese American community and a greater respect for its opposing views than those who were later entrusted with the task of further-

ing the memorial project.

GFBNVA lobbying led to the introduction of the same bill in the House of Representatives, by Representative Norman Y. Mineta, and the Senate, by Senator Daniel K. Inouye. The bill's purpose was to authorize a memorial on federal land to honor Japanese American veterans. But the bill hit a snag when the National Capital Memorial Commission ruled that the proposed memorial did not conform to the Commemorative Works Act which prohibited any further military memorials honoring an ethnic group.

Using the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the bill's goal was amended so the memorial would encompass more than military service; **it would encompass the entire Japanese American experience during World War II.** The amended bill was enacted in October of 1992 and enabled the building of the memorial on federal land.

## National Japanese American Memorial Foundation

With the purpose of the memorial thus expanded, the GFBNVA reorganized itself to go beyond veteran groups and to seek broader representation. In December of 1994 a new Board of Directors representing a reconstituted and expanded organization met and adopted a new name, and the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation was born.

The following mission statement was

unanimously adopted by the NJAMF board:

*The mission of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation is to create under congressional statute a memorial to the loyalty, courage, sacrifices and contributions to the greatness of this nation, made by Americans of Japanese ancestry and their immigrant parents during World War II, despite injustices rooted in ethnic prejudices, and as a commitment to an ever greater America.*

## Early Drafts of the Inscriptions

William Hosokawa, a member of the Board and author of several books on Japanese American history, was selected to prepare drafts of proposed inscriptions for the Memorial. These drafts included the following: a narrative of the incarceration of Japanese Americans and the patriotism and valor of Japanese Americans who served in the Military Intelligence Service, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion; quotations from Congressman Norman Y. Mineta, Senator Daniel K. Inouye, President Harry S. Truman and President Ronald Reagan; a poem by Akemi Matsumoto Ehrlich, who won a *tanka* competition sponsored by the Foundation; the names of each of the War Relocation Camps together with their post offices and populations; and the names of Japanese American servicemen who died in service during World War II.

Early drafts also included: excerpts from

## The Mike Masaoka Problem

The name of Mike Masaoka and an excerpt from his “Japanese American Creed” were included in early drafts and were controversial from the start. Mr. Masaoka served the wartime JACL as its Executive Secretary until he volunteered for the Army in 1943. In the postwar years, he returned to the JACL as its Washington lobbyist and is generally praised for his work in support of legislation that removed features in laws that discriminated against Japanese in America. There is, however, no such consensus concerning his leadership in the JACL during World War II. More on this aspect of Masaoka in the next section, under “Mike Masaoka and the Japanese American Creed.” Also, see “The Lim Report” in the Addenda.

Predictably, voices were raised within the

## Masaoka Removed From Inscriptions

At the following meeting held in Burlingame, California, on May 30, 1998, several revisions were considered. Finally, two drafts were presented to the Board — a “Draft 9” by Mr.

the Bill of Rights and from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s 1942 Executive Order 9066, which authorized and enabled the mass exclusion and detention of Japanese Americans; and this quotation from the 1982 report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians:

*Executive Order 9066 was not justified by military necessity. The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership. A grave injustice was done to American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry who were detained by the United States during World War II.*

As we shall see, most of these were dropped so the inscriptions would fit within a prescribed number of words.

board to protest this inclusion. Kelly Kuwayama was one of the members of the NJAMF Board who had objected to the inclusion of Mr. Masaoka’s name. His view, repeated throughout the deliberations, was that the Memorial should not be usurped for the “aggrandizement or commemoration of ethnic organizations or non-elected individuals.”

At the meeting held in Torrance, California, on February 28, 1998, Frank Sogi, once again, voiced objections to the inclusion of Mr. Masaoka. Despite his objections and those of several others, the Board tentatively approved a “Draft 8” containing the Masaoka inscription, but on the condition that amendments would be considered at the next meeting.

Hosokawa and an alternative draft prepared by Mr. Kuwayama which incorporated the suggestions of several other Board members including Frank Sogi, James Suzuki, Rita Takahashi, Harry Abe,

Henry Daty and Jun Mori.

Neither the Hosokawa Draft 9 nor the Kuwayama alternative contained any mention of Mike Masaoka whose name had been removed from the inscriptions. Following the presentation of the two drafts, the Board authorized Chairman

## **Misrepresentation of Historical Facts**

Perhaps because of the “no Masaoka” consensus that appeared to have been reached, several key members involved in the earlier drafts were absent from the following meeting held in Arlington, Virginia on November 7, 1998. Among those absent were Harry Abe, Jun Mori, James Suzuki, Rita Takahashi, and even Bill Hosokawa. There was, however, a surprise in store for some of the Board members. During the Executive Committee meeting, a day before the full board meeting, according to the Chairman’s report, Grant Ujifusa requested and was granted permission to add four more names to the inscriptions. At the meeting of the full Board, over the strong objections of Frank Sogi and Kelly Kuwayama, Chairman Chiogioji allowed Mr. Ujifusa to make the motion to add the names of Senator Spark Matsunaga, Representative Robert Matsui, Mike Masaoka and Min Yasui to the inscriptions.

We need to note that the NJAMF bylaws require that all decisions of the Executive Committee be approved by the Board before they are acted on and that minutes be kept of the Committee’s meetings. The Executive Committee decision on the Ujifusa request was never placed before the full Board for its review, amendment, and concurrence. And the board was not provided with the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting. It was especially critical in this instance because the Executive Committee decision to re-introduce the name and words of Mike Masaoka contravened and violated the bylaws of the Foundation and the decision of the Board to accept a consolidated version of two earlier drafts, both of which did not contain Mike Masaoka or his Japanese American Creed.

Moreover, there exists a potential parliamentary question here. Was the consolidated draft that was decided upon in the prior, May 30, 1998,

Chiogioji, Mr. Hosokawa and Mr. Kuwayama to consolidate and reconcile the two drafts. Chairman Chiogioji stated that the consolidated draft would be considered at the next meeting and that there would be no further changes beyond what was in the two drafts.

meeting to be the final draft? If so, then the motion by Mr. Ujifusa to amend this “final” version should have been ruled out of order.

Even if these procedural errors did not exist, the merits of re-introducing Masaoka into the inscriptions are not persuasive. The addition of Senator Matsunaga and Representative Matsui was justified on the grounds of their long service to the Japanese American community; and Mr. Yasui, because “he worked with civil rights and was instrumental in resisting evacuation and He also headed Redress movement,” according to Mr Ujifusa. He re-introduced Mr. Masaoka because he was “the father of the 442nd.” But are the facts correct?

The identity of the true fatherhood of the 442nd is in the Addenda, “Origins of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.” Here is a brief explanation why Masaoka is not its father. In November 1942 a special conference of the JACL was held in Salt Lake City with JACL-selected representatives from the camps. This was just two months before the announcement of the all-volunteer, all-Nisei combat unit. At Masaoka’s urging, the JACL passed a resolution to seek the restoration of conscription, so Nisei would be treated just like other Americans. Masaoka was opposed to volunteering and to segregation. He could hardly be considered the father of the 442nd.

Despite the misrepresentation of historical fact on Masaoka, the Ujifusa motion passed on a vote of 24 to 3. No action was taken by the Board thereafter notwithstanding the fact that a memorandum was distributed to the members of the Board proving that there was a serious misrepresentation of fact.

At a later meeting, Chairman Chiogioji reported that a consolidated draft prepared by him, Mr. Hosokawa and Mr. Kuwayama in June, 1998,

had indeed been submitted to the National Park Service for approval and that it had been rejected as too long. The Chairman should have submitted the consolidated version to the Board for its review and approval before it was sent to the National Park Service. At the very least, the Board should have been notified of the rejection of the inscrip-

tions by the National Park Service before it voted on the Ujifusa motion. His motion to add four more names and quotations made the full text even longer than the version that had already been rejected. What the board needed was fewer words, not more.

## **Disinformation and Violation of Democratic Process**

The NJAMF Board made no significant effort to inform the public or to obtain input from the public over the more than five years it spent in its deliberations. Even members of the Board have complained of the failure of Chairman Chiogioji and Executive Director Cherry Tsutsumida to keep them adequately informed. There is evidence that important information was withheld from Board members or selectively disseminated. Misleading reports were issued concerning the actions of the Commission of Fine Arts and National Park Service. It was reported on several occasions that the Commission of Fine Arts or the National Park

Service had given final approval, when they had not, presumably to discourage further protests or attempts to correct errors in the inscriptions. When the Commission of Fine Arts held a public meeting to receive testimony on the proposed inscriptions members of the NJAMF Board were not informed. Chairman Chiogioji has insisted repeatedly that decisions were made democratically and has invoked the principle of “majority rule,” and it continued to approve historically inaccurate inscriptions and the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Park Service seem to have gone along.

## **TWO ISSUES THAT MATTER MOST**

### **Matters of Historical Accuracy**

A problem that persisted throughout the deliberations of the Board was that its members were not given the opportunity to present their views and to call its attention to matters of historical accuracy. No attempt was made to inform the Board of the voluminous body of scholarship that exists on the Japanese American experience during World War II. No scholars were retained to help draft the inscriptions or to address the Board. The inscriptions in their final form were never presented to the full Board for review and approval. The final version of the architect’s drawings, which included the inscriptions, was distributed to

board members *after* its last meeting on July 7 and 8, 2000, in San Francisco. And this final version of the inscriptions contained serious historical inaccuracies. So does the monument.

The monument contains 53 stone panels, each weighing around two tons. Three of these are dedicated to provide a brief historical narrative of the wartime history of Japanese Americans. Eighteen — more than one-third — are dedicated in an impressive display of the ten camps operated by the War Relocation Authority (WRA): their names, post office locations, and populations.

## **One: The narrative has at least four significant errors.**

1) It states, “. . . the removal of 120,000 Japanese American men, women, and children from their homes in the western United States and Hawaii.” This removal under E.O. 9066 affected persons of Japanese ancestry in the entire state of California, western portions of Washington and Oregon, and the southern portion of Arizona. The narrative mistakenly includes Hawaii. Around 1,400 Issei men from Hawaii’s population of 160,000 were arrested as suspect enemy aliens and were interned as prisoners of war (POWs) in Army and Department of Justice camps. They were not arrested and removed as a result of E.O. 9066.

2) Moreover, there were not 120,000 persons removed from their homes. Around 110,000 were removed and interned for a few years. Another 10,000 were added to this population as newborns (5,981); POWs who were paroled into WRA camps (1,735) from the POW camps; family members from Hawaii who voluntarily entered the

camps to be reunited with their paroled fathers (1,118); and others. The total number of people who were detained in the camps was 120,000.

3) There is double counting and a language problem when the inscriptions state, “2,500 were also held at the family camp in Crystal City, Texas.” First the language problem. This was not a “family camp;” it was an internment camp. The purpose of this camp was to reunite Issei POWs with their families. These were Issei POWs who were deemed ineligible for parole. These 2,500 are comprised of individuals from the 120,000 and from the 4,500 reported as arrested by the Justice Department. They were not an “also held” group.

4) The final phrase of the final sentence states that the Civil Liberties Act “reaffirmed the nation’s commitment to equal justice under the law for all Americans.” No such statement exists in this Act.

## **Camp and post office names and camp populations contain these errors.**

1) The population figures add up to 112,581, not 120,000, a well-verified figure. Another set of population figures is available that does and should have been used. For a more detailed explanation of this error, please see Peak Populations in the Addenda.

2) Three of the camp names and post office names have been switched — or almost switched. Amache is the post office for Granada. Poston is the post office for the Colorado River War Relocation Center. And Topaz is the post office for Central Utah. This is the “almost switched”; the post office is inscribed as “Central, Utah,” not “Central Utah, Utah.”

3) Two post office names are missing. McGehee is the post office for Rohwer. (Actually, there is a branch of the McGehee post office, named “Relocation,” that served the Rohwer camp.) And Rivers is the post office for Gila River.

These are simple, non-controversial, objective historical facts. It is hard to believe that a board of leaders from Japanese America, most of whom went through the wartime experience, could have presided over such errors, etched into stone no less. Part of the reason for this may be seen in an outburst from the board’s chairman, Melvin Chiogioji: “I don’t give a damn what the inscriptions say, let’s just get it over with.”

Just as troubling, but for different reasons, is the almost hands-off position taken by the National Park Service, whose mandated responsibility it is to ensure the historical accuracy of inscriptions on all monuments erected on federal land. The NPS did make one correction in the post office names: it corrected the spelling “Denson, Arkansas” from “Benson, Arkansas.” But the NPS ignored all the other errors noted above. This is especially perplexing since “The Evacuated People,” the authority cited above, is the product of the Department of the Interior under which the NPS is subsumed.

Moreover, in 1999, the NPS published, “Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites.” It is a 450-page study of all ten WRA camps, plus

the prisons and Justice Department and Army camps that held Japanese Americans during the war. The current NPS does not want for experts on these matters.

## Two: Mike Masaoka and the Japanese American Creed

Let us begin with the quote from the Japanese American Creed. But in order to understand the excerpted quote (“I am proud that I am an American of Japanese ancestry. I believe in **this nation’s** institutions, ideals and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future”), we need to look at the entire creed:

*I am proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this Nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today. She has given me an education befitting kings. She has entrusted me with the responsibilities of the franchise. She has permitted me to build a home, to earn a livelihood, to worship, think, speak, and act as I please — as a free man equal to every other man.*

*Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way — above board, in the open, through courts of law, by education, by proving myself to be worthy of equal treatment and consideration. I am firm in my belief that American sportsmanship and attitude of fair play will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.*

*Because I believe in America, and I trust she believes in me, and because I have received innumerable benefits from her, I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places; to support her constitution; to obey her laws; to respect her flag; to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic; to actively assume my duties and obligations as a citizen, cheer-*

*fully and without any reservations whatsoever, in the hope that I may become a better American in a greater America.*

Mike Masaoka wrote this creed in 1940. He wrote to fill an empty page in a program booklet for a gathering of the JAACL in Utah. It is difficult to believe that he had any understanding of the burden of racial discrimination that lay heavy on the lives of Japanese America. We lived under the burden of restrictive housing covenants that forced us to live in ghettos; job discrimination that kept many of us on the lowest rung of the economic ladder; ineligibility for U.S. citizenship to our immigrant parents and relatives solely because of their Japanese ancestry; its derivative denial of ownership of real estate to those ineligible for U.S. citizenship; and anti-miscegenation laws that forbade intermarriage between whites and persons who were Negro, Chinese, Japanese, or Filipino. Discrimination was not a matter inflicted by “some individuals;” it was institutionalized in federal and state laws, as well as business practice. This discrimination was hardly something one could glory in or boast of. Rather, it was demeaning and oppressive.

Thus, the creed is an embarrassment of hyperbole when it speaks of “liberties and opportunities such as no individuals enjoys in this world today” and of receiving “an education befitting kings” and “being a free man equal to every other man.” This creed is delusional when it asserts, “American sportsmanship . . . will judge . . . on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.” Even in 1940, children in junior high schools knew that outstanding Negro athletes in colleges would never make it into professional football and baseball.

When the Japanese Imperial Navy attacked the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor, racial hatred blossomed in newspaper headlines,

political speech, popular songs, comic strips, radio comedians, commentators, and news broadcasts. “Jap” pervaded our language and applied equally to the enemy and to Americans of Japanese ancestry.

## Civil Rights Advocate?

Etched into stone next to “Mike M. Masaoka” is the description of him: “civil rights advocate.” Well, how did this “civil rights advocate,” behave? Returning to his creed, he proclaims himself the antithesis of civil rights: to “assume my duties and obligations as a citizen, cheerfully and *without any reservations whatsoever.*” [emphasis added] How can one be an advocate of civil rights if one accepts one’s duties and obligations of citizenship “without any reservations whatsoever”? Doubts and reservations about the conditions of citizenship are at the core of civil rights advocacy.

Yet Masaoka outdoes even this in the JACL’s Bulletin #142, April 7, 1942. He writes as the National Secretary in response to the constitutional challenge raised by Minoru Yasui over the curfew order issued by the Western Defense Command requiring all Japanese-Americans to stay at home from dusk to dawn and limiting their travel to no more than five miles from home:

**National Headquarters is unalterably opposed to test cases to determine the constitutionality of military regulations at this time.** *We have reached this decision unanimously after examining all the facts in light of our national policy: “the greatest good for the greatest number.”* [emphasis in original]

This advocate is part of a consensus position that stood “unalterably opposed” to constitutional test cases in the Courts. His opposition is the antithesis of civil rights; it is a betrayal of his people who were already being herded off to the first internment camp at Manzanar. He was a civil rights advocate who turned away when this detention was performed in clear violation of the Constitution’s fundamental safeguard of ensuring

And soon enough such Americans were being herded off to assembly centers and eventually to permanent detention camps in the interior.

every citizen access to the courts before detention through its affirmation of the Great Writ of habeas corpus. And his “greatest good for the greatest number” undermines the principle inscribed above the double pillars of the U.S. Supreme Court: “Equal Justice Under Law.”

He doesn’t stop there. Masaoka then goes ad hominem in this attack on Minoru Yasui in the bulletin:

*. . . self-styled martyrs, who are willing to be jailed in order that they might fight for the rights of citizenship, as many of them allege, capture the headlines and the imaginations of many more persons than our seemingly indifferent stand. We realize that many Japanese and others who are interested in our welfare have condemned the JACL for its apparent lackadaisical attitude on the matter of defending the rights and privileges of American citizens with Japanese features.*

What are we to do with this attack in the year 2000? Do we really wish to honor with the title, “civil rights advocate,” a man who so viciously attacked Minoru Yasui who willingly went to jail to challenge the constitutionality of the process that was engulfing his people with the brute denial of freedom and threatening to undermine our nation’s Constitution?

If persons are to be honored as “civil rights advocates,” they must be those individuals who raised the challenges in the Courts by demanding the restoration of their freedoms. These would include Minoru Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu, Mitsuye Endo, and the young men who insisted on the restoration of their freedoms as a necessary condition for their compliance with military conscription.

# PROTEST

## **Petition to Secretary of the Interior**

Because of the paucity of information coming out of the Board, the general public was slow to learn of the controversy surrounding the Memorial. But there had been intense interest in the work of the NJAMF Board among a group of scholars and activists who communicated with each other by telephone, fax and email. The group included three members of NJAMF Board: Rita Takahashi, Frank Sogi and Kelly Kuwayama. They wrote letters of inquiry and protest to the NJAMF

Board, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Park Service, but became convinced that all three bodies were indifferent to historical research, to accuracy, to fairness and balance. The group then began circulating a petition asking Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, for an investigation of the National Park Service (NPS), which was under his jurisdiction, to assure the public that the NPS was living up to its duties and responsibilities.

## **JAvoice.com: Committee for a Fair and Accurate Japanese American Memorial**

Because the group was small in number and had no formal organization, the progress of the petition was slow. In the spring of 2000, Samuel Fromartz, a freelance journalist and Sansei in Washington, D.C, joined the group and suggested a program of “cyber advocacy.” The suggestion led to the creation of the web site, JAvoice.com: Committee for a Fair and Accurate Japanese American Memorial. The web site allowed people to sign the petition electronically. It also became the main source for protest letters and news articles and offered a forum for an electronic discussion about the Memorial to counter any attempt of NJAMF to stifle open and public debate.

The web site became operational on May 8, 2000 and within a period of three months the number of individuals signing the petition doubled, going over the 1,000 mark. Organizations that signed on to the resolution included the Honolulu Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League; Japanese American Historical Society of Southern California; Manzanar Committee; San Francisco State University, Asian American studies faculty; Stanford University Nikkei; former Board members of the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund; and the Oahu AJA Veterans Council.

## **Protests Mount on Memorial Inscriptions**

As word seeped out that the NJAMF Board had decided to place Mr. Masaoka’s name and “creed” on the Memorial, the protest mounted and letters poured in from around the country to the NJAMF, the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Park Service opposing the Masaoka inscription. Numerous articles appeared in Japanese American vernacular newspapers concerning the controversy and an active dialogue was started in letters to editors. The majority members of the NJAMF Board also entered the fray accusing three of its members, Frank Sogi, Kelly Kuwayama and Rita Takahashi, with pursu-

ing a “vituperative vendetta,” and questioned their credentials on the grounds that they did not personally experience “the 1942 mass evacuation tragedy.” The three were not incarcerated during World War II. Mr. Sogi served in the Military Intelligence Service, Mr. Kuwayama was in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and Dr. Takahashi is too young to have been in the camps, but her Ph.D. thesis dealt with the administration and management of five War Relocation Authority camps. A particularly disingenuous remark by the majority members was that thousands “voted with their checkbooks to build this memorial

Virtually none of the contributors had any knowledge of the inscriptions that would be placed on the

Memorial at the time they made their donation, and the Board did nothing to keep them informed.

## Hawaii Veterans Protest

Significantly, among those to protest was the Oahu (Hawaii) AJA (Americans of Japanese Ancestry) Veterans Council. Its president, S. Don Shimazu, wrote on July 11, 2000, to the NJAMF Board that the officers and directors of his organization had voted unanimously to remove all personal quotations and names except those of President Harry Truman and president Ronald Reagan from the Memorial. The letter said in part:

*It is the considered feeling of the Oahu AJA Veterans Council that the monument should not have quotations by individuals who do not have the full support of the AJA community and/*

*or the AJA veterans of World War II. After all, it is a monument for all the AJAs in perpetuity, not just for the current majority of NJAMF Board of Directors. Any inscription that is a cause of current tensions and contentions, and a seed that will perpetuate them should be removed.*

The Oahu AJA Veterans Council comprises the 442nd Veterans Club, Club 100, an association of veterans of the 100th Infantry Battalion, the MIS (Military Intelligence Service) Veterans Club, and the 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion with a membership of about 1,500.

## Federal Agencies Turn Backs on Protest

Robert Stanton of the National Park Service, as did Chairman J. Carter Brown of the Commission of Fine Arts, washed his hands of the controversy, lacking the interest and commitment to look more deeply into an event of historic importance, not only to the Japanese American community, but to all who believe in the rule of law and our Constitutional form of government. Mr. Brown, in letters to Mr. Sogi and Mr. Kuwayama, declined to act on historical inaccura-

cies, saying "The National Park Service, as the custodian of the memorial in perpetuity, has a responsibility in seeing that **history is correctly represented**. In this light, we have forwarded all of the letters to the Park Service offices." Mr. Stanton of the National Park Service essentially pleaded ignorance saying research was still ongoing. There is no indication that Park Service made any attempt to study the large body of books and archival materials that exists.

## National Park Service Rejects Protest

The controversy, however, never got the attention of most of the mainstream news media, and the protests appeared only to harden the NJAMF Board and the National Park Service in their joint stance. On July 12, 2000, Robert Stanton, Director of the National Park Service, responded to the protest made by JAvoice.com in a letter that promised to correct inaccuracies that the group had brought to his attention, but he refused to intervene on the issue of Mr. Masaoka. He wrote:

*With regard to the inclusion of Mr. Mike Masaoka*

*and a portion of the creed, we reconsidered this and have four points to make here. First, Mr. Masaoka was a key civil rights leader in this country for 50 years during which he successfully fought for the rights of Japanese Americans. Second, the Board of the Foundation, which is erecting this memorial and is composed of Japanese Americans, has considered this matter and voted on numerous occasions to include Mr. Masaoka. We must respect their views. Third, the research about this period in our history is ongoing and it is possible that current historical thinking may change. However,*

*this should only occur after the standards of scholarship have been applied to the research. Thus, although Mr. Masaoka has been charged with making some statements which are offensive, these must be the subject of further research and, in turn, must be judged in the context of his other achievements during his lifetime. Fourth, this is a complicated story and cannot be completely told in a memorial. Thus, we believe that pamphlets should be produced which will give more information to the visitor. Such a pamphlet can be changed over time if the scholarly research indicates a change in the traditional narrative of the story is required. For these reasons, we have determined that Mr. Masaoka and his quotation should be placed on the memorial.*

There are these problems with Stanton's four points. In point one, he describes Masaoka, who died in 1991, as a civil rights leader for 50 years

## Scholars Respond to Stanton

In drafting a response to the Stanton letter, JAVoice.com solicited comments to the assertion that Mike Masaoka was a civil rights leader and that there was still not enough reliable research on his wartime record. Scholars and researchers who have thoroughly studied this subject for years had this to say in response to Mr. Stanton's claim that "Mr. Masaoka was a key civil rights leader":

- "This is revisionist history at best (and I use the term 'history' politely here) — Stanton's reference to Masaoka as a 'civil rights leader' during WW II! The body of scholarship contradicts Stanton's notion. Masaoka didn't even speak for Japanese Americans, and his words and deeds favored fascism and not democracy. Add my outrage to this latest of outrages." **Gary Okihiro**, Columbia University, Director of the *Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race and Professor of International and Public Affairs*,
- "I am writing a college text on the history of Japanese Americans. My review of published scholarship and archival materials cited by pro-

thus includes the critical years of 1941-43, in which, as we earlier discussed, Masaoka made pronouncements that favored the subversion of the civil rights of Japanese Americans. In point two, when he argues that we must respect the views of the Board, how does he suggest we square this respect with the Board's abysmal failure — by majority vote — to ensure historical accuracy in the Memorial's inscriptions? In point three, Stanton applies the curious moral standard that one's egregious failures should be judged in the context of one's achievements — a truly novel theory of moral behavior. Finally, he pleads that the requirements of brevity should be allowed to cover one's sins.

Obviously, Robert Stanton and the NJAMF are relying upon Masaoka's role beyond World War II. The monument was designed to focus on the events of World War II and the patriotism of all Japanese Americans during this period, during which Masaoka's role was highly controversial.

fessional historians does not support NPS Director Stanton's assertion, in his letter of July 12, 2000 to Dr. Rita Takahashi, that current scholarship on the subject supports the NPS decision to include Mike Masaoka as a 'civil rights leader' in World War II. In fact, publications and doctoral dissertations overwhelmingly refute such a claim." **Nadine Hata**, *El Camino College, Professor of History*

- "In my studies and teaching, Mike Masaoka does not emerge in history as a 'civil rights leader' during World War II. To the contrary, by the facts of his words and actions, he strikes students as being one who acted against civil rights. Those who defend Masaoka against this criticism usually comment that students today do not understand the context in which Masaoka spoke, wrote, and acted, in World War II. But the criticism still remains, because the context is studied, and it is the context that gives rise to the judgment of Mike Masaoka." **Stephen H. Sumida**, *University of Washington, Professor of American Ethnic Studies*

- “I have taught courses on ‘Japanese Americans in World War II’ for thirty years, and I am familiar with the published books and articles on the subject by respected professional historians. There is no basis for NPS Chief Stanton’s claim, in his letter to Professor Rita Takahashi, that current scholarship identifies Mike Masaoka as a Japanese American ‘civil rights leader’ in World War II. Instead, the scholarship suggests that Masaoka’s place in history is one of notoriety rather than fame.” **Don Hata**, *California State University, Dominguez Hills, Professor of History*.
- “NPS is trashing careful research done since 1946 and accepting uncritically an ahistorical message about incarcerated Japanese Americans during World War II. [Scholars] state that JAs [Japanese Americans] resented JACL ‘leaders.’ The leaders were ‘objectionable to most evacuees’ — they were following a ‘collaborationist policy.’ . . . JACL was looked upon as a small group that betrayed the JAs. . . . Most of the works put forth the view that Masaoka deplored any JA resistance and worked to identify ‘known agitators’.” **Mitziko Sawada**, *Hampshire College, Professor Emerita of History*.
- “The identification of Masaoka as a ‘civil rights leader’ either during or after the internment creates an odd and troubling definition of what ‘civil rights leader’ means. If ‘civil rights leader’ is defined as one who will fight against the persecution of an oppressed minority and who seeks justice in the face of societal and governmental hostility, then a generation of scholars has found Masaoka lacking — whether it be with respect to his collaborationist role during the camps

or with respect to his support for the Walter-McCarran Act which was strongly opposed by numerous progressive civil rights organizations or his initial hostility to monetary reparations for Japanese Americans after the camps.” **Chris Iijima**, *University of Hawaii, law professor*.

As Mr. Stanton states in his letter, research and history are ongoing (they are always ongoing), but the current research has already produced substantial proof that, through word and deed, Masaoka did not uphold civil and constitutional rights. Further, it is an established fact that there was wide-spread dissent and a great deal of protest stemming from Mr. Masaoka’s and JACL’s roles during World War II.

John R. Ross, whose father worked for the War Relocation Authority (WRA), recalled his father’s assessments of Masaoka and JACL:

*My late father, Robert H. Ross, who worked for the WRA as a ‘reports officer’ at the Tule Lake Camp/Segregation Center consistently maintained that Masaoka was a traitor to the Constitution, to the Japanese Americans of his time, to the interests of both those immigrants born in Japan and their children, American citizens all. He talked numerous times of duplicity and collaboration with the WRA’s most racist and punitive elements, the congressional critics and the Army who encircled all in the camp and saw those inside as the [same] as the enemy. He decried the role of the elements of the JACL as being a polarizing influence that at crucial times he compared to throwing gasoline on a fire in the Tule Lake Camp as it went through the turmoil that was called ‘Segregation.’*

## True Heroes

We have many heroes we could have celebrated, but except for the men who served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service and the 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion, most of them are not represented on the Japanese American Memorial. Among those excluded and

remained unmentioned are hundreds of Nisei who resisted the draft on constitutional grounds and who went to prison for their stance. They were denounced as “draft dodgers” by the JACL, but Senator Daniel Inouye, remarking on the draft resisters, told a JAvoice.com group recently, “Those who volunteered for military action might

have shown physical courage, but those who resisted the draft as matter of principle showed moral courage,” impressive words coming from one of 20 Japanese American recipients of the Medal of Honor on June 21, 2000 at the White House.

We should honor and recognize by this monument our true heroes who served in the

## **No Need To Fear Our History**

Our work is far from complete. It is our hope that this publication, our contribution, will be part of an effort to encourage the public to delve more deeply into the large body of historical works that exists on Japanese American history, particularly the tragic years of World War II. We also wish to reassure the Japanese American community in particular that there is nothing to fear

## **Japanese Americans United**

Assuming that the final form of the inscriptions are historically accurate, removal of Mike Masaoka’ name and the so-called Japanese American Creed, which have been engraved on one slab of granite, will unite the board of NJAMF and a major part of the Japanese American community.

The bond that has bound all Americans, we believe, has been the right to freedom, justice and opportunity and this is the creed of political faith that Thomas Jefferson propounded in his

United States Armed Forces and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. But we should also understand and respect that there were other players in our history during World War II in order that we may face our future with a perceptive understanding of our past.

from a close examination of our history. While it might reveal human frailties, the complete record reflects great credit on American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry, and a deep and honest involvement with our own history will help us heal the wounds of the past and reunite the Japanese American community.

inaugural address.

This pamphlet is not intended, in any manner or form, to be critical of any individual or organization mentioned in it. It is intended to give a fair balance of a part of our Japanese American history and, as Robert Stanton has suggested, to “give more information to the visitor.” This is the spirit in which, as veterans of World War II and substantial contributors to the NJAMF, we wrote this pamphlet.

# ADDENDA

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

It is significant that at the meeting in San Diego, on August 16, 1997, the membership of the Board was increased from 35 to 45. As a result, more than three-fourths of those on the Board were now current and former national presidents, national board members, chapter presidents and members of the JACL. The question of conflicts of interest was raised at this meeting, not only because of the overwhelming presence of the JACL, but because of the board membership of former Congressman Norman Y. Mineta and his family relationship to Mr. Masaoka, his brother-in-law.

Was there actual or apparent conflict of interest among the members of the Board. At the time of the board meeting in November, 1998, when the final consolidated version (i.e. the amalgamated version) was expected to be approved, Mike Masaoka and the JACL Creed had been deleted from the monument and past and current JACL officers and directors, as well as members, composed over 75% of the board.

## PEAK POPULATIONS

The problem of population numbers lies with Table 5 that is in "The Evacuated People: A Quantitative Study." This official statistical study of the camps was produced by the U.S. Department of the Interior, under whose jurisdiction the camps belonged in their final years. This is a subtle error. It is repeated in serious studies. The sum of the "peak" populations of the ten camps is 112,581. These peaks occurred in late 1942 and early 1943. "Peak population," however, does not mean total population. A camp population ebbed and flowed. People were beginning to leave for the outside world through the relocation program or military service or through transfers to another camp. The largest transfers were caused by the segregation program of 1943. Under this program thousands were transferred to the Tule Lake camp from the nine other camps. And those originally interned at Tule Lake and were not to be segregated were transferred to one of the other nine camps. Yet, even after the camp's peak population had been reached, infants continued to be born, Issei were entering the WRA camps as parolees from the Dept. of Justice or Army camps, and family members from Hawaii were voluntarily entering the camps to be reunited with their paroled fathers.

There was another count of populations maintained by the WRA. It kept for each camp the count of "individuals coming under the jurisdiction of WRA for the first time." These populations are in Table 1 and they add up to 120,313. The choice of tables for population figures may be a matter of judgment. It may also be influenced by the term "peak population." In the case of the monument's inscriptions, the use of the 120,000 figure in the historical narrative requires the use of the Table 1 populations in the interest of consistency. The populations of the ten camps should add up to the 120,000 of the narrative.

## ORIGINS OF THE 442nd REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

According to the research conducted by Ted T. Tsukiyama, a prominent lawyer in Hawaii, the first mention of an all-Nisei combat unit was made by Colonel Moses W. Pettigrew in the spring of 1942. In an article, "Origins of the 442nd" written for the 50th anniversary celebration of the unit, Mr. Tsukiyama states that General Delos C. Emmons, Army commander in Hawaii, endorsed the plan, which eventually was backed by John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War. Edwin O. Reischauer, then a professor at Harvard University, in a memorandum on "Policy Towards Japan" coincidentally also suggested the possibility of "a special volunteer unit of Japanese Americans and other Americans who desire to serve with them." Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information, on October 2, 1942 wrote to President Roosevelt, urging him to oppose bills in Congress that would deprive Nisei of citizenship and intern them for the duration of the war. In the letter he also said, "Loyal American citizens of Japanese descent should be permitted, after individual test, to enlist in the Army and Navy. It would hardly be fair to evacuate people and then impose normal draft procedures, but voluntary enlistment would help a lot (to improve the morale of Japanese Americans)." Mr. Tsukiyama concludes that Pettigrew, Reischauer, Davis, Emmons and McCloy deserve the credit for reopening voluntary enlistment to Japanese Americans and are the "unsung forefathers of the 442nd."

# “THE LIM REPORT”

## The 1988 National Convention and Resolution No. 7

On August 10, 1988, while the National Convention of the Japanese American Citizens League was gathered in Seattle, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that was to grant \$20,000 in compensatory redress to each survivor of America’s Second World War program of the mass exclusion and detention<sup>1</sup> of 125,000<sup>2</sup> Japanese Americans. The enactment marked the fulfillment of a decade-long effort by the League and others<sup>3</sup> to redress their grievances for the most massive failure of the United States Constitution in protecting the rights of its citizens and residents. That a lobby of Americans numbering less than one-fourth of one per cent, if you count the entire population of 600,000 Japanese-Americans, could succeed in compelling the U.S. Congress to enact such legislation testifies to the resilience of America’s constitutional democracy and the character of the American people. Many members of the League flew from Seattle to Washington to join with others to witness the signing ceremony in the Old Executive Office Building. While the euphoria and exchanged congratulations of this extraordinary event were irrepressible, business had to be conducted within the National Council, the legislative session of the National Convention. The Seattle Chapter introduced a resolution which asked the League to offer an apology for the injuries it had inflicted on Japanese Americans during this wartime trauma.

It was called Resolution No. 7:

*WHEREAS, the US of A this year has made a significant and symbolic gesture of serving to begin the healing process of deeply felt injuries caused by the gross injustice perpetrated against Americans of Japanese ancestry in 1942 with the mass incarceration of those people in detention camps by the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1987 [sic];*

*WHEREAS, in the Civil Liberties Act the President and Congress recognizes and apologizes for the injury, injustice and pain endured by over 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry;*

*WHEREAS, in the time of uncertainty, stress and social upheaval, a handful of persons had thrust upon them overwhelming responsibilities, without benefit of reflective time, proper delegation of authority nor institutional support;*

*WHEREAS, a number of Japanese Americans were not only victims of the racist events of 1942 but further were the victims of their own fellow oppressed internees within the confines of particular detention/concentration camps;*

*WHEREAS, in times of duress not all persons act with noble and honorable instincts, though everyone in the concentration camps were all victims;*

*WHEREAS, JACL recognizes that pain and resentment remains in the hearts of a number of our fellow citizens of Japanese ancestry and with the bitterness still unresolved — reference is to the “NO-NO BOYS”;<sup>4</sup>*

*NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the JACL recognize that a number of our community citizens were injured by persons acting individually and in the name of the JACL and that the JACL apologizes for their injuries, pain and injustice born [sic] by them;*

*FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the JACL will do everything in its power to go forth to heal these wounds and to reach out to all of our community to encourage all to endeavor for the benefit of each of us.<sup>5</sup>*

The resolution was not enacted. In its place, a motion was enacted “to refer the Resolution to a special Presidential Select Committee<sup>6</sup> for a thorough study with all appropriate documentation; and that the report be presented to the 1990 National Council.”<sup>7</sup> The idea here was to give the delegates the facts required to deliberate and vote on this matter.

## **JACL Prepared to Cooperate with Mass Imprisonment**

Mr. Masaoka testified to the Tolan Committee (Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, US House of representatives, 77th Congress) in March of 1942:

If, in the judgment of military and Federal authorities, evacuation of Japanese residents from the West Coast is a primary step towards assuring this Nation, we will have no hesitation in complying with the necessities implicit in that judgment.

I think, sincerely, if the military say 'Move Out,' we will be glad to move, because we recognize that even behind evacuation there is not just national security but also a thought as to our own welfare and security because we may be subject to mob violence and otherwise if we were permitted to remain.

Compare Mr. Masaoka's words with the statement by James Omura submitted to the same Committee:

I would like to ask the committee: Has the Gestapo come to America? Have we not risen in righteous anger at Hitler's mistreatment of the Jews? Then, is it not incongruous that citizen Americans of Japanese descent should be similarly mistreated and persecuted? I speak from a humanitarian standpoint and from a realistic and not a theoretical point of view. This view, I believe, does not endanger the national security of this country nor jeopardize our war efforts.

Are we to be condemned merely on the basis of our racial origin? Is citizenship such a light and transient thing that that which is our inalienable right in normal times can be torn from us in times of war?

May I ask the committee member(s) if any or all of you are acquainted with the Nisei? I believe that much of this distrust of citizen Japanese is based on ignorance. It would seem more compatible in the sense of fair play and justice that we should not be prejudged and that racialism (sic) should not be the yardstick by which our loyalty is measured.

## **JACL Informers and "Suicide Battalion"**

In his "Final Report" to the JACL, which was partially covered in the Lim Report, written on April 22, 1944, Mr. Masaoka confirms cooperation with FBI and Naval Intelligence. The report also confirms proposal for an all-Nisei "suicide battalion:"

JACL did cooperate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Naval Intelligence, and other agencies by furnishing them with all the information which we might have had at our disposal regarding the suspects the agencies questioned us about. This was the duty of every American. But since we of the JACL are not, and were not then, trained investigators in counter-espionage, we were not able to furnish them with more than what was general community knowledge, that is to say facts or rumors relating to their ostensible business and sympathies, family relationships and organizational ties. Most of us can't read, write, or speak Japanese well enough to understand much of what happened in the 'inner sanctums' of the Japanese community; certainly our Americanism was too well known to encourage those interested in destroying our country from placing us in their confidence.

Two ideas which we seriously considered at that time illustrated what extremes we Japanese Americans were willing to go to safeguard our homes and associations. One was to form a volunteer "suicide battalion" which would go anywhere to spearhead the most dangerous missions. To assure the skeptics that the members of the 'suicide battalion' would remain loyal, if such guarantees were necessary to quell the objections of the professional agitators of the west, the families and friends of the volunteers would place themselves in the hands of the government as "hostages." When this idea informally discussed with a high military official, we were informed that it was not the practice of the government to require "hostages" or to sponsor such "suicide battalions."

## Deborah Lim and Her Assignment

In June 1989, Deborah Lim, an attorney and instructor of Asian Studies at San Francisco State University, was contracted by the JACL to perform the study and write the report. Lim was given an outline of topics to be covered:

- I. *JACL: Pre-Evacuation (1941 - Spring 1942)*
  - A. *Activities and relationships with governmental agencies before 12/7/41.*
  - B. *Response to declaration of war with Japan.*
  - C. *Response to various military orders, curfew.*
  - D. *Decision to cooperate with evacuation.*
  - E. *Actions initiated in community.*
- II. *Internment Period (1942-1945)*
  - A. *JACL position on legal test cases.*
  - B. *Relationship with War Relocation Authority and other agencies.*
  - C. *JACL activities in camps.*
  - D. *Position and actions on loyalty oath.*
  - E. *Position and actions on Resisters and Segregation process.*<sup>8</sup>

She was given these questions to examine:

1. *What were the policies and positions taken by the JACL in response to the military and government actions relative to the curfew, evacuation, and detention of Japanese Americans?*
2. *What actions did the JACL take to implement its policies prior to and during the internment?*
3. *What impact did the JACL's actions have upon the Japanese American community?*<sup>9</sup>

She was directed to and used primary documents including: bound volumes of the JACL's newspaper, *Pacific Citizen*; 15 file boxes of the JACL Archives; Minutes of special meetings of the JACL; the Bancroft Library, University of California; the Japanese Evacuation and Resettlement Study or JERS files, also at the Bancroft Library; the Merritt Collection, University of California, Los Angeles; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; and other sources including microfilm and oral history tapes.

She read and used several published works that covered these topics, including: Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps: North America*; Richard Drinnon, *Keeper of Concentration Camps*; Dillon S. Myer and *American Racism*; Milton Eisenhower, *The President Is Calling*; Bill Hosokawa, *JACL: In Quest of Justice*; Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese American Internment Cases*; Douglas Nelson, *Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp*; *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians*; Jacobus ten-Broek, Edward Barnhart, Floyd Matson, *Prejudice, War and the Constitution*; Dorothy S. Thomas, Richard Nishimoto, *The Spoilage*; and Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps*.

In addition, she used articles in journals, including: *Amerasia Journal*, *Journalism History*, and *Pacific Historical Review*.

During her research she talked with the following persons: Frank Abe, Arthur Barnett, Ernest Besig, Prof. Shirley Castelnuovo, Frank Chin, Prof. Richard Drinnon, Frank Emi, Prof. Arthur Hansen, Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga, Prof. Gordon Hirabayashi, Lane Hirabayashi, Harry Honda, Bill Hosokawa, Yuji Ichioka, Prof. Peter Irons, Fred Korematsu, Mits Koshiyama, Mike Masaoka, Raymond Okamura, James Omura, Prof. Peter Suzuki, Prof. Rita Takahashi, Togo Tanaka, Harry Ueno, Clifford Uyeda, Michi Weglyn, and Karl Yoneda.<sup>10</sup>

She completed the first version of her report, 95 pages, towards the end of 1989 and submitted it to the Select Committee. The Committee made amendments and asked her to make additions. She made these and submitted an expanded, 154-page version to the Select Committee in the spring of 1990.

## An Odd Turn and “The Lim Report”

At this point, her report took an odd, but not entirely unexpected, turn. Her report was ready to be reproduced and submitted to the delegates who would be attending the 1990 National Convention which was to be held in San Diego. Instead, the chairman of the Presidential Select Committee, Cressey Nakagawa, with help from the staff of the JACL, wrote the official version of this study. Judging from its content, Nakagawa seemed to have gone out of his way to ignore most of Lim’s findings. This version of 28 pages of text relies heavily on Ronald Takaki’s *Strangers from a Different Shore* and discusses the pre-war history of Japanese-Americans and the JACL before launching into a sanitized account of the JACL’s pre-war relationships and activities that excludes Lim’s findings of the JACL relationship to the Office of Naval Intelligence and Federal Bureau of Investigation and the JACL’s informant activities. Nakagawa characterizes the JACL’s role during the turmoil of the uprooting and banishment of Japanese-Americans as being largely a provider of social services, without a word about the organization’s efforts to assume power in the administration of the detention camps and to influence the formation of policy by governmental agencies. When the official version gets into the loyalty issue and draft resistance, it once again uses Takaki’s book. (For example, Takaki gives draft registration as one of two reasons for the “loyalty” questionnaire’s emergence in 1943, when Selective Service had been suspended for Japanese-Americans and would not be reinstated until 1944. The questionnaire was used to find candidates for an all-volunteer combat unit.)<sup>11</sup>

Others had knowledge of these JACL relationships and activities and wondered whether the JACL would allow Lim’s findings to become public. They knew that the JACL, through its sponsored publications, had denied or ignored its wartime role. They were skeptical of the outcome.

This pattern of denial was continued when the 1990 convention enacted Resolution No. 13, a substitute for No. 7:

*Now therefore be it resolved that the JACL recognize that those Japanese American draft resisters of World War II, who declared their loyalty to their country, but who were also dedicated to the principle of defending their civil rights, were willing to make significant sacrifices to uphold their beliefs of patriotism in a different form from those who sacrificed their lives on the battlefields; and that they, too, deserve a place of honor and respect in the history of Americans of Japanese ancestry.*<sup>12</sup>

The narrowness of this substitute stands in striking contrast to the 1988-proposed resolve “that the JACL recognize that a number of our community citizens were injured by persons acting individually and in the name of the JACL and that the JACL apologizes for their injuries, pain and injustice . . .”<sup>13</sup> While chapter nine of Lim’s study does describe the harsh opposition of the JACL to draft resistance, it is, after all, but one chapter of nine.

Almost immediately her report, the original 95-page version, began life as “The Lim Report” and was copied and distributed informally almost as though it were samizdat in some communist country. (It is this version to which this Forward is attached.) Four years later, at its 1994 National Convention at Salt Lake City, the JACL finally agreed to distribute copies to its assembled delegates. The Convention itself, however, took no action on the issue.

In the year 2000, the JACL seems to have once again decided against making copies available. But by now the Internet had become a dominant factor in the communications industry. With Ms. Lim consent, “The Lim Report” was converted and installed on two websites, JAvoice.com and Resisters.com, where it can be read and from which printouts can be made. Readers of this pamphlet, particularly those who are skeptical of some of its claims regarding the behavior of the JACL and Mike Masaoka are encouraged to make the effort to read “The Lim Report” on these websites.

*FOOTNOTES:*

- 1 The widely used term for this is “evacuation,” which was one of several official euphemisms devised by the War Relocation Authority, the bureaucracy that administered the camps, in order to mask the true nature of the camps. Japanese-Americans were excluded from wide areas of the West Coast and southern Arizona. And they were held in detention camps, for which “relocation center” was the official euphemism.
- 2 The figure of 125,000 includes the 5,000 or so persons who “voluntarily” left the exclusion zone before such movement was banned. While not detained, they were excluded.
- 3 The others were significant. The National Council for Japanese American Redress supported the first redress bill introduced in Congress and then launched a class action lawsuit that reached the Supreme Court. The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations mounted a vigorous grass roots campaign. Others organized in Seattle, Chicago, and New York.
- 4 “NO-NO BOYS” probably refers to those who responded negatively to two “loyalty” questions. “BOYS” makes it incorrectly gender exclusive; both males and females answered negatively. The expression may also refer to draft resisters. It is discussed more fully later under Some Terms Explained.
- 5 “Report of the Presidential Select Committee on Resolution No. 7 to the JACL National Council,” June 17-22, 1990, 31st Biennial Convention, JACL, JACL Archives. Cited hereafter Report of PSC.
- 6 The members of this committee were: Cressey Nakagawa, who served as the committee’s chairman; Taoru Ishiyama; Lillian Kimura; Marilyn Hall Patel; and Homer Yasui.
- 7 Report of PSC.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Deborah Lim “Research Paper in Response to the JACL’s Resolution #7,” the 154-page version of “The Lim Report,” JACL Archives.
- 11 Report of PSC.
- 12 The Pacific Citizen, August 31, 1990.
- 13 Report of PSC.

# Japanese American

## **The 100th Infantry Battalion**

The 100th Battalion was a path-breaking unit that led the way in preserving the right of military service for Japanese Americans during World War II. It was composed of 1,432 Hawaiian-born Japanese American soldiers pulled out of regular Army units, disarmed and segregated after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In spite of this demeaning and inauspicious beginning, the men of the 100th went on to become the first Nisei unit to see combat and fought with such valor and suffered such heavy casualties that it became known as the “Purple Heart Battalion.” While the War Department pondered the fate of Japanese American soldiers, the 100th got 14 months of training in Wisconsin, Mississippi and Louisiana, making it, perhaps, the most intensively trained unit in the U.S. Army. Finally, in September of 1943, the 100th was attached to the 34th “Red Bull” Division in Algeria. It saw its first action in Salerno, Italy, soon afterwards, and fought its way northward with the 34th Division. The 100th was attached to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, retaining its identity even though it became the 1st battalion of the 442nd RCT, in June of 1944, and the battle-hardened veterans of the 100th provided the toughness that comes with experience to start the 442nd on its path to distinction. During its 21 months in combat, 337 men of the 100th Infantry Battalion were killed in combat, earned 1,703 Purple Hearts, 8 Medals of Honor, 147 Silver Stars, 2,173 Bronze Stars and 30 Division Commendations and three Presidential Unit Citations.

## **The 442nd Regimental Combat Team**

After the U.S. Government decided on the formation of a volunteer combat unit made up of Japanese Americans in January of 1943, some 11,000 Nisei volunteered. The number of volunteers from the mainland, where Japanese Americans were confined in concentration camps, was predictably low. About 10,000 of the volunteers were from Hawaii, where there was no mass imprisonment of Japanese Americans. When the Selective Service System was later opened to Japanese Americans, the ranks of the 442nd would be replenished with Nisei draftees from the mainland and Hawaii. True to its motto, “Go for Broke,” a Hawaiian gambler’s jargon for shooting the works, the men of the 442nd together with 100th Infantry Battalion compiled a combat record that is unmatched in U.S. military history. As a spearhead to some of the most perilous actions in Italy, France and Germany, the unit suffered 650 dead and 8,826 wounded in the course of the war and received Purple Hearts. There were no deserters, but there were “reverse AWOLs,” men who left their hospital beds without permission to rejoin their buddies on the front line. The 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd RCT received 18,143 individual decorations for valor and seven Presidential Unit Citations. In June 2000, after a review of the records, the Medal of Honor was belatedly awarded by President Clinton to 20 men who had served in the 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd RCT during World War II.

# n Military Units

## **The 1399th Engineer Construction Battalion**

Because of the its exemplary work in constructing and maintaining military facilities in Hawaii during World War II, this all-Nisei outfit has been called “the unsung heroes of the home front.” The soldiers of the 370th Engineer Battalion, which was activated on October 1, 1942, formed the nucleus of the 1399th. Its ranks were filled by Nisei drafted in 1944 and later the 156th Dump Truck and 1525th Base Equipment Companies were attached to the 1399th, which grew to nearly 1,000-men strong by November, 1944. Based at Schofield Barracks, the Battalion completed 54 major projects in addition to repairing roads and bridges. So outstanding was their work that General Douglas MacArthur twice asked to have the 1399th assigned to the Phillipines. Both times, he was refused by the War Department because it considered these men too valuable to the defense of Hawaii to risk them in direct conflict.

## **The Military Intelligence Service**

Approximately 6,000 Nisei served in the Military Intelligence during World War II, but because of the secrecy surrounding their wartime achievements the very major contribution they made to winning the war in the Pacific was long unrecognized. The recruitment of Nisei for a Japanese language school began even before the war, in September of 1941. As more Nisei volunteered or were drafted into the MIS, the school was moved from its original location at the Presidio in San Francisco to larger quarters in Minnesota, first at Camp Savage and later at Fort Snelling near Minneapolis. They served in the Pacific Theater, as well as in China-Burma-India Theater, the Alaskan Department, Pacific Ocean area, Southwest Pacific Area and in language centers, and in other units, such as Psychological Warfare, Office of Strategic Service, Office of War Information, Chinese Combat Command, MP detachments, the US Navy, Us Marine divisions, British Australian and New Zealand armies, “Merrill Marauders,” and the “Mar Task Force.” The men of the MIS translated enemy radio messages, Japanese military documents and interrogated prisoners of war, providing vital intelligence concerning enemy troop movements and deployment, as well as details of Japanese naval plans and strategy. The MIS played a vital and possibly decisive role in such famous engagements as the battle of Midway, Guadalcanal, the Mariannas, the Phillipines and Okinawa. In the fall of 1942, translations by Nisei soldiers of captured enemy documents gave the U.S. Navy the call signs and code names of every ship in the Japanese fleet, the call signs of every naval air squadron and even the names and descriptions of ships American commanders did not know existed. Translating other documents, MIS teams provided a list of all 40,000 Imperial Army officers, with each officer’s rank, unit and job title — information that enabled General MacArthur to determine the locations and strengths of the Japanese units he faced. “Never in military history did an army know so much about the enemy prior to actual engagement,” MacArthur said. His intelligence chief, Maj. General Charles Willoughby, went further, saying: “The Nisei saved a million lives and shortened the war by two years.”